



# RISE + RESILIENCE

ALPENA, MI



MICHIGAN ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

SMITHGROUP

# THE RISE + RESILIENCE TEAM

The Rise + Resilience technical team consists of staff from MEDC and SmithGroup. A special thanks to all the community members, elected officials, and others who contributed their time, energy, and enthusiasm to this program.

## Committee Members

- Montiel Birmingham | Alpena Planning, Development, & Zoning Director
- Anne Gentry | Alpena Downtown Development Authority Director
- Rachel Smolinski | Alpena City Manger
- Mike Mahler | Alpena Economic Development Director & Alpena Authority for Brownfield Redevelopment Chair
- Steve Shultz | Alpena City Engineer
- Rob Edmonds | Alpena City Fire Department Chief  
Cindy Johnson | Alpena Mayor
- Paige Gordier | Alpena Planning Commissioner and Alpena Community College Vice President of Instruction
- Denise Cline | Northeast Michigan Council of Governments - Deputy Director/ Chief Planner
- Melissa Chambers | Northeast Michigan Council of Governments – Regional Planner
- Samantha Nellis | Huron Pines
- Jeff Scott | Holcim Plant Manager
- Hunter Norstrant | MyMichigan CEO

Image from workshop here  
(GRAB PHOTO IN JULY SESSION!)



SECTION A

# CREATING A SHARED PROCESS

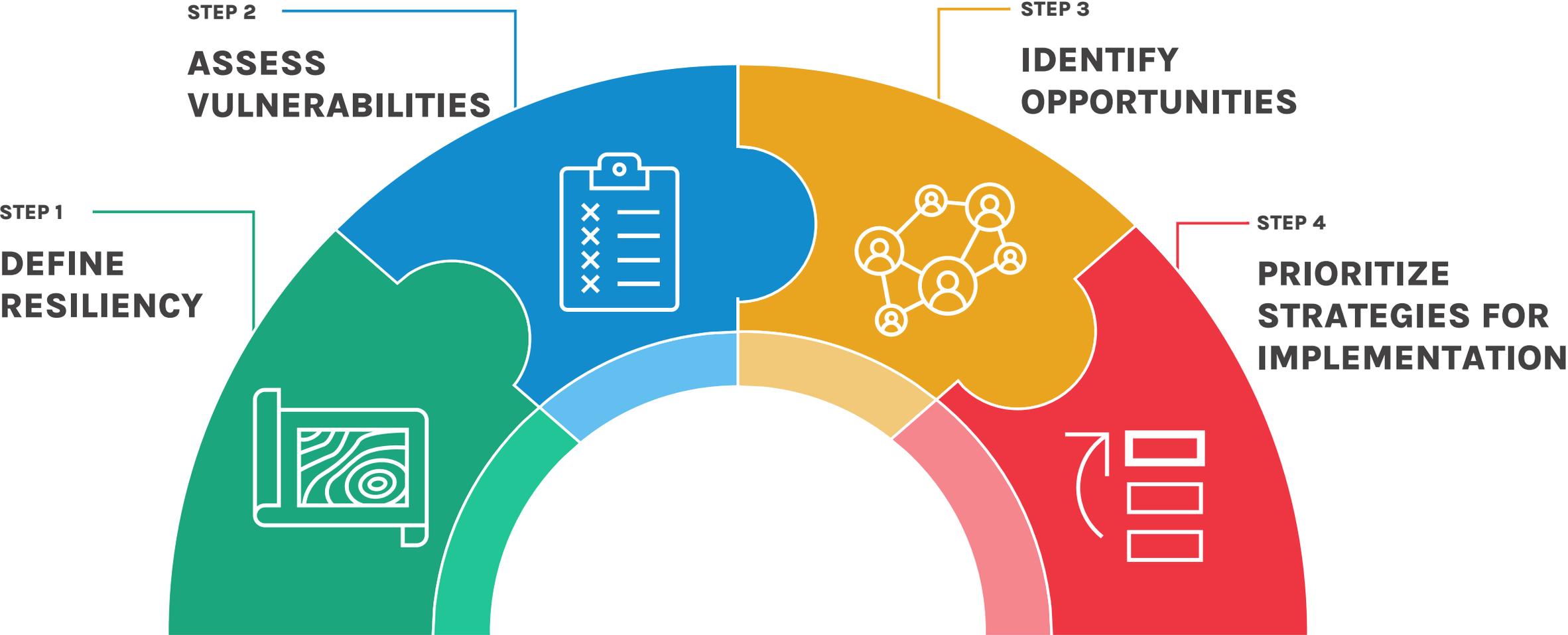


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# PROCESS

The Rise + Resilience Program walks through four steps to understand the biggest challenges Alpena may face in the future and identify actionable steps to prepare and adapt. A workshop with the committee and follow-up with City staff during each phase ensured the team was able to continuously build on findings throughout the process.



SECTION B

# DEFINING RESILIENCE



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## SHOCKS

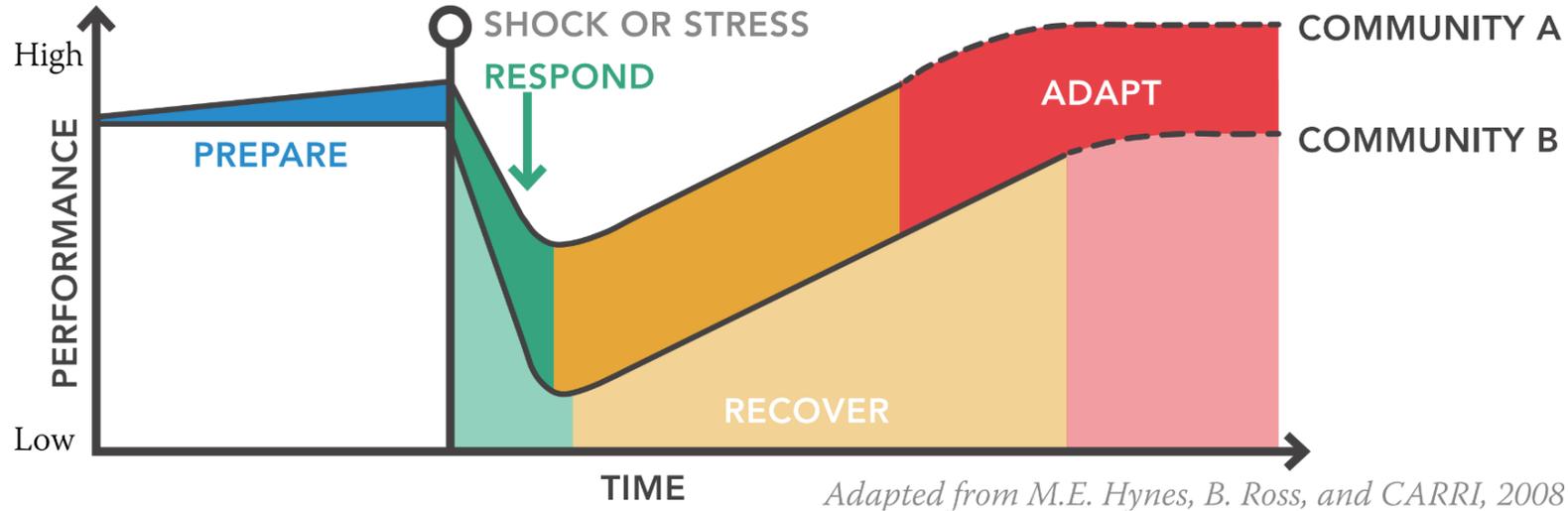
shocks are single event disasters like floods, epidemics, and closures of big employers



## STRESSES

stresses are pressure that happens on a daily or recurring basis like an aging population or sprawling development

# COMMUNITY RESILIENCE WHAT IT MEANS



## RESILIENCE IS THE CAPACITY TO

**PREPARE** for potential disruptions,  
**RESPOND** and **RECOVER** from immediate shocks,  
**ADAPT & THRIVE** through long-term stresses,  
transforming systems for a stronger future

*Planning for resilience **today**  
ensures faster recovery **tomorrow***

# A RESILIENT CITY FROM ALPENA'S PERSPECTIVE

Each city is unique in its needs and vision for the future, making it important for community members to share their own perspectives about what resilience means for them and their neighbors. When asked how Alpena defines resilience, committee members had thoughtful responses that have been summarized and condensed into the statements below.



