

2.0 COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

2.1 POPULATION

The relationship between people and their city's leisure, outdoor recreation, and space is the basis of recreation planning and design. Therefore, historical population data and future population trends are used as justification for providing recreation facilities and services. Available current data and future projections make it possible to compare population data within the City of Escanaba, its surrounding townships and Delta County to anticipate future recreational and leisure needs.

The City of Escanaba achieved its highest population level in 1960 and has experienced moderate loss in population since.

**TABLE #1
POPULATION TRENDS**

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
City of Escanaba	15,391	15,368	14,355	13,659	13,140
Delta County	34,298	35,934	38,947	37,780	39,520

SOURCE: U.S. Census, 2000

Delta County as a whole, on the other hand has shown a moderate increase in population with the population expected to stabilize for at least the next decade. While the City has experienced a moderate decline in population since the 1990 census, several of residential townships surrounding the City experience a stable and increasing population since 1990.

**TABLE #2
POPULATION TRENDS IN ESCANABA AREA**

	1980	1990	2000
City of Escanaba	14,355	13,659	13,140
Wells Township	5,181	5,159	5,044
Ford River Township	2,136	2,002	2,241
Escanaba Township	3,229	3,340	3,587

SOURCE: U.S. Census, 2000

Table #2 reinforces a countywide population distribution trend where some residential townships around the City are growing at a more significant rate. The period from 1990 to the present illustrate a positive economic climate in Delta County with more people electing to reside in the townships.

The City's population trends have been affected by social, economic and space factors. Increased residential construction in the townships surrounding the City has resulted in smaller households in the City and an increase of the number of households within the townships. Few residential building lots are available in the City as compared to numerous open and wooded lots available in the immediate surrounding area. Table #3 reinforces a

decade long trend of smaller household sizes in the City and further illustrates a significant increase in the number of households in the townships as compared to the City.

**TABLE #3
HOUSEHOLDS AND AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE**

Unit	# of Households		Average Household Size	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
City of Escanaba	5,728	5,800	2.32	2.19
Wells Township	1,736	1,847	2.92	2.72
Ford River Township	743	909	2.69	2.47
Escanaba Township	1,087	1,290	3.03	2.76

SOURCE: U.S. Census, 2000

The primary factor affecting the City's population since 1990 is people opting for rural/semi-rural residential areas in the townships. As stated previously, the residential areas of the townships offer large lots, rural living and lower property taxes. It is expected that a reversal of this trend will occur as the population begins to age, there will be a need to be closer to services an older population desires.

Table #4, Age-Sex Composition, highlights an interesting trend that was identified in 1990 and continues today. The City's population continues to age and is aging at a rate higher than the County as a whole.

**TABLE #4
AGE-SEX COMPOSITION**

	Total	Male (%)	Female (%)	0 - 17 (%)	18 - 44 (%)	45 - 64 (%)	65+ (%)
City of Escanaba	13,140	6,140 (46.7)	7,000 (53.3)	2,960 (22.5)	4,583 (34.9)	2,781 (21.2)	2,816 (21.4)
Delta County	38,520	18,913 (49.1)	19,607 (50.9)	9,168 (23.8)	13,058 (33.9)	9,784 (25.4)	6,548 (17.0)

SOURCE: U.S. Census, 2000

Therefore, the data presented in Table #3, Households and Household Average, further reinforces the City population is older and a lesser number of them are living in a greater number of households. The City's Age-Sex data illustrates a relatively stable school-age population (0-17 years) with an increase in the 45+ and 65+ age groups.



The City of Escanaba's moderately declining population over the past decade can be attributed to several factors including (1) young families of the family forming age group (18-44 years) continue to migrate out of area to seek better employment opportunities; (2) an aging of

the City population which continues to comprise of more mature families (45+ years) and the retired group (65+ years) which accounts for small households; (3) young adults of the family forming age group (18-44 years) are continuing to elect rural or semi-rural living in the residential townships surrounding the City; and (4) other prominent nationwide and regional factors that have affected population distribution in the area.

It should be noted, however, that the City's population past, present and future projections - must be evaluated within the context of the Escanaba area's economy. The impact and severe fluctuation of the area's resource based economy during the period 1980 through the early 1990's cannot be understated. During that time period, a concerted effort to diversify the area's economy has been a priority in both the public and private sectors.

