

WEST BENZIE JOINT  
**MASTER PLAN**  
including the 5-year park & recreation plan



BENZONIA AND PLATTE TOWNSHIP  
MICHIGAN

**2022**

*draft for public review  
October 2022*



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# Acknowledgments

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## **TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES**

Jim Sheets  
Sheila Priest

## **TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR**

Jason Barnard

## **TOWNSHIP CLERK**

Diana Heller

## **TOWNSHIP TREASURER**

Karen Burns

## **WEST BENZIE JOINT PLANNING COMMISSION**

Jim Sheets, Chairman  
Bruce Wildie, Secretary  
Alison Michalak, Recording Secretary  
Tim Flynn, Treasurer  
Matt Wieber  
Robb Bollenberg  
Jason Barnard, Zoning Administrator

## **PREPARED BY**

Sara Kirk, ASLA, LEED AP  
SRP Design Studio, llc



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# 1. Introduction

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This plan is prepared as authorized under the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA33 of 2008) and is used to satisfy the requirement of section 203(1) of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (PA110 of 2006), MCL 125.3203 for the jurisdictions of Benzonia Township and Platte Township located in Benzie County, Michigan. This Master Plan will also serve as the joint Park and Recreation Plan.

## Why Plan?

A Master Plan creates a blueprint for the preservation of a community. It is the essential foundation upon which communities are built. They guide not only physical and economic development, but also accommodate social, environmental, and regional concerns. They also help adjacent jurisdictions coordinate future planning and development. The planning process offers an opportunity to look broadly at local programs such as economic development, public infrastructure and services, environmental protection, and how they relate to one another by presenting a “big picture” look at the community today and then articulating goals for the future. The land use plan resembles a series of goals and policies that are then used to guide future land use regulations and decisions, including zoning. A good plan engages the public and clearly defines the hopes, needs and aspirations of a community.

The Master Plan is intended to take a long-range view of the Townships, guiding growth and development for the next twenty years and beyond, while also providing flexibility to respond to changing conditions, innovations, new concepts and available resources.

## Background & Key Players

This master plan will be the first master plan created solely for Benzonia and Platte Townships. In 2010 Benzie County eliminated its planning department and repealed its zoning ordinance. It was at that time that Benzonia and Platte Townships decided to work together and created the West Benzie Joint Planning Commission (WBJPC). They adopted the Benzie County Comprehensive Plan in order to meet the criteria of the Michigan Enabling Act in order to base the Township’s zoning ordinance.

Benzonia and Platte Townships also have previously adopted the recently completed Benzie County Joint Recreation and Cultural Plan (2019-2024) in order to be considered for funding through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR). As a part of this master plan process, it was decided that a park and recreation plan also be updated at the same time so that WBJPC will then have control of their own park and recreation plan as well. When this updated plan is adopted in 2023 and approved by the MDNR, the Park and Recreation Plan will then be valid through 2028. After then it will need to be reviewed and updated per the MDNR guidelines every 5 years.

## How Is It Used?

- A master plan gives guidance to property owners, developers, neighboring jurisdictions, and county and state entities about expectations and standards for public investment and future development.
- Establishes the basis for the zoning ordinance, capital improvements, land use policies, and other implementation tools and programs.
- Provides the framework for day-to-day planning decisions by staff and land use policy decisions by the Planning



Crystal Lake

Commission and Township Board.

- Identifies and evaluates existing conditions and characteristics, community values, trends, issues and opportunities.

Master Plans and Zoning Ordinances are “living documents.” Meaning, they each respond to changing conditions. As social norms shift over time each document should be updated to reflect the new changes. That is why the Michigan Planning Enabling Act requires municipalities to review their Master Plan every 5 years. If this review finds the Plan does not align with current trends then it should be updated. This allows the Zoning Ordinance to effectively respond to the needs of Township residents.

# 2. Community Profile

## Regional Context

Benzonia and Platte Townships are located within Benzie County. Benzie County is located in Northwest Lower Michigan, and is the smallest county in the state (refer to Figure 1.0).

Benzonia Township is comprised of 33.84 square miles, of which 6.1 square miles is water. It includes the southeast end of Crystal Lake and also a portion of Big Platte Lake. The Betsie River also runs through Benzonia Township as well as a portion of Platte River as it enters Big Platte Lake. The Township is bisected by two major highways, US-31 and M-115. It also includes two Villages, the Village of Beulah and the Village of Benzonia. Both Villages have their own zoning ordinances, the Village of Benzonia has an active planning commission.

Platte Township is slightly larger than Benzonia and is comprised of 36.47 square miles, only 0.2 square miles is water. A small portion of Little Platte Lake is in the southwest corner, the North Branch of the Platte River flows into Little Platte Lake. M-22, a scenic highway runs through the western edge of Platte Township. Much of Platte Township is government controlled lands of either the National Park Service (Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore) or Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) properties.

## Previous Planning History

As mentioned previously the Townships have not previously completed their own master plan. There are a number of planning studies that have been completed under the County Government, as well as the adjacent Villages that have been referenced during the development of this Master Plan. In addition, the County also recently completed the “Benzie County Joint Recreation and Cultural Plan 2020-2024. The WBJPC chose to adopt this for their Park and

