

# Mission Township Comprehensive Plan

*Text version*

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*This draft is a text document. All maps, table of contents and other information will be added to this draft upon final editing and publication.*

*This plan was prepared with assistance from the Community Growth Institute  
[www.communitygrowth.com](http://www.communitygrowth.com)*

## **Section 1. Introduction**

Mission Township is a rural community located in the center of Crow Wing County and has a total area of 34.7 square miles. The majority of the township's area (85%) is land covering a total of 29.6 square miles with the remaining fifteen percent (15%) being comprised of water. Unlike some cities and townships in Minnesota, Mission Township is well endowed with natural resources and has retained the majority of them.

### **Mission Township History**

Prior to settlement, much of the area of Crow Wing County, including the land which is now known as Mission Township, was inhabited by the Ojibwe. One of the earliest settlers of Mission Township came to the area in June of 1857. In that year, Reverend Ottmar Cloetter, who was a pastor of a Missouri Synod Lutheran congregation at Saginaw Michigan, was called by his congregation to the Indian Mission in Minnesota. Cloetter expanded this Mission by building a residence, and had planned to build a school just prior to the uprising of 1862, however in the uprising his residence was destroyed and, as a result, the school he had planned was never built. Mission Township received its name due these series of events.

Mission Township was organized as a Township in 1912 and prior to that time existed as unorganized territory. The settling of Mission Township was much like many of the other areas surrounding the Township which was spurred by logging, trapping, and other early economic endeavors. In the mid-Twentieth Century, Mission Township began to develop along many of its shorelines while much of the development within the Township remained predominately as large-tract rural developments. This shoreline development included mostly small cabins and recreational or seasonal homes through later in the Century. Beginning around 1990, Mission Township began experiencing tremendous growth in the number of permanent residents which also brought a conversion of small cabins and recreational dwellings to large year-round homes. This trend is continuing today.

### **The Planning Process**

Mission Township initiated the planning process in the spring of 2006. The development of this plan included a strong participation process with a series of public meetings held throughout the summer and fall of 2006 with the first community meeting was held in July of 2006, and the final meeting held December 4, 2006. All property owners and residents in the township were invited to participate and be involved in the planning process facilitated by the Community Growth Institute through direct mailings, publication in local newspapers and mass Email and the Township's planning Website [www.missionplanning.info](http://www.missionplanning.info). Throughout the process, residents and stakeholders were asked to contribute their knowledge, expertise, ideas, and concerns about Mission Township today and the manner in which the township should function and develop in the future.

Residents identified strengths and weaknesses regarding the quality of life and land use in the township through a series of community meetings. Goals were developed to address issues affecting the township and strategies were created to accomplish those goals. This plan was created by the residents of Mission Township for the future of their community and is their vision for future land use management. The plan was adopted by Mission Township Board of Supervisors on December 4, 2006.

**Insert “072706MissionTWP 003” photo**

## Section 2. Demographics and Current Trends

In developing a plan which will guide the future of the Township, it is important to look to past and future trends. Understanding the history of Mission Township and the trends that affect the area provide a factual base from which to make sound decisions. Although the past is not a perfect indicator of things to come, it does give perspective on the status of the community and suggests where the township may be heading.

While there can be the tendency to look only within the township borders, Mission Township is part of a larger community in the Central Lakes Region of Minnesota, also known as the Brainerd Lakes Area. This plan provides an analysis of a variety of key demographic indicators in comparison to nearby cities and Crow Wing County as a whole. This analysis and comparison will show how the township compares to neighboring communities and identifies the role that Mission Township plays within the region.

### Population Trends

#### Growth

Mission Township has a small but steadily growing population. In 2000, the United States Census indicated Mission Township had a population of 733 people. These population statistics are based on the number of full-time residents and part-time or seasonal residents who list their Mission Township home as their primary residence. A further breakdown of population and housing statistics show Mission Township with 323 households and 225 families. The township has a population density of 24.8 persons per square mile and a housing unit density of 29.5 units per square mile based on the 871 housing units within the township. The reason for the large number of housing units reported within the township is attributed to the large number of seasonal, recreational and occasional use homes. Another factor regarding population and housing trends is the ratio of year-round homes to homes used for seasonal or recreational purposes. Many communities in the Central Lakes Region have experienced a transition in housing from primarily seasonal homes and cabins to year-round homes.

Crow Wing County as a whole has a higher average density of 55 persons per square mile and an average housing unit density of 34 per square mile with 33,483 total households.

**Table 1: Mission Township Recent Growth 1970 to 2005**

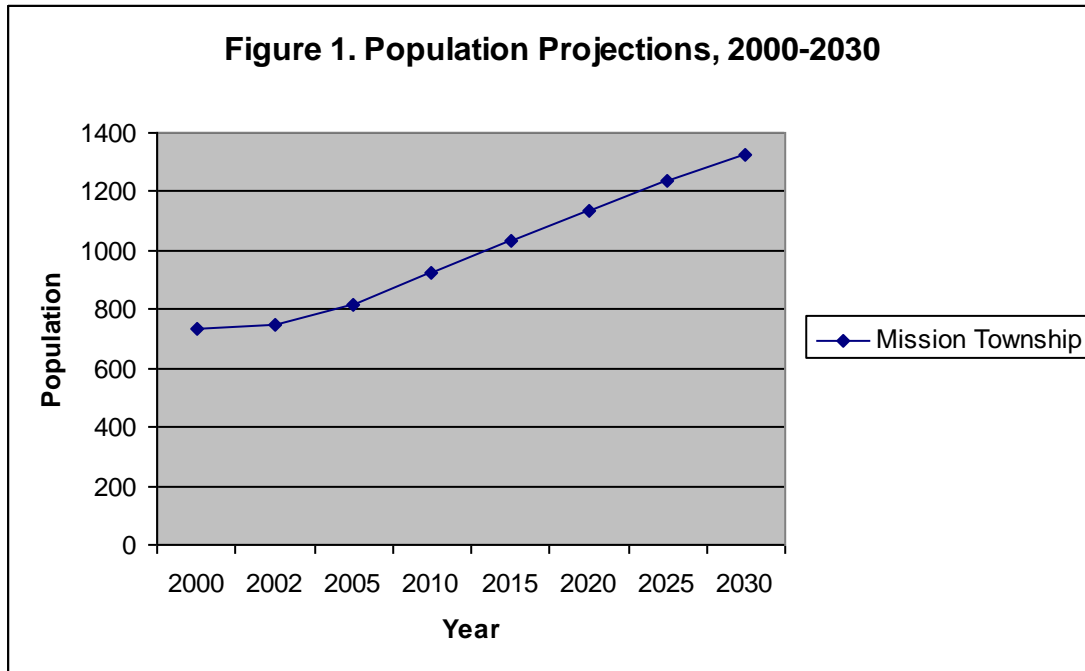
	1970 Population	1980 Population	1990 Population	2000 Population	2005 Population Estimate	% Change 1990- 2005
Mission Township	319	527	514	733	777	51.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**Table 2: Population Projection for Mission Township; Crow Wing County; and Pelican, Ideal, and Perry Lake Townships-2000-2030**

