

Appendix D

2024 Master Plan Addendum

Building on the Past, Looking Towards the Future

This Appendix encapsulates the Benzie County Board of Commissioners' (BOC) effort to review and update the 2017 Benzie County Master Plan. The Michigan Planning Enabling Act recommends that municipalities at least review their master plan every 5 years to ensure that goals are being met and that changes in the community are noted. Throughout 2024, the Benzie County BOC worked with planners from Networks Northwest to accomplish the following:

- Review goals from the 2017 plan
- Refine goals so that the County would have around 10 prioritized goals that list partners, specify a timeline and give a first step towards achievement
- Describe the County's use of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and their connection to public input
- Prioritize future project categories if other types of federal funding were to become available, both for sustainability and for current county needs
- Detail opportunities for the County to promote recreational and cultural sites that are found throughout Benzie

- Describe changes and provide an inventory of the county's various public safety entities
- Discuss the benefits of expanded infrastructure and improvements to existing infrastructure
- Identify opportunities to remediate age-related issues for the area's youth and those in their retirement years

Each of these topic areas can be found as "Sections" in this Addendum. Benzie County's BOC and Networks Northwest spent 6 work sessions discussing this update to the 2017 master plan. In addition to these meetings, the planning team also updated the data in the main plan body text to include 2020 U.S. Census data, as well as data from sources such as Business Analyst Online, the U.S. Agricultural Census, and many more. These data updates, as well as the discussions around the County's many challenges and opportunities led to a set of 10 goals that the County will seek to accomplish prior to another plan update.

As always, the focus of this plan and for the Benzie County Board is to ensure a high quality of life for residents in this picturesque community.

Section 1 - Goals & Objectives

Refining Opportunities into Actionable First Steps

The current 2017 Benzie County Master Plan has over 100 “opportunities” listed throughout the document. These are broad-based ideas pertaining to the different chapter categories (housing, for example) and are divided between opportunities for the County and others for the local units of government. While these listed opportunities are useful in identifying a range of potential projects, the Benzie County Board of Commissioners (BOC) found a need for more actionable and focused objectives to accomplish in the next 5-10 years.

For this reason, during the 2024 plan update, the BOC worked with Networks Northwest over a four meeting period to prioritize projects, identify stakeholders and provide timelines for achievement. This will allow the Board to focus their efforts on implementation and capacity building in the near term. The tables on the next two pages are organized by column to make each goal and objective more actionable. The first column contains a goal from the current 2017 plan. The second column lists stakeholder groups locally, regionally and statewide that would be helpful or necessary in accomplishing the goal. The third column gives a timeline for goal initiation and completion. Finally, the fourth column gives a first step that the BOC will need to take in order to begin working towards implementation. This table should be updated each year as first steps are accomplished and new objectives are identified.

Goal	Partners	Timeline	First Step
Offer incentives for participating in partnerships with housing stakeholders and developers through the County Land Bank Authority or Brownfield Redevelopment Authority.	Habitat for Humanity, Homestretch, Frankfort Area Community Land Trust, Housing North	2024 start, ongoing thereafter	Many of these entities already meet, with facilitation from Housing North. The Benzie BOC recognizes a need to formalize this group, its meetings and processes. The BOC will contact each of the partners listed in this goal to meet 2-4 times per calendar year.
Coordinate with local units of government and relevant stakeholders to identify options for enhancing or expanding infrastructure such as sewer, natural gas, water and broadband.	Local units of government, Benzie County Road Commission, DTE Energy, Consumers Energy, Cherryland Electric Co-Op	2025, ongoing thereafter	Benzie County will continue to lead a formalized collaboration for broadband expansion. The County will help local units to develop sewer and water expansions by acting as a resource in letters of support, advocacy and information requests. The County will lead efforts to expand natural gas.
Support waterway trail systems through infrastructure and programming developments.	DNR, Benzie Conservation District, Platte River Watershed Council, Betsie River Watershed Council, Crystal Lake Watershed Council, FLOW, LIAA, CISMA	By 2034	Convene stakeholders to identify a need for a coordinated water trail system on the Betsie River. Work with a consultant to develop a water trail plan that includes themed signage, site improvements, gaps in trail access, a water trail committee and funding opportunities.
Act as a resource for trail development and maintenance.	Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail, DNR, National Park Service, Benzie-Manistee Snowbirds	Ongoing	When needed, act as a fiduciary for grant proposals. If a Recreation Director is hired at the County, have this person regularly communicate with each stakeholder group to identify collaboration opportunities.
Support education and training as a best practice for good governance throughout the county.	Local units of government	By 2028, ongoing thereafter	Survey local unit boards and councils on gaps in expertise (e.g. zoning administration, FOIA, economic development, meeting procedures).

Goal	Partners	Timeline	First Step
Promote best practices for improving and maintaining high water quality.	DNR, Benzie Conservation District, Platte River Watershed Council, Betsie River Watershed Council, Crystal Lake Watershed Council, FLOW, CISMA, Health Department	Ongoing	Provide letters of support to partnering agencies related to initiatives that promote watershed best practices, land protection on critical sites, low-impact development and infrastructure improvements.
Increase use of Benzie’s recreation and cultural sites through coordinated efforts (see Section 3 of this addendum)	Local units of government, Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail, DNR, National Park Service, Benzie-Manistee Snowbirds	2025, ongoing thereafter	Hire a Recreation Director to coordinate stakeholders and implement some or all of the site promotion methods described in Section 3 of this addendum. The first initiative should be the development of an interactive portal containing site location and an inventory of features.
Develop an updated analysis of land use changes since 2000. This can help local units to plan their future land use based on trends at the county level.	Local units of government, Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, Consultant	By 2030	Hire a consultant to analyze aerial imagery of development patterns since 2000. Also, analyze existing assessed land uses across the county for compatible and incompatible land use patterns.
Identify programs and services in Benzie County that could be shared between municipalities in order to reduce redundancies and increase cost savings.	Local units of government	2026, ongoing thereafter	Survey local units on gaps in their programs and services, including but not limited to: emergency services, policing, youth programming, infrastructure maintenance and recreation.
Consider options for shared zoning administration and permitting services for local jurisdictions.	Local units of government	By 2035	Survey local units on their ability to administer their zoning. Educate local leadership on collaborative permitting models: Joint Planning Commissions (Wexford), Single-County Zoning Ordinance (Emmet), Contracted Permitting Services (Manistee)

Reduce Redundancies, Save Money

Throughout the 2024 plan update, the BOC discussed the County's role various times. First, it was noted that the County's role is not to overstep local control of features like infrastructure, emergency services, land use and anything else that the local units are successfully accomplishing independent of the County. However, it was noted that the County could play a larger role in presenting the local units with chances to collaborate with one another and with Benzie, as well as to fill gaps in services not being met by the local units. For example, the County does not intend to outright fund or initiate infrastructure expansions within villages. But if a village sought assistance in acquiring a grant, the County would be willing to assist.

Additionally, the County does not currently have a planning commission or planning department. During the planning process, various collaborative planning models were discussed as options in the event that multiple jurisdictions are unable to hire a zoning administrator or fill a planning commission. In this instance, Benzie could help local units to form a Joint Planning Commission or take on contracted planning services similar to what Manistee County does. In each scenario, the sovereignty of the local jurisdictions is balanced with the County's ability to fill gaps where needed.

In addition to filling gaps, the County could also work to reduce redundancies in services to help local units save money. This is the ninth goal listed in the goals tables on the previous page. The local governments in Benzie County could save their taxpayers money by sharing services with their neighboring communities or with the County itself. In the coming years, Benzie will work with the local jurisdictions to understand what services they definitely want to sustain on their own and which ones would be better served through a collaborative approach. This is especially necessary for an aging community like Benzie, where filling planning commissions, hiring for paid positions and finding volunteers will likely become much more difficult in the future. Now more than ever, collaboration is an important ingredient for success in Benzie.

Section 2 - State & Federal Funding

Ensuring Resilience in Benzie County

Local units of government increasingly have to rely on state and federal funding to succeed in project implementation. There are various reasons for this phenomenon, though the fact remains: communities who are able to access grant dollars are better off than those who cannot.

From 1960 to 2022, federal funding for community and regional development expanded from \$0.1 billion to \$43.2 billion. Even accounting for inflation this is a nearly 14 times increase in spending for this category. In 2015, this allocation was at \$14.4 billion. Between 2000 to 2022, transportation funding from federal to state and local governments increased from \$32.2 billion to \$93.9 billion (*Analytical Perspectives, Budget of the US Government, FY2024*). There is ample funding for parks and recreation, transportation, infrastructure, community engagement, planning and economic development.

This section of the 2024 Benzie County Master Plan addendum describes three key components. First, the Benzie County Board of Commissioners prioritized vision-based initiatives to better the community over the next 5-20 years. These initiatives were divided into short versus long-term, as well as low versus high-impact. Second, the Board discussed the success of the survey issued to garner public preferences regarding the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds that became available in the wake of the 2019 COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, this section highlights that survey and reiterates the importance of community engagement in the decision making process, especially regarding which funds to seek and where to spend them. Finally, this chapter lists other state and federal funds the County may seek in the coming years to accomplish many of the goals listed in Section 1 of this 2024 Addendum.

Ensuring Resilience in Benzie County

There were many lessons learned in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Local communities were able to stress test the various factors contributing to their quality of life. Local officials were able to see what economic contributors remained strong during disruption, and which ones needed more planning and preparation. In response to the pandemic, the federal government initiated the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). This included \$350 billion in funding to governments across the U.S. This specific funding allocation was \$3,450,837.00 to Benzie County. A few years removed from the peak of the pandemic, Benzie County officials found that additional planning would be helpful in case more federal funding were to become available during an unforeseen event such as COVID-19. Therefore, envisioned initiatives found in this section are categorized into Community Improvement actions and Community Resilience actions. The difference between the two is discussed further in this section.

Planning for Future Funding

Many communities across Michigan, for understandable reasons, were not expecting the COVID-19 pandemic nor the federal funding assistance that came along with it. Because of this, communities had to work quickly to decide how ARPA funds should be spent locally.

At the first meeting set aside for this Master Plan update, the Benzie County Board of Commissioners, with facilitation from Networks Northwest, discussed the prospect of future funding allocations. Specifically, the commissioners were asked to list as many broad-based local initiatives as possible that would promote Community Resilience and Community Improvement (see right for definitions).

The various initiatives brainstormed by the Board of Commissioners is broken into four additional categories. The purpose of doing so is to help the Board to prioritize projects if and when funding were to become available. These categories are Easier to Implement, More Difficult to Implement, Specific Impact and Broad Impact. The County would do well to implement projects that are Easier to Implement and have a Broad Impact on the county, followed by those that are Harder to Implement.

The easy to implement, broad impact quadrant's initiatives focused primarily on [emergency communications and response times](#), [health care](#), [education](#), [youth programming](#), [housing](#), [environmental protections](#) and [senior services](#). These are the first widely defined initiatives the County will direct funding if something similar to ARPA were to become available in the future. These are also areas the County may address in the near term, as many overlap with the goals and objectives listed in the previous section of this addendum.

Community Resilience

These are projects or programs that would help Benzie County to overcome unforeseen changes in the local economy, environment or day-to-day operations of local government and businesses. While the COVID-19 pandemic was a rare occurrence, it spurred a need to more diligently plan for the future.

Community Improvement

These are projects or programs that address current needs in the county. These may include infrastructure improvements, increased economic opportunities and solutions to gaps in the social well-being of the community.

Ease of Implementation

During the facilitation, commissioners were asked to separate their proposed projects into those that are “easier to implement” and those that are “more difficult to implement”. A clear definition was not provided. This category is based on the commissioners’ perception of how challenging certain deliverables would be to implement.

Degree of Impact

Similar to ease of implementation, the degree of impact categorization are based on commissioners’ subjective viewpoints. The facilitator asked the commissioners to decide whether each project or program would have a broad or specific impact on the social, economic or environmental well-being of the county.