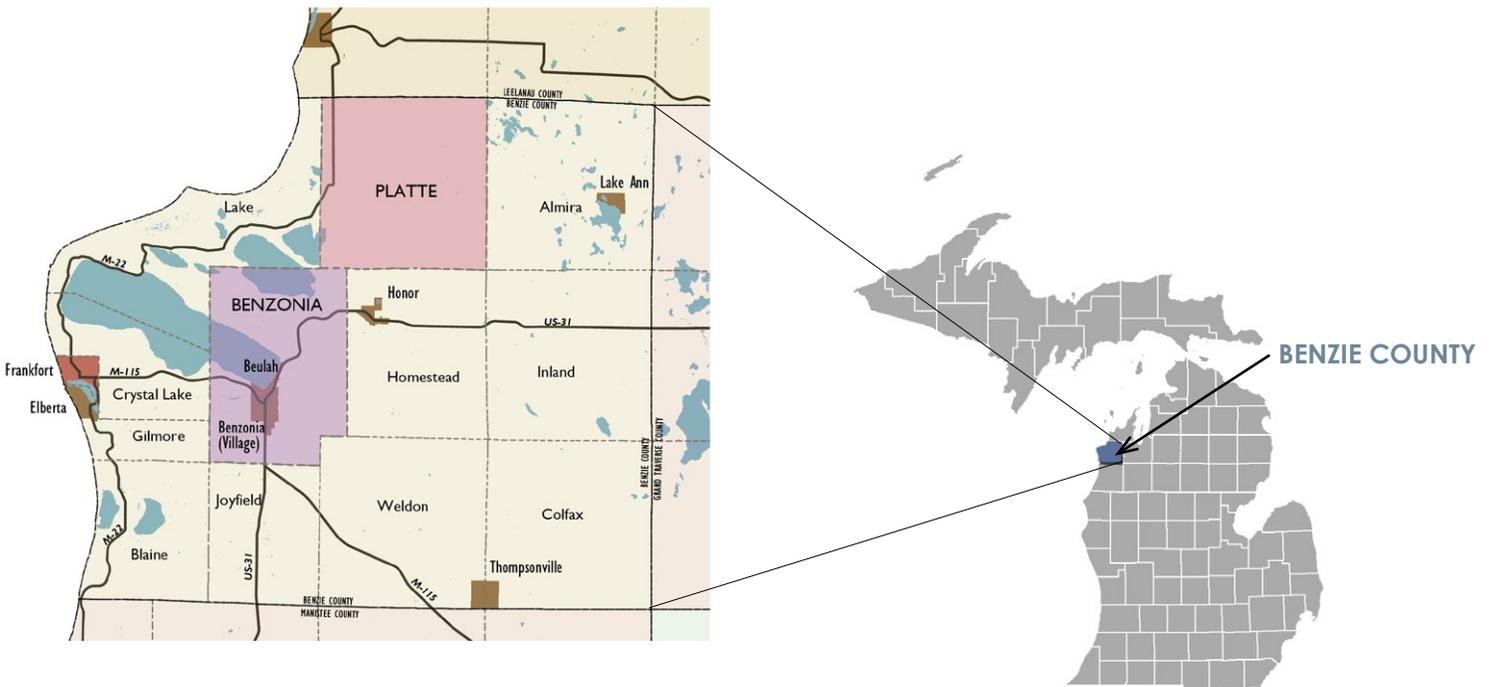


Figure 1.0 Township Vicinity Map

Recreation Plan, making them eligible for MI MDNR grant funding. As a part of this master plan development, the WBJPC has decided to include the Park and Recreation Plan. The intent is for the WBJPC to now have their own master plan and own park and recreation plan that will be on the same 5-year review and update cycle.

The following is a list of previous plan documents that were reviewed.

- Benzie County Joint Recreation and Cultural Plan, A Joint Recreation Plan with Benzonia Township, 2020-2024
- Benzie County Comprehensive Plan 2020.
- 2017 Benzie County Master Plan, Networks Northwest, 2017.
- Benzie County Recreation And Cultural Plan 2015-2019, Benzie County Parks And Recreation Commission With Networks Northwest, 2015.
- Benzie County Open Space And Natural Resource Protection Plan, Open Space And Natural Resources Protection Committee, April 2002.
- Benzie County Planning Commission, Annual Report, 2016
- A Housing Market Analysis Of Benzie County, Alliance For Economic Success. 2017.
- US-31 Benzie County Corridor Transportation Management Tool. Michigan Department Of Transportation - North Region, 2018.
- Northwest Michigan Regional Non-Motorized Strategy, Northwest Michigan Council of Governments and Michigan Department Of Transportation, 2008.
- Framework For Our Future, A Regional Prosperity Plan For Northwest Lower Michigan. (Various Chapters) Networks Northwest, 2014.
- Michigan Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, 2018-2022

In addition, the current Township zoning ordinance and its associated overlays and amendments were also reviewed, along with neighboring community zoning ordinances.

## Township Snapshots

### HISTORY AND CULTURE

The following is a brief background on the formation of both Platte and Benzonia Townships.

Much of the early settlement in Benzie County was in the area of the Village of Benzonia and Benzonia Township. In 1858, Charles E. Bailey an educator at Oberlin College in Ohio, led a group of Oberlin Alumni including ministers, teachers, farmers, and business people to the area with the idea of forming an “educational Christian Colony”<sup>1</sup>.

The colonists’ “Articles of Agreement and Plans for a Christian Colony and Institution