	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Mission Township	777*	925	1031	1138	1239	1328
Crow Wing County	61,080	67,090	73,400	79,420	85,120	90,240
Pelican Township	471	552	635	717	796	869
Ideal Township	1030	1137	1247	1354	1458	1554
Perry Lake Township	264	287	311	334	356	377

\*Based on estimate published by U.S. Census Bureau  
Source: MN State Demographer's Office



Source: MN State Demographer's Office

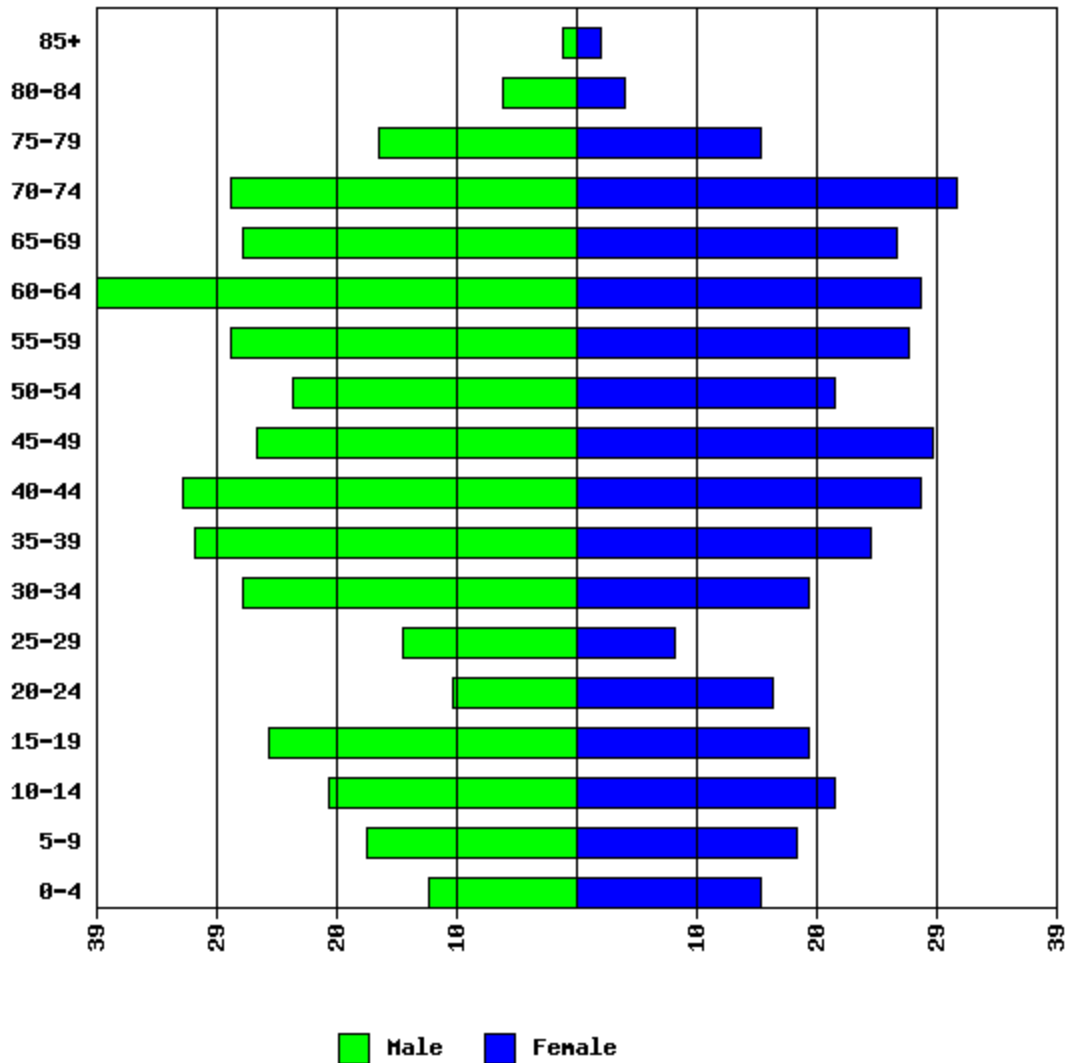
### Age Groups

Eighteen percent of Mission Township residents are under 18 years of age, 5.5 percent are between 18 and 24 years old, 25 percent are from 25 to 44, 30 percent are from 45 to 64, and 21 percent are 65 years of age or older. The median age for the township is 46 years old. As expected, there is a decline in college-age young adults as they must leave

Mission Township to attend an institution of higher learning or pursue other opportunities. The largest percentage of township residents consist of adults in their prime working years (ages 25-64). Much of this attributed to advances in technology and transportation which allow working adults to work remotely in Mission Township or commute to the Brainerd area for employment. As the baby boomer population ages and seeks out amenity-rich areas for retirement, the percentage of residents in these older cohorts increases. With the continuation of large amounts of workers retiring and moving to the Central Lakes Region the increase in the retirement population within Mission Township is expected to continue.