You will notice that in the table on the next page the same initiative may be listed in different quadrants. Commissioners worked in pairs to list initiatives, their ease of implementation and the potential impact. When the same project is listed more than once, this indicates that more discussion on its prioritization should occur if and when more funding becomes available.

Specific Impact

Broad Impact

Easier to Implement

Community Resilience

Create programs, policies and infrastructure that improves water quality
Improve road quality
Ensure that education is not interrupted by hazards (e.g. pandemic)
Provide access to nutritional meals community-wide

Community Improvement

Maintain the structural integrity of bridges

Community Resilience

Monitor and eradicate environmental concerns (e.g. invasive species)
Improve emergency response times
Make public safety improvements
Build broadband connections and digital equity to more areas in the County
Improve communication and transparency between public officials and the public
Increase access to health care
Ensure that hazard responsiveness is well-prepared
Expand communication networks, especially for use during emergencies
Provide quality educational opportunities for all ages

Community Improvement

Increase the presence of youth services
Continuing education for adults
Be responsive to local economics to ensure stability
Protect natural resources
Provide/support affordable housing development
Invest in educational opportunities for all ages
Generate a comprehensive inventory and provide easy access to public lands and water bodies
Support year-round youth activity opportunities
Continue to support programs for senior citizens

More Difficult to Implement

Community Resilience

Create revolving loan funds to support local businesses
Manage and plan resources for a hazard response (food, shelter, etc.)
Provide revolving loan funds to local businesses
Keep businesses open to the extent possible during prolonged emergencies
Designate a space for emergency shelter during an emergency
Ensure that the community has backup communications systems during an emergency

Community Improvement

Provide a business incubator space
Inventory and communicate the full list of senior services in the community
Provide affordable and accessible childcare

Community Resilience

Create a support mechanism for small businesses and the agricultural industry
Increase presence of mental health services
Develop regional water, sewer and natural gas hookups
Increase housing stock
Improve access to medical care
Increase the presence of reliable childcare
Increase the amount of affordable housing
Ensure that first responder staffing and equipment is adequate for potential emergencies

Community Improvement

Establish a collaborative body in the community to coordinate resources
Increase the number of EMS/Fire/Public safety officials
Make improvements to the County's parks and recreation spaces
Provide childcare for youth age 0-6
Market the County's assets to increase year-round tourism
Improve community walkability and connectivity
Develop a community recreation center
Provide a central space for access to community resource services
Ensure that community infrastructure is of top quality
Encourage housing growth
Improve water and sewer availability
Continue to expand the availability of broadband
Expand childcare
Grow the presence and access to parks and recreation

Engaging the Public

When ARPA funds became available to Benzie County during the COVID-19 pandemic, the County distributed an online survey for residents to provide input. The County wanted to know how members of the public preferred to see the ARPA dollars spent and which categories of local needs they found most pressing. The survey received roughly 470 responses with at least one respondent from each municipality in Benzie County. Around 50 percent of respondents were age 50+ with just two respondents under 20 years of age. Benzie County's Board of Commissioners, during the 2024 planning process, agreed that another survey is the best manner in which to garner input on funding allocations from grant awards.

The first survey question asked participants to rank a list of items from highest priority to lowest priority, 1 being the highest and 10 being the lowest. The mean indicates how close the option was to the highest average priority. For example, "Enhance online presence for County, Townships, and City information" had a mean of 8.41, meaning it was the lowest priority as it had the highest mean of the 10 options. The options included the following, with means listed next to each:

1. Attainable Workforce Housing, including assistance with the procurement of property for the development of housing (3.52)
2. Increase childcare capacity and quality, including family and caretaker subsidies, provider subsidies, and in-home training program for providers (4.43)
3. Broadband Expansion (4.48)
4. Road Repair and Maintenance, including brining of roads, resurfacing, and paving projects (4.99)
5. Sewer and Water Infrastructure, including support for a regional water and/or sewer system (5.31)
6. Expansion of Utilities options including natural gas (5.72)
7. Bridge Repair, including assistance with the repair and/or replacement of Lindy Road Bridge, Haze Road Bridge, Nostwick Road Bridge (6.13)
8. Parks and Recreation, including the Thompsonville Area Revitalization Project and local park amenities (6.25)
9. Emergency Communications Infrastructure, including an emergency telecommunications tower (6.26)
10. Enhance online presence for County, Townships, and City information (8.41)

One can see that "Attainable Workforce Housing, including assistance with the procurement of property for the development of housing" was the highest rated priority followed by childcare, broadband and road repairs.

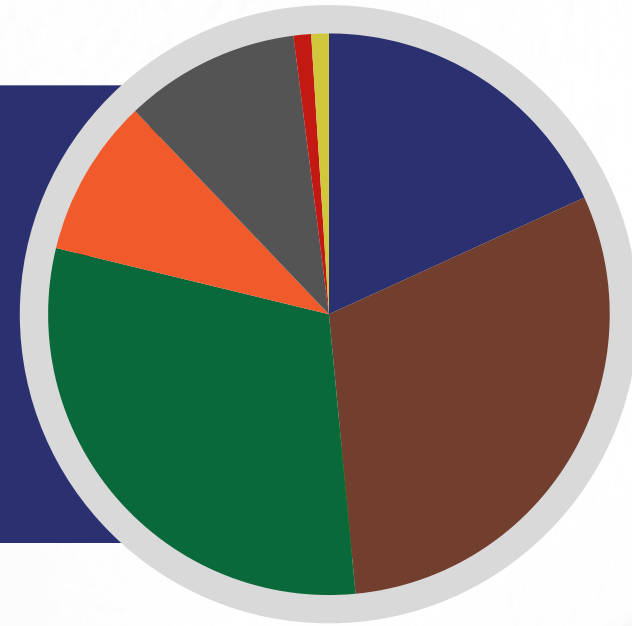
The second survey question asked respondents to “Please assign a percentage of total awarded dollars to the following projects based on your ranking above (please do not exceed 100 as a total)”. Similar to the previous question, we use the mean score in order to show the prioritized project categories that received the highest percentage of preferred funding allocations. We also include the standard deviation to show the degree to which each category’s preferred percentage varied. A low standard deviation means that the percentages of funding allocations varied less. For example, “Attainable Workforce Housing” had a standard deviation of 21.62, or a variance of 467.33 (standard deviation is the square root of the variance). We include the standard deviation because the average (mean) score of 20.13 percent for “Attainable Workforce Housing”, with a high standard deviation, signifies that responses ranged greatly from 0 percent to 100 percent. In contrast, “Enhance online presence” varied minimally. This is important because, for example, “Attainable Workforce Housing” likely received many higher percent funding responses, also indicated by the fact that it had the highest mean score.

It is worth noting that some categories had a higher preferred funding allocation percentage than they were ranked as priorities in the previous question (Emergency communications infrastructure, for example). This indicates that respondents believed some projects that are a higher priority should still not receive a higher percentage of funding allocations.

1. Attainable Workforce Housing, including assistance with the procurement of property for the development of housing (mean=20.13, standard deviation=21.62)
2. Increase childcare capacity and quality, including family and caretaker subsidies, provider subsidies, and in-home training program for providers (mean=11.65, standard deviation=14.90)
3. Broadband Expansion (mean=10.48, standard deviation=14.66)
4. Road Repair and Maintenance, including brining of roads, resurfacing, and paving projects (mean=9.34, standard deviation=13.41)
5. Emergency Communications Infrastructure, including an emergency telecommunications tower (mean= 8.09, standard deviation=17.49)
6. Sewer and Water Infrastructure, including support for a regional water and/or sewer system (mean=7.74, standard deviation=11.36)
7. Expansion of Utilities options including natural gas (mean=5.82, standard deviation=9.25)
8. Parks and Recreation, including the Thompsonville Area Revitalization Project and local park amenities (mean=5.47, standard deviation=9.53)
9. Bridge Repair, including assistance with the repair and/or replacement of Lindy Road Bridge, Haze Road Bridge, Nostwick Road Bridge (mean=5.45, standard deviation=8.21)
10. Enhance online presence for County, Townships, and City information (mean=1.97, standard deviation=5.93)



BENZIE COUNTY'S COMMUNITY IMPACT



Success in Implementation

The graphic to the right shows how Benzie County, by the time of this writing in 2024, spent its ARPA dollars. In total Benzie County received \$3,450,837 as part of the federal relief package.

According to Benzie County, “With the community’s wishes and interest at the forefront, the Board of Commissioners and Benzie County focused on the best utilization of this funding to make the biggest impact on the community... It’s important to note that while Benzie County received \$3,450,837 in funding, it was able to leverage additional dollars from other sources, totaling an investment of over \$16,000,000!”

Parks & Recreation

A total of \$330,000 in funding has been committed to improving parks and protecting our natural resources, including the Crystal Lake Outlet and Point Betsie.

Broadband Expansion

\$1,700,000 was committed to expanding broadband internet, igniting an expansion project of over \$10 million!

Child Care Support

\$42,000 was allocated to enhance child care quality and provide professional development opportunities for providers within the community.

Local Support

Letters of support and funding have been extended to support the expansion of natural gas, water, and sewer utilities.

Local Government Operations

An internal operations investment has been made to enhance services for the community and address an array of deferred maintenance. Investments include a new web presence, digitization of county records to improve access, upgrades to heating and cooling, expansion of 911 operations, and other maintenance to buildings and grounds.

Workforce Housing

An investment of \$620,000 was made in workforce housing, leveraging over \$2,500,000 in other funding for housing expansion in Benzie County.

Emergency Communications

A local commitment of \$450,000 secured a \$2.2 million allocation from Michigan to enhance emergency communications.

Road Improvements

A contribution of \$38,000 acted as matching funds to pave the new Huskey Trail, freeing road funding for other necessary road maintenance and required bridge repair projects within the County.

Funding Opportunities

While the ARPA funds and COVID-19 pandemic were both unexpected, Benzie County has the opportunity to continue identifying available funding sources from the state and federal government. Counties across Michigan are hiring grant writers because of the competitive edge they give their communities in acquiring funding for local projects. While Benzie does not, as of 2024, have an in-house grant manager, the County can still use various sources to monitor grant opportunities. Grants.gov provides subscribers with availability alerts and is the main source for federal grant programs.

The table below shows different granting agencies at both the federal and state levels.

