

CHAPTER 4

COMMUNITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES

One of the primary contributors to the quality of life of a community is the type and variety of services available to both local residents and visitors to the area. In many cases, a smaller community does not have the financial resources to provide all or even most of the services which would normally be considered essential in an urban area. The more populated the community, the greater the variety of public, semi-public and private services made available to residents.

This chapter of the Master Plan will identify the types and extent of services now available to residents and businesses in Corwith Township. Even though these services may be sufficient for the needs of the current population, future development may increase the demand to upgrade or expand the services and facilities the Township needs to maintain a satisfactory living environment in the future.

Township Hall

Corwith Township was constructed in 1971 and houses township offices, meeting space and the Vanderbilt branch of the Otsego County Library. In addition, the hall is available for rental for public and private functions. The hall has a seating capacity of 300 people, a fully equipped kitchen, bar and dance floor.

Water and Sewage Disposal

Corwith Township does not currently provide public water or sewage disposal systems for its residents. Residents and business owners must rely on on-site private wells for domestic drinking water needs and private on-site septic systems for wastewater disposal. Northwest Michigan Community Health Agency (formerly District Health Department Number Three) regulates and maintains a permitting system for private wells and septic systems. Two important determinants for siting a septic system are soil suitability and depth to bedrock. Chapter 3 - Natural Resources discusses the geology and soils of the Township.

Solid Waste

Corwith Township does not presently offer solid waste management or municipal waste disposal service. However, a transfer station is located on Yuill Road just north of the Vanderbilt village limits where Village and Township residents may drop off refuse for a per bag price. Leaves and yard waste for composting are also accepted. The facility is open only on Saturday mornings. Residents and business owners who choose not to use the drop-off facility rely on private waste haulers for pick up, who must dispose of the rubbish in a licensed landfill. The primary private waste haulers that pick up solid waste in the Township are Waste Management, Inc., PAC Sanitation and Arrow Sanitation. Solid waste collected in the Township is hauled to the licensed Waste Management landfill facility, located in northern Crawford County. The Township also sponsors an annual clean-up day held in May each year, allowing residents to dispose of large items at no charge.

Northeast Michigan Council of Governments (NEMCOG) is the designated solid waste management planning agency for Otsego County. Operating in this role, NEMCOG prepared the County's Solid Waste Management Plan as required by P.A. 641 of the State of Michigan.

Utility Services

Consumers Energy supplies electric service to developed areas of the Township near the I-75 and Old 27 corridors. Great Lakes Energy supplies electricity to the rural areas. Natural gas is provided by DTE Energy, formerly Michigan Consolidated Gas Company for residents along the Old 27 corridor. Residents may also purchase liquid propane gas or fuel oil from several suppliers throughout the area, while some residents elect to heat with wood.

Local telephone service is provided by Verizon, formerly General Telephone and Electronics (GTE) North, while residents and commercial users have the option of choosing long distance service from several providers. Several cellular communications towers are located in Corwith Township

Charter, Inc. (formerly Bresnan Communications) supplies cable television service to residents along the Old 27 corridor, north to Thumb Lake Road, including the Village of Vanderbilt. Residents may also purchase individual satellite systems for programming similar to that

supplied by the cable provider. Five local channels including the major networks and public television are readily available with individual antennas.

Police, Fire and Ambulance Services

Law enforcement protection for Corwith Township is primarily the responsibility of the Otsego County Sheriff Department and the Michigan State Police. The Otsego County Sheriff Department is located in Gaylord, the county seat. The State Police Post is also located in Gaylord. The Otsego County Jail provides lock-up facilities for use by all law enforcement agencies in the County.

The joint Vanderbilt-Corwith Township Fire Department provides fire protection for both jurisdictions. The fire department functions with part-paid on-call staff and has a roster of approximately 20 firefighters. A fire hall, located on Cheboygan Street in Vanderbilt, houses the equipment, which consists of two pumpers with 750 gallon capacity and capable of pumping 750 gallons per minute, two tankers with 1,800 to 2,000 gallon holding capacity, and a 4-wheel drive pick-up truck with 250 gallon capacity used for grass fires. Vanderbilt covers 40 percent of the fire department budget, while Corwith Township is responsible for 60 percent. The fire department also provides First Responder ambulance service, but does not transport. Ambulance transportation is provided by the Otsego County EMS located in Gaylord. The countywide enhanced 911 emergency service, operated from the State Police Post in Gaylord, is provided for all county residents.

Transportation

There are approximately 49 miles of primary roads and approximately 105 miles of secondary roads in Corwith Township. The major highway transportation facilities that directly serve Corwith Township are Interstate 75 and Old 27, both traversing north-south through the Township. Both I-75 and Old 27 pass through the length of Otsego County. The Michigan Department of Transportation is responsible for maintenance of the state trunklines. These highway transportation facilities provide a vital link bringing goods, services and people to and from the region. The major east-west route is Sturgeon Valley Road, leading into Pigeon River Country State Forest on the east side of the Township.