## PREPARE

Involving the community, and building a strong foundation through preparation and structure



## RECOVER

Knowing who you can count on and what outside resources are available to make it through



## RESPOND

Knowing how to respond to adversity, and doing what you have to do to take care of everyone

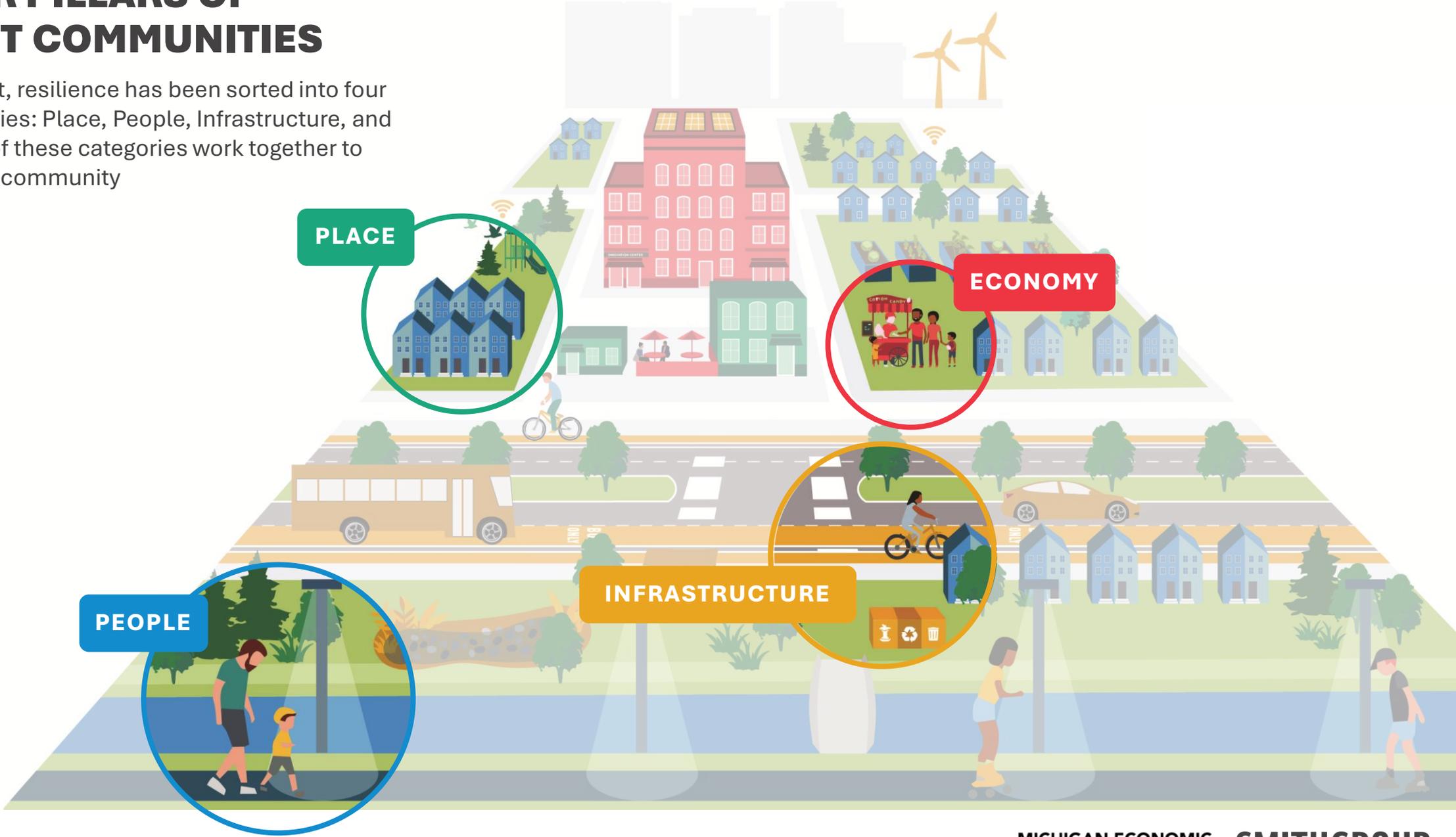


## ADAPT & THRIVE

Being able to adapt to change, move forward, and make your community better than it was before

# THE FOUR PILLARS OF RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

In the RRC Toolkit, resilience has been sorted into four thematic categories: Place, People, Infrastructure, and Economy. Each of these categories work together to create a resilient community



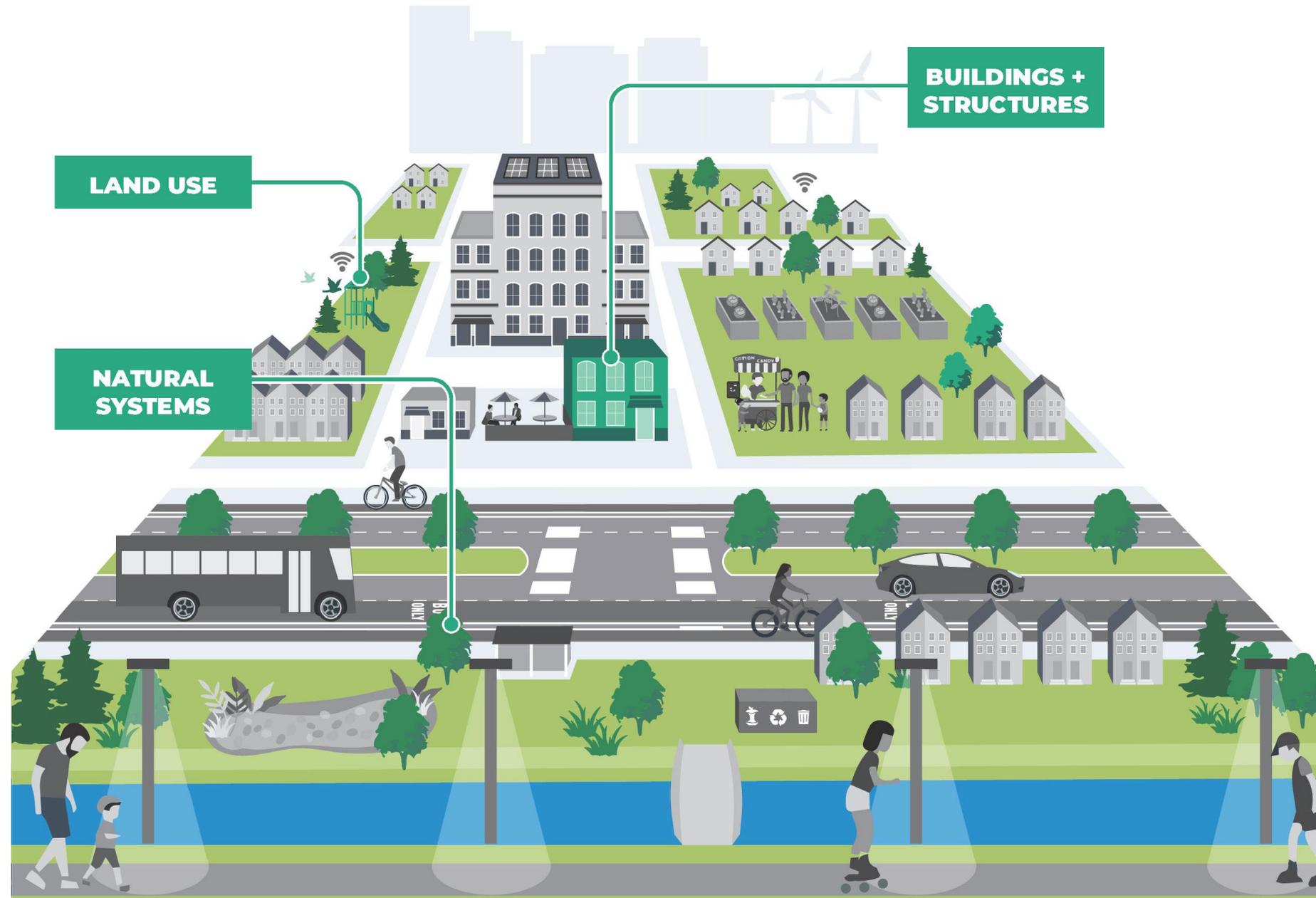
## WHAT ARE RESILIENT PLACES?

Resilient places include the spaces, structures, systems, and environments that our communities occupy.

These places are physical parks, open spaces, cultural spaces, and historic buildings. They are also the natural and man-made environments that support and impact our daily lives.

They are influenced heavily by the land use, development, and land management policies of our communities.