Within Crow Wing County, 25 percent of residents are less than 18 years of age, 8 percent are between the ages of 18 and 24, 26 percent are between the ages of 25 and 44, 24.5 percent between the ages of 45 and 64, and 17 percent are age of 65 or older. The county's median age is 39 years.

**2000 Population for all races:  
Mission township (Crow Wing County)**



Source: MN State Demographer's Office

The age groupings show that Mission Township has generally older population percentage in comparison to Crow Wing County and a higher percentage of retirees.

**Households**

Twenty percent (20%) of the households in the township contain children under 18 years old, 64 percent are married couples living together, and 10.5 percent consist of a senior over 65 years old living alone. The average household size is 2.27 and the average family size is 2.72. The size of households is similar to the regional trend, and the downward trend in family size is reflective of the growing number of residents choosing to live in the area following retirement.

Crow Wing County has an average household size of 2.43 persons and an average family size of 2.93. The lower household and family sizes in Mission Township can be attributed to the higher amount of retirees and empty-nesters.

**Housing Units**

Mission Township has experienced consistent growth in the number of housing units within the Township over the past few decades. More surprisingly is the fact that the number of housing units within the Township actually exceeds the Township’s total population according the U.S. Census data. This is due to a rise in the number of permanent residents relocating to the area as well as the increased development of seasonal and recreational homes.

	1970	1980	1990	2000	1990-2000 Change	
					Number	Percent
Housing Units	402	590	801	871	70	8.74

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2000)

**Seasonal and Recreational Dwellings**

Nearly 61% of all housing units within Mission Township were reported in the 2000 U.S. Census as used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Although specific data does not exist on the increase in the number of housing units since then, it is assumed that this number has continued to climb. The following table shows the status of housing units reported as “vacant” by the 2000 U.S. Census.

	Mission township, Crow Wing County, Minnesota
Total Vacant Housing Units	548
For rent	0
For sale only	3
Rented or sold, not occupied	6
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	531
For migrant workers	0
Other vacant	8

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2000)

**Income**

Based on 2000 Census information, the median household income in Mission Township is \$41,750, with the median family income being \$46,932. The per capita income for the township is \$26,503. Even with these income amounts, about five percent of families and four percent of the population were reported as having incomes at or below the poverty line.



Income data from that same year shows that Crow Wing County has a median household income of \$37, 589 and a median family income of \$44,847, both lower than the median income reported for Mission Township. The county per capita income is \$19,174. On a county-wide level, 6.5 percent of families and about 10 percent of the population are at or below the poverty line.

In comparison, nearly five percent of Mission Township households reported earnings above \$200,000 in that same year.

<b>Household and Family Income in 1999</b>				
<b>Income</b>	<b>Households</b>		<b>Families</b>	
	<b>Data</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Data</b>	<b>%</b>
Total:	313	100.0	215	100.0
\$0 to \$24,999	70	22.4	32	14.9
\$25,000 to \$49,999	115	36.7	81	37.7
\$50,000 to \$99,999	105	33.5	82	38.1
\$100,000 to \$200,000	10	3.2	10	4.7
\$200,000 or more	13	4.2	10	4.7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2000)

### **Income, Property Value, Tax Base and Opportunity**

A highly valued property tax base allows a community such as Mission Township the opportunity to provide a higher degree of quality community services while retaining a lower real estate tax rate for individual and commercial real estate tax payers. This enables Mission Township to consider options not available to many other communities such as paved township roads, trails, fire and emergency services, parks and community facilities. The Township would be remiss not to recognize and take advantage of this opportunity to continue improvements in our community without overburdening tax payers.

## Section 3. The Future

### Creating a Vision

The residents of Mission Township initially created a comprehensive plan in 1996. To ensure that Mission Township leads growth and development and not the reverse, the township began the process of creating a new vision for their community through the preparation of a new comprehensive plan.

### The Environment

Mission Township is fortunate in that there are abundant natural resources throughout the community. Forests and forested land accounts for 85 percent of the entire land area within the township and, including surface water areas, accounts for a total of 72 percent of the entire township area. Numerous lakes are present in the community and when the total water surface area of those lakes is combined with all wetlands within the township we find that surface waters account for 21 percent of total township area. The majority of these wetland areas are located along the banks or in the vicinity of rivers. Areas that are classified as wetlands include swamps, bogs, marshes, and wet meadows. These wetlands may be difficult to discern since the majority of the wetlands are bogs and shrub swamps. These types of wetlands have heavy vegetation cover that blends them in with their surroundings. In reality, the soils beneath them are heavily saturated with water, and in some cases, actually may have standing water beneath their vegetation. Wetlands provide nesting habitat for many bird species, including ducks and other game birds. Turtles, deer, and other animals also rely on wetlands for water, habitat, and breeding. A small portion of the community (seven percent) is made up of grasslands, residences, and urban areas. The grassland and agricultural areas are primarily located in the central portion of the township and away from major lakes and waterways.

**Table 3:** Mission Township Land Cover Classifications

Land Cover Type	Square Acres	% of Total Area
Forested land	24.9486	72.02
Wetlands	1.8846	5.44
Developments/urban	0.9220	2.66
Grasslands/open land	1.5734	4.54
Open Water	5.3147	15.34

Source: Minnesota DNR

A large amount of Mission Township land cover today bears a resemblance to pre-European conditions. Historic vegetation and land cover was considered to be primarily forests, wetlands, and prairies. The majority of land cover consisted of jack pine barrens and openings along with aspen-birch forests trending to conifers. There were also areas of conifer bogs and swamps, mixed white and red pine woodlands, wet prairies, and river

bottom forests. While some human development of the area has occurred along with an updated surface cover classification scheme, the township of today looks much as it has for centuries.