Federal Funding Entity	Agency Web Site	State Funding Entity	Agency Web Site
Economic Development Administration (EDA)	eda.gov/	Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR)	michigan.gov/dnr
United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)	usda.gov/	Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT)	michigan.gov/mdot
Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA)	fema.gov/	Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA)	michigan.gov/mshda
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	epa.gov/	Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO)	michigan.gov/leo
United States Department of Transportation (USDOT)	transportation.gov/	Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC)	michiganbusiness.org/
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)	highways.dot.gov/	Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD)	michigan.gov/mdard
United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)	hud.gov/	State Land Bank Authority	michigan.gov/leo/bureaus-agencies/landbank
		Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE)	michigan.gov/egle
		Michigan State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)	miplace.org/historic-preservation/

Section 3 - Promoting Public Sites

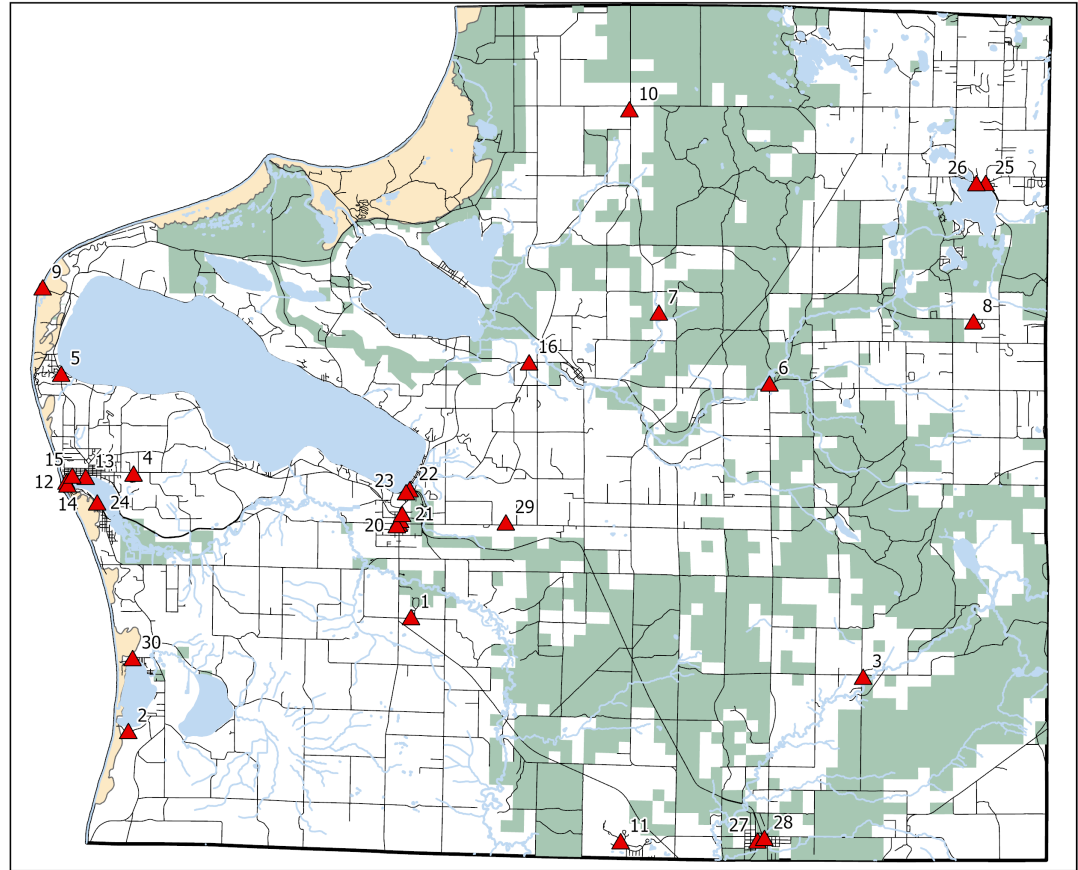
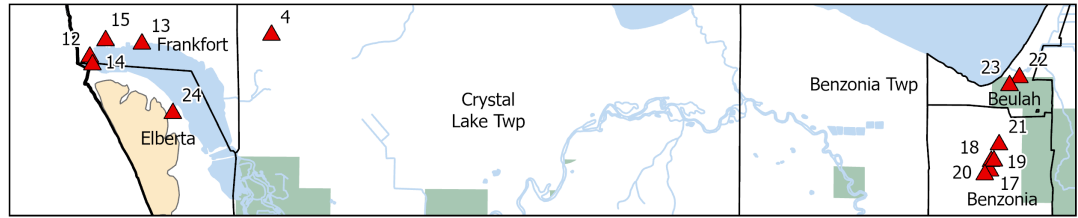
Providing Opportunities for Collaboration and Promotion

This section describes strategies that Benzie County may use in the near to long-term future to promote its many recreational and cultural sites. While the County itself owns and manages just a handful of the area's many sites, the BOC understands that it would do well to plan for and promote recreation collaboratively. For this reason, in 2022 Benzie contracted Networks Northwest to develop a *Recreation Director Feasibility Study*. The purpose of this plan was to document other communities' efforts to hire and maintain a recreation department, its expenses, revenues, organizational structure and local benefits. Since the feasibility study's introduction, the County is moving towards creating new positions for one full-time and one part-time person to work together on parks and recreation and community/economic development. This is a strong step in the County's eventual ability to implement some or all of the strategies described in the section.

Benzie County owns or manages the following recreational and cultural sites: Betsie Valley Trail (in partnership with Michigan DNR), Zada Price Park, Railroad Point Natural Area, Crystal Lake Park and Point Betsie Lighthouse. A full list of cultural sites can be found on the next page. A list of all recreation sites in Benzie, including an inventory of site features, can be found in the *2022 Benzie County Recreation Director Feasibility Study*.

Site Number	Site Name	Ownership
1	Benzie Manistee Tribal Outpost and Community Center	Grand Traverse Band
2	Watervale Historic District	Private
3	Historic Wallin School	Private
4	Frankfort Gateway Arch	City of Frankfort
5	Congregational Summer Assembly	Private
6	Platte River State Fish Hatchery	MDNR
7	Cheneniah Bible Camp	Private
8	Lake Ann Elementary School	Benzie Central Schools
9	Point Betsie Light House	Benzie County
10	Drake School	Benzie County Historical Society
11	Michigan Legacy Art Park	Private non-profit
12	Marquette's Death Historical Marker	City of Frankfort
13	Benzie Shores District Library	District library
14	Elizabeth Lane Oliver Center for the Arts	Non-profit
15	Garden Theater	Private non-profit
16	Cherry Bowl Drive in Theater	Private
17	Benzonia College Historic Marker	Non-profit
18	Mills Community House	Non-profit
19	Benzonia Public Library	District library
20	Benzie Area Historical Museum	Benzie County Historical Society
21	Crystal Lake Elementary School	Benzie Central Schools
22	Darcy Library of Beulah	Darcy Library Board
23	Beulah Depot Trailhead	Village of Beulah
24	Carferries on Lake Michigan Historic Marker	Village of Elberta
25	Almira Township Library	Almira Township
26	Almira Historical Museum	Almira Historical Society
27	Betsie Valley District Library	District Library
28	Thompsonville Diamond Crossing Historical Site	Village of Thompsonville
29	Benzie Central Jr. Sr. High School	Benzie Central Schools
30	Camp Lookout	Private

Benzie County Cultural Sites (as found in 2022 Benzie County Recreation Director Feasibility Study)



Legend

- ▲ Benzie Cultural Sites
- Hydrography
- Roads
- Benzie Lakes
- Critical Dune Areas
- Public Land
- Benzie County Boundary



Strategies to Promote Benzie Recreation and Culture

Online Mapping Platform

Listed in the goals section of this addendum, the County wants to prioritize creating an online platform that displays recreation and cultural sites. This platform would be interactive, allowing users to click on sites to see more information such as site amenities, directions, site size and a brief description of what to expect. Communities across Michigan have had great success with similar initiatives. The Michigan Water Trails website is a great example (michiganwatertrails.org). During the *2022 Recreation Director Feasibility Study*, the County and Networks Northwest created an inventory of all recreation sites in Benzie and created a Geographic Information System (GIS) shapefile containing this information.

Public-Private Partnerships

Public-Private partnerships are a way for local governments to engage with local businesses to spur investment in the community. Businesses can be supportive of the well-being and recreation of the area in which they operate, and facilitating this support can go a long way in offsetting some costs for promotion and marketing.

In addition, there are recreation-based businesses that the County and local units can target for relocation or to start up in Benzie. According to a recent study from Networks Northwest, “Opportunities for business investment and development are recommended in the following categories: Camping and camping equipment; bicycles; sports, recreation, and exercise equipment; and rental/repair of sports, recreation, and exercise equipment” (*Outdoor Recreation Economic Impact Study for Northwest Michigan*).

Various entities in Benzie could take a role in collaborating with local businesses, and in targeting the recreation industry for growth locally. While the Chamber of Commerce is the most appropriate entity for this task, other agencies would do well to generate ongoing relationships with recreation and cultural businesses already operating in Benzie.

Community Events

Public events are a strong way to showcase the community’s assets. Benzie County could host smaller events, on their own or in collaboration with non-profits and local businesses. The County could also encourage programming at specific sites, such as bird watching groups, hiking groups, etc. Clean-up days and similar organized activities can also help to support volunteerism. These organized activities could be promoted by a Recreation Director, or the County could help hosting agencies to get the word out to the public.

Mobile App

Similar to the online mapping platform, a mobile application of Benzie’s cultural and recreation sites would help with promoting their use. The mapping platform could be integrated into the mobile app, as well as any other information that would be useful to residents and visitors. This may include event notifications, a calendar of events, safety warnings, local initiatives and opportunities to participate in events or volunteerism.

Ongoing Feedback & Input

Part of having a successful cultural and recreation scene in Benzie is engaging the public on a regular basis. Residents and visitors should have chances to let local leadership organizations know what is working well and what could be improved. A mobile app may contain a feature that allows for input. Additionally, the County may survey public site users every 2-3 years to identify possible projects that would increase the use of public sites.

Coordinated Promotion

There are various actors in Benzie County who are already contributing to the promotion of public sites through improvements and programming. The County could play a role in making sure that there is a central point of promotion for all of these entities. A centralized calendar of events and programming would help members of the public to stay informed. This may be a role that could be handled by a County Recreation Director, as described in the 2022 feasibility study.

Improved Accessibility

A key means to encourage more use of public sites is to ensure that they are accessible to many people. For example, mobi mats are a very useful tool to help people in wheelchairs to enjoy beaches. Universal kayak launches allow people with physical disabilities to access water-based recreation. Certain types of pathways are easier to navigate in a wheelchair than others.

There are funding opportunities, such as the Michigan DNR Trust Fund, that can help pay for these improvements.

Social Media

Communities across Michigan now rely heavily on social media to disperse information and to promote local recreation sites and events. While this method can be time consuming, it is a useful way to engage with community members. Social media posts should occur on a regularly scheduled timetable in order to keep people drawn to the page.

Printed Materials

Printed materials can be more expensive than other communications methods described in this section. However, since Benzie County's populace is largely age 65+, it may be difficult to draw people using an online presence alone. Informational pamphlets, postcard mailings, Every Door Direct Mail (USPS), posters and annual reports can describe success stories and plans for improvements at public sites.

Themed Signage

Signage plays many roles. Wayfinding signage helps people navigate the community, and can lead them to public sites. Informational signage highlights the unique qualities of each site, including environmental features, historical significance, honoring local figures and donors and providing safety warnings. Lastly, signage that contains a recognizable theme (color, font, layout) creates a sense of place for residents and visitors. Themes indicate that someone is in Benzie, as opposed to any other part of Northern Michigan.

Section 4 - Public Safety

Existing Services Overview

Benzie County Central Dispatch

505 S. Michigan Ave., Beulah, MI 49617

Benzie County Central Dispatch was established on October 16, 2012 by the Board of Commissioners as the emergency and non-emergency public safety answering point (PSAP) for Benzie County. Operational funding is provided by a citizen approved 9-1-1 surcharge applied to all telephone subscribers in the county and from a state wireless surcharge formula, based on the county population, from the State 9-1-1 Committee. No county general funds are applied.

For the purpose of policy and procedures Benzie County Central Dispatch is governed by the Benzie County Central Dispatch Advisory Board. The intent of the Board is to make recommendations to the Director and County Board of Commissioners (BOC) “as it relates to the operation of Benzie County Central Dispatch and to comply with the Law Enforcement Information Network (LEIN) requirements and policies, recommend operational policy and procedures, recommend a Director, and to meet the requirements under the Emergency Telephone Enabling Act, PA 32, and the county E9-1-1- Service Plan”.

Agencies represented on the board include the following:

- Benzie County Sheriff’s Office
- Frankfort Police Department
- Michigan State Police
- Benzie County EMS
- Benzie County Fire Chiefs
- Benzie County Board of Commissioners (BOC)
- National Park Service – Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore



The Director is appointed by the Board of Commissioners and is a member of the Michigan Communications Director Association.

The mission of Benzie County Central Dispatch is to manage emergency and non-emergency public safety calls for service, and dispatch and monitor the law enforcement agencies, fire departments and emergency medical service providers (or Public Safety Partner Agencies) they serve, for the protection of property and the safety of the citizens, visitors and the public safety personnel of Benzie County.