## CREATE RESILIENT PLACES

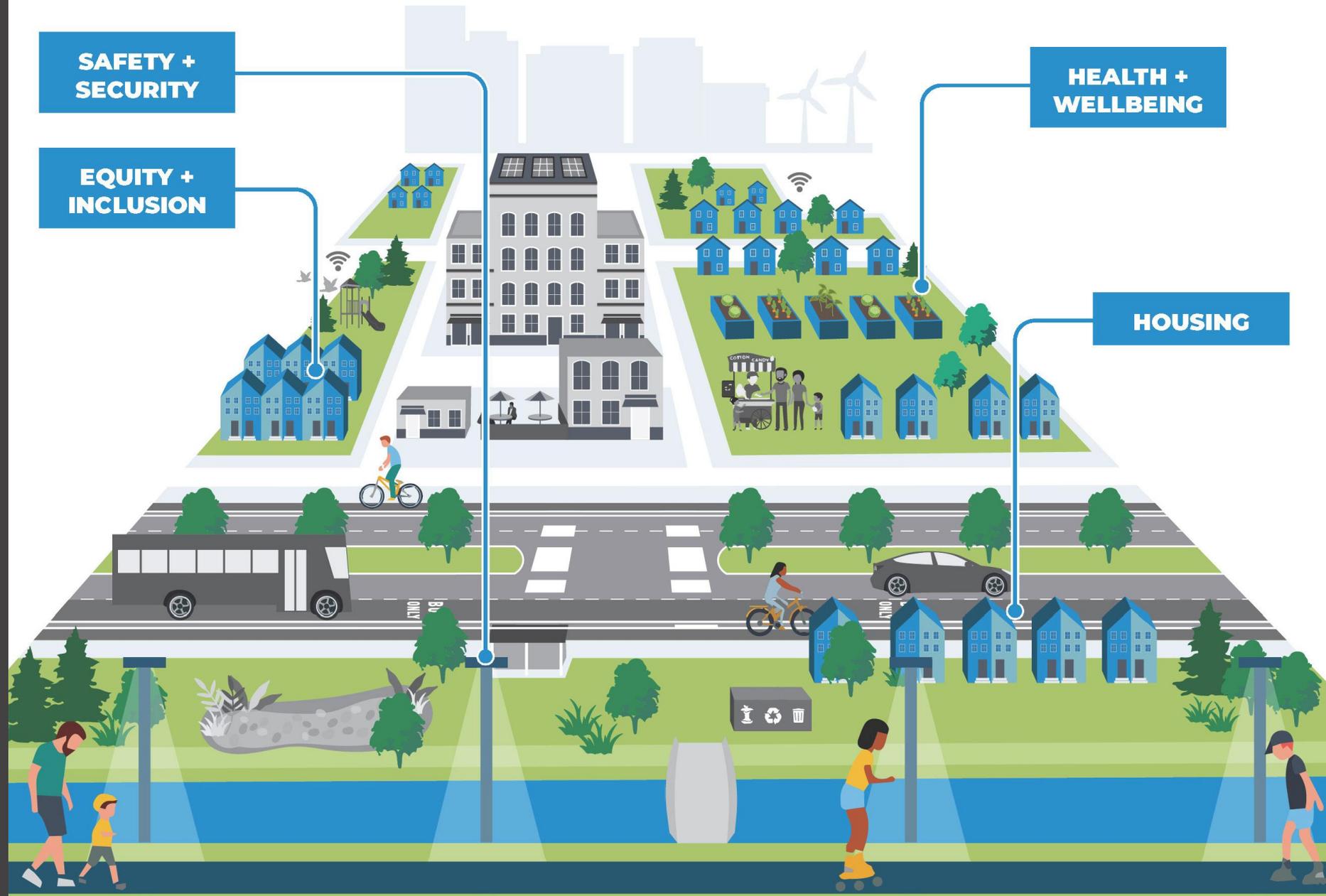


## WHAT ARE RESILIENT PEOPLE?

Resilience depends on providing all people with fair access to the resources needed to ensure a stable, secure, and well-rounded quality of life.

People are the foundation of a community. As individuals, residents exercise their voices, actions and rights in diverse ways, while collectively, the cultures, social groups and organizations they form provide support and momentum for the lives of Michiganders.

## CREATE RESILIENT PEOPLE

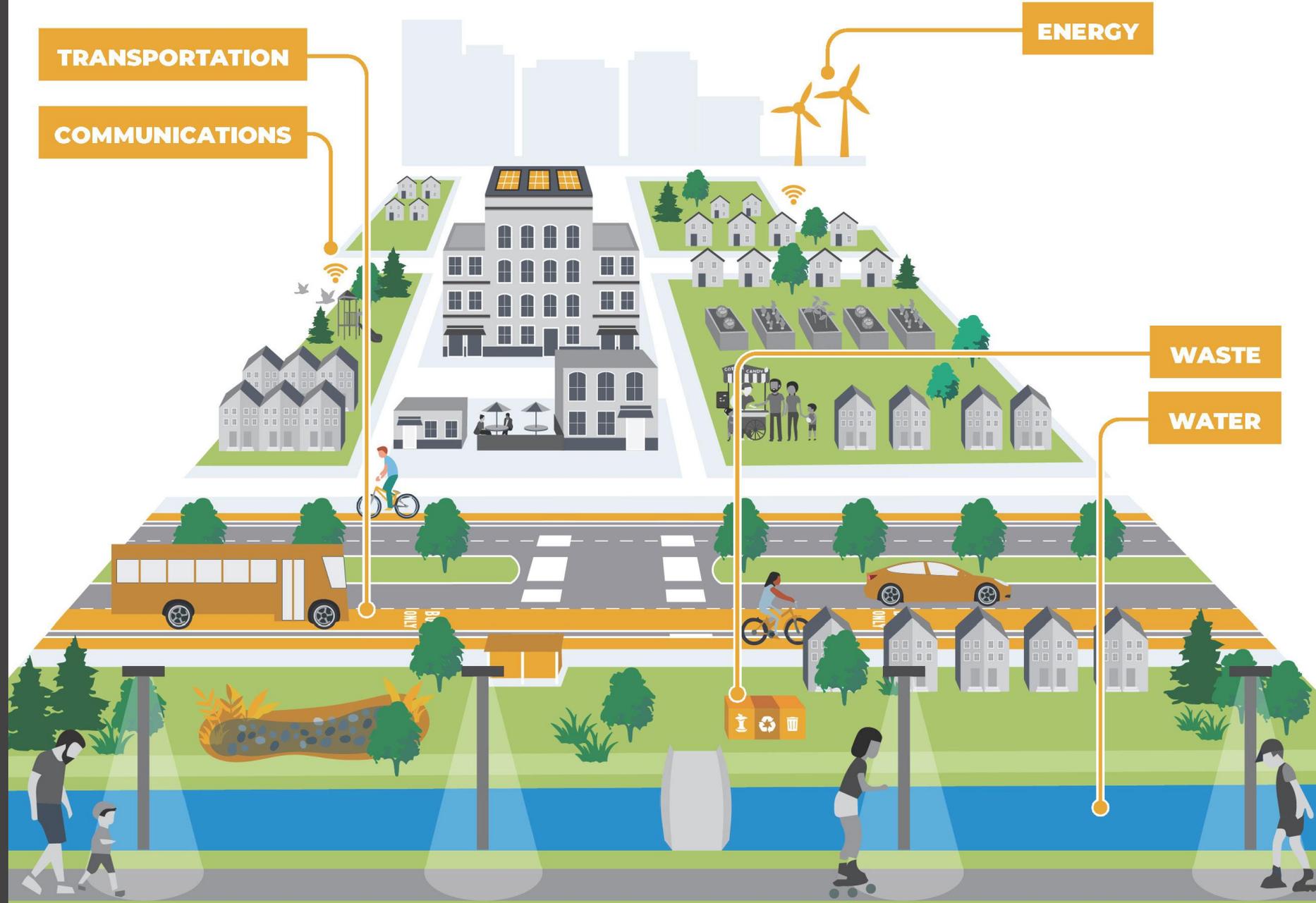


## WHAT IS RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE?

Robust infrastructure is critical to everyday life. Resiliency includes efficient transportation, a reliable power grid and communications outlets, and safe drinking water.

As infrastructure degrades over time, it is important to consider future shocks and stressors that may determine how effectively upgrades or replacements will serve the community in decades to come. While infrastructure is often a high-cost investment, it can also be the source of costly catastrophes unless they are built properly upfront.

## CREATE RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE



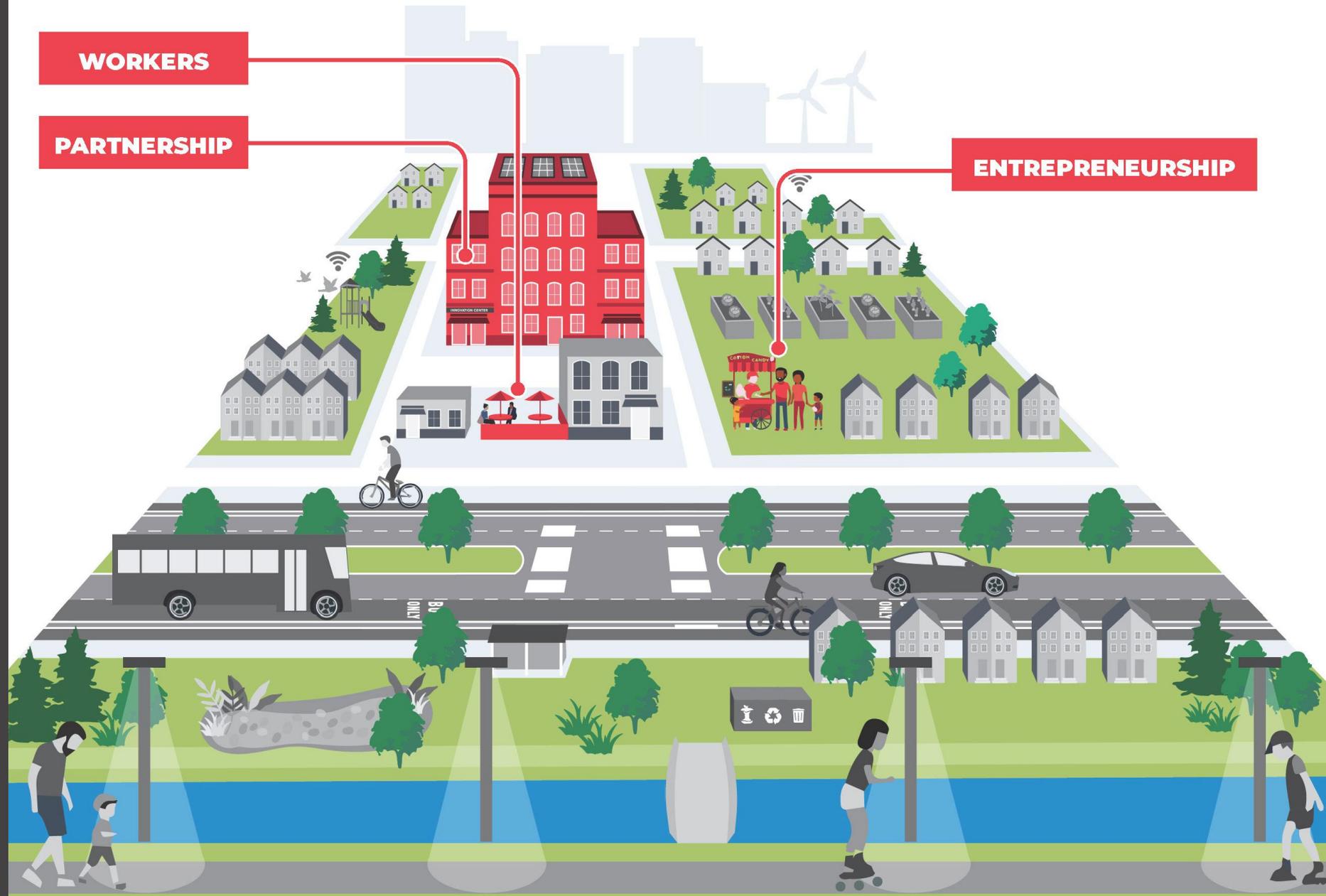
## WHAT ARE RESILIENT ECONOMIES?

