

Town of Fredenberg-Community Vision



Prepared for:

Town of Fredenberg

Prepared by:

ARDC



Prepared: July 2020.

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Background of Planning Process

The Arrowhead Regional Development Commission (ARDC) was requested to facilitate a planning process to create a community vision for the future of the Town of Fredenberg, Minnesota. The process was inspired by the potential for new gravel or borrow pits and batch or crush plants in the community.

ARDC Planning's collaborative staff specializes in community development, public engagement, and funding mechanisms at multiple levels to serve the people of Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, and St. Louis counties. As a division of the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission (ARDC), our mission is to provide local units of government and citizens groups a means to work cooperatively in identifying needs, solving problems, and fostering local leadership.

Community Profile

The Town of Fredenberg is a township located in Saint Louis County, Minnesota. 2018 American Community Survey data estimates the total population to be 1,436 (738 Male/698 Female) According to the US Census Bureau, the township has a total area of 35.9 square miles, 25.4 of which is land and 10.5 is water. The Cloquet and Beaver Rivers flow through Fredenberg and connect to Fish and Island Lake which are partially within the township. Most of the soil in Fredenberg is sandy loam over sand and gravel or gravelly coarse sandy loam. Two County highways (48 and 43) and one County gravel road reside in the community, with an additional 14 miles of township roads.

Demographics

Age and Sex

51.2 +/- 3.8

Median age in Fredenberg township, St. Louis County, Minnesota

37.9 +/- 0.1

Median age in the United States

Table: DP05

Table Survey/Program: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Population by Age Range in Fredenberg township, St. Louis County, Minnesota

Under 5 years - 3.5%

18 years and older - 78.7%

65 years and older - 21.5%

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80

Earnings

\$57,857 +/- \$11,512

Female median year-round, full-time earnings in Fredenberg township, St. Louis County, Minnesota

\$41,690 +/- \$70

Female median year-round, full-time earnings in the United States

Table: S2001

Table Survey/Program: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Median Earnings for Fulltime, Year-Round Workers by Sex in Fredenberg township, St. Louis County, Minnesota