Mission Township has a large amount of forests and forested land area with 72 percent of lands classified as such. While some of these areas have been fragmented by agricultural, housing, and infrastructure development, many patches of core forest habitat remain. These patches of core habitat and their surrounding edge forest habitat provide many of the outdoor recreational and scenic amenities including hiking and walking, hunting, nature watching, and trail use within the township. Protecting and connecting existing prime patches of forest will keep the aesthetic and natural character of the town intact and provide a base where human development and enjoyment can occur with minimal impact on wildlife and their habitats.

## **Core and Edge Forest**

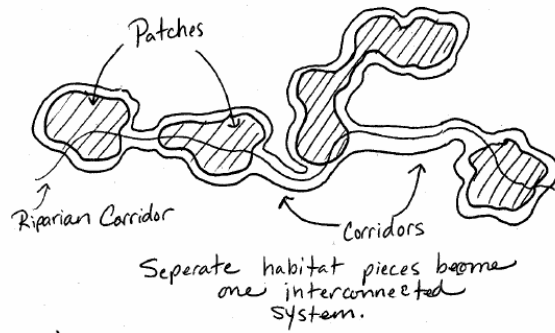
Most forested land in Mission Township occurs in tracts throughout the township with some fragmented areas in existence. Inner forest – also known as “core” forest – is becoming more rare in the central area of Crow Wing County, including Mission Township, as land develops and forests are further fragmented by roads and housing developments. Core forest constitutes interior forest lands at least 100 feet from the “edge” of a forest. Edge forest is generally characterized by transitional phases of forest development and situated along a natural or human created opening.

Edge forest supports a diverse array of game species that are more tolerant of disturbance and human interaction, including grouse, deer, fox, black bear and hares.

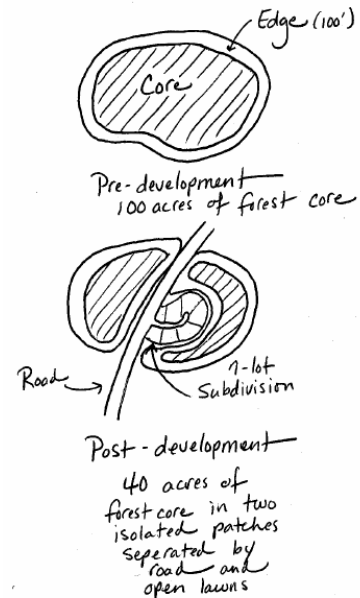
Core forest, which is characterized by more mature forest tree species – such as white pine, Norway pine, oaks and maples – supports wildlife species that require a greater degree of privacy and cover, and that require more mature trees and plant species found only in forest groundcover. These species include martens, fishers, wolves, and migratory songbirds such as warblers and vireos.

Efforts to link forest core patches via natural “corridors”, particularly via “riparian” corridors, can help to support wildlife populations in both core and edge forest habitat.

## **Insert “Forested Areas” map**



Large tracts of core forest patches left intact also ensure the longevity of core wildlife species. One road or small subdivision bisecting a core forest patch can drastically reduce the amount of core forest habitat and isolate wildlife populations that previously interacted and existed as one population.



Mission Township contains areas with low, medium, and high susceptibility to groundwater contamination as determined by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Two-thirds of the township's land area has a high potential for groundwater contamination due to the underlying sand and gravel soil. The majority of this soil type is located in the northern two-thirds of the township. About one-sixth of the township has lacustrine deposits as its underlying soil and is classified as having medium contamination potential. This area is entirely located in the southwestern corner of the township. Scattered throughout the central and northeastern portions of the township are areas with low contamination susceptibility and an underlying composition of glacier till. These areas represent the easiest places to build as far as ease of locating wastewater treatment facilities and the least risk for contaminating groundwater. Contamination potential should be taken into consideration when constructing buildings and structures and waste treatment systems to avoid fouling surface and groundwater.

Mission Township has eight different watersheds within its borders. A watershed is the greatest geographical extent away from a body or bodies of water where water molecules will flow to that water body. There are two unnamed watersheds and six named ones. The named watersheds include Little Pine River in the northeast corner, Pine River in the north-central region, Pelican Brook in the northwest, Pelican Lake along the western boundary, Mission Creek in the south-central region, and Mississippi River in the southeastern section of the community.

The suitability of an area for a septic system depends on factors including the type of soil and how much suitable land is available. Parcels to be developed must have enough useable land to place a primary system and space for installation of a second system should the primary one become unusable. The parts of Mission where limitations are

not a factor occur around Flanders, Mud, and Little Bass Lake; in the northeast corner around Goggle Lake; and in the southeast around the convergence of County Road 109 and County Road 19.

The geomorphology of the township varies based on location and nine different morphological categories exist. The types comprising the most land surface include: hummocky near shore lake sands in the southwest, level outwash in the north and central areas, hummocky drift along the eastern border, rolling to undulating outwash in the southeast, hummocky drift in the north. Other categories comprising smaller geographical areas are: level near shore lake sands, hummocky outwash, outwash channel, hummocky till plain.

The township has slight elevation changes and topography does not play a very substantial roll in resources and development. Slopes greater than twelve percent are rare and over half of steep slopes are in publicly-owned protected areas. Elevation in Mission varies from a low of 917 feet along the northern shore of Upper Mission Lake to a high of 1,313 feet along the western edge of Flanders and Mud Lake and at the convergence of County 109 and County 19.

Mission is endowed with numerous lakes. Out of these bodies of water, three are general development lakes, three are recreational development lakes, and ten are natural environment lakes.