Resilient communities prepare residents to weather economic events by equipping communities with financial means and diverse skill sets.

Resilient economies include the businesses, institutions, and agencies that provide financial capital to support community members livelihoods. It should...

- Include a diverse mix of industries that can handle shifts in the market
- Provide educational opportunities to train working individuals for the jobs of tomorrow
- Offer quality benefits and income to retain and recruit workers

## CREATE RESILIENT ECONOMIES



SECTION C

# ESTABLISHING A BASELINE



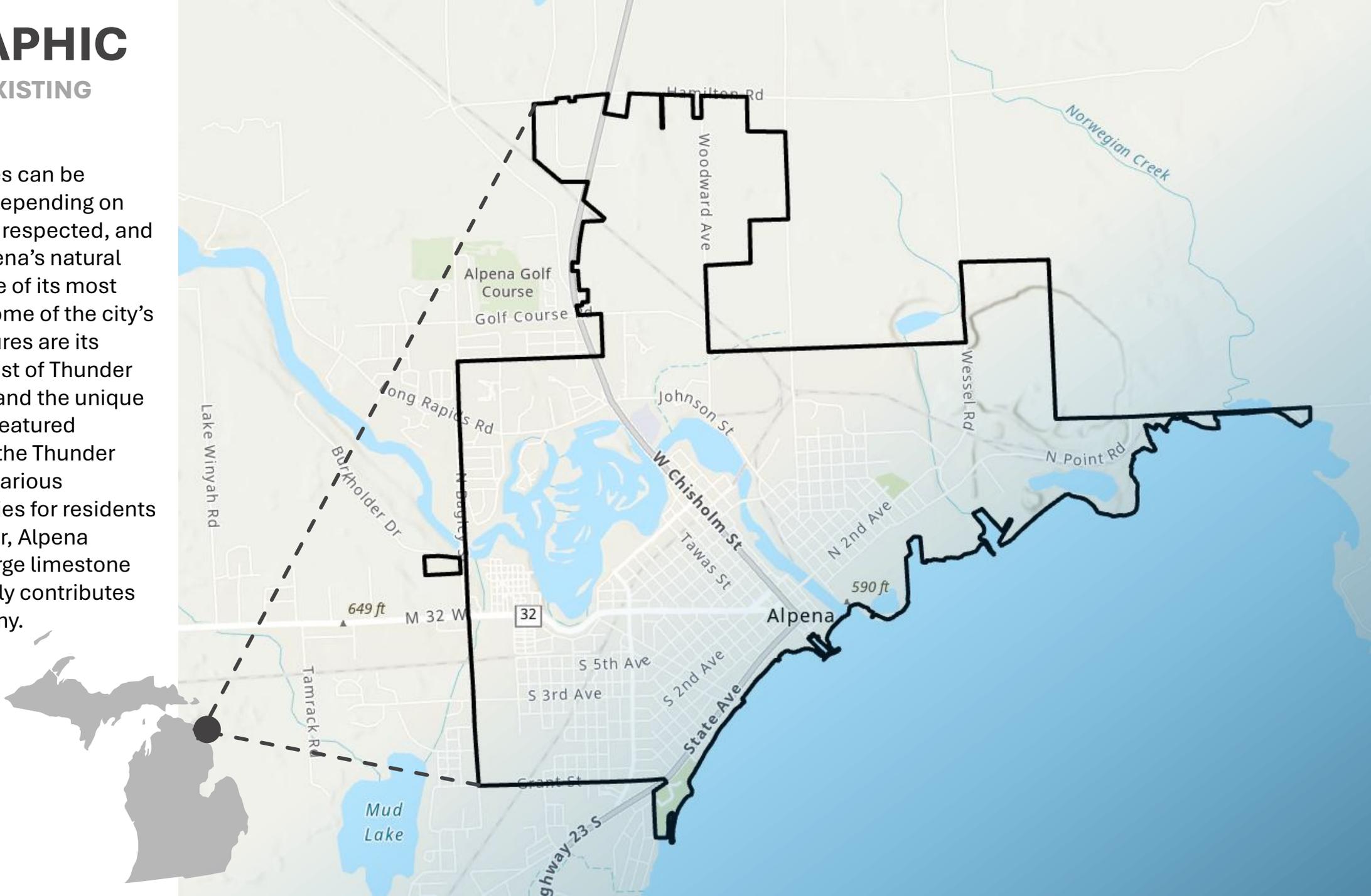
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# GEOGRAPHIC

## TRENDS AND EXISTING CONDITIONS

Geographic features can be barriers or assets depending on how they are used, respected, and accounted for. Alpena's natural resources are some of its most valuable assets. Some of the city's most defining features are its location on the coast of Thunder Bay in Lake Huron and the unique wildlife sanctuary featured prominently along the Thunder Bay River, hosting various recreational activities for residents and visitors. Further, Alpena maintains the Lafarge limestone quarry, which largely contributes to the local economy.



# CLIMATE TRENDS AND EXISTING CONDITIONS

Michigan is experiencing a warming trend. Historically, Alpena has seen less than four days over 90F annually; by midcentury, the city is projected to experience between 9 and 14 days over 90F, with the possibility of seeing a day or two over 100F. While these extreme temperatures are limited to the warmest part of the year, each individual season has been becoming increasingly warmer over time and seasons are projected to experience an increase of 3.25 to 5.25 degrees from the seasonal average in the coming decades.

Rising temperatures lead to increased evaporation, removing moisture from soil and plants and adding it to the atmosphere. When this moisture is eventually returned as precipitation, it can take the form of snow, ice, or rainfall, depending on air temperature. All of these precipitation events have the potential to result in intense and damaging storms.

The governor has declared a major disaster over 60 times in the state since 1980, two of which included Alpena County. The most recent of these being the ice storms in March of 2025 that impacted much of northern Michigan. Disaster can trigger cascading failures throughout a city's many interconnected systems, leading to widespread disruption of residents' daily lives. As extreme conditions escalate in intensity and frequency, it will become increasingly important for Alpena to prepare for both direct and indirect impacts of climate change such as power outages, flooding, climate migration, economic downturn, and supply chain shortages.



**9.4-14.2**

Projected annual increase in number of days over 90° F by midcentury



**3.1-5.3**

Projected annual increase in number of days over 95° F by midcentury



**320-440**

Projected total increase in cooling degree days by midcentury  
CDDs are degrees over 65F, a unit used to measure demand for energy to cool buildings



**2-2.5**

Projected increase in inches of precipitation per year by midcentury



## Projected increase in average annual temperature by season by 2060



Winter +3.25-3.5 °F



Spring +3.25-3.5 °F



Summer +5-5.25 °F



Autumn +4.25-4.5 °F

### SOURCES

Climate projections from CMRA with numbers showing the increase from 1976-2005 historical averages, Alpena County seasonal projections obtained from GLISA, last calculated 2023