Benzie County Central Dispatch uses several types of technology to perform their duties:

- Enhanced 9-1-1 which provides caller ID information
- Mapping software for cellular phone location identification
- Computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system to record and track the calls for service
- Address point mapping to identify the location of an address
- Mobile in-vehicle computers for Police, Fire and EMS units.
- Mobile CAD, including mapping, for responders.
- GPS tracking on the units

Public Safety Partner Agencies:

- Benzie County Sheriff's Department 505 S. Michigan Ave., Beulah, MI 49617
- City of Frankfort Police Department 412 Main St., Frankfort, MI 49635
- Michigan State Police - Honor Post 11508 Main St., Honor, MI 49640
- United States Coast Guard Frankfort, MI
- National Park Service Law Enforcement (Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore)
- Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians Tribal Police
- Michigan DNR - Platte River - Fire Control 15200 US Hwy 31, Beulah, MI 49617
- Benzie County Animal Control
- Benzie County Emergency Management

- Almira Township Fire and EMS Department 7276 Ole White Dr., Lake Ann, MI 49650
- Benzonia Township Fire Department 1020 Michigan Ave. Benzonia, MI 49616
- Frankfort Fire and Rescue Department 1223 James St. Frankfort, MI 49635
- Homestead Township Fire Department 11508 Honor Hwy., Honor, MI 49640
- Inland Township Fire and EMS Department 19668 Honor Hwy, Interlochen, MI 49643
- Thompsonville Fire and EMS Department 14714 Lincoln Ave., Thompsonville, MI 49683
- Benzie County Emergency Medical Services, which provides:
 - 911 RESPONSE. This service is made up of Medical First Responders (MFR), Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT), and Paramedics (Advanced Life Support). EMS personnel respond 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and in all weather conditions. Crews respond to all medical emergencies, motor vehicle accidents, or other traumatic events, wherever they are needed by the residents of Benzie County. County EMS Station 1: 448 Court Place, Beulah, MI 49617. County EMS Station 2: 1901 N. Thompsonville Hwy, Beulah, MI 49617, County EMS Station 3: 225 Park Ave., Frankfort, MI 49635
 - Emergency Medical Service Programs
 - CPR Training

Additionally, Benzie County Central Dispatch continues to be involved in the regional Incident Dispatch Team (IDT) as part of the Northern Michigan Mutual Aid (NMMA). One dispatcher is provided as part of the response team for pre-determined deployments, based on the needs of the incident. Additionally, that dispatcher can be assigned to support operations during major incidents or planned events, such as Ironman, in Benzie County.

In 2023, Benzie County Central Dispatch formed an internal Community Outreach Team focusing on community outreach, public education, and recruitment. This team works to inform and educate the community about the technology and importance of both 9-1-1 and emergency communications.

Benzie County Sheriff's Office 505 S Michigan Avenue, Beulah, MI 49617



Corrections Division

Mission Statement: "To serve as a detention facility for lawfully incarcerated individuals. To assure the public's safety by securely maintaining the custody of these individuals in a secure and cost effective environment that is safe for both the inmates and staff."

The Corrections Division of the Benzie County Sheriff's Office is responsible for processing and supervision of all arrested and incarcerated persons by the Benzie County Sheriff's Office and all other law enforcement agencies operating in Benzie County. The Benzie County Jail Policies and Procedures have been established with the guidance of the Michigan Department of Corrections, Administrative Rules for Jails and Lock-ups as well as American Corrections Association, Standards for Adult Local Detention Facilities. The Benzie County Jail has been found to be in total compliance with the Administrative Rules continuously since 2000, with our most recent inspection being in 2022. All of the agency's Correctional Staff are certified by the Michigan Sheriff's Training and Coordinating Council. Additionally, they are required to be re-certified annually with oversight by the MSCTC.

Groundbreaking for the current Jail and Law Enforcement Center occurred on December 9, 1990. It is located to the southwest of the Benzie County Government Center on US-31 in the Village of Beulah. Total cost of the facility came in under the estimate of \$3,500,000.00, by about \$300,000.00. The brick and block structure covers approximately 19,000 square feet and houses the Jail and Sheriff's Office operations. The Benzie County Jail has a maximum inmate capacity of 47 inmates, which at the time of its opening, made it the smallest Direct Supervision Jail in the United States.

Law Enforcement Division

The primary responsibility of the Law Enforcement Division is to provide the highest quality of public services and safety to the citizens and visitors of Benzie County. Services provided include patrolling the roads and highways of Benzie County, issuing citations, performing criminal investigations and arresting violators of the law.

The Benzie County Sheriffs' Office serves a population of 17,800. The population grows seasonally to approximately 50,000+ during the summer tourist period, which can pose unique challenges for law enforcement.

Marine Division

The Benzie County Sheriff's Office operates a Marine Patrol which is funded through a state grant and local funds. Benzie County Marine Division patrols 25 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline as well as over fifty inland lakes.

The Sheriff's Marine Division is mandated by state and federal legislation to provide search and recovery of drowning victims from any body of water in Benzie County. The Marine Division enforces and investigates all violations of marine and criminal state laws that occur on lakes located in Benzie County. The Benzie County Sheriff Marine Division handles a variety of incidents including contacts made by stopping boaters, assisting disabled boaters, medical emergencies, search and rescue operations and investigating criminal activity occurring on the waters of Benzie County.

State law requires that the Sheriff's Office provide a comprehensive boating safety program that also includes instruction to youthful boaters. The Benzie County Sheriff's Office Marine Division provides a Michigan Boating Basic course several times during the marine season. By making people aware of the rules and laws of the water, equipment required on vessels, and basic rescue techniques, some of the tragic incidents of the past can be prevented.

Snowmobile Patrol

Snowmobile patrol normally operates on weekends and will occasionally work special events. Selective enforcement may be necessary based upon special requests or complaints received from citizens. Typically, deputies patrol the snowmobile trails and selected areas conducting inspections and compliance checks to ensure that operators adhere to state and local laws. The snowmobile patrol may be requested to assist at accident scenes and could at any time, be called out for search and rescue operations.

Benzie County Emergency Management 505 S. Michigan Ave., Beulah, MI 49617

The role of Benzie County Emergency Management is to protect the lives and property of citizens before a disaster strikes through preparedness, training and mitigation, and to reduce human suffering after a disaster strikes through prompt and effective coordination of the County's response and recovery efforts utilizing the expertise and resources of federal, state, local agencies and voluntary relief organizations.

Benzie County Animal Control 543 Michigan Avenue (US-31), Beulah, MI 49617

Mission Statement – “To balance the public health, safety, and welfare needs of the citizens and domestic animals in Benzie County by responsibly and humanely enforcing animal-related laws; provide nourishment and a safe environment for impounded domestic animals; educate the public about responsible companion animal ownership; investigate cases where animal care is inadequate; and find new loving homes for homeless animals at the shelter. We understand that warehousing animals for the sake of saving them from humane euthanasia is not in the public’s or animal’s best interest. We know it is not possible to save all animals in Benzie County. We are committed to the highest performance standards, ethical conduct, truthfulness, and moral behavior in our work with people and animals.”

The Benzie County Animal Control Office handles complaints regarding dogs and livestock, enforces all State and County animal care laws, and sponsors the adoption program of dogs and cats to the public. The staff averages approximately 500 such complaints annually.

The Animal Control Building was built in 1993 using funds raised by the Animal Welfare League of Benzie County. The building can house up to 20 adult dogs and 8 adult cats on an ongoing basis.



Photo Source: <https://www.recordpatriot.com/news/article/Benzie-County-organizations-dedicated-to-caring-17231408.php>

Benzie County Animal Control and the Animal Welfare League of Benzie County have worked together for over two decades to make sure the county's animals get the care they need.

Benzie County Animal Control and the Benzie County Animal Shelter are under the same county office, according to Kyle Maurer, director of Benzie County Animal Control. Animal control operates out of the shelter, located at 543 Michigan Ave in Beulah.

During the course of an average year the Animal Control staff adopt out approximately 150 dogs and 120 cats. Persons who adopt an animal from the shelter are provided with a certificate which covers a percentage of spay or neutering surgery. The Animal Welfare League of Benzie County sponsors this program.

August 14, 2023 - the Board of Commissioners authorized a Professional Services Contract with the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians for animal control services in the total amount of \$300/quarter, expiring September 30, 2025, subject to review by legal counsel.

County Administrator Memo to BOC 8/17/2023: Benzie County Animal Control has a services contract in place with the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians to assist them in housing stray animals and apprehending and subduing aggressive animals. This partnership is like other partnerships Benzie has with neighboring entities to assist each other in need. Director Kyle Maurer is requesting this services contract be extended until September 30, 2025. This contract is appropriate and continues to show Benzie's dedication to its neighbors. The Tribe agreed to pay Benzie County \$300 per quarter for the use of space, whether they're utilizing the space, or not.



Recent Progress Toward Improving Benzie County's Public Safety Services

Benzie County 911/ Central Dispatch

October 29, 2023 – BOC authorizes the implementation of Emergency Medical Dispatch and accepts the proposals from Priority Dispatch and ID Networks in the total not to exceed amount of \$41,270, over a five-year period, with funds available in the Central Dispatch Fund, with a reimbursement from the MMRMA, and that the Chair be authorized to sign the appropriate documents.

County Administrator Memo to BOC 10/19/2024 - EMD is a system that enhances the services providers by our dispatchers, including allowing the call taker to quickly narrow down the caller's type of medical or trauma situation so that the dispatcher can provide quality instruction to the caller while waiting for medical first responders to arrive. Implementing EMD has been a goal for some time but hasn't been implemented primarily because of the upfront cost and the intense training necessary to roll this out. Mr. Ellis was able to obtain an MMRMA grant to assist with implementation and plans to also apply for a 2% tribal grant. In the 23/24 budget, we have budgeted for the implementation of this service.

March 15, 2024 – Benzie County 911/Central Dispatch celebrated the completion of major renovations to the Sheriff's Office former storage basement. It now contains a gym for Sheriff Deputies and staff and a new, state of art dedicated space for the 911 dispatchers.

The new 911 dispatch center is triple the size of the former one, providing a more comfortable work space for current dispatchers and can accommodate more dispatcher workstations in the future. New technology upgrades were also made to dispatch equipment. The \$1.88 million project was funded through a variety of sources including the county's general fund, delinquent tax fund and federal ARPA and COVID relief funds.



New Benzie County 911 Dispatch Center, March 2024

Photo Source: <https://upnorthlive.com/news/local/benzie-county-sheriffs-office-reveals-188m-remodel-for-improved-local-service>

January 23, 2024 - County Administrator's report to the BOC: Consider putting the 911 Surcharge millage on the August 2024 Ballot EMS/ALS millage on the November 2024 Ballot.

Benzie County Central Dispatch 2023 Annual Report - Goals for 2024

- **Integrate Emergency Medical Dispatching (EMD)** as a major improvement for the community and first responders. EMD is a systematic program of handling medical calls for assistance. Trained telecommunicators use locally approved EMD guidecards to quickly and properly determine the nature and priority of the call, dispatch the appropriate response and give the caller instructions to help treat the patient until the responding EMS unit arrives.
- **Continued monthly trainings** to ensure all continuing education (CE) credits are obtained and compliant with the State of Michigan along with meeting community expectations for services. With the introduction of EMD, we will also incorporate those CE requirements.
- **Continuing to work towards better alignment with 9-1-1 industry standards and community expectations** with various projects such as policies and procedures, training program documentation, CTO program enhancements, community engagement, and more.
- **Staffing** - Benzie County Central Dispatch will continue to search for qualified candidates and provide them with quality training. The desired result is to provide two dispatchers on duty 24/7/365 to meet the need.
- **Continuing to analyze, identify, and acquire equipment** that supports the mission of providing an efficient, resilient, modernized, and redundant Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) / Emergency Communications Center (ECC).

Distribution of County Opioid Settlement Funds

November 28, 2023 – BOC allocates County’s Opioid Settlement Funds to:

- Central Wellness Network to help support their Medication Assisted Treatment Program
- Benzie County staff to fund training for 911/Law Enforcement personnel to assist with their daily interaction with situations involving opioids or substance abuse disorders and/or co-occurring mental health conditions.
- Provide start-up cost to integrate Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) protocols into the Benzie County Dispatch daily operation protocols.