Public transit service is provided by the Otsego County Bus System, a countywide demand-response transit system. The operation was established in 1978 as a demand-response system serving area seniors and persons with disabilities. In 1980 the system became a countywide public transit system serving all county residents. Beginning June 4, 2004, the bus system will operate Monday through Friday, from 6 a.m. to midnight and from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays. Peak usage times are 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., which are work related trips. The usage remains relatively constant each day of the week. However, usage increases from September to June, due to transportation of school children. While riders are transported throughout the County, the major trip origins and destinations are in the greater Gaylord area. Otsego County Bus System has a fleet of 13 busses. Eleven of the buses are 21-passenger, and two of the buses are seven-passenger. All vehicles are equipped with wheelchair lifts.

Straits Regional Ride, a regional public transit service covering Emmet, Cheboygan, Presque Isle and Otsego Counties, provides transportation for work, school, shopping and medical appointments in the four-county region. All buses are handicap accessible.

Regional air service is available at Pellston Regional Airport in Emmet County and at Alpena County Regional Airport, located west of the City of Alpena. Commercial air service at both facilities is provided by Northwest Airlink (Mesaba Airline), offering transportation between Alpena and Detroit Metro Airport, with regularly scheduled daily flights. United Parcel Service and Federal Express provide air freight service at these two airports. The Cherry Capital Airport in Traverse City has commercial passenger service provided by Northwest Airlink to Detroit Metro Airport; and United Express and American Eagle to Chicago O'Hare Airport. Air freight service at Traverse City includes Federal Express, Airborne Express and United Parcel Service.

The Otsego County Airport in Gaylord serves smaller private or corporate aircraft. Two local private charter services operate from the facility. The 6,500 feet runway is capable of serving commercial passenger aircraft, but the County is yet to be successful in coming to terms with Northwest Airlink to provide the service. Long-term plans for the airport call for expanding the terminal and upgrading the runway system.

programs through arrangements with Ferris State University, Central Michigan University, Michigan State University, Eastern Michigan University, Michigan Technological University, University of Michigan, Wayne State University and Lake Superior State University.

Evergreen Hill Cemetery is located just north of Vanderbilt in Corwith Township on Yuill Road. Township and Village residents may use this cemetery as a final resting place. The cemetery is approximately 27 acres in size, but the original section was acquired before 1899 and was just two acres. In 1899 ten acres were added, and in 1944 land was purchased to bring the cemetery to its current size. The earliest headstone is dated 1874. Approximately six acres of the cemetery at the south end is undeveloped. The Catholic cemetery, used by Corwith Township residents, is located just south of the Township border in Livingston Township.

Two churches are located in Corwith Township: Northern Lights Christian Fellowship on Old 27 north of McGregor Road and Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witness on Old 27 just inside the Township's northern boundary. There are three churches located in Vanderbilt: Vanderbilt Community Church, Pigeon River Baptist Church and Holy Redeemer Catholic Church, which are used by Corwith Township residents.

Medical Facilities

There are no medical facilities located Corwith Township. For health care services residents travel to Otsego Memorial Hospital in Gaylord, Alpena General Hospital in Alpena, Northern Michigan Hospital in Petoskey, Munson Medical Center in Traverse City, and Grayling Mercy Hospital in Grayling. Residents needing long-term or nursing home care will find two facilities nearby in Gaylord: McReynolds Hall or Tendercare. An adult foster care family home is located on Alexander Road in the Township.

Northwest Michigan Community Health Agency (formerly District Health Department Number Three) is often able to fill health care needs of the community which are not available or affordable elsewhere. The agency's service area includes Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet and Otsego Counties and is headed by a board, whose members are representatives from the County Boards of Commissioners. Programs offered by the agency fall under three categories: home health care services, environmental health services and personal health services. Other

home health care services include the Otsego Area Hospice and a number of private home health care providers.

Northern Michigan Community Mental Health provides support services to developmentally disabled persons as well as persons needing mental health services. Northern Michigan Community Mental Health service area covers Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Emmet and Otsego Counties.

Recreational Facilities

One important attraction sought by residents and visitors is the abundant recreational opportunities of the Northern Michigan area. State lands, forestlands, lakes and rivers are the primary draws for the outdoor sports enthusiast. The Pigeon River County State Forest offers hunting, fishing and camping, and forest trails are used for hiking, biking, cross-country skiing and horseback riding.

The former railroad grade running north-south through the Township is now used as a Michigan Department of Natural Resources snowmobile trail. Motorized wheeled vehicles are prohibited, but the trail may be used for walking, biking or horseback riding during the snowmobile off-season.

Village of Vanderbilt parks, playgrounds and ballfields are open to the public and are often used by Corwith Township residents.

The Senior Citizens Center at Main and Arthur Streets in Vanderbilt provides organized activities such as bingo and serves meals for area senior citizens.

In addition, many of the Vanderbilt School's recreational facilities, such as gymnasium, ball field or playground are available for public use by special arrangement when not in use for school related activities.