# SOCIAL TRENDS AND EXISTING CONDITIONS

## 10,197

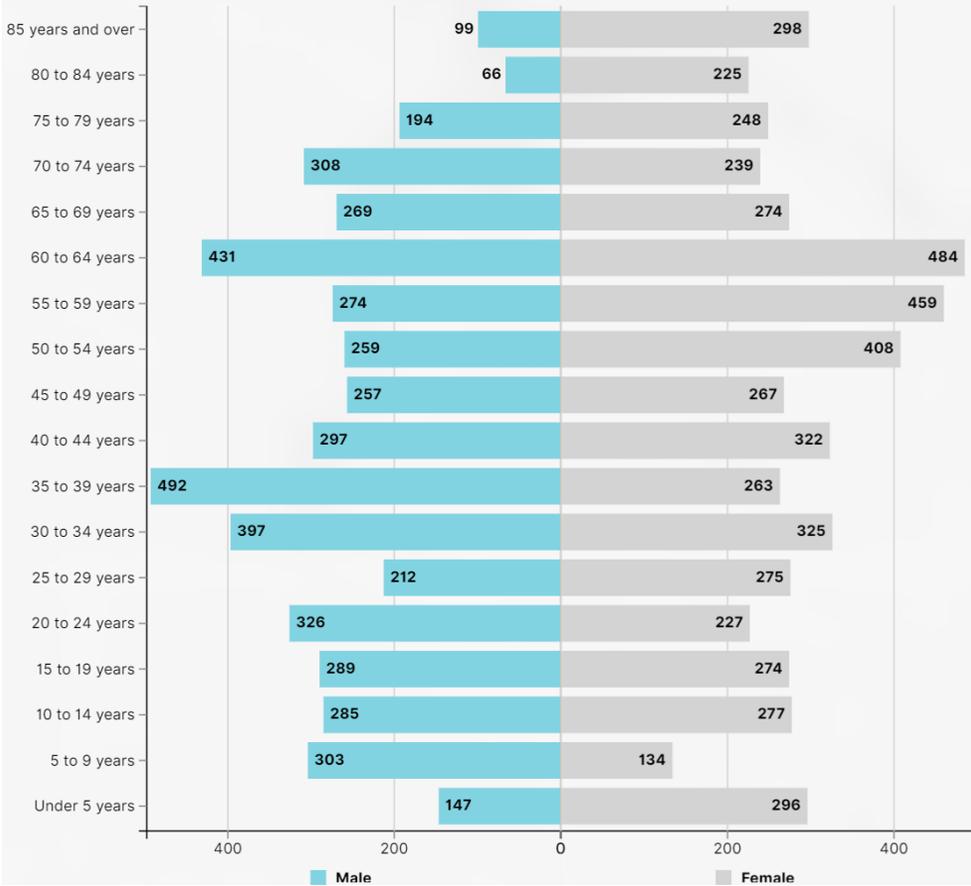
POPULATION IN 2022

↓ LOWER THAN POPULATION IN 2010

## 3<sup>rd</sup>

MOST POPULATED CITY IN  
NORTHERN MICHIGAN

Alpena city, Michigan



## GENERATIONS

### 44.7

MEDIAN AGE

↑ HIGHER THAN STATE

### 21.8%

RESIDENTS  
65+

↑ HIGHER THAN STATE

### 18%

UNDER 18

↓ LOWER THAN STATE

## EDUCATION

High school or equivalent degree - 35.4%

Some college, no degree - 25.8%

Associate's degree - 17.2%

Bachelor's degree - 7.7%

Graduate or professional degree - 5.8%

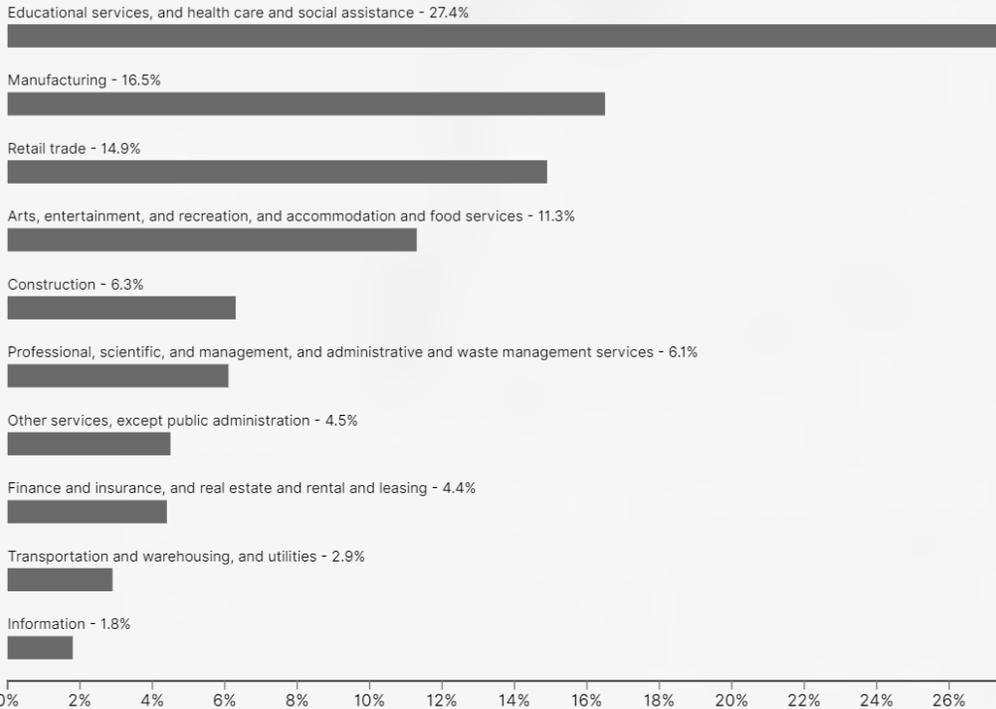
0% 5% 10% 15% 20% 25% 30% 35% 40%

# ECONOMIC TRENDS AND EXISTING CONDITIONS

# 4,415

## PEOPLE IN THE WORK FORCE

### Industry for the Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and Over in Alpena city, Michigan



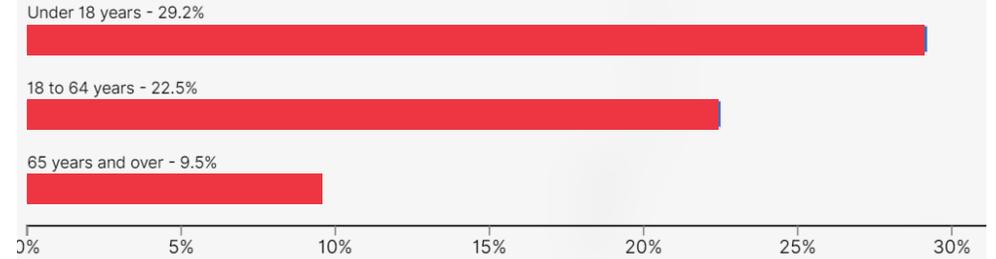
## POVERTY

# 20%

POVERTY RATE

↑ HIGHER THAN STATE

### Poverty by Age in Alpena city, Michigan



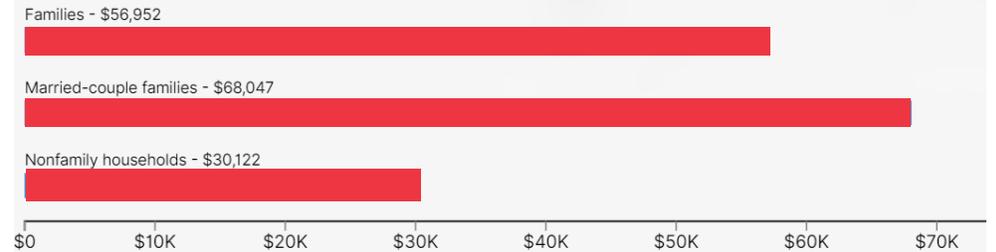
## INCOME

# \$43.6K

MEDIAN  
HOUSEHOLD  
INCOME

↓ LOWER THAN STATE

### Median Income by Types of Families in Alpena city, Michigan



SECTION D

# REVIEWING PRIOR PLANS



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# RECENT PLANS

In addition to analyzing data, trends, and existing conditions, the Rise + Resilience Technical team several prior plans to understand what is happening in Alpena today and what the community is already tackling.

## Plans Reviewed

- [2024 Zoning Ordinance](#)
- [2024 Recreation Plan](#)
- [2024 DDA Strategic Plan](#)
- [2020 Comprehensive Plan](#)
- [2013 Thunder Bay Riverscape Plan](#)
- [2003 Transportation Plan](#)

## Programs and Initiatives Reviewed

- [Alpena Strategic Plan](#)
- [Green Infrastructure Stormwater Project](#)
- [Lake Huron Forever Pledge](#)
- [Great Lakes Cities Initiative](#)



# PLACE PRIOR PLANS AND INITIATIVES

## NATURAL SYSTEMS

- **Education & Low Impact Development** | The City of Alpena collaborated with Alpena County to commit to the [Lake Huron Forever Pledge](#) in 2023 which has goals for green stormwater infrastructure practices, low impact development standards, sensitive area protections, education campaigns, and staff training to help maintain Lake Huron as part of a larger regional partnership.
- **Healthy Ecosystems** | The [2013 Thunder Bay Riverscape Plan](#) set goals to maintain a healthy ecosystem around Thunder Bay while expanding community access to the river and promoting tourism and recreation opportunities. This is still being implemented today, with [recent initiatives](#) such as three major restoration projects on tributaries in 2021 which reconnected 39 miles of habitat.
- **Green Infrastructure** | The City of Alpena and Huron Pines collaborated to create a large-scale [Green Infrastructure Plan](#) in 2022 from engagement to implementation. It identified seven key locations, two of which are partially completed and two of which are funded as of March 2025.

## BUILDINGS & STRUCTURES

- **Historic District** | Alpena's historic downtown was [approved by the State Historic Preservation Review Board](#) to the National Register of Historic Places. This designation opens up opportunities for tax credits and grant programs through SHPO.

## LAND USE

- **Parks & Recreation** | The [City of Alpena Recreation Plan](#) of 2024 identified strategic investments and goals for the next five years. Eighteen of 23 parks have an accessibility score of 3 or higher, meaning most facilities in Alpena's parks are barrier free and accessible for people with physical disabilities.
- **PFAs Contamination Grant** | Alpena was recently awarded a \$203K grant from EGLE to tackle PFAs contamination.