February 13, 2024 - BOC allocates County’s Opioid Settlement Funds to:

- - \$4,465 to the joint request from the Benzie County District Court and Central Wellness for substance abuse assessment, testing and monitoring programs.
- - \$6,900 to Almira Township Fire and EMS for the purchase of 1 Airway trainer and 2 full sets of CPR/AED training manikins, along with training of one additional instructor to help with classes.
- - \$9,200 to the School and Youth Resource Officers to have Tony Hoffman go into the schools for two speaking engagements with the students regarding mental health, addiction, and recovery challenges.

March 12, 2024

Authorize an additional \$3,000 in Opioid Funding to impact the youth of Benzie County with motivational speaking in the schools, bringing the total to \$12,200 for a total project cost.

Benzie County Sheriff's Office

August 2, 2022 – Voters approved a millage to fund School Resource Officers (SRO) provided by the BCSO. Two SROs serve at the Frankfort and Elberta Schools District and Benzie County Central School District. The SROs foster trust amongst school staff and students, aid in school security, and provide safety education.

April 11, 2023 – BOC approved the lease arrangement to obtain a Soter RS Full Body Scanner for a period of seven years, with annual payments not to exceed \$15,749.20 for years one through five, and authorizes an additional \$9,750 for years six and seven for annual maintenance, with funds available first through grant sources noted in the April 11, 2023 packet communications and remaining funds available from unexpected inmate housing rent revenue, and LATCF funding, and further that if there are any changes to the existing lease arrangement, or additional services of the machine are requested that the Board of Commissioners give prior approval to such changes to ensure proper funding is in place.

December 12, 2023 – BOC approves that the purchasing policy be waived and that the purchase of a TruNarc Unlimited Model Device from Thermo Scientific Portable Analytics Instruments, Inc. in the amount of \$29,900, be approved with funds available in the Capital Fund.

This is a second TruNarc device that will be utilized by Sheriff's Office deputies to analyze key drugs of abuse as well as common cutting agents and precursors. With the emerging threats of carfentanil and numerous fentanyl analogs and precursors this device will protect deputies from exposure to these dangerous and life-threatening drugs. The Sheriff's Office already has one device that it shares. The bidding process was waived because Thermo Scientific Portable Analytics Instruments is the preferred agency among Michigan local law enforcement departments and participates in the MI Deal program, is the most competitive in pricing and provides a consistent device for use by deputies.

January 9, 2024 - Board of Commissioners authorizes an addendum to the construction contract with Grand Traverse Construction to include the Parole and Probation Remodel, with funds available in the Capital Fund in the not to exceed amount of \$220,000.

February 13, 2024 - BOC authorized a Letter of Agreement with the Michigan Fraternal Order of Police Labor Council, Deputies Unit, which allows for 12-hour shift rotations, and moves the Sheriff's office closer to the goal of providing 24-hour road patrol and authorizes the Chair to sign.

BOC authorizes an amendment to the letter of agreement with Manistee Benzie Community Mental Health Organization, also known as Centra Wellness, for mental health services within the Benzie County jail, to allow for a bachelor's level clinician in the jail to act as a conduit between an inmate and a master's level clinician, and authorize the Chair to sign, with minimum quarterly reports to the Board of Commissioners.

March 12, 2024 - BOC authorizes the 2024-009 Resolution Authorizing Millage Election for Benzie County Jail Operations Millage Proposal and Certifying Ballot Language, be adopted, placing ballot language on the August 6, 2024, election.

County Administrator's 3/5/2024 Memo to the BOC: "At the February 27th Board meeting, discussion took place as to the need for jail operations, with consideration given to recommendations by the Michigan Department of Corrections. As a result of that meeting, there was an understanding the there is a need for one to two additional personnel within the jail. However, it was apparent that the only way to fund these positions is with a millage increase. While there appears to be reluctance in requesting an increase in the jail operations millage, there is an understanding that personnel safety is an extremely important aspect to operations. At the February 27th Board meeting, I indicated to the Board that a millage levy of 1.400 mills would generate sufficient funding to hire two additional personnel. The proposed millage is an increase from the current millage by 0.171 mills. I have sat down with the Sheriff to discuss this millage and its duration. We recommend moving forward with a five-year millage term, levying the millage through 2028 inclusive. This timing would allow Benzie County to place a renewal millage on a 2028 ballot, saving funding by not holding a special election. However, during that time, Benzie County could decide to approach funding the jail differently. This direction is at the desecration of the Board of Commissioners."

April 9, 2024 - Authorize the use of Fund 213 (Jail Fund) Balance in the not to exceed amount of \$60,000 to fill an additional rostered Corrections Officers position for the remainder of the Fiscal Year 2023/2024.

April 23, 2024 - BOC authorizes a budget amendment in the amount of \$17,000 to recognize revenues and expenditures related to a marihuana prevention educational and outreach program campaign

Benzie County Emergency Management

August 14, 2023 - the Board of Commissioners waives the competitive bidding process and accepts the proposal from Motorola Solutions dated August 14, 2023 for the installation of an emergency communications tower and the total project cost not to exceed \$2,650,000, with funds available in the capital projects fund.

This new 800 MHz communications tower in Frankfort enhances emergency communications and fills in gaps in the county’s existing emergency communications radio coverage. (Communication between first responders at County Dispatch in Beulah and the City of Frankfort was not possible due to the area topography). Funding for the tower was primarily sourced from the State of Michigan, as well as Lake Township and County ARPA funding. The City of Frankfort donated the land for the construction of the tower, located southeast of Day Avenue and Hall Street.

This project also contributes to another county goal of expanding broadband internet. The fiber installation to the tower will act as “middle mile” fiber for connecting all those along the route, including Crystal Lake Township and expanding into the City of Frankfort, Lake Township, and the Village of Elberta.

Construction of the tower is estimated to be completed in mid-2024.

February 13, 2024 – The BOC adopted the County’s 2023 Hazard Mitigation Plan Update, which has met FEMA and MSP review criteria. The expiration date of the 2023 Benzie County Hazard Mitigation is February 25, 2029.

The approved plan, which was significantly updated with assistance from Networks Northwest, is one of the conditions for the County (and participating local governments) to apply for and/or receive FEMA mitigation grants from the following programs:

FEMA Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) Grant Program	FEMA is a non-disaster, competitive grant program that provides funding to states, local communities, federally recognized tribes. Funds can be used for projects that reduce or eliminate the risk of repetitive flood damage to buildings insured by the National Flood Insurance Program.
FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Grant Program	BRIC is a non-disaster grant program, which provides funds on an annual basis for hazard mitigation planning and the implementation of mitigation projects prior to a disaster. The BRIC program guiding principles are supporting communities through capability- and capacity-building; encouraging and enabling innovation; promoting partnerships; enabling large projects; maintaining flexibility; and providing consistency.
FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)	HMGP is a post-disaster grant program, where funding is only made available under a Presidential major disaster declaration, in the areas of the State requested by the Governor. Federally-recognized tribes may also submit a request for a Presidential major disaster declaration within their impacted areas.
FEMA HMGP Post-Fire Assistance (PFA) grant program	This FEMA grant funds projects that make a community more resilient after a designated wildfire disaster. States and federally-recognized tribes affected by fires resulting in a Fire Management Assistance Grant (FMAG) declaration on or after October 5, 2018, are eligible to apply.

Benzie County Animal Control

The shelter has undergone several renovations since 2021, including the installation of "cat condos" to update where cats are housed and a new parking lot.

In 2023 and 2024, the Animal Control shelter began updating its outdoor space and yard to make four fenced individual kennels so that volunteers and employees can allow more animals outside at one time. The ideal flooring for an outdoor kennel yard is a K9 turf, because it inhibits the digging by dogs, and also provides an area that can be easily cleaned to help prevent disease outbreaks at the shelter. This turf also is considered to have a lifetime warranty and can be re-purposed if a move happens.

The Animal Welfare League of Benzie County and Two Seven Oh, Inc. (a group dedicated to helping other small organizations in Michigan care for the wellbeing of animals) have assisted with funding the project.

The shelter also has expanded hours, and now is open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. The shelter is operated by Animal Control Officer Kyle Mauer, who also serves as a shelter attendant and a part-time shelter clerk.

September 12, 2023 – The BOC approves the Phase I Kennel Yard project for Animal Control. Accepted the proposal from AJ's Excavating in the not to exceed amount of \$51,000 to excavate, build a retaining wall and prep for village utility connection, with funds available from the ARPA funding.

September 26, 2023 – The BOC accepts the proposal from AJ's Excavating not to exceed amount of \$74,905.00 for Animal Control connection to the Village of Beulah's water and sewer system, with funds available from ARPA.

Future projects that need to be completed at the animal control/shelter building, per Kyle Maurer, Animal Control Director:

- **Renovate the aging indoor kennel area for the dogs** so that the shelter complies with the State of Michigan regulations for animal shelters.
- **New exterior doors**
- **An updated surveillance system**
- **There would be a need for a larger shelter in the future if the county were to partner with a surrounding county for animal holds.** The property that the current Animal Control Office/ Shelter is located on is not adequate for a larger shelter. Building a new shelter would allow for the building to be code compliant and for us to be able to be compliant with the state regarding animal needs within the shelter. This can include design features that facilitate disease control, air quality, sound control and employee/ animal separation, such as isolation kennels.

October 10, 2023 – BOC rescinds the approval of the prior proposal from the September 26, 2023, Board of Commissioners meeting, with AJ Excavating and approve the new proposal from Kerby Backhoe in the not to exceed amount of \$52,000, with funds available from the ARPA and Capital funds.

October 24, 2023 – BOC authorizes the reimbursement grant agreement with Two Seven Oh, Inc. in the total reimbursable amount of \$32,074.15 for animal shelter upgrades (purchase and install a canopy over a renovated kennel yard) and authorizes the related budget amendments to recognize the expenditure and revenue, and authorizes the Chair to sign.

Example Projects/Resources to Consider for Additional Improvements in Public Safety Services

Constructing a New Animal Shelter

Note: While the example below is representative of a much larger county in comparison to Benzie County (808.4 square miles of land and a population of 327,997 persons in Spartanburg County compared to 319.7 square miles of land and a population of 17,970 persons in Benzie County), resources utilized in this project for consulting and design work, partnerships, and operational goals can be seen as potential examples for Benzie County Animal Control to consider in future planning.

Additionally, collaborating with other related animal shelter organizations surrounding Benzie County to facilitate such an endeavor that would provide potential regional benefits and local cost savings should also be considered.

Example – Spartanburg County, South Carolina

“Spartanburg County Council approved that \$5,000,000 of the county’s ARPA funds be allocated to assisting in the construction of a new Pet Resource Center. The funding strategy was based on estimates of recently constructed facilities.

Spartanburg County plans to open its own Pet Resource Center in the near future, where we will house and care for our animal community.

We hired an animal shelter consultant, Dr. Sara Pizano of Team Shelter USA, to help us identify needs in our animal community and develop an animal welfare system plan. As part of a feasibility study, Dr. Pizano surveyed nearly 50 animal welfare organizations in our area to determine the best practices of each organization. County leadership and staff toured multiple animal shelters across the state to further determine best practices and operations. Our \$24.6M facility, located on Southport Road, will be purpose-built, providing the services our citizens and animals need, and will include room for future growth.

SHLTR Architects of Greenville worked with Animal Arts of Boulder, Colorado to prepare a conceptual design of the 26,600 sq. ft. facility, which includes:”



- “Dog housing (79 kennels)
- Cat housing (12 kennels)
- Isolation housing
- Adoption and clinic lobbies
- Staff offices, workstations, break room, and support rooms
- Surgery, x-ray, pharmacy, and exam rooms
- Multipurpose room

The facility will be a utilitarian structure, very durable, and designed to reduce long-term maintenance costs. The site will also include 18,600 sq. ft. of exterior space (including 5,000 square feet of covered exterior areas). The exterior space will include:

- Multiple fenced animal yards
- Artificial turf zones
- Temporary housing for farm animals
- 72 parking spaces

We expect preliminary site work to begin in the spring of 2024, and construction to last between 14 and 18 months, with an expected completion date in 2025.