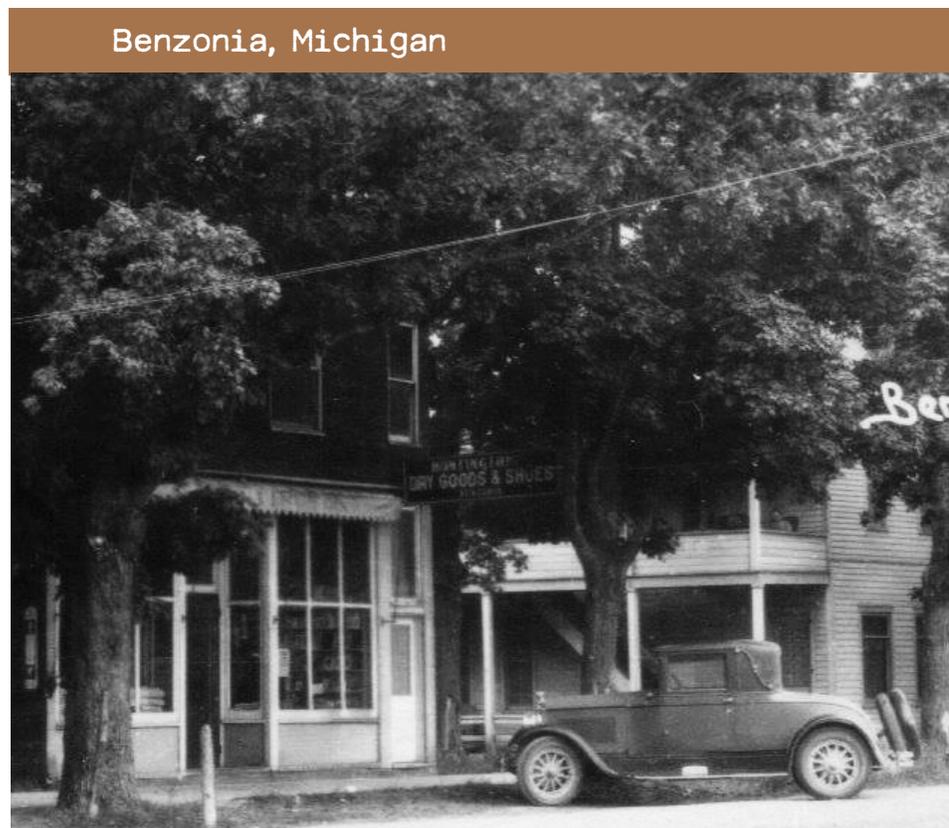


Photo Source: Benzie County Historical Society

## 2. Community Profile

of Learning” provided that a quarter of the stockholders’ lands were to establish and endow the college. The original political organization of government for the colony was Crystal Lake Township, and part of Grand Traverse County. In 1861, Benzonia Township was organized from this, and so the new college chartered in 1863 was named Grand Traverse College and operated until 1890.<sup>2</sup> It was then the name of the college was changed to Benzie College, and was providing college level education. The school was finally changed to Benzonia Academy and operated until 1918. Mills Community House is the only remaining structure from the school and was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1972<sup>1</sup>.

The Township of Benzonia originally included a much larger territory in Benzie County, it was from this larger territory that the townships of Platte, Almira, Inland, Weldon, Joyfield and Homestead were eventually organized.

The Township of Benzonia includes a number of Benzie County’s historical and cultural icons. Just some of the most significant places include; Mills Community House, the Benzonia Historical Museum, Gwen Frostic’s Print Shop and the Cherry Bowl Drive-In Theater. In addition, there are 4 State Historical Markers in the Village of Benzonia (Benzonia College, Bruce Catton, Mills Community House and First Congregational Church). There is also a historical marker that was established by the County in the Village of Beulah regarding the tragedy of Crystal Lake.

### Gwen Frostic Print Shop



Gwen Frostic established her print shop in the woods along the Betsie River in Benzonia Township in 1964. Gwen was a renowned Michigan artist, famous for her Linocut block print artwork featuring elements from the natural world. The unique building, built into the natural landscape, included her print shop, retail store and personal office and residence. A popular tourist destination, it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2021.

The township of Platte, was first settled in the year 1864. The early settlers had a hard time with the heavily forested lands and lack of roads, many used the beach of nearby Lake Michigan as a way to convey their goods and supplies, until about the year 1866 when several roads were developed connecting the area to Glen Haven and Traverse City. It was in 1867 that the Township of Platte was officially organized.

It was in that same year the first school district was also organized. School was held in one room of the Thurston residence. It was in the spring of 1868 a log schoolhouse was built in district No. 1. District No. 1 was eventually listed as the Morgan School.<sup>3</sup> The first post

## The Drake School, Platte Township

Photo Source: Benzie County Historical Society



office was also established in that same year, Abel Briggs was appointed postmaster.<sup>2</sup>

Another school district was created, District No 2., was established about 1876, and is now know as the Drake School. This school was initially known as the Getchell School, and was later changed to the Drake School in 1913. The school was in operation until it closed in 1943. In 1988, the property and school was donated to the Benzie Area Historical Society, by a woman named Katherine Maley.

The Platte Grange, #1328, assisted the Historical Society in restoring the property to an early 1900 time period. It was rededicated as the Drake School museum on May 13, 1989. It is currently open for visitors on weekends in the summer.

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<sup>1</sup>Mills Community House, <https://www.millscommhouse.org/history.html>

<sup>2</sup>Michigan Pioneer And Historical Society Collections Volume 31 (1901) Pages 114--125), A History Of The Early Settlement Of The Township Of Benzonia And The Founding Of Grand Traverse College By William A. Betts.

<sup>3</sup>Benzie Historical Society, "The Drake School", <https://benziemuseum.org/the-drake-school/>

# 2. Community Profile

## DEMOGRAPHICS

The following demographic summary will look specifically at statistics for Benzonia and Platte Townships. The idea is to identify overall trends to help the Townships make informed decisions regarding planning that will be in the community's best interest. Comparisons will be made to County, State or National data as available to help illustrate these trends. All of the census data is referenced from the latest information available (2019/2020) from American Fact Finder data by the U.S. Census Bureau.

### GENERAL POPULATION

Benzonia Township had a population of 2,735 as of the 2019 census data. The male and female population is almost equal, with slightly more female population. The 2019 population shows another decline from the 2010 and the 2000 census for Benzonia Township. (FIGURE 2.0). This is in contrast to Benzie County as a whole, as the County population has increased from 2010 to 2020 by about 1.5%.

Platte Township had a population of 380 as of the 2019 census data. The male and female population is almost equal, with slightly more male population. The latest 2019 population number is a decline from 2010 census, whereas the 2010 census had shown an increase from the 2000 census (FIGURE 2.1).