**Table 4: Mission Township Lake Inventory**

Lakes are classified as General Development (GD), Recreational Development (RD), and Natural Environment (NE).

Section	Lake Name	Lake Classification
1	Adney	GD
1, 12,	Goggle	RD
7, 8, 17, 18,	Greenwood	NE
11	Lake L	NE
14	#18-249 (Unnamed)	NE
16	Flanders	NE
17, 18, 19, 20, 29	Horseshoe	RD
18, 19	Pelican	GD
19, 30	Young	NE
21	Little Bass	NE
23	#18-225 (Unnamed)	NE
27, 28, 33, 34	Upper Mission	GD
29, 32	Bass	RD
30	West Twin	NE
30	#18-258 (Unnamed)	NE
30	East Twin	NE
31	Bonnie	NE

32	Duck	NE
21	Mud Lake	NE
24	Fool Lake	NE
33	Lower Mission	RD

Smaller lot sizes on general and recreational development lots allow a greater number of people to reside and play on these lakes. The larger size that exists on natural environment lakes tries to reduce the number of residents and structures along their lakeshores to help protect the habitat and make a more rural appearance.

**Insert 'MSNT\_Sidebar on Lakes' PDF here**

## Land Use

The rural, forested setting interspersed with lakes in Mission Township was one of the most commonly noted strength of the community identified by residents through community visioning sessions. Most current land uses take advantage of one or both of these amenities or provide limited services to residents and visitors. The challenge for the township is to employ strategies that maintain the rural character of the community without compromising individual property rights.

### **Insert “072706MissionTWP 012” photo**

Forests comprise the largest portion of land and the predominant use of land in Mission Township. Ownership of forested areas is a mix of private individuals, companies like the Potlatch Corporation, and public entities. In addition to private landholders, three forest preservation programs are currently in place within Mission to preserve forests and forested parcels.

The majority of the land along the northern and eastern border of the township is part of Crow Wing State Forest and is managed by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Land under state jurisdiction is available to all members of the public regardless of where they live or their state or nation of residence. Crow Wing State Forest provides woodland that can be used for hiking, camping, and nature watching.

There are also two parcels of land in the Memorial Forest Program managed by Crow Wing County. One portion of the Memorial Forest land is in the far northeastern corner of the township and the second portion is located just north of Horseshoe Lake in the center of Mission.

A third category of protected forest land within Mission Township is the Minnesota Forest Legacy Program. This program was designated by Congress in 1990 to provide grants to the State of Minnesota to identify and protect environmentally important forested areas within Minnesota that could become subjected to development into other land uses. Mission has eleven parcels within the town borders that are part of this program. Funds from federal and local sources are used to purchase development rights and conservation easements to keep the forests from becoming logged or converted to non-forest uses. The program allows the landowner to continue ownership of the property and use it for forest uses in accordance with the perpetual easement. These uses include recreation, hunting, hiking, and timber management. Conservation easements through this program are purchased from willing owners at the current appraised rate. The areas are primarily located in the northeast quadrant of the township bordering Crow Wing State Forest and the northeast Memorial Forest.

Most private land in the town consists of single-family residences and residential areas with heavy concentrations along lakeshores and the major county roads. The largest concentration of businesses and commercial properties are located along the County

Road 3 corridor and the intersection of County Road 11. These businesses provide limited employment and both basic and ancillary services to residents.



## **Recreation**

Mission Township residents enjoy opportunities for a variety of recreational activities. Community members and visitors enjoy the ability to walk and bike on low-traffic streets, view wildlife and forests in their backyards, on public lands, and on Potlatch Corporation property, recreate using snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles (ATV's) and off-highway vehicles (OHV's), and hunt within their community. Snowmobile trails currently exist within Mission and their locations are in the northeastern corner skirting Goggle Lake, within Forest Legacy land in the center of the town, and extending to the northern and southern boundaries and County Road 3. Water and beach recreation options are available at the township's 27 main lakes and numerous smaller lakes and rivers. Four public lake access points exist on Upper Mission, Bass, and Horseshoe Lakes and along County Road 11. Residents also utilize Mission Park and its recreation facilities for sports and leisure.

These resources are valuable to township residents and they would like to see these amenities preserved and enhanced where possible. Residents are concerned that poorly planned or unplanned growth can degrade species habitat and reduce nature viewing and hunting opportunities.

Residents would like to see an expansion of park facilities, trails and publicly-owned land. The past availability of Potlatch Corporation land for public enjoyment and use and the continued availability of this land have come into question. Conservation or recreational agreements or easements or the acquisition of this land by Mission Township or Crow Wing County are methods to ensure the continued public use and enjoyment of Potlatch Corporation land by town residents.

## **Insert Recreational Opportunities Map**

## Section 4. Implementation: Goals and Strategies

Residents and property owners in Mission Township developed goals through a series of public meeting to address the issues that face the township and to provide future planning direction for the community. The goals are divided into five categories: Community Character, Growth and Development, Natural Resources, Recreation, and Services and Facilities. Strategies to meet each of the goals were also developed by residents and property owners.

### Community Character

Residents of Mission Township defined the community character as: *Mission Township is a vibrant and progressive rural community with an environment rich in natural resources. The community consists of established and newer residents which represent the entire range of demographic groups and whom enjoy their recreational and natural resource amenities.*

**Goal 1:** Protect and enhance local landmarks, historic and archeological sites, social gathering places, and natural features of Mission Township.

The natural features of the township and the cultural and community resources that are present are of great pride to the residents of Mission. Protecting flora and fauna habitat and human-created areas like the cemetery and the town park should be done in conjunction with one another to continue providing high quality scenic and recreational opportunities to residents and visitors of Mission. These areas of the community act as focal points for resident interaction and provide character to the community.