It is important to note that our Pet Resource Center will not function as a traditional animal shelter. We do not intend to warehouse animals. Historically, we’ve seen that approach causes animals to become less adoptable. We’ve learned that, when animals spend extended periods of time in kennels, their mental health and wellbeing can decline, making them a less likely option for a potential pet owner. Warehousing animals can also lead to increased euthanasia rates.

Our goal is to keep people and pets together. We want to minimize the length of stay for each animal, focusing on reuniting lost pets with their owners and re-homing others. We plan to accomplish this through safety net programs and by working with local fosters and rescues who can assist us in finding homes for animals as quickly as possible.

IMPORTANT TAKEAWAYS

- Partnerships will be key in our success.
- Implementing proactive programs will help to reduce the number of shelter intakes, which is imperative, as we want the Pet Resource Center to serve as a "last resort" option.
- The goal behind the Center will be to keep people and pets together. We want to minimize the length of stay for each animal, focusing on reuniting lost pets with their owners and re-homing others.
- Volunteers are vital when it comes to the animals' quality of life.

LOCATION: We have selected an 8.05-acre site for our planned Pet Resource Center. The property is located on Southport Road, across from the wastewater treatment facility and near the SCDMV. We closed on the property September 7, 2023. This particular property will allow the Pet Resource Center to be centrally located, as it is positioned on a main arterial road, and has 740 feet of road frontage. All of the utilities needed for the Pet Resource Center are available at this site.

STAFFING: We have created two new positions for the Pet Resource Center, including a Director of Animal Welfare Services and an Animal Cruelty Investigator. We are still looking for someone to fill the Director position.”

Expanding First Responder Service Capabilities

Local Example – Alignment with Local Master Plan Goals - Blair Township, Grand Traverse County^{1,2}

Traverse City Area Public Schools (TCAPS) began discussions in 2019 with the Oleson Family, Blair Township, TART Trails, and Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy about 208 acres of TCAPS property behind Blair Elementary School.

The township expressed interest in developing a portion of the land for the purpose of meeting their Master Plan goals, which includes developing and expanding an interconnected non-motorized trail system for recreational, civic, and commercial services within the Township and connectivity to the ongoing development of the Traverse Area Regional Trail (TART) system, preserving open spaces and scenic views in the development of recreational opportunities and facilities, encouraging the development of neighborhoods parks, and constructing a new Township Fire Hall.

The Township's 40-year-old fire station had reached the end of its usefulness and was not located centrally within the community. After reviewing the plans for the Township Fire Hall and future trails at the TCAPS Board Meeting, board members moved to officially transfer 130.44 acres of the land to Blair Township for construction of a new fire hall/EMS facility. After a \$6.2 million bond was passed by township voters in August 2022, ground for the project was broken. The new facility was completed in early 2024.

This larger building will accommodate the future growth of staffing as Blair Township continues to grow. Additionally, the building is centralized in the community, resulting in a reduction in emergency response times. Other upgrades at the station along M-37 include a state-of-the-art alert system and cancer-reduction measures with an isolated gear room and gear washer. As for the former Blair Township Fire Hall, other township services have already moved into the renovated space.



1- <https://upnorthlive.com/news/instagram/blair-township-celebrates-new-62-million-emergency-services-building-completion>

2- <https://upnorthlive.com/news/local/tcaps-transfers-some-of-land-behind-blair-elementary-to-township-for-development>

Funding and Programs

USDA Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program - Provides affordable funding to develop essential community facilities in rural areas. An essential community facility is defined as a facility that provides an essential service to the local community for the orderly development of the community in a primarily rural area, and does not include private, commercial or business undertakings. Funds can be used to purchase, construct, and / or improve essential community facilities, purchase equipment and pay related project expenses. Examples of essential community facilities include, but are not limited to, public safety services such as fire departments, police stations, prisons, police vehicles, fire trucks, public works vehicles or equipment.

FEMA's Assistance to Firefighters Grants Program - Fire safety grants fund critically needed resources to equip and train emergency personnel, enhance efficiencies and support community resilience. The primary goal of the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) is to meet the firefighting and emergency response needs of fire departments and non-affiliated emergency medical service organizations. Eligible applicants include fire departments, non-affiliated Emergency Medical Services (EMS), state fire training academies, and non-federal airport and/or port authority fire or EMS organizations.

Since 2001, AFG has helped firefighters and other first responders obtain critically needed equipment, protective gear, emergency vehicles, training and other resources necessary for protecting the public and emergency personnel from fire and related hazards.

Northwest Michigan Works! Apprenticeship Team - Registered Department of Labor Apprenticeship programs allow the employer to upskill current employees or recruit new talent while filling workforce gaps. The Northwest Michigan Works! Apprenticeship team provides customized apprenticeship services to fit the needs of every employer, big or small. From Winemakers to Medical Assistants to Construction Workers, we assist with the process.

Northwest Michigan Works! partnered with the Manistee County Sheriff's Department and West Shore Community College to create Michigan's first Police Officer Apprenticeship program. Watch the video to hear what the Apprentice, Mentor, Sheriff, and Director of the Police Academy have to say about the apprenticeship program.

Section 5 - Infrastructure Expansion & Improvement

Road and Bridge Infrastructure

During the recent ARPA survey (2022) that Benzie County conducted, survey takers identified bridge repair and road repair as their number one and number two highest priority items. Bridges and roads are essential infrastructure investments that provide many benefits to communities and society as a whole.

Safety

Well-maintained roads and bridges are crucial for ensuring the safety of motorists, pedestrians, cyclists, and other road users. Potholes, cracks, and uneven surfaces can pose hazards and increase the risk of accidents, injuries, and fatalities. Repairing roads and bridges helps reduce safety risks and prevent accidents. Reliable transportation infrastructure is important for supporting emergency response efforts during natural disasters, public health emergencies, safety threats, cases of national defense, and other disasters. Paved roads and bridges facilitate the movement of emergency vehicles, supplies, military, emergency responders, and other personnel, enabling timely and effective response to disaster and recovery efforts.

Mobility, Productivity, and Accessibility

Paved roads and bridges improve mobility, productivity, and accessibility by providing more consistent and well-maintained routes for people and goods. Accessible infrastructure allows individuals to travel to work, school, healthcare facilities, businesses, and other destinations efficiently and safely. Well-maintained roads can reduce travel times, vehicle operating costs, and fuel consumption, leading to increased productivity, a lower cost for goods for consumers, and consistency for businesses and individuals.

Economic Growth

Investing in infrastructure maintenance and repair contributes to economic growth by creating jobs, creating demand for materials and services, and supporting local businesses. Well-maintained roads and bridges facilitate the movement of goods and services, attract investment, and promote commerce and trade, helping to increase economic activity and prosperity. Well-maintained roads and bridges contribute to higher property values, thus increasing tax base, allowing more services for the community, and attracting additional investment. Access to quality

transportation infrastructure is an important consideration for homebuyers, businesses, and even consumers, when choosing where to live, work, and spend their dollars. Paved roads and bridges support tourism and recreational activities, by giving easy and equitable access to scenic destinations, like Sleeping Bear Dunes or Lake Michigan, cultural attractions, including the Michigan Legacy Art Park, and outdoor recreational areas, including Crystal Mountain. Accessible and equitable transportation routes boost economic and tourism spending, encourage healthy communities through outdoor recreation, and support and encourage through education and experience the local cultural identity.

Environmental Benefits

Well-maintained bridges and roads can have additional environmental benefits by reducing vehicle emissions, congestion, and fuel consumption common with deteriorating infrastructure. New or improved infrastructure can help sustain transportation approaches, such as public transit, multi-modal approaches including biking or walking, which in turn reduce carbon emissions, promote health, and can help to offset global climate change.

Where appropriate, Benzie County should look to work with stakeholders to improve, repair and expand the bridges and roads, both paved and unpaved, within Benzie County. Infrastructure improvement will improve the safety, mobility, productivity, accessibility, quality of life, encourage economic growth and higher tax dollars, and enhance the overall environment for the citizens of Benzie County.







Sewer and Water Infrastructure

Expanded sewer and water systems can reduce the risk of waterborne diseases by providing clean drinking water and proper sanitation facilities. There are benefits to replacing septic systems with sewer systems as sewer systems are more convenient for homeowners and businesses because they require minimal maintenance. Once connected to the municipal sewer system, residents do not need to worry about regularly emptying septic tanks or maintaining a septic field.

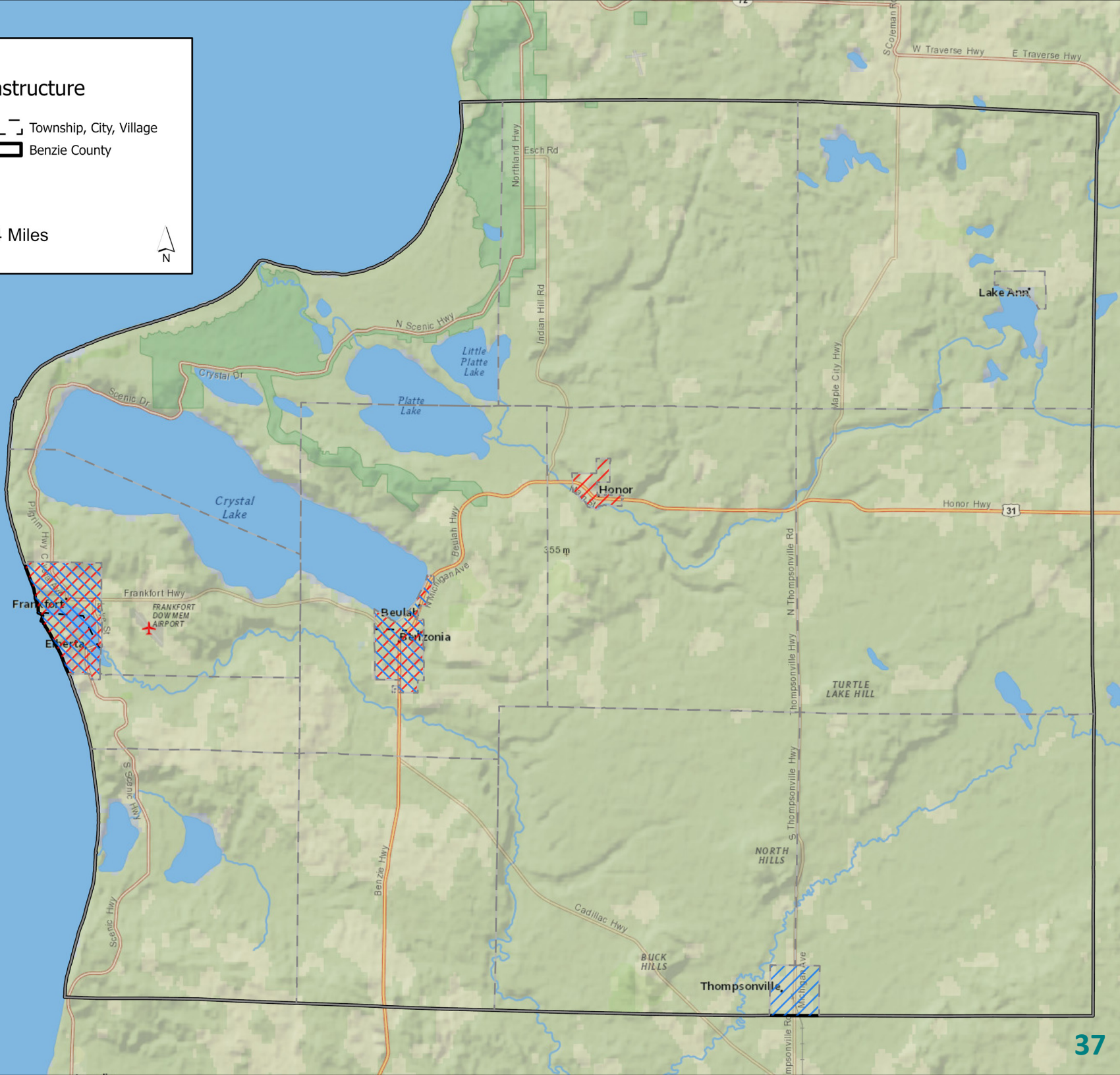
Sewer systems have greater capacity and scalability than septic fields. Sewer systems are more ideal for densely populated urbanized areas and accommodating future growth. Municipal sewer systems can handle large volumes of wastewater and are easier to expand or upgrade as needed. Proper wastewater management reduces pollution of natural water bodies, preserving aquatic ecosystems and safeguarding public health. Sewer systems are designed to treat and dispose of wastewater safely and efficiently, reducing the risk of groundwater contamination and environmental pollution compared to septic fields, which may malfunction or leak if not properly maintained.