### HOUSEHOLDS

Households and families are basic units used in the analysis of demographic information, however they are not the same thing. A household is composed of one or more people who occupy a housing unit, not all households contain families. Under the U.S. Census Bureau definition, family households consist of two or more individuals who are related by

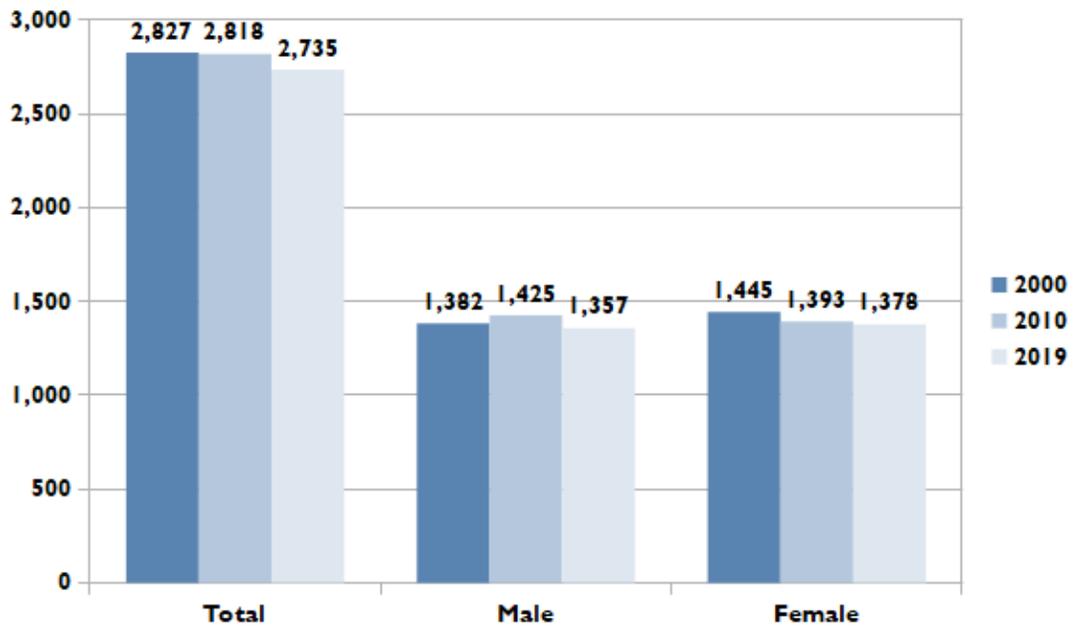


Figure 2.0 Benzonia Township Population

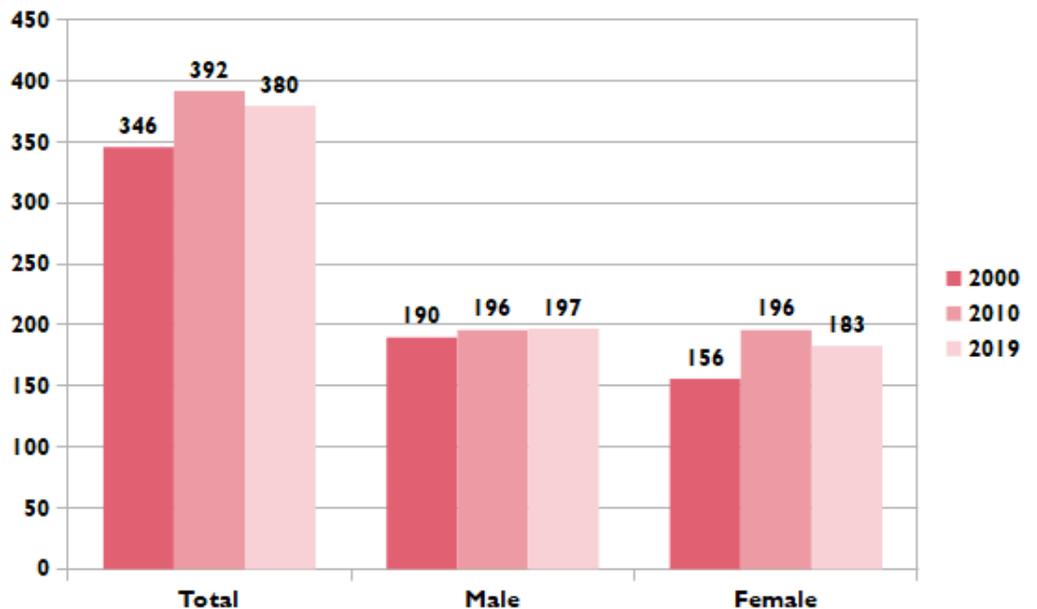


Figure 2.1 Platte Township Population

birth, marriage, or adoption, although they also may include other unrelated people. Non-family households consist of people who live alone or who share their residence with unrelated individuals.

An individual's living arrangements usually change at different stages of life. The average size and composition of households are highly sensitive to the age structure of the population. But they also reflect social and economic changes. In the United States, the mix of household types has changed enormously over the last three decades. One of the most notable nationwide changes is the declining proportion of family households and the rise in single-person households.

Households in both townships had similar trends, with both showing increased households from the 2000 to 2010 census and then a decrease from 2010 to the 2020 data. Family households in both townships also is trending lower with both showing less family households in the most recent data than the previous decade. In both townships households with individuals over the age of 65 is increasing. (FIGURES 2.3 and 2.4)