Male - \$65,074

Female - \$57,857

0 10000 20000 30000 40000 50000 60000 70000

Town of Fredenberg

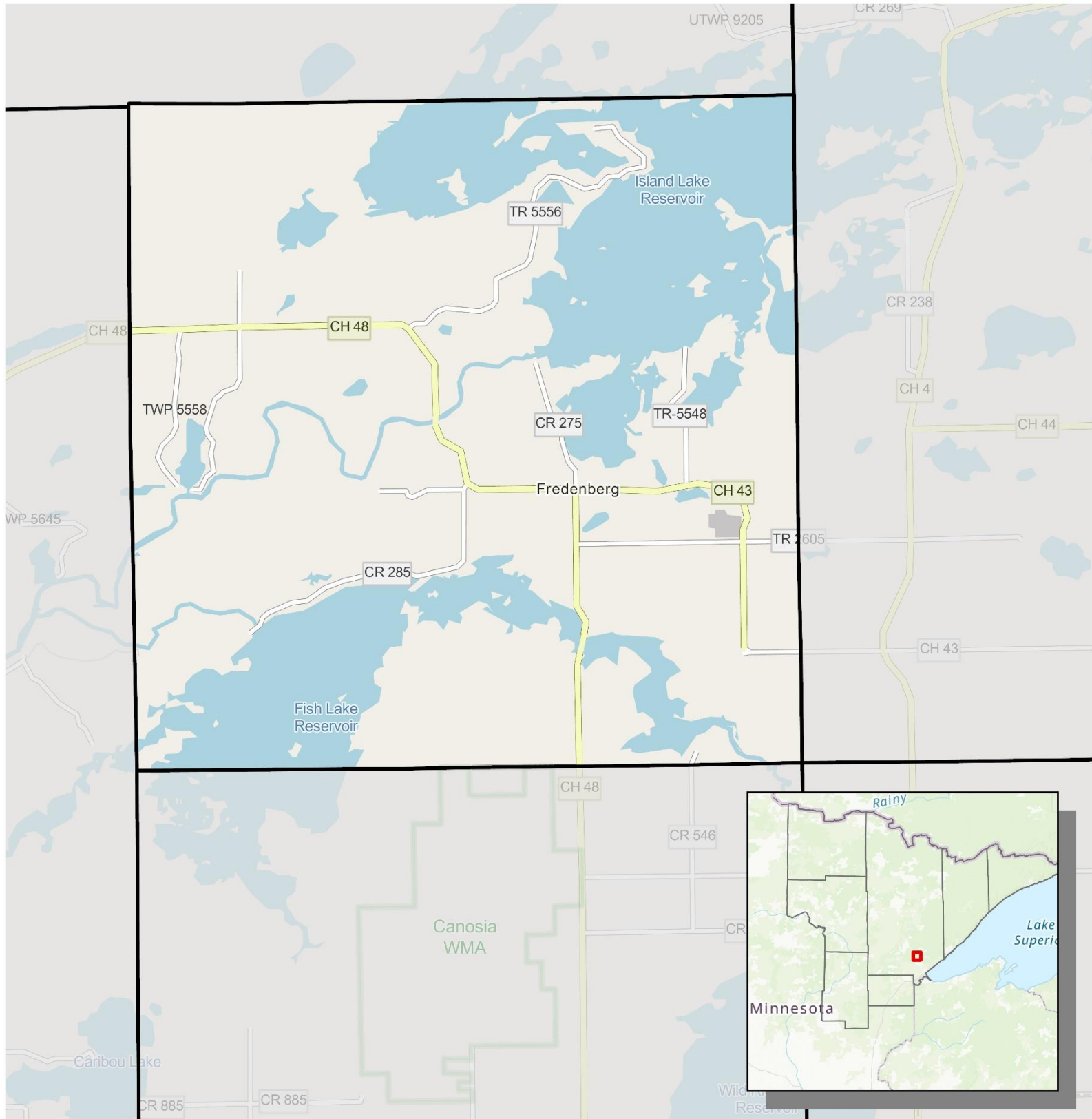


Figure 1: Town of Fredenberg Overview

History

The history of the Region dates back nearly 12,000 years when the first people known to archeologists as Paleoindians moved to the Region. The Paleoindians were small nomadic hunting groups who would move from small site to small site as the food sources moved. As the climate began to change so did the people of the region. As a warmer drier period began about 8,000 years ago the now day rugged landscape was carved out. With vast amounts of glacial melt, the networks of streams, rivers, and lakes unfolded. Along with these environmental changes came the cool and moist climate which gave way to the dense forests of spruce and large amounts of bodies of water. By the 1700s the Ojibwe lived in much of the area. Fur Trading dominated the 18th century, but by 1830s the fur trade began to decline from overhunting and declining markets in Europe. In 1834, the American Fur Company undertook commercial fishing operations on Lake Superior to bolster their sagging profits. By the 1850s explorers began to cross into the Region making way for the logging boom and the building of the railroads, which brought homesteaders to make their way to the region before the turn of the century.

The Town of Fredenberg became official in 1904. In 1905, there were 77 residents but only 6 families. The Weyerhouse Company built a log dam in 1890 over the Cloquet River. In 1913, the Great Northern Power Company (now Minnesota Power -MP) purchased the dam, building the first concrete dam in 1915. In 2017, updates to this dam were made by MP. The 1918 Fire swept through the township and was devastating, especially to the agriculture, farming, logging and residents in the area. .

The first school was established around 1890 in homes. In 1903, the first graduating class of 8th graders had 4 students. The Fredenberg School was built in 1958 and remained open until 1981. The building now houses the Community Center/Town Hall. Students from the area attend the Hermantown Schools.

Community Vision

The Town of Fredenberg completed a comprehensive plan document in 2018. This document presents a vision for the future of the community and the following excerpt outlines some of that vision:

The Town of Fredenberg lies to the north of Duluth. As the Township faces more development pressure, there is a need to guide any future development in such a way that the rural character of the Township is retained as desired by the majority of respondents to the 2007 and 2017 Township surveys. Areas that are unsuitable for development need to be protected, and it is important to recognize, value, and preserve the many natural resources that make up the Township.

The natural resources that abound also present some unique challenges for land use decisions. Our town possesses:

- Natural lakes, rivers and streams, reservoir lakes created by MN Power
- Many acres of wetlands that serve as nature's filter and areas of water retention

The natural resource assets also provide the following: -

- Varied recreational opportunities such as fishing and boating on the many lakes; hunting, hiking, skiing, cycling, horseback riding on woodland trails; snowmobiling on designated trails and a locally developed and supported cross country ski trail