A significant increase in total employment since 1993 reflects a trend of stabilization of the City's population, and moderate increases in population in the townships of Delta County. Therefore, the uncertainty of economic circumstances, whether positive or negative, will affect the accuracy of population projections to a matter of speculation.

2.2 ECONOMY

The economic base of an area is the single most important determinant of what its character will be. For the sake of simplification, this plan will focus upon the economy of Delta County in which Escanaba plays the major and pivotal role.

The economic history of Delta County has been dominated through the decades by the forest industry, related forest product occupations, paper production and transportation. Over the past 20 years, new industrial development has cushioned the economic fluctuation of older, established industries.

However, the resource based nature of our area's economy, i.e.: forest products and iron ore transport, have made our economy historically vulnerable to fluctuations. Community appearance, housing, as well as cultural and recreation facilities have been important contributors to the City and County's economic and business climates.

Since 1990, there has been strong employment growth in the City of Escanaba and Delta County. Employment has grown by more than 2,000 jobs since 1990. Table #5 *Labor Force and Employment in Delta County* illustrates the substantial growth of small business and manufacturing, especially evident within Escanaba. Industrial land use in Escanaba continues to occupy 18% of the City's land base.

**TABLE #5
LABOR FORCE AND EMPLOYMENT IN DELTA COUNTY**

YEAR	LABOR FORCE	EMPLOYMENT	UNEMPLOYMENT	%UNEMPLOYMENT
1980	15,722	13,914	1,808	11.5%
1990	16,900	15,275	1,625	9.6%
1993	18,050	16,125	1,925	10.7%
1997	18,950	17,525	1,425	7.5%
2004	19,400	17,775	1,625	8.4%
2005	20,450	19,075	1,375	6.7%

SOURCE: MESC

The steady increase in the labor force can be attributed to more employment in the manufacturing, construction, wholesale and retail trades, and service industries. Table #6 *Employment by Industrial Group in Delta County*, further defines the positive economic growth experienced in Delta County since 1990. Not only did employment increase since 1993 but most importantly, manufacturing jobs were increased back to 1980 levels, prior to the closing of the P & H Crane Plant.

**TABLE #6
EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRIAL GROUP IN DELTA COUNTY**

	1980	1990	2002	2005
Total Employment	13,041	13,500	19,800	12,980
Manufacturing	3,153	3,200	3,225	2,645
Construction/Mining	328	625	825	1000
Transportation/Utilities/Communication	779	750	950	565
Wholesale Trade	350	400	500	248
Retail Trade	1,795	3,025	3,750	2,340
Services	2,270	2,375	3,975	5,523
Finance, Real Estate and Insurance	438	575	600	650
Government	2,170	2,550	2,575	*(Not available)

SOURCE: Michigan Jobs Commission/Employment Services Agency

Table #6, *Employment by Industrial Group* further denotes that manufacturing has and will continue to flourish and be an important source of employment for the people of Delta County and the City of Escanaba. The period 1993 to 1997 denotes the first increase in manufacturing jobs in about the last fifteen-year period. The recent increase in manufacturing jobs kept pace with other industrial groups. Finance/Real Estate/Insurance industries and government experienced the only employment losses since 1993.

Manufacturing activities that do provide a stable economic base have included paper production/forest products. Table #7 *Delta County Major Employers, 2004*, illustrates the stability of paper production, but also industrial diversification and the growth and expansion of hi-tech industries.



New diversity and strengthening of existing industries has been the focus of both the public and private sectors. The Delta Economic Alliance, of which the City of Escanaba is a major

contributor, is an area-wide organization responsible for economic development in Delta County. Sponsored and funded by all major units of government and private sector industries and businesses, the Alliance has been successful by cooperating and working together. Under

this concept, local governments and the business community have pooled resources to hire staff and carry out marketing and promotion activities.

Tourism and tourism related businesses and industries have also played an important role in the diversification of our area's economy. Tourism has been identified as an important part of the economic pie. The 1997 establishment of the Escanaba/Gladstone Convention and Visitors Bureau was formed to market and promote the area's recreation/leisure opportunities with a special focus on our most valuable natural resource - Little Bay de Noc. This plan identifies and prioritizes the several tourism related recreation facilities and projects as important segments to our economic well-being and quality of life.