To achieve this goal, the following strategies should be implemented:

- Increase board and citizen input, awareness, and support in implementation.
- Have established and enforced zoning requirement.
- Maintain and improve the Mission Cemetery.
- Maintain and enhance the Mission Town Hall, Fire Hall, and Mission Park.
- Enhance the waste transfer station and include expanded recycling options.
- Protect and mark Native American mounds and Mission Township historical sites.
- Maintain the rural character of the township.

**Goal 2:** Support traditional activities such as festivals and other events that bring the community together.

Community events not only provide entertainment and recreation to residents, but they foster a sense of community by providing a place and time to meet your neighbors and make new friends and they bring in visitors who contribute to the local economy.

Keeping public interest levels up for current festivities and looking to expand social gatherings and offerings within Mission supports the town's character and provides a higher quality of life for residents who wish to participate in communal activities.

To achieve this goal, the following strategies should be implemented:

- Utilize established and predictable communication methods to increase stakeholder involvement and awareness (email, mail, radio, etc.).
- Create and maintain a town website that includes a calendar of events and information about the community.
- Publish and distribute a quarterly newsletter.
- Hold Township sponsored events like a township potluck.
- Support community events like the annual Fire Fair, 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade and Celebration, Boat Parades, Halloween Hay Ride, etc.
- Promote a sense of unity with community events of all ages.
- Promote growth and development which provides a bridge between older residents and younger residents, year round residents and seasonal residents.

## **Growth and Development**

**Goal 1:** Manage growth and development in a manner consistent with the rural community character goal defined by the Township.

The residents of Mission Township have described and defined their community as one having a rural character and nature. Growth and development that occurs within the town should be harmonious with existing development to maintain the natural amenities and forest and lake feel of the community. Development should not only be physically compatible with existing structures and development patterns but also visually compatible.

To achieve this goal, the following strategies should be implemented:

- Maintain the features of the township which attract new residents to the community and keep residents within the community.
- Manage growth and development to maintain the recreational and environmental features of the township.
- Have large lots to space out development.
- Allow commercial development in designated areas (example along County Road 3).
- One unit per 40 acres zoning in forested land or Potlatch land to maintain the forested and outdoor recreation feel of the township.
- Require a 2.5 or 5 acre lot minimum
- Establish zones for commercial and industrial, agricultural, residential, and green space uses.
- Encourage more green space.

- Maintain the rural character of the township to sustain the natural features of Mission Township.
- Encourage cluster development on parcels not abutting a lakeshore.

**Goal 2:** Promote growth and development which provides a bridge between residents who have resided within the township for years and newer residents.

Community cohesiveness is the foundation of any stable community. Preventing insider versus outsider conflict and treating all people in Mission fairly allows the township to focus its energy and resources on more important resident needs. Maintaining a cordial relationship between long-term residents and new arrivals will encourage participation in community events, reduced nuisances and disputes among neighbors, and promote a stronger township as a whole for current and future generations.

To achieve this goal, the following strategy should be implemented:

- Administer and enforce uniform regulations for both established and new residents.

**Goal 3:** Manage growth and development to maintain the vibrant and progressive-rural community character of Mission Township while protecting important natural environmental features.

Growth and development can be done in harmony with the local surroundings and character of Mission Township. Community amenities should be preserved and enhanced while growth is accommodated. Much of the rural character and feel of the community is due to the forests, lakes, and rural roads lined with trees and vegetation. These natural features make Mission the community that it is today and will retain and attract residents into the future.

To achieve this goal, the following strategies should be implemented:

- Improve dilapidated homes and structures and clean up properties.
- Remove unlicensed vehicles from township properties.
- Limit tree removal on residential properties.
- Require tree buffer zones in commercial areas.
- Have a proactive Town Board.
- Network individual lake associations together.
- Legislate and enforce architectural controls that are harmonious with the environment.

**Goal 4:** Effectively manage population growth and land development through the implementation of Township-level policies and programs

There are a variety of actions that the township can take or consider taking that will provide more local control of growth and development within Mission's borders. Options are available under the current county-township relationship of land use

decisions and other paths may be considered to provide greater autonomy and local decision-making authority to the township.

To achieve this goal, the following strategies should be implemented:

- The Township Planning Committee will continue to be responsible for the monitoring and implementation of the Mission Township Comprehensive Plan, especially the following:
  1. Consider the establishment of an official Township Planning Agency.
  2. Consider the implementation of township local land use control instead of local land use control administered by the County.
  3. Consider the development of a township land use ordinance.
  4. Consider costs associated with the implementation of Township ordinances and Planning Agency.
  5. Consider contracting a qualified company to successfully implement, administer and enforce a Township land use ordinance.
- Prevent unauthorized dumping on private property.
- Control and establish the rate of growth (example: a specific number or percent of permits allowed per year; permits as a percentage of population growth).
- Implement policies which will support and maintain larger lot sizes within the Township.
- Update categories of businesses keeping them environmentally friendly and include home-based businesses.
- Improve timely communication between boards and their constituents.
- Solicit grant writers to tap into additional and alternate funding sources.
- Invite the chamber of commerce and local communities to Mission Township meetings.
- Maintain the rural appearance of public roadways through screening such as tree and shrub placement in front of buildings and rear onsite commercial parking.
- Restrict new businesses to a central location at the junction of County Roads 3 and 11.
- Develop parking restrictions to accommodate onsite parking for businesses' average daily use.

## **Natural Resources**

**Goal 1:** Preserve an atmosphere that supports human development while fostering wildlife growth and protection.

As human growth occurs in Mission Township, it should be done in a manner consistent with the natural and rural characteristics of the community. Properly planned development will manage growth to be harmonious with the ecosystem and visual preferences of residents and visitors.

To achieve this goal, the following strategies should be implemented:

- Manage growth in a manner consistent with the goal of maintaining the Township's rural character.
- Require and encourage landscaping and green space as part of development and redevelopment proposals.
- Maintain the trees and tree buffers along public roadways.
- Protect existing natural resources.
- Maintain access to local lakes, forest lands, and public lands for recreation.