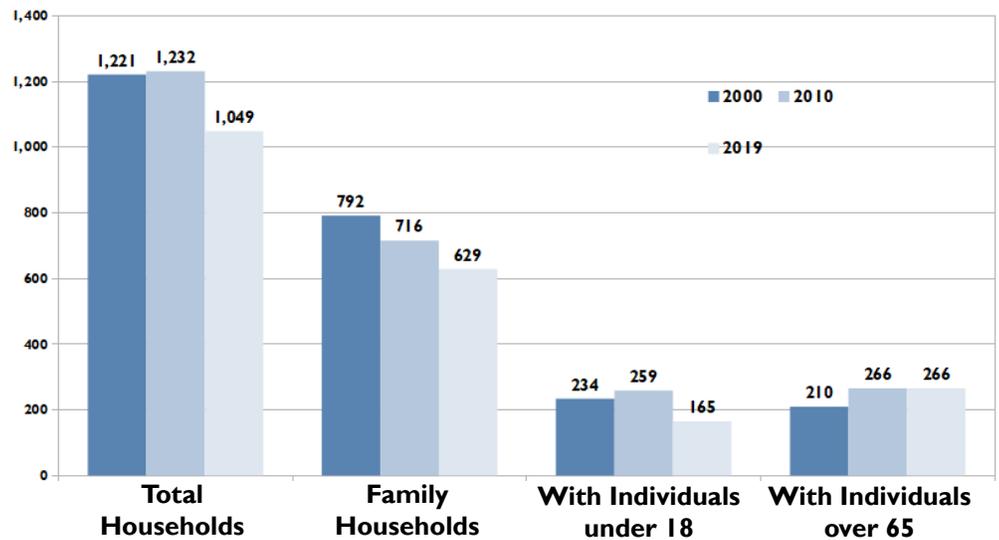


Figure 2.2 Benzonia Township Households

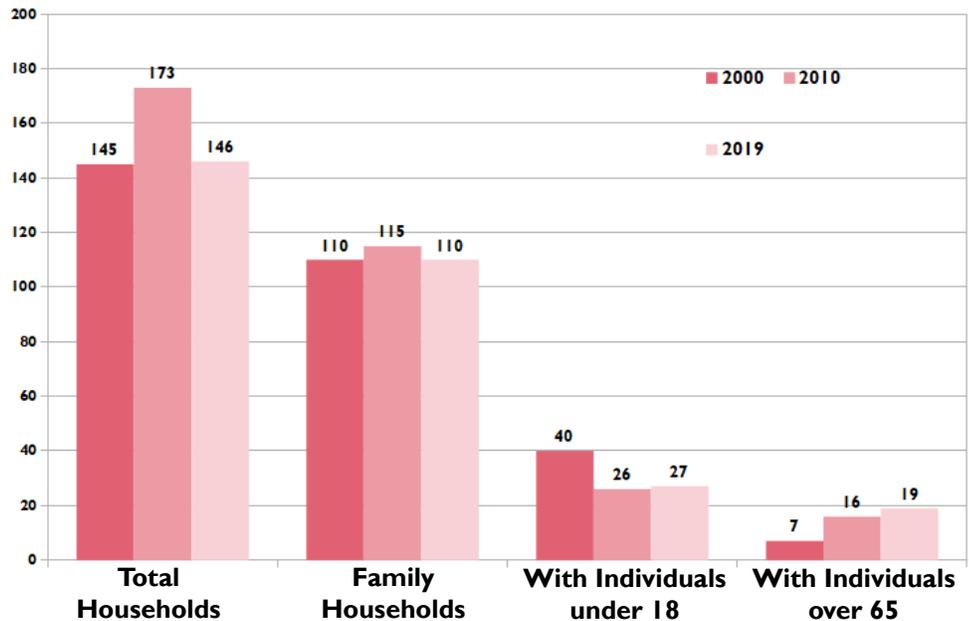


Figure 2.3 Platte Township Households

Benzonia Townships family households have steadily decreased since 2000, (FIGURE 2.2) while the average household size and family size has steadily increased (FIGURE 2.4). This is in contrast to the County growth pattern, as the County Master plan indicates that average household size has been dropping by about 4% across the region. In addition, total housing units have risen since 2000 for both Townships, while it is interesting to note that owner occupied houses have declined in both Townships. (TABLE 2.0 and 2.1)

# 2. Community Profile

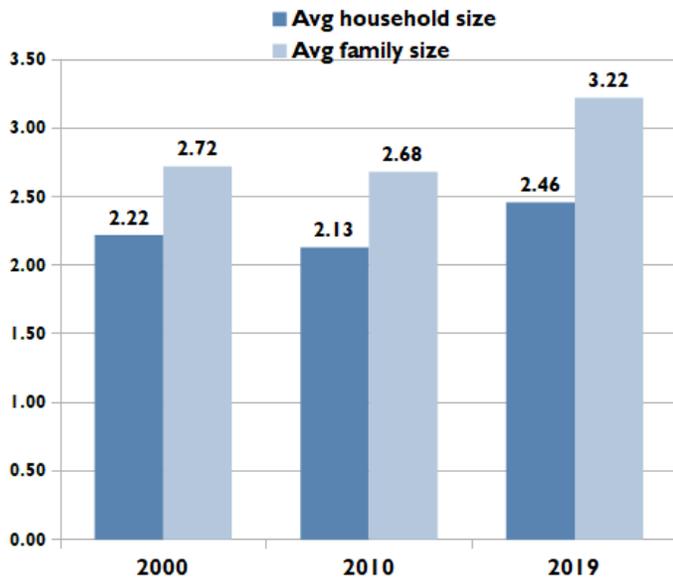


Figure 2.4 Benzonia Township Household & Family Size

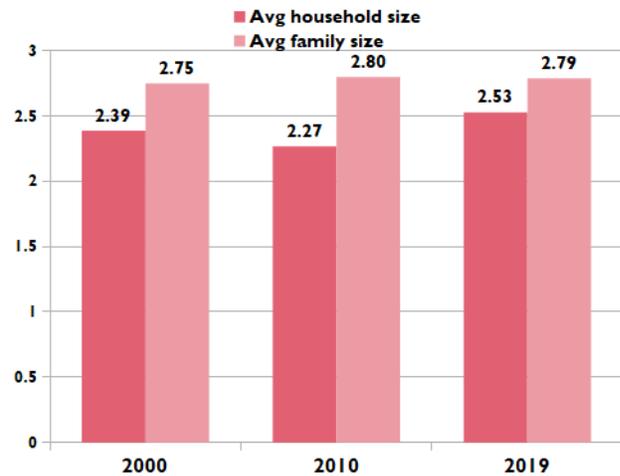


Figure 2.5 Platte Township Household & Family Size

## KEY FINDINGS & COMPARISONS FROM THE 2020 CENSUS <sup>4</sup>

- The U.S. population is on track to grow at the slowest rate since the 1930s, which could have wide-ranging impacts on the labor supply and the demand for goods and services, including new homes, over the coming years.
- More than half of U.S. counties have experienced net population loss since 2010, with more than 550 counties losing at least 5 percent of their residents.