Properties connected to municipal sewer and water systems may have higher resale value than those relying on septic systems; buyers perceive sewer systems as more reliable and convenient. Access to sewer and water infrastructure can increase property attractiveness and marketability. Sewer and water systems provide broader community benefits, such as supporting economic development, promoting

Benzie County Water and Sewer Infrastructure

-  Water and Sewer
-  Sewer
-  Water
-  No Water or Sewer
-  Township, City, Village
-  Benzie County

0 1 2 4 Miles



urbanization, public health benefits, and improving overall infrastructure resilience. Access to sewer services facilitates growth and enhances the livability of cities and towns. Although residents connected to municipal water systems must pay water utility fees, these costs are often lower than the expenses/maintenance associated with private well ownership. Municipal water users do not have to initially pay for the expense of well drilling, ongoing maintenance and repairs, or water quality testing, making municipal water a more cost-effective option over an extended period of time.

Sewer and water infrastructure are present in Benzie County. Expansion efforts are ongoing in an attempt to provide additional services to the Village of Benzonia and the Village of Benzie. The County should encourage, and where appropriate, support these expansion efforts while looking to expand sewer and water development to dense multi-family, two-family, and single-family housing; commercial and industrial development should also connect to this infrastructure.

Broadband

Many consider broadband internet access a modern day necessity in the same way that efficient transportation and electricity became. Broadband access offers many positive benefits and opportunities for individuals, businesses, and communities. It enables access to large amounts of information available on the internet and internet-based opportunities, including: educational resources, news, research materials, communications, economic opportunities, remote work and telecommuting, healthcare services, and civic engagement. Broadband internet access encourages lifelong learning, entertainment options, empowers individuals to stay informed and connected with the world and their community.

Educational Opportunities

Information through broadband enables access to a plethora of educational resources, online courses, and digital libraries, leveling the playing field for students regardless of their geographic location. It also allows for distance learning and remote education, which is paramount during emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Economic Development

Broadband access encourages economic activity and growth by facilitating e-commerce, empowering business' ability to reach new markets, and encouraging entrepreneurship. Broadband internet access attracts investment, encourages innovation, and creates job opportunities in sectors such as technology, telecommuting, and digital services.

Remote Work and Telecommuting

Broadband enables remote work and telecommuting, allowing individuals to work from home or at other locations outside of traditional office settings. It offers flexibility, work-life balance, and productivity benefits for employees and employers.

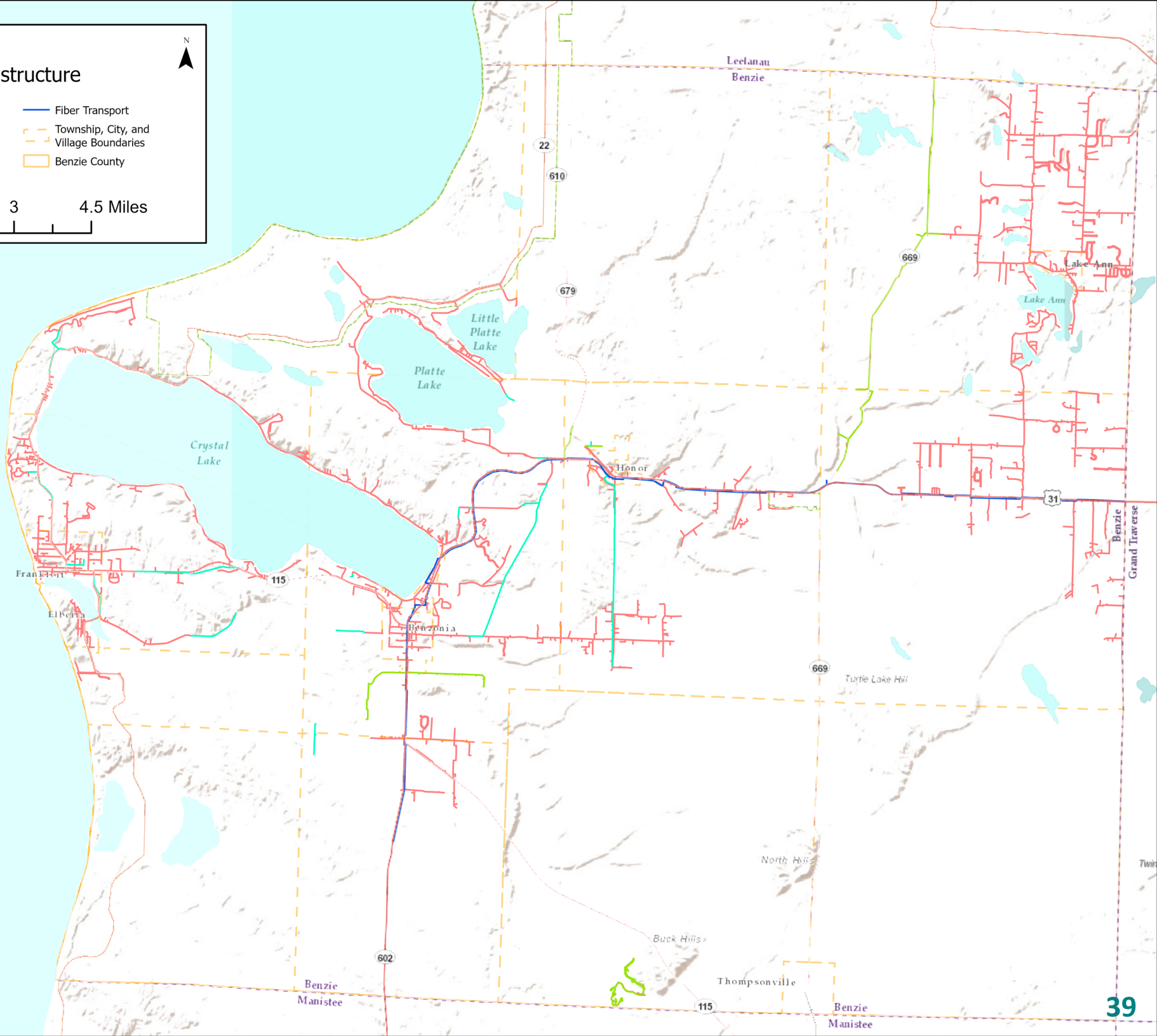
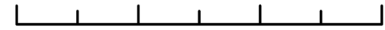
Benzie County Broadband Infrastructure



Technology

- Coaxial
- Fiber
- Fiber Transport
- Township, City, and Village Boundaries
- Benzie County

0 0.75 1.5 3 4.5 Miles





Healthcare Improvements

Telehealth and remote healthcare services rely on broadband connectivity to provide medical appointments, monitor patients, and provide healthcare services to rural and/or under-served areas. Broadband expansion enhances access to healthcare, drives down costs, and reduces the need to visit a hospital or office space.

Improved Communication and Social Connectivity

Broadband enables communication through email, social media, video conferencing, and messaging platforms. Broadband internet can foster connections between individuals, families, and communities. It reduces isolation, enhances social support networks, and promotes civic engagement.

Enhanced Government Services

Broadband facilitates the delivery of government services online. These may include, but are not limited to: applying for permits, paying taxes, retrieving government forms, and accessing public records. It increases government efficiency, reduces administrative barriers, and enhances transparency and government responsiveness.

Smart Agriculture

Broadband connectivity supports accurate agriculture, enabling farmers to access real-time data, monitor crop conditions, and improve resource management. It expands farm productivity, reduces environmental impact, and enhances food security.

Cultural Preservation and Tourism

Broadband encourages the preservation and dissemination of cultural heritage through digital archives, online exhibits, and virtual tours. It promotes tourism by providing travelers with access to information about destinations, attractions, maps, trips, and informational guides that can properly prepare them for their trip. Cameras at destinations that are live-streamed can provide real-time information about the conditions at a location.

Disaster Preparedness and Response

Broadband connectivity strengthens disaster preparedness and response capabilities by facilitating communication, disseminating alerts and warnings, and coordinating emergency services.

Civic Engagement

Broadband access allows individuals to engage with government services, participate in civic activities, and helps keep citizens informed. It promotes transparency, accountability, and democratic participation by providing access to information, resources, and platforms for civic engagement.

Benzie County, the State of Michigan, and the Federal government have made considerable effort to encourage broadband internet service providers to expand broadband to traditionally rural areas. A portion of these efforts via the Rural Opportunity with Broadband Infrastructure Networks (ROBIN) along with existing infrastructure are available in the map on page 39. The County should make additional efforts and utilize resources to find funding or incentives to provide broadband to the unserved areas around Thompsonville, Upper and Lower Herring Lake, and other areas that are without broadband. The County should also monitor the internet service providers awarded grants under ROBIN and other State and Federal grant processes build out as described in the grant awarded.

Natural Gas

Benzie County has been attempting to extend natural gas lines within the county in an effort to lower energy costs, foster economic development, and enhance energy reliability. However, these extensions can also present drawbacks, including: environmental impacts, financial risks, and potential delays in the transition to renewable energy.

Economic Growth and Development

Natural gas is often cheaper than other energy sources such as propane, oil, or electricity. Extending natural gas lines can reduce energy costs for households and businesses, potentially increasing disposable income and stimulating local economic growth.

Reliable and affordable energy can attract new businesses to the area, fostering economic development and creating jobs. Industries that require stable and cost-effective energy sources could find an expanded availability of natural gas in Benzie County more appealing.

Environmental Advantages

Natural gas burns cleaner than coal, wood, and oil, producing less pollutants such as sulfur dioxide (SO₂), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), particulate matter, and volatile organic compounds (VOCs). This can lead to improved air quality and health outcomes for residents. Natural gas does not reduce greenhouse emissions lower than renewable energy. However, natural gas emits less CO₂ per unit of energy compared to coal, wood, and oil, contributing to lower greenhouse gas emissions when substituted for coal, oil or wood. Natural gas infrastructure provides a reliable and continuous energy supply, reducing dependence on deliveries of propane, heating oil, or wood which can be disrupted by weather, supply chain issues, or often times in the case of wood, require additional time, energy, and resources to gather the supply yourself.

Backup to Green Energy

Natural gas can serve as a backup for renewable energy sources such as solar and wind, which are intermittent. This can help ensure a stable energy supply during times of low green energy production.

Environmental Concerns

Natural gas is primarily methane, a strong greenhouse gas. Leaks from infrastructure can promote climate change, hypothetically offsetting some of the environmental benefits over other fossil fuels. Investing in natural gas infrastructure may delay the transition to renewable energy sources, lengthening dependency on fossil fuels.

Hefty Upfront Investment

Extending natural gas lines requires large initial investment for construction and expansion of lines. This could burden local budgets, increase taxes, or require a reallocation of funds from other essential services.

Regulatory and Policy Challenges

Extending natural gas infrastructure requires navigating complex regulation, securing permits, and remaining in compliance with environmental and safety standards. Future regulations, looking to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, could require additional costs or restrictions on natural gas infrastructure, impacting its feasibility and driving up costs associated with maintaining and/or expanding of natural gas lines.