# PEOPLE

## PRIOR PLANS AND INITIATIVES

### HEALTH & WELL-BEING

- **Active Living** | Alpena has 18 miles of bike paths, almost all within large open spaces and parks.

### HOUSING

- **Identifying the Housing Gap** | The 2023 Housing Assessment identified a need for 40 affordable rentals, 60 workforce rentals, 80 market rate, 20 affordable senior units, 32 market senior units, 24 assisted living units, and 20 tiny homes.
- **Filling the Housing Gap** | Several major developments were set to take place in the region including a 400-unit development in Alpena approved in 2024.
- **Affordable Housing** | The Target Alpena Development Corp has helped to assemble the Northeast Michigan Housing Alliance focused on a regional housing plan to bring equitable, accessible, and affordable housing options to Alpena and other counties.

### SAFETY & SECURITY

- **Rehabilitation Program** | Alpena Sheriff's IGNITE program helps to rehabilitate inmates and prepare them for a positive and law-abiding path forward as they reintegrate into society after serving time. The focus is on skill building and education, helping former inmates become self-sufficient and allow for easier pathways to employment.
- **Substance Abuse Programming** | The Huron Undercover Narcotics Team (HUNT) supports victims of drug and rape. They also help lead to the removal of millions of dollars worth of drugs from the streets of Alpena and surrounding communities. Their associated Angel program helps provide a path and rehabilitation for those struggling with substance abuse.

### EQUITY & INCLUSION

- **Countywide Planning & Programming** | Planning efforts have included regional perspectives to ensure more voices are heard and considered when making decisions. There are also youth development programs (such as 4H, Girl Scouts, etc.), non-profit organizations, and volunteer organizations that help with health initiatives, senior support, and domestic abuse victims (United Way, Hope Shores Alliance, NEMCSA).



# INFRASTRUCTURE PRIOR PLANS AND INITIATIVES

## TRANSPORTATION

- **Clean Busing** | The [Alpena Public School District](#) was one of 29 school districts that received funds from the Michigan's Clean School Bus grant program in 2024.

## WATER

- **Stormwater Management** | Alpena joined the [Resilient Coastal Projects Initiative](#) in 2023, which helped develop, advance, and secure funding for coastal adaptation projects.
- **Drinking Water** | Alpena is working with the MI DNR to protect drinking water by encouraging sustainable forest land use and management through the [Forest to MI Faucet](#) initiative.

## ENERGY

- **Renewable Energy** | Holcim is set to construct the company's [largest solar array in the Midwest](#) at a 100-acre site of the city. When combined with existing renewable energy efforts, the solar initiative will help the plant self-generate 75% of its electric power needs with green energy.

## WASTE

- **Waste Management** | The City of Alpena offers waste diversion through curbside collection for yard waste, a drop-off site for leaf and grass materials, and access to the Alpena Resource Recovery Facility for various materials, including recyclables and hazardous waste. The [Alpena Resource Recovery Facility](#) is a county-funded program to handle recyclable materials. In 2023, they formed the Northeast Michigan Materials Management Authority and are planning to break ground on a new facility in 2024.
- **Circular Economy** | Alpena County has launched a [circular economy initiative](#) to enhance local recycling efforts and align with Michigan's goal of achieving a 45% recycling rate by 2030.

## COMMUNICATIONS

- **Emergency Communications** | The City of Alpena has emergency and non-emergency lines for all residents. The [average response time](#) for emergency calls throughout Alpena County is approximately 10 minutes.
- **Fiber & Broadband** | According to the [Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity](#), Alpena has multiple broadband options, most of which are at 100/20 Mbps, the amount needed for the average 4-person American household.
- **Wi-Fi** | Alpena has 5 public wi-fi spots: Besser Museum, Thunder Bay Theater, Chamber of Commerce, the County Library, and a church.

# ECONOMY PRIOR PLANS AND INITIATIVES

## WORKERS

- **Workforce Development** | [Alpena Community College](#) and the [Alpena Area Chamber of Commerce](#) have programs and opportunities focused on educational attainment, job shadowing, leadership training, and connecting students with local businesses.

## ENTREPRENEURSHIP

- **Business Retention and Development** | The [Downtown Development Authority](#) has several financial programs to support small businesses in Downtown Alpena: an Activation Grant and the Rental Incentive Program. MEDC also provides several grants available to local businesses such as the Build MI Community Grant and Match on Main.

## PARTNERSHIPS

- **Industry Recruitment** | The [Downtown Development Authority](#) leads several initiatives to recruit people and create a thriving downtown including beautification, downtown dollars, street performers, façade grants, and the Fresh Waves mural program.
- **Local Economic Leadership** | The [2024 Alpena Downtown Development Authority Plan](#) identified several goals for the future to support businesses and ensure Alpena is a dynamic place to live which will help with retention and recruitment of top talent.



SECTION E

# ALPENA'S RESILIENCY SCORECARD



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# COMMITTEE WORKSHOPS SUMMARY

The Technical team, with the help of the City, organized several workshops dedicated to understanding Alpena's strengths, challenges, and what initiatives are actively being pursued.

The initial kickoff was held in early March of 2025. In this session, the team introduced the Rise + Resilience program, the RRC Toolkit, and the Resiliency Scorecard. A brief discussion was held to understand the shocks and stressors affecting each of the framework categories before sending the committee off with an assignment to fill out the scorecard on their own.

The first of three workshops was held in early June after being delayed due to a historic ice storm that affected Northern Michigan for several weeks. The committee returned with valuable insight to discuss their initial scorecard rankings and how their priorities shifted since the event. The committee identified **Disaster Preparedness** and **Smart Growth** as their top two overall challenges to tackle. The Technical team then developed recommendations based on what was learned in this workshop and through review of Alpena's existing conditions and on-going initiatives. Each challenge was considered through the lens of the four framework categories to determine relevant implementable strategies that can help Alpena to address these topics.

**AFTER WORKSHOPS 3 & 4 ADD WHAT WAS DISCUSSED AND SUMMARIZE HERE**



**Pillar 2 | People Introduction**

**RRC RESILIENCY SCORECARD**

Resilience depends on providing all people with fair access to the resources needed to ensure a stable, secure, and well-rounded quality of life.

**SHOCKS**

- Health emergencies + COVID-19
- Loss of employment + financial burden
- Disaster
- Resource crisis
- Communication failure
- Unreliable transportation/evacuation routes
- Other: Write here

**STRESSES**

- Stressors are factors that pressure a community on a daily or recurring basis.
- Check off the stressors you are facing:
  - Housing cost burden
  - Access to health care
  - Poor diet and exercise/food insecurity
  - Low education + training/unemployment
  - Lack of wealth
  - Lack of family and social support/isolation
  - Violence/community safety
  - Discrimination/racism
  - Other: Write here

**WHAT MAKES PEOPLE RESILIENT?**

Resilience is a community's ability to bounce back from adversity and recover with their assets.

This chapter features trends and recommendations for the following:

- Equity & Inclusion
- Housing
- Safety & Security
- Health & Wellbeing

**Pillar 2 | People Score**

**RRC RESILIENCY SCORECARD**

Use the scoring scale to see where you are in your resiliency journey:

- 0 - 1 Starting** | Don't exist or we're just getting started in the early discussion, research or planning stages — we need more information and in need of a plan.
- 2 - 3 Evolving** | Getting ready to launch or already in place, ongoing or progressing — but with opportunities for growth or enhancement.
- 4 - 5 Excelling** | Fully and consistently demonstrated or maintained with a high degree of proficiency and quality — commonly viewed among our greatest strengths.

**Questions for prioritization:**

	STARTING	EVOLVING	EXCELLING			
	0	1	2	3	4	5
<b>HEALTH &amp; WELLBEING</b>						
<b>HOUSING</b>						
<b>SAFETY &amp; SECURITY</b>						
<b>EQUITY &amp; INCLUSION</b>						

**Pillar 2 | People Notes**

**TOP TO TACKLE**

**TOP TO CELEBRATE**

**NOTES**

**What we learned in our last chat**

**Challenges Alpena faces**

- Attracting people to stay, live, work and play in Alpena
- Loss of jobs and income
- Unstable housing
- Lack of young professionals
- Healthcare & education
- Healthcare & education
- Healthcare & education

**What Alpena is doing right**

- Having development in housing and helping 500 acres of the city
- Having high and diverse economic sectors
- Emergency response
- Healthcare & education
- Healthcare & education
- Healthcare & education

**Today's takeaways:**

This is an exciting time for Alpena as we have the opportunity to build upon our strengths and address our challenges. We are excited to see the progress we are making and the impact we are having on our community. We are committed to working together to create a resilient and thriving Alpena for all.

# DISASTER PREPAREDNESS CHALLENGES

Alpena's recent ice storms revealed a need for improved disaster preparedness and coordination; the following challenges were identified during the workshop:

## NEEDED RESILIENCE HUBS

- Not enough generators
- Not enough designated locations for relief and aid

## REGIONAL COORDINATION

- Existing regional protocols need better compliance
- Interorganizational disaster coordination is lacking
- No County-level after-action debrief on lessons learned
- Networking is not as strong as it needs to be

## COMMUNICATION

- Limited ability to update the community due to cell and internet service disruption
- Timeline uncertainty for when power will be restored

## GETTING RESOURCES

- Getting necessary supplies to the area
- Awareness of what resources are available
- Access to rural utility lines due to forest damage



Photo: John Russell, The Detroit News



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# SMART GROWTH CHALLENGES

While Alpena is looking to attract more businesses and residents, committee members expressed that it is important to focus on smart growth to ensure the city is using its resources effectively.