NOTE - this is not the case of Benzie County as its population showed an increase of about 4% since 2010.<sup>5</sup>

- The percentage of U.S. residents ages 65 and older is increasing at the fastest pace in U.S. history, with significant implications for public spending on programs for older adults.
- Fewer households are being established, due in part to the growing share of young adults who still live with their parents.

NOTE - this trend is shown in Benzonia and Platte Townships.

<sup>4</sup>Population Bulletin, Vol. 74, No. 1, June 2019, Population Reference Bureau, www.prb.org

<sup>5</sup>Benchmarks Northwest: A Collection of Data Resources for Northwest Michigan, Networks Northwest, 2020.

## HOUSING

This section deals with the more physical makeup of the housing characteristics in the townships. In order to be able to plan for the future, it is important for community leaders to have an understanding of the current housing situation in their community. The northwest region of Michigan is fortunate to have access to a wealth of housing and economic data available from the Networks Northwest organization. The planning commission should always be sure to access and review the latest housing data when making planning decisions as many data resources are updated annually. The following is a snapshot of current data available for both townships as compared to the County and region.

### **HOUSING OCCUPANCY: OWNERSHIP VS. RENTAL**

The shortage of available housing of all types continues to be a major issue. It is currently not just a Northwest Michigan issue but a National concern as well. Total housing units in the Benzonia is up slightly over the last decade, while total housing units in Platte township has actually decreased (TABLE 2.0 and 2.1).

An important consideration when analyzing the housing markets is how those units are held by its users. There are two primary methods, owning and renting with advantages and disadvantages to each. The main advantages to home ownership is that it includes shelter provision and asset building. However, the existence of a strong rental market is also important as it can provide lower-cost shelter option for those in the community, which is sometimes more suitable for new households, or residents more likely to be mobile due to seasonality, educational or family circumstances. It is important to provide enough rental options in a community for these type of transitional residents.

Current housing in both townships is dominated by owner occupied housing units, this hasn't seemed to change a great deal for either Township since the 2000 census. There is a greater percentage of rental homes available in Benzonia Township, likely due to the denser zoning around the Villages of Benzonia and Beulah. The percentage of rental homes in Benzonia Township in the 2019 data was 16.4% and 6.4% for Platte. Comparatively for the State of Michigan, the current owner occupancy rate is 71.7% and rental occupancy is 28.3%, - both townships have a much lower rental occupancy than the state average.

### **VACANT HOUSING**

The US Census Bureau defines a housing unit is vacant if no one is living in it at the time of the interview, unless its occupants are only temporarily absent. Vacant units may be unavailable for rent or sale for any number of reasons. A vacant unit may be one which is entirely occupied by persons who have a usual residence elsewhere. They may be under renovation.

HOUSING OCCUPANCY- BENZONIA			
	2000	2010	2019
Total (Housing Units)	2,033	2,011	2,164
Occupied	1,219	1,232	1,049
Owner occupied	742	1,027	877
Renter/Seasonal Occupied	195	205	172
Vacant		779	1,115

Table 2.0 Benzonia Township Housing Occupancy

HOUSING OCCUPANCY - PLATTE			
	2000	2010	2019
Total	238	284	246
Occupied	149	173	146
Owner occupied	40	162	130
Renter/Seasonal Occupied	4	11	16
Vacant		111	100

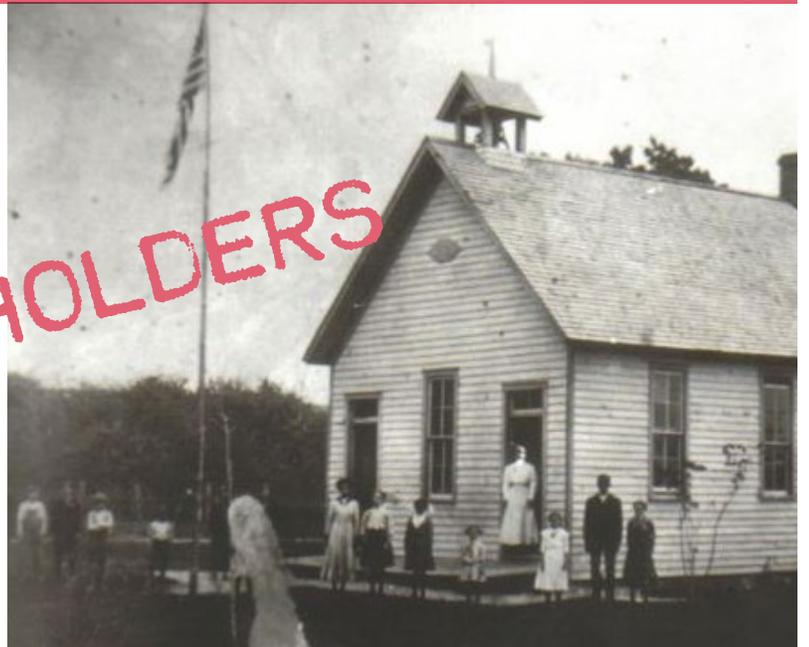
Table 2.1 Platte Township Housing Occupancy

## 2. Community Profile

Housing in Benzonia Township



Housing in Platte Township



They may be newly built and not sold or leased yet. They may be used part-time for a purpose other than the owner's primary residence: for example, an AirBnB or a short-term rental. The vacancy rate for both townships is relatively high, and could be having an effect of the amount of housing available to year round residents. For Benzonia Township it is 51.5%, which is higher than the County rate of 45.8%. The vacancy rate for Platte Township is 40.6%. Comparatively the current vacancy rate for the State of Michigan is 13.7%. Both townships have a much higher vacancy rate than the state average. Due to the known tourist and seasonal living characteristics of the northwest Michigan region, it is quite possible vacancy rates are high due to seasonal residents and short-term rentals.