2.3 TRANSPORTATION

Primary overland access to the City of Escanaba is provided by U.S. 2 & 41 and M35 (North), M35 (South) and U.S. 2 & 41 (West). Air-passenger/freight transportation is provided by two regional air carriers. Air service is provided from the Delta County Airport situated in the southwest portion of the City. (See Map - 3)

Other industrial transportation needs of the City are met by two railroads, Canadian National and Escanaba and Lake Superior Railroad (ELS). Little Bay de Noc also boasts of being one of the finest deep-water ports on the Great Lakes.



Escanaba Municipal
Marina



Escanaba Municipal
Marina

The City of Escanaba owns a large vessel pier at the Municipal Dock. This large docking facility is the only public pier for large boats north of Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin. The City of Escanaba also owns a 165 slip public marina located in Ludington Park. The Escanaba Municipal Marina serves recreational transient pleasure craft plying the waters of northern Lake Michigan and the upper Green Bay. Access to citywide park and recreation facilities, especially Ludington Park/Marina/Beach, which serves regional needs, is more than adequate as sufficient primary arteries and collectors exist to and from Ludington Park.

The City has also expanded the existing bike path/route system by adding 5.5 miles of new path/route from 12th Avenue North to the city limits at the Danforth Road. The Danforth Road bike route shall be incorporated with routes planned in Wells Township, Escanaba Township and the City of Gladstone. Joint Governmental planning has and will continue to include new bike routes to improve non-motorized transport in the Escanaba-Gladstone corridor. Expansion of the area's bike path/route system is suggested in this plan as suggested by the City's *1998 Bikeway Master Plan*.

Any additional or expanded recreation and park facilities that may be constructed in accordance with this plan will pose no serious transportation difficulties. Transportation facilities now servicing existing regional and neighborhood parks and recreation facilities are more than adequate and could facilitate additional traffic volume, if necessary.

2.4 LAND USE

Land use patterns are an important consideration in planning for the recreational needs of a community. Land use statistics and maps will indicate a relationship between recreational areas and the City's population concentrations. Table #8, *Existing Land Use in Acres/City of Escanaba*, illustrates a total of 8,230 acres within the City's corporate limits. The *Land Use Map* also identifies three major use categories.

**TABLE #8
EXISTING LAND USE IN ACRES
CITY OF ESCANABA
(2006)**

LAND USE	ACRES
Residential	1318.83
Shopping/Business/Trade	429.25
Industrial/Manufacturing/Waste	657.36
Social/Institutional/Infrastructure	369.54
Travel/Movement	774.38
Mass Assembly	134.09
Recreation/Leisure	504.51
Vacant/Non-Classifiable	1148.59
Total	5336.55

SOURCE: Escanaba Master Plan, 2006

Of the 5336.55 acres within the City, 504.51 acres are identified for public recreation purposes. The recreation/leisure figure excludes the U.P. State Fairgrounds, Escanaba Country Club (golf course) and those properties donated or purchased by the City west of North 30th Street dedicated to recreation and wetlands preservation. Developed and activity used recreation properties, including schools grounds, represents 3.5% of the total City acreage.

Existing acreage set aside for public recreation use is sufficient except for four (4) deficiencies discussed within the *Recreation Needs* and *Capital Plan* elements of this plan. Open public space is a prime commodity within the City. This plan has identified the need to acquire additional public property for soccer fields, a neighborhood park immediately north of Ludington Street; a pocket park west of North Lincoln Road bounded by 12th Avenue North, 23rd Street and 15th Avenue North; secure an isolated 80 acre tract near the ski pathway west of North 30th Street; and secure necessary easements and properties for multi-use bike paths/non-motorized pathways.



Land use information also does not bear out the fact that vital recreation acreage in some areas of the City may be deteriorated or undeveloped to meet essential needs.

The 1999 Recreation Plan identified the need to interpret existing and projected land use patterns and provide recreation facilities in those areas where especially new residential development is likely to occur. This plan proposes the development of recreation and park facilities especially in those areas zoned multi-family or with a high number of duplex rentals.

A final consideration in regard to land use and future recreation planning is the impact that the seasonal tourist load has upon the City's recreation and park facilities. Increased visitors utilizing city park and recreation facilities, especially during the summer months, is not reflected in the local population statistics or land use allocations. This indicates that the City may need to provide recreation facilities in excess of what the population may indicate.