## MANAGING NATURAL RESOURCES

- Managing forest damage after large storms has been difficult and time-consuming
- Development without impacting valuable green space
- The biggest availability of open land for development does not have critical infrastructure

## HOUSING & CITY STAFF CAPACITY

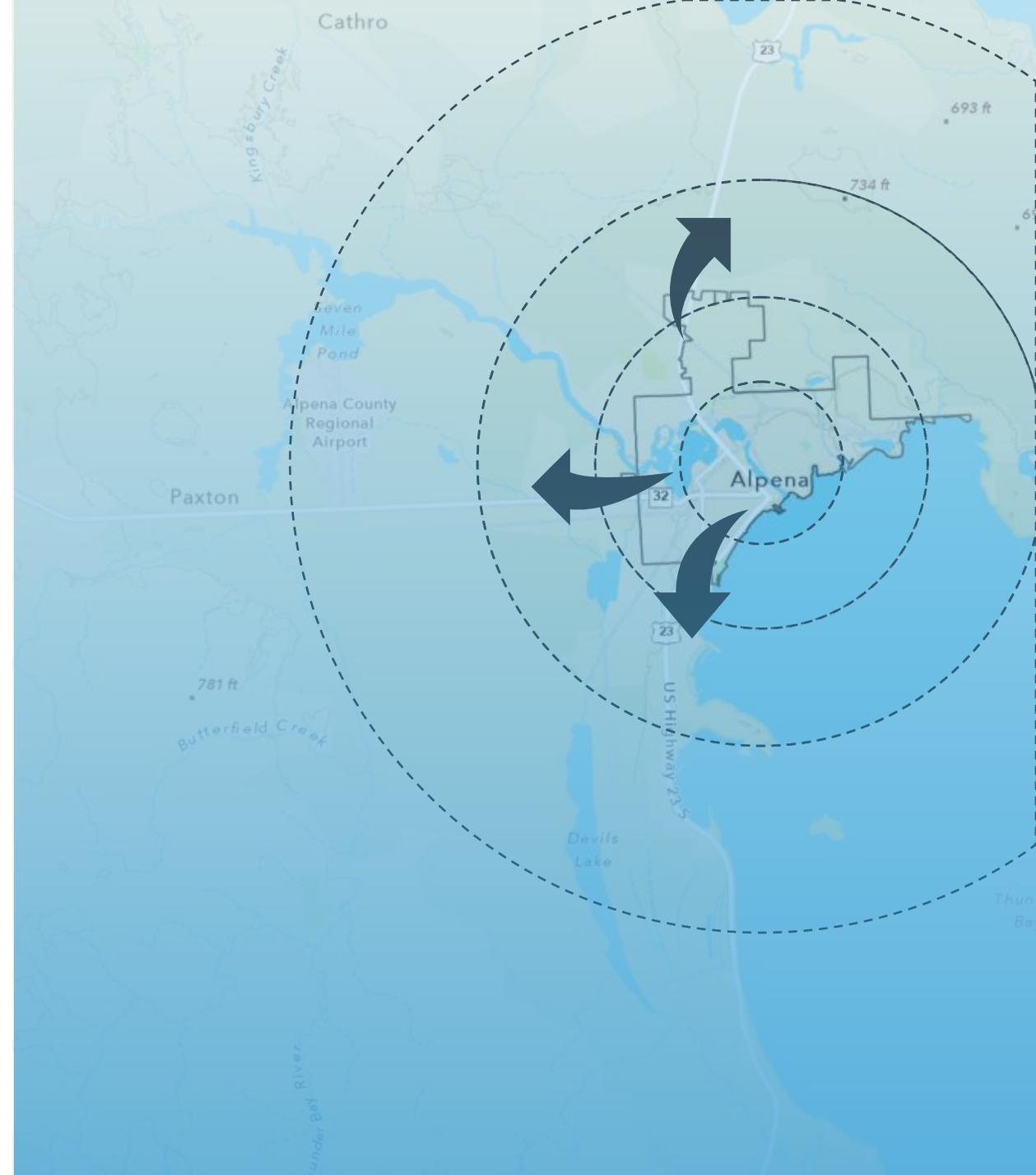
- Developing housing for new residents and workers
- Including community in decision-making
- Communication about leadership opportunities
- Limited capacity to pursue, win, and administer grants

## INFRASTRUCTURE

- Aging infrastructure needs to be upgraded or replaced
- Isolated from other areas, requires intentional visits

## ATTRACTING GROWTH

- Encouraging developers to look at infill and brownfields
- Getting funding and resources to build
- Attracting new businesses



SECTION F

# ALPENA'S RESILIENCY OPPORTUNITIES



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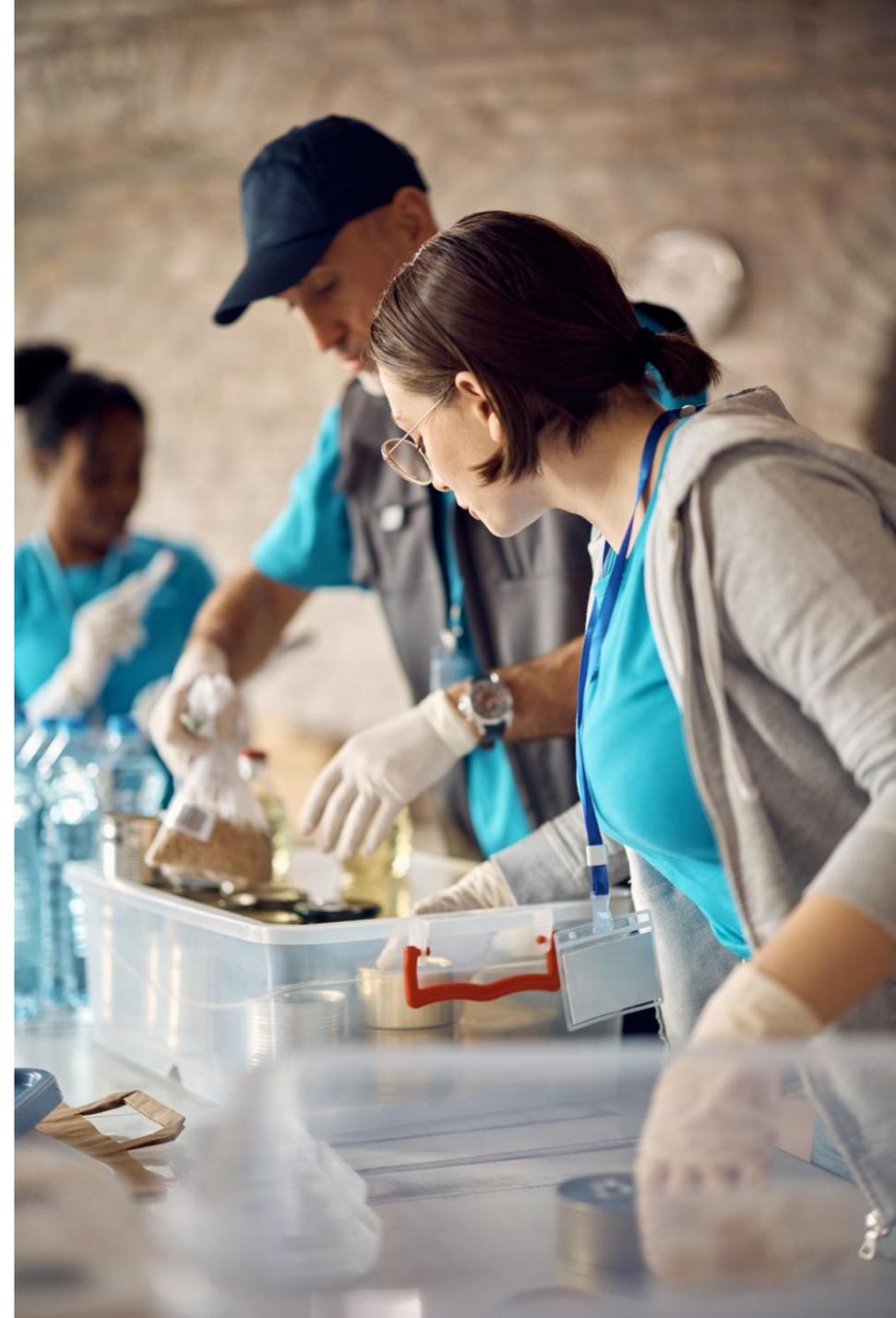
# WHAT DO WE MEAN BY DISASTER PREPAREDNESS?

Introducing long-term efforts to underground power utilities, increase green infrastructure, acquire backup generators, build microgrids, and expand cell network coverage are all important aspects of creating a city that is resilient to natural disasters, and these are included in Alpena's recommended actions. However, disaster preparedness includes not only the large-scale planning and budgeting that goes into mitigating the physical impact of extreme weather events. It also means reflecting on past events, understanding what went wrong, and acknowledging the success in what went right. The lessons learned can be helpful in determining low-cost actions that can be taken in the short term to improve coordination efforts now so that when the next event happens, the community bounces back faster and stronger than before.