**SHORT TERM RENTAL**

The growth and issues of the short term rental industry over the last few years has again been not only a Northern Michigan issue, but a national issue as well. While short-term rentals do increase a community's bed base for tourism, it can also results in fewer home for sale and long-term rentals available for people who actually live and work in the community. It also tends to increased prices and reduced the inventory of homes for sale. This can be especially detrimental to smaller communities as long-term effects could include loss of population, fewer families with students, fewer community volunteers for boards and commissions and emergency services such as first responders and volunteer fire departments. This is becoming a critical issue in many areas, especially those that rely heavily on tourism, and should be carefully considered in all future decisions related to the regulation and development of housing.

**HOUSING VALUE**

At the same time that vacancy rates are rising in the housing units available to the community, the median housing values are sharply increasing as well. Both Benzonia and Platte Townships have had significant increases in housing value in the last decade and both median values are over the County average (TABLE 2.2).

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines affordable housing as generally defined as housing on which the occupant is paying no more than 30 percent of gross income for housing costs, including utilities. Generally that means that households should spend about 2.5 times their annual income on their home. In looking at the current

In looking at the median income for both townships, if that is multiplied by about 2.5 times, the median home value that most families can afford is approximately in the \$128,000-\$147,000 range. With the current median home values at \$212,2100 in Benzonia and \$199,200 in Platte, one can see how affordable homes may be extremely unattainable for many residents.

Adding affordable housing to the community has

HOUSING VALUE – COMPARISON			
	2000	2010	2020
Benzie County	\$104,700.00	\$160,200.00	\$195,400.00
Benzonia Township	\$118,600.00	\$175,600.00	\$212,100.00
Platte Township	\$98,500.00	\$169,600.00	\$199,200.00

Table 2.2 Median Housing Value Comparison

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME			
Year	2000	2010	2019
Median Income/Year (benzonia)	\$32,837.00	\$42,689.00	\$51,417.00
Median Income/Year (county)	\$37,350.00	\$44,718.00	\$53,185.00

Table 2.4 Benzonia Township – Median Income

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME			
Year	2000	2010	2019
Median Income/Year (platte)	\$36,979.00	\$45,250.00	\$58,750.00
Median Income/Year (county)	\$37,350.00	\$44,718.00	\$53,185.00

Table 2.5 Platte Township – Median Income

# 2. Community Profile

LABOR FORCE – BENZONIA			
Year	2000	2010	2019
Total (persons 16+ working in area)	2329	2375	2252
Employed	1156	1140	1004
Unemployed	81	151	52
Year	2000	2010	2019
Unemployment rate (benzonia)	6.5	11.7	4.9
Unemployment rate (county)	6.2	11.7	4.5
Unemployment rate (state)	3.8	12.3	5

Table 2.6 Benzonia Township – Labor Force

LABOR FORCE – PLATTE			
Year	2000	2010	2019
Total (persons 16+ working in area)	273	329	195
Employed	179	206	180
Unemployed	18	17	15
Year	2000	2010	2019
Unemployment rate (platte)	6.5	5.1	7.7
Unemployment rate (county)	6.2	11.7	4.5
Unemployment rate (state)	3.8	12.3	5

Table 2.7 Platte Township – Labor Force

been and will continue to be a complex problem. Oftentimes there are stigmas attaches to affordable housing as many people think of government housing projects with crime and drug issues. There is also negative perceptions of tax dollars being spent on housing projects than then are detrimental to the neighborhood. The following is from the Michigan Economic Corporation’s “Affordable Housing Myths Fact Sheet:

In many areas, high land costs, construction labor shortages, rising material costs, limited and expensive infrastructure, and taxes, make it almost impossible to put together financially viable projects that are affordable to the workforce. These developments require some level of subsidy, whether it’s from

## ADDITIONAL HOUSING RESOURCES

- *Housing North* - <https://www.housingnorth.org/>
- *Networks Northwest, Housing* - <https://www.networksnorthwest.org/community/housing/>
- *Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency* - <https://www.nmcaa.net/>
- *Michigan State Housing Development Authority, Statewide Housing Plan* - <https://www.michigan.gov/mshda/developers/statewide-housing-plan>

grants, tax incentives, or land donations. There are a few public funding programs available to support affordable or workforce housing, but the dollars are limited

At meetings, participants may refer to “those people.” “Those people” comments typically imply that new people from outside of the community will be moving in when, in fact, the housing is for your neighbors, your children or a teacher. Many aging baby boomers have not saved sufficiently for retirement, young people are entering the worst job market in years, and middle-class incomes have stagnated. According to AARP, there is a significantly widening gap between median household income and median home prices and rents.

It should be kept in mind that affordable housing may include a variety of housing types and scenarios. It can be workforce housing, for veterans or for persons with disabilities, senior housing, transitional housing for students or recently graduated, or for just regular working families. Affordable housing isn’t always subsidized with tax credits; it could simply be smaller unit sizes to reduce costs of a housing unit, alternative construction methods such as manufactured home communities, or ANY other creative construction means to achieve a more specific and affordable price point.

## ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

### INCOME

The median income for both townships has risen over the last 20 years. Benzonia's rate of growth has remained on par with the County, while Platte Townships median income in the last 10 years has risen and was significantly higher than the county income level in the 2019 dataset (TABLE 2.4 and 2.5).

A look at the most recent employment and income trends shows that both township currently have a higher unemployment rate than the County and State rates. Benzonia Township has a significantly lower unemployment rate that it did in 2010, while Platte Township's rate is about 2.5% higher than it was ten years ago (TABLE 2.6 and 2.7).

### EDUCATION

Table 2.8 and 2.9 show the data for school enrollment in each township since the 2000 census. Overall, school enrollment is trending lower since 2010. Educational attainment, or the highest level of education a person receives is generally related to an individual's earning capacity. In other words, people with more education tend to make higher total incomes over their lifetime. A community's average educational achievement, therefore, can be an indicator of its economic capacity. In Benzonia Township 76.8% have a high school diploma or greater, for Platte Township it is 100%. The regional average is 93.1%. In Benzonia Township 36.4% have at least some college or above while for Platte Township it is 17.3%.