**Goal 2:** Implement measures and cultivate partnerships which will effectively preserve and improve water, shoreland, and shoreline quality within the Township.

Lakes and waterways are benefits and natural amenities in the area that is Mission today. Water bodies have constrained and defined growth patterns in the past and they continue to provide excellent scenic and recreational opportunities to current inhabitants. Water quality is important to the health of humans and wildlife and the shore area should be protected to ensure the continued benefit to the community that water provides.

To achieve this goal, the following strategies should be implemented:

- Maintain and preserve shoreline buffer zones between development and water along the shore.
- Educate residents on shore protection measures.
- Provide incentives to protect and reestablish natural shorelines.
- Partner with lake associations to improve lake quality and access.
- Promote educational meetings between the township and the DNR regarding lake matters.
- Maintain shoreline rules and regulations.
- Develop and implement restrictions on docks and disruption of lake and shoreline habitat for fish and wildlife.

**Goal 3:** Implement measures and cultivate partnerships which will effectively preserve forests and forested land, habitat, hunting lands, and other natural resources.

Forested land, natural resources, and hunting lands share an equal importance as does water for the residents of Mission Township and every effort should be made to protect and sustain them. Forests provide scenic beauty, recreational space, and habitat for a multitude of flora and fauna species. Forests define the "Minnesota North Woods" and break up lines of sight to promote the rural aspect of the town.

To achieve this goal, the following strategies should be implemented:

- Public entities (township, county, state, and others) purchase land to keep open for public recreation and nature preservation.
- Identify a priority list for land to preserve to most efficiently allocate available and potential resources.
- Establish a forest legacy program with the township purchasing or acquiring property for green space.
- Establish a relationship as a township with the Potlatch Corporation.

## Recreation

**Goal 1:** Develop measures to better control and accommodate off-road motorized vehicle use and ridership.

Off-road motorized vehicles provide an important recreational and transportation option within Mission Township. Riders, motorists, and property owners share a joint responsibility in education and enforcement of safety rules and regulation pertaining to off-road vehicles. Steps should be taken to allow continued enjoyment of motorized recreation. For the purposes of this goal, the phrase off-road motor vehicles include all-terrain vehicles (ATV), motorized bikes and similar vehicles.

To achieve this goal, the following strategies should be implemented:

- Coordinate with the Crosslake Police Department and the Crow Wing County Sheriff Department to address off-road motor vehicle enforcement concerns.
- Promote or provide public education on off-road motor vehicle ridership, possibly at Mission Town Hall.
- Establish and designate off-road motor vehicle trails for use by Township residents.
- Establish a Township Trails Committee responsible for the implementation of trails related goals and strategies of the Mission Township Comprehensive Plan and subsequent plans.

**Goal 2:** Maintain and improve the ability of all residents to enjoy and utilize the natural and human-created community amenities.

Residents have a collective right to use and enjoy publicly-owned and operated land and there is a desire to maintain and expand public recreational options. Maintaining park land within the township will promote community interaction and involvement along with improved fitness and health of residents. Mission needs to continue to allow and provide for public access to the recreational facilities and community amenities that make the area a great place to live and work.

To achieve this goal, the following strategies should be implemented:

- Create, designate, and maintain motorized and non-motorized trails in the township including paved walking and hiking trails.
- Maintain and improve Mission Park and acquire land surrounding the park for future expansion.
- Establish a community center and new Township offices at or adjacent to Mission Park.
- Consider indoor bathroom facilities at Mission Park.
- Create a music pavilion/band stand at Mission Park.
- Work more closely with lake associations to protect and preserve the natural environment.

- Implement policies and funding strategies to maintain and achieve our parks and recreation related goals.
- Maintain and expand youth and adult tennis, basketball, hockey, soccer, baseball, and other sports programs.
- Maintain public hunting lands.

**Goal 3:** Develop a well maintained, well planned, and safe trail network for motorized and non-motorized users.

A trail network independent of the road system is necessary to provide safe and enjoyable areas for hiking, walking, biking, skating, and motorized recreational travel. Community health and fitness levels depend on the availability of facilities and facility use should be promoted among all residents and visitors. Dedicated trails for motorized and non-motorized users will prevent dangerous confrontations between different modes of travel and help ensure the safety of all users. Planning trails prior to development reduces cost and time and can help guide development to appropriate areas of the town. Trails also provide alternate transportation choices, links to outside municipalities and recreational amenities, and associated preservation alongside the trails themselves.

To achieve this goal, the following strategies should be implemented:

- Develop a trails plan which specifically identifies a paved non-motorized walking and biking trail network.
- Provide informative and educational signage about town trails.
- Provide trail maps for the public to include the entire township.
- Provide paved walking, biking, roller-blading and cross-country skiing trails along major roadways and in residential areas.
- Provide motorized trails in undeveloped and forest areas within the township.
- Work with Crow Wing County to ensure all paved trails running along County roads are detached to a safe distance from the roadway surface.

## **Services and Facilities**

**Goal 1:** Provide a well maintained, well planned, and safe roadway network throughout Mission Township.

Roads are the primary means of travel within Mission Township and they provide the links to outside communities. The township has a good existing system of roadways and plans for their maintenance. Road development, improvement, and maintenance need to keep up with growth to ensure a continued high level of service. Safety is of paramount concern and all township roads need to be constructed and maintained to prevent injury and property damage.

To achieve this goal, the following strategies should be implemented:



- Pave all roads and maintain the high level of maintenance as growth occurs.
- Increase signage and enforcement.
- Establish a plan and timeline for providing paved trails along roadways and integrate that plan with the Township road plan.
- Provide two and five year plans for scheduled road maintenance.
- Begin setting aside funds for paved walking and biking trails.

**Goal 2:** Provide for improvements to the town hall and fire hall which will meet the requirements and demands of the community to include staffing and office needs and a community center.