Alpena learned from the ice storms in early 2025 that residents show up for each other and that businesses and organizations are willing to help in whatever way they are able.

They also learned that local emergency coordination efforts between the City, fire department, and volunteer organizations was incredibly effective. These are the foundation of strong social capital, a crucial element of disaster recovery. Due to Alpena's remote location, building upon the community's existing networks and casting a wider inter-regional net to capture additional capacity and resources will be a helpful lens through which Alpena's resilience actions are decided. Thus, the recommendations on the following page focus on solutions to identified local challenges, but also on fortifying this concept of building stronger links between other communities and existing organizations.

**This plan defines disaster preparedness as the actions needed to expand Alpena's ability to effectively mitigate damage and receive aid in times of need but also includes a wider goal of leadership in providing assistance to Michiganders in other communities as well through advanced coordination with key entities.**



# DISASTER PREPAREDNESS OPPORTUNITIES

Being ready for when disaster strikes is one of the best things a community can do to ensure residents are safe, homes and businesses are protected, and the community can get back to normal as quickly as possible after an event.

GOALS	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
<b>Green Infrastructure</b> Maintain a network of GI that integrates with the built environment to maintain natural ecological systems and functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Continue to work with Huron Pines and the Lake Huron Forever Initiative to understand and implement recommendations provided in the <a href="#">Alpena Stormwater Guide</a>, targeting downtown areas for green infrastructure application</li> </ul>	
<b>Building Energy Efficiency</b> Ensure new and existing buildings are energy efficient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Explore energy conservation measures in addition to hybrid (solar + battery and traditional) systems for Resilience Hubs</li> </ul>	
<b>Healthy Environments</b> Reduce and eliminate exposure of residents to unhealthy environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Identify publicly-owned buildings that can operate as Resilience Hubs for warming, communication, and small device charging</li> </ul>	
<b>Social Capital</b> Foster bonds, links, and bridges to strengthen social capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Develop a process for compiling and sharing information about emerging multi-organizational networks (EMONs) that have revealed themselves post-disaster</li> <li>❑ Explore expansion of involvement with organizations like <a href="#">Mutual Aid Disaster Relief</a></li> </ul>	
<b>Homeowner Support</b> Help homeowners maintain and remain in their homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Ensure homeowners know about <a href="#">NEMSCA's Weatherization Assistance Program</a> to help insulate and protect their homes against extreme weather events</li> </ul>	
<b>Emergency Communications</b> Strengthen public emergency communication channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Coordinate with the Thunder Bay Amateur Radio Club to develop a communications plan and have members get licensed through the <a href="#">Amateur Radio Emergency Service</a></li> </ul>	
<b>Fiber &amp; Broadband</b> Strengthen and increase communications network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Partner with providers to explore small cell deployment to enhance network capacity and improve service</li> </ul>	
<b>Regional Strategy</b> Create and regularly update a regional economic strategy for growth, retention, and recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Coordinate emergency response training and after-action debrief process for all scales of influence, including local, regional, multi-regional and state</li> <li>❑ Ensure renters, homeowners, and businesses affected by natural disaster know how to apply for low-interest loans through the <a href="#">Individual and Households Program (IHP)</a> and the <a href="#">Small Business Association (SBA) Disaster Assistance</a></li> </ul>	
<b>Prepared P3s</b> Strong public/private partnerships between government, major employers, educational and non-profit institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Partner with Alpena Power Co, Presque Isle Electric &amp; Gas, and nearby communities to conduct a feasibility study to explore opportunities for <a href="#">regional community nanogrids</a> for critical buildings and cell towers</li> <li>❑ Identify partners that are best positioned to fulfill community needs in anticipation of future events (hotel and grocery chains, generator distributors, volunteer)</li> </ul>	

# WHAT DO WE MEAN BY SMART GROWTH?

Smart growth offers a roadmap to preserve what makes the Alpena special while preparing for what's next. **At its core, smart growth in Alpena means focusing development in areas that already have infrastructure, encouraging mixed-use neighborhoods, and reducing sprawl.**

This approach helps protect the region's natural resources—like its forests, waterways, and shoreline—while making it easier and more affordable to maintain roads, utilities, and public services. There are 10 key elements to smart growth that work together to create great places to live, work, and play.

- 1 Mix land uses, including water-dependent uses (such as boats, marinas, parks, and house boats)
- 2 Take advantage of compact community design that enhances, preserves, and provides access to waterfront resources
- 3 Provide a range of housing opportunities and choices to meet the needs of both seasonal and permanent residents

- 4 Create walkable communities with physical and visual access to and along the waterfront for public use
- 5 Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place that capitalizes on the waterfront's heritage
- 6 Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and the critical environmental areas that characterize and support the community
- 7 Strengthen and direct development toward existing neighborhoods and encourage waterfront revitalization
- 8 Provide a variety of transportation options
- 9 Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost-effective through consistent policies and coordinated permitting processes
- 10 Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions, ensuring that public interests in and rights of access to the waterfront and coastal waters are upheld



# WHY DOES SMART GROWTH MATTER?

By updating land use, zoning, and development practices using Smart Growth, Alpena can tackle several shocks and stressors such as sprawl, housing cost, and increasing demand on infrastructure systems while also raising its resiliency score across several of the following areas.

## PLACE

- **Land Use** | Green Infrastructure & Biodiversity
- **Buildings & Structures** | Historic & Cultural Assets
- **Land Use** | Redevelopment and Limit Environmental Impacts

## PEOPLE

- **Health & Well-Being** | Active Living
- **Housing** | Affordable Housing & Housing Access
- **Safety & Security** | Community Trust
- **Equity & Inclusion** | Community Engagement

## INFRASTRUCTURE

- **Transportation** | Accessibility, Safety, Equitable Access
- **Water** | Consumption, Stormwater Management

## ECONOMY

- **Entrepreneurship** | Strengthening Small and Medium Enterprises
- **Partnerships** | Community Employment Opportunities



# SMART GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

By adopting land use and zoning practices with Smart Growth in mind, Alpena’s development, growth, and preserved spaces will work together to both create more walkable, compact, and connected spaces as well as conserve our greatest natural resources.

GOALS	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
<p><b>Redevelopment</b> Focus growth and redevelopment in infill areas, increased density, and mixed-use development to reduce sprawl</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Work with developers to create <a href="#">infill development zones</a> with pre-approved home plans that are supported by existing infrastructure</li> <li>□ Collaborate with the DDA to pursue a <a href="#">RAP Grant</a> for a shovel ready project</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Limit Environmental Impacts</b> Minimize encroachment and impact on natural features and systems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Adopt a policy commitment to limit expansion of urban boundaries, prioritizing density of the built environment to preserve natural resources</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Historic and Cultural Assets</b> Preserve, conserve, renovate, and adapt historic structures and sites to retain local, regional, and national history and community culture.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Continue participating in the Michigan Main Street program to access the Vibrancy Grant, Match on Main, and technical services such as predevelopment packets for historic structures.</li> <li>□ Partner with the region to advocate for greater flexibility in the use of historic tax credit programs to facilitate the adaptive reuse of old and historic structures by allowing greater matches.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Housing Access</b> Provide a diversity of housing types and affordability options</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Explore <a href="#">Michigan’s Employer-Assisted Housing Fund</a> for businesses willing to invest in housing for workers</li> <li>□ Consider density bonuses, expedited permitting, and tax relief to encourage developers to increase unit quantity and affordability</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Civic Engagement</b> Facilitate inclusive civic engagement and empower all community members to participate in local decision-making</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Create a volunteer program for residents to assist the City in organizing special events and services</li> <li>□ Collaborate with local organizations to hold leadership development workshops</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Accessibility</b> Provide diverse, convenient, affordable, safe, and accessible transportation, prioritizing pedestrian, bicycle, and transit infrastructure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Advocate for an Alpena route of the <a href="#">Michigan section</a> of the High-Speed Rail Alliance regional rail initiative</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Available Capital</b> Ensure local capital and investment opportunities are available for starting new business</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Raise awareness about funding through the <a href="#">Michigan Innovate Capital Fund</a> for non-profits that operate programming for pre-seed and start-up stage innovative and state of the art technologies</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Industry Recruitment</b> Identify strategic opportunities for economic growth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Conduct community engagement to understand desired industries, provide incentives to these industries to attract business-owners</li> <li>□ Create targeted campaigns for wanted industries to increase awareness of local and regional benefits</li> </ul>	

SECTION G

# LEARNING FROM CASE STUDIES



MICHIGAN ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

SMITHGROUP

# PRE-APPROVED HOUSING SMART GROWTH

One of the greatest costs to the construction of housing is actually the approvals process, such as going through multiple rounds of design review and permitting. To help cut down on some of these costs, communities can provide publicly available pre-approved designs for developers or homeowners to choose from. This ensures designs are already in alignment with community zoning and land use standards while making it easy for community members to enter the development market.

Kalamazoo, Michigan was one of the first Michigan communities to adopt pre-approved housing plans design to meet all local codes and fit on common-width city lots. With this and several other successes across the state, the Michigan Municipal League created a full pattern book for missing middle housing styles, such as duplexes and fourplexes. The Pattern Book was developed with construction ready documents to assist homeowners who may not have capital to access an architect. By allowing some of these ready made resources to be used in certain zoning districts without additional review, this can help keep construction costs for needed housing types slightly lower.