### POVERTY

The key poverty statistics summary on this page as well as the ALICE Households Summary on page 21 provide data on poverty in the region and county as compared to Benzonia and Platte Townships. The overall poverty rate for Benzie County at 9% puts it at

## KEY POVERTY CHARACTERISTICS

SNAPSHOT (from the 2020 American Community Survey estimates)

### Benzonia Township

- % below the poverty level: 17.4% (this is an increase from 2015 estimate of 14.5%)
- For those Employed: 11.3%
- For those Unemployed: 49.3%
- Highest Rate per Age Group: 35-65 years at 20.3%
- Lowest rate among education level: Those with a bachelors degree or higher at 7%

### Platte Township

- % below the poverty level: 7.9% (this is a decrease from 2015 estimate of 10.5%)
- For those Employed: 9.3%
- For those Unemployed: 21.1%
- Highest Rate per Age Group: 60 and over 13.6%
- Lowest rate among education level: Those with some college education at 2.4%

# 2. Community Profile

the lowest overall poverty rate in the Northwest region.

## TRANSPORTATION

Having an understanding of where people work and how they get there can help make planning decisions regarding both housing and transportation - either vehicular or pedestrian related. Benzie County has approximately 445 employers and offers about 4,900 jobs, this puts it at the lowest rate of jobs available in the Northwest Region. Grand Traverse County offers the highest number of jobs by a considerable amount<sup>6</sup>. This means that a large population of the work force in Benzie County likely travels outside the County for work.

The total amount of people who drive to work everyday has not changed significantly in either township since 2000, however the latest dataset does show a decrease overall from the previous decade. The people that take public transportation to work in Benzonia Township has risen since 2010, and also interesting to note the significant number of people that reported they bicycle to work in Benzonia Township in the latest report.

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT - BENZONIA TOWNSHIP			
	2000	2010	2019
Enrolled In School	598	550	427
Preschool	15	27	24
K	22	30	25
Grade1-4	283*	102	70
Grade5-8	*combined	109	153
Grade9-12	181	157	101
College	97*	75	46
Graduate or Professional	*combined	50	8

Table 2.8 Benzonia Township - Means of Transportation

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT - PLATTE			
	2000	2010	2019
Enrolled In School	37	68	51
Preschool	0	3	0
K	0	4	0
Grade1-4	12	18	3
Grade5-8	18	19	18
Grade9-12	3	11	25
College	4	7	2
Graduate or Professional	0	6	3

Table 2.9 Platte Township - Means of Transportation

MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK - BENZONIA			
	2000	2010	2019
Total	1135	1079	987
Car, Truck, Van - Alone	895	842	866
Carpooled	107	141	31
Public Transportation	12	2	20
Walk	50	56	8
Other	7	9	12
Worked at Home	64	29	58
Bicycle			23

Table 2.8 Benzonia Township - Means of Transportation

MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK - PLATTE			
	2000	2010	2019
Total	177	206	164
Car, Truck, Van - Alone	128	138	131
Carpooled	18	12	17
Public Transportation	2	4	0
Walk	10	4	1
Other	0	0	0
Worked at Home	19	48	15

Table 2.9 Platte Township - Means of Transportation

## ALICE HOUSEHOLDS & WHAT IT MEANS

### WHAT IS ALICE?

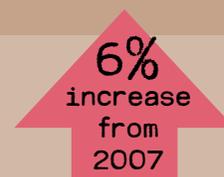
The ALICE project is a partnership with United Way and several other organizations across Michigan to gain a better understanding of the people in Michigan communities that are employed yet still struggle to make ends meet. These households earn more than the Federal Poverty Level, but less than the basic cost of living for the county they live in (the ALICE threshold). When you combine the ALICE households with the poverty-level households, that equals the total population in the community that is struggling to afford their basic needs<sup>7</sup>.

This is important to understand during a master planning process because these households may not provide as much economic support to local commercial areas as non-poverty households. These households will generally consume differently, spending more money on basic necessity type retailers and less on 'extras' like specialty shops and gift stores. These households may not travel as far for recreational needs and require more support for a healthy lifestyle from recreation sources close to their homes, in the Village. These households may require various types of rental and more affordable or non-traditional housing options.

### Community Summary - 2021 Data<sup>8</sup>

#### Michigan:

13% in Poverty 25% in ALICE = 38% in Poverty or ALICE



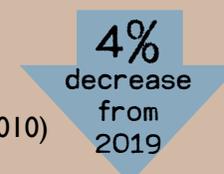
#### Benzie County<sup>7</sup>:

Population: 18,223 Households: 6,940

Median Household Income: \$64,257

#### BENZIE COUNTY:

9% in Poverty 29% in ALICE = 38% in Poverty or ALICE  
(while this is a decrease from 2019, this percentage has remained similar since 2010)



SENIOR HOUSEHOLDS (AGE 65+) are slightly higher than the County Average, with 40% either in Poverty or ALICE.

### 2021 HOUSEHOLD SURVIVAL BUDGET FOR MICHIGAN

	Single Adult	Senior (1 Adult)	2 Adults, 1 Infant, 1 Preschooler
<b>Monthly Total:</b>	\$1,950	\$2,187	\$5,343
<b>Annual Total:</b>	\$23,400	\$26,244	\$64,116
<b>Hourly Wage Req'd.</b>	\$11.70	\$13.12	\$32.06

<sup>6</sup>County Dashboard - Benzie County, Networks Northwest, <https://www.networksnorthwest.org/data/regional-data/county-dashboards/county-dashboard-benzie.html>

<sup>7</sup>ALICE in Michigan: A Financial Hardship Study, 2021 Michigan Report, Michigan Association of United Way.

<sup>8</sup>2021 Quick Facts, United States Census Bureau, [data.census.gov](https://data.census.gov)