Section 6 - Age-Related Challenges

Age Related Issues

The 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) data displays that Benzie County has a median age of 50.4, older than state median of 40.3, and higher than the national median of 38.8. When looking at this data in the table on page 44, it becomes apparent that within the next 5 to 10 years Benzie County will be dealing with a large portion of their population being over the age of 65, many of whom will need different housing, healthcare, and transportation-based needs.

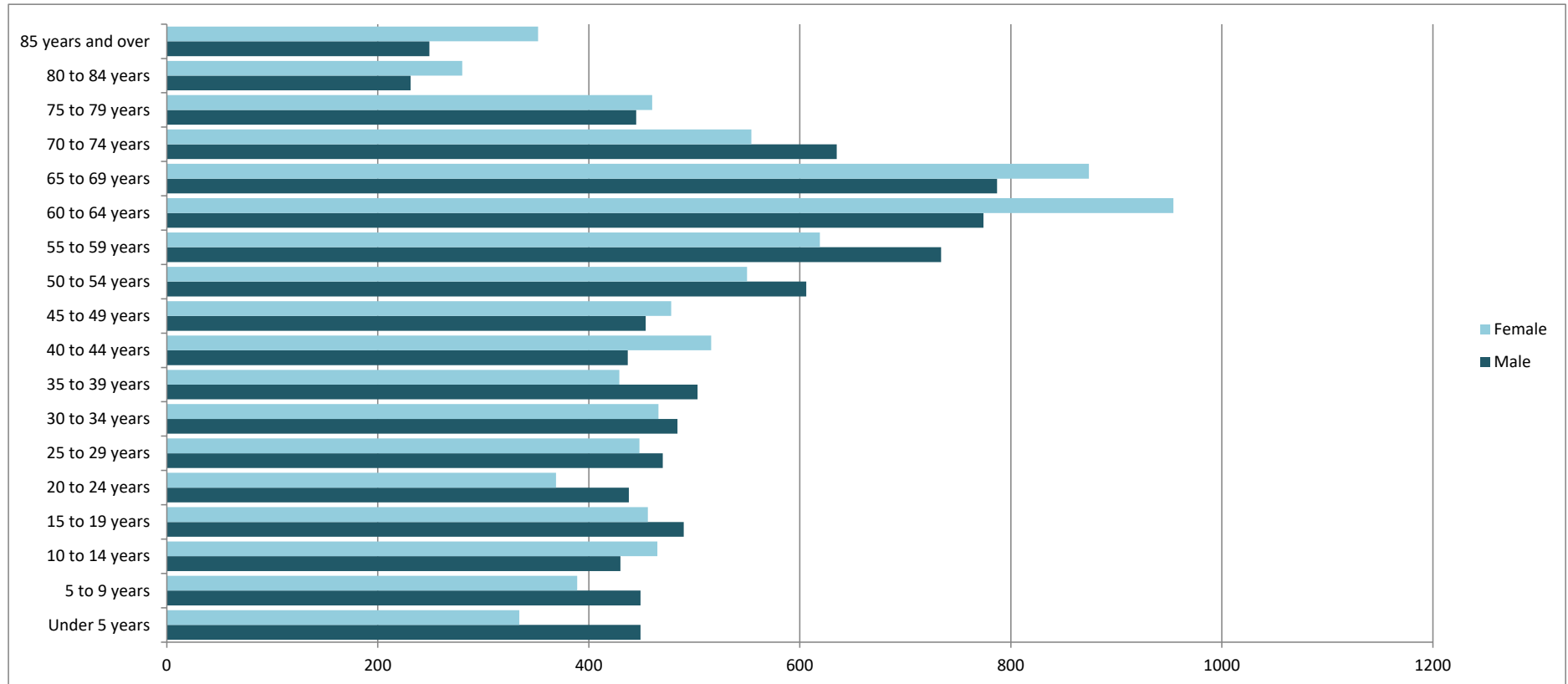
Aging in place

Aging in place refers to seniors living independently and comfortably in their own homes or communities for as long as possible as they age, rather than moving to institutional settings such as nursing homes or assisted living facilities. This allows seniors to keep their independence, dignity, and quality of life. This approach benefits society as a whole by maximizing resources, promoting socially engaged communities, and building resilient communities that value people of all ages.

Housing

To allow seniors to age in place requires planning ahead and having the tools and people to do so. These changes can take the form of accessible housing options: ensuring that housing is designed or can be modified to be accessible to seniors needs. Seniors are able to stay in their homes longer by supporting senior community centers, such as Benzie Senior Resources, which provides social engagement opportunities, care coordination, delivered and community meals, exercise and mental well-being opportunities, lawn services, maid services, and snow removal. Alternative housing options also allow seniors the ability to downsize from larger homes by, where appropriate, supporting higher density housing options such as condos or Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs).

Benzie County Age Cohorts, 2022 Estimates



Source: 2022 ACS 5-year Estimates

Transportation

According to American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) most seniors give up driving around 75 years old. Benzie County should continue to invest in transportation measures that support senior mobility. Benzie Bus currently provides accessible and affordable transportation options tailored to seniors' needs, such as door-to-door transportation services, on demand service, airport service, ride sharing, non-emergency medical transportation, health rides, and prescription delivery. Benzie County could look to support additional services including: volunteer driver programs, senior shuttles that make community trips to commonly visited areas like a grocery store or civic events, and alternative modes of transportation.

Housing & Aging in Place

Often, the difference between someone in their retirement age being able to age in place or having to move elsewhere is diversity in the housing stock. Single-family detached housing is popular for obvious reasons. It affords property owners control over land and structure, it offers peace and privacy, and the larger footprints are conducive to raising a family. However, for many people in retirement age, a large home on a large lot can be overwhelming. Landscaping takes time and effort, maintenance can be overly burdensome if there are fewer people to help out, and structurally features like stairwells can make mobility difficult.

For these reasons, many people want to downsize their housing later in life. This could mean anything from a condo to a cottage court (shown to the right). If a community does not have these options, people may be forced to move to a different community. This can have negative consequences for the economic and social makeup of the area, as longtime residents with institutional knowledge, social connections and spending power leave. Many times, this type of development is disallowed in the existing zoning ordinance.

To combat this issue, Benzie County may look to promote alternative housing styles such as duplexes, triplexes, cottage courts and condominiums. Each of these housing types are attractive to people not wanting to maintain a yard or a structure with a large footprint. Additionally, developments like cottage courts (three examples to the right) can be designed with features that support social interactions. These include porches close to sidewalks, low traffic speeds, small setbacks and small parcel sizes. Design considerations can be the difference that helps Benzie's aging residents to stay in the area and continue contributing to the community's sense of place.



Childcare

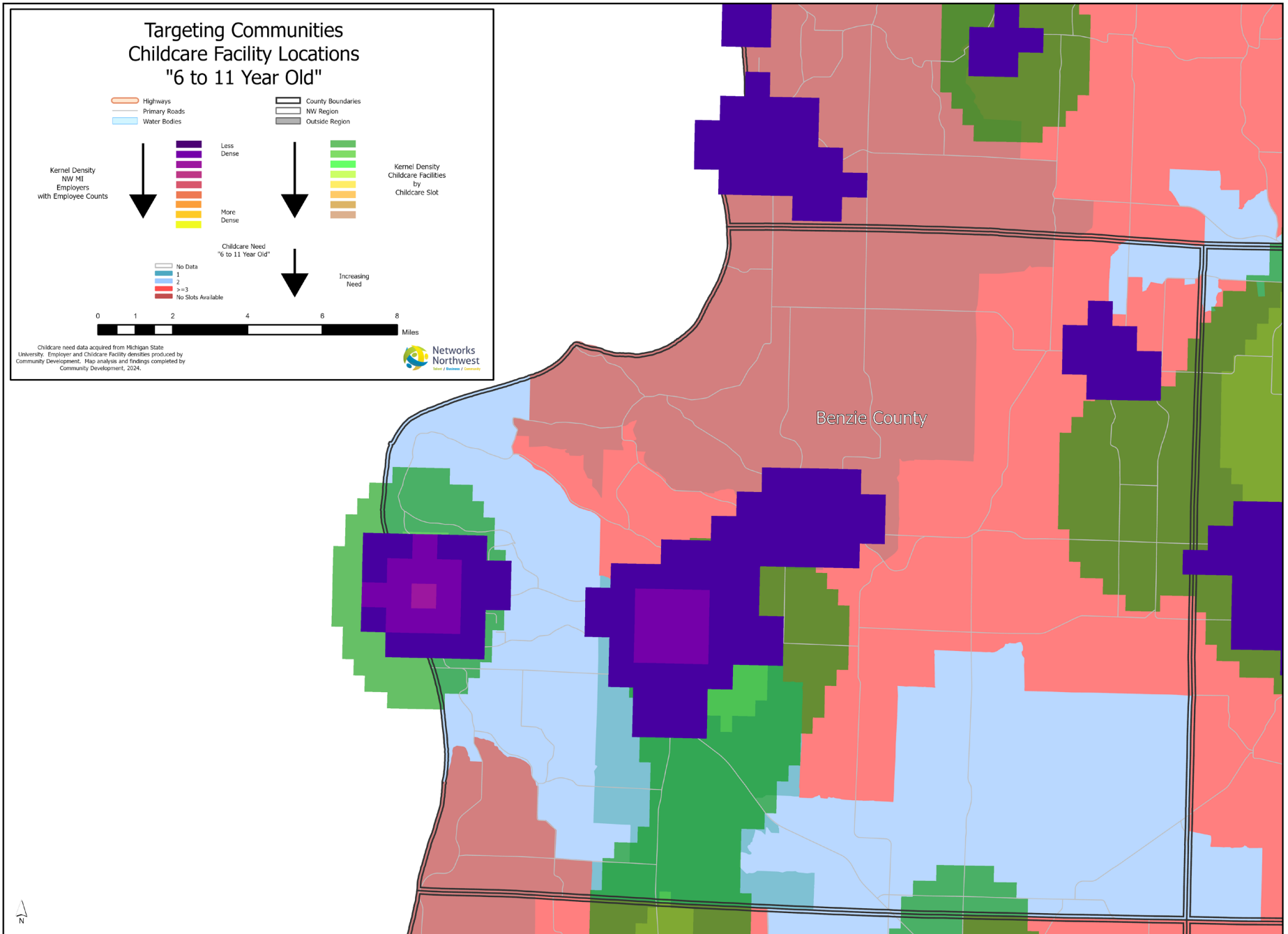
Childcare expenses can be exorbitantly high for many families, often exceeding the cost of rent or mortgage payments. The high cost of childcare can place a significant financial burden on parents, predominantly those with low or moderate incomes, and may force some families to choose between childcare and other essential expenses. In addition, accessibility to quality childcare may be limited in some areas of the county requiring the parents choose between working or staying home to provide care for their children. The County may look to support subsidized childcare programs, invest in preschools, Head Start, and other pre-kindergarten programs. The County may also work with non-profits, businesses, and foster other public-private partnerships with the goal of creating workplace policies that are friendly for families with children. The County could coordinate with Townships, Villages, and the City of Frankfort to ensure they are not putting up road blocks for new childcare developments or in home services. The map on the next page was developed using kernel density to show areas of need for childcare, demonstrating employers, and finally need. This map is a snapshot in time, but can be utilized to show the most deprived areas for childcare currently in Benzie County.

Youth based services

Youth services aim to provide young people with opportunities for education, skill development, support, health and wellness, and community engagement. Benzie has several groups working with youth in the community including, but not limited to:

- Best Benzie: currently helps youth with Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) college student aid program,
- Benzie Area Youth Initiative: working youth substance abuse, school nurses, curriculum, and making youth aware of the dangers around them
- Centra Wellness: provides education and mental health services for the county youth
- MSU Extension: facilitates a 4-H soccer program in Benzie

Childcare target locations in the region for 6 to 11 year olds.
 Developed by Networks Northwest Community Development Department.



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