As the community grows and the demand for services increases, the township needs a plan and strategies to accommodate the increased need for space for governmental and community functions. The quality of buildings and services offered is as important as the amount of space provided as these are the outward symbols of the township as an entity that are presented to the public.

To achieve this goal, the following strategies should be implemented:

- Explore options for a new community center at the town hall or at Mission Park to include space for town office needs.
- Expand and retrofit the fire hall to incorporate the entire existing building.
- Set aside funds for a new community center and town hall.

**Goal 3:** Maintain the existing high level of emergency services and partnerships which provide emergency services to township residents.

- a. Mission Township Volunteer Fire Department and First Responders
- b. North Memorial Ambulance
- c. Crow Wing Sheriff's Office
- d. Crosslake Police Department (part-time)

The high level of emergency services are a major draw for residents of Mission and their presence provides personal and property protection. The existing high level of availability and response needs to expand with growth so service provision is not limited or diminished. All residents and areas of the township need equal coverage and response should an emergency occur.

To achieve this goal, the following strategies should be implemented:

- Increase law enforcement and enforcement presence.
- Establish lake patrols to increase safety.

**Goal 4:** Support Individual Sewage Treatment System (ISTS) compliance and inspection programs which provide improved management and safety and effectiveness of systems.

With its rural location, Mission Township residents and businesses are served by private wastewater treatment and septic systems. These systems provide the means to develop and live in Mission and any potential environmental or groundwater harm should be prevented. This can be accomplished through the use of acceptable systems and regular maintenance and inspection. Environmental degradation and increased personal and public costs from failing or failed systems can be prevented through participation in ISTS compliance and inspection programs. Mission is predominately sandy and sandy loam soil which is great for working septic systems but exacerbates contamination when a system fails since sewage flows go straight through sand.

To achieve this goal, the following strategy should be implemented:

- Have the township support the Crow Wing County sanitary sewer district.

## **Section 5. Future Land Use**

The residents and officials of Mission Township prepared a future land use map as part of implementing the land use vision of the township. The map contains the following land use designations that will serve as a guideline for making decisions on future rezoning requests.

- **Open Space:** A designation for the preservation of environmentally-sensitive areas, unique resources, and other designated non-developable lands. Areas such as wetlands, lakes, bluffs, threatened and endangered species habitat, historic sites, and land set aside as part of the development process should be zoned Open Space.
- **Recreation:** A designation for lands to be used for public and private recreational facilities.
- **Green Space:** A designation for the preservation of publicly-owned environmentally sensitive lands. Areas included in this classification are part of the Memorial Forest Program, owned by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, owned by Crow Wing County, or have been privately owned but have the potential to come into public ownership. These lands tend to be heavily forested or located in environmentally sensitive areas.
- **Shoreline Residential:** A designation for shoreline properties to be developed residentially.
- **Rural Preservation:** A designation for sustainable management of secluded, rural areas. This classification provides low density, rural residential development and agricultural areas with a suggested minimum lot size of 10 acres. This designation also includes lands

generally identified as agricultural include those which are best suited for rural farmsteads. These properties would generally have low accessibility and limited infrastructure.

- **Neighborhood Residential:** A designation for already developed properties, properties where infrastructure is in place for higher density development, and properties developed as a rural neighborhood cluster. Land in this zone could not be further subdivided unless the land is incorporated into a development on an adjacent property.
- **Rural Residential:** A designation that provides medium density, rural residential development serviced by existing roads. Suggested minimum lot size would be 2.5 acres. Allowances could be made for higher density developments as part of a rural cluster.
- **Conservation Subdivision:** A designation for properties that are non-shoreline and are most suited to being developed using conservation design principles. Conservation design would allow for preservation of open spaces and sensitive areas while allowing increased development flexibility in areas most suitable to development.
- **Commercial:** A designation for non-shoreline property that is suitable for commercial development.

### **Insert Future Land Use Map**

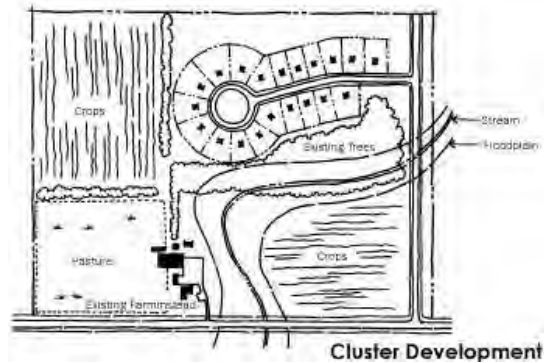
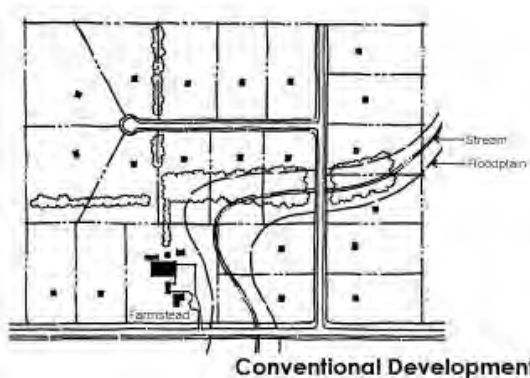
## What is cluster development?

The basic premise of cluster development is to group new homes onto part of the property to be developed and preserve the rest of the property as open space. The clustering of the homes can have dual benefits:

- building more homes than would otherwise be permitted
- protecting natural resources

Typically, subdivision design divides up all the development property so that the entire property is designated as private residential parcels or as roadway, regardless of the natural resources, topography, or surrounding development in the area.

On the other hand, cluster development would place the new homes on smaller lots usually using no more than half of the development property while designating the remainder of the property as public open space through transfer of development rights (TDR), conservation easements, or land trusts managed through a homeowners or property owners association.



## **Appendix. Additional Planning Maps**