Town of Fredenberg: Streams & Watersheds

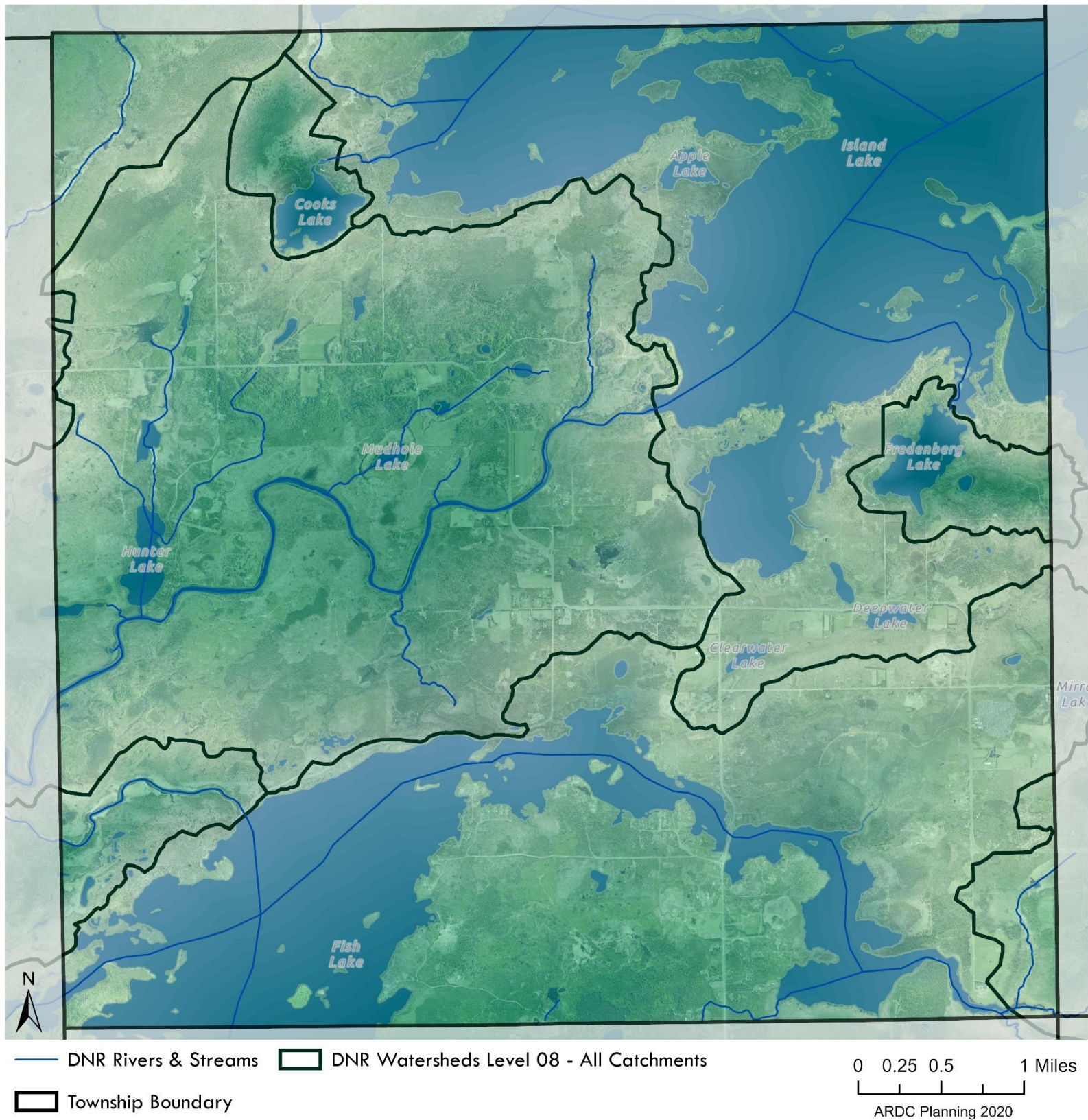


Figure 2: Town of Fredenberg: Streams and Watersheds

Relevant Existing Town Plan Goals & Strategies

The following is a list of goals and strategies identified in the Town of Fredenberg's plan which was deemed relevant to this planning process.

Goal 1: Maintain the existing rural character of Fredenberg Township

POLICY 2: Rural areas away from existing development should generally be used for that area's dominant land use activity, such as farming and forestry.

GOAL 3: Provide for the orderly growth of commercial and industrial activities within the township.

POLICY 2: Ensure that new commercial or industrial development will be compatible with the character and environment of the Township through the following: site design controls; use of screening between potential incompatible land uses; nodalization of commercial and industrial uses wherever practical.

POLICY 4: Discourage heavy industrial and large commercial expansion and/or development as being incompatible with the character and environment of the Township

GOAL 6: Encourage Fredenberg residents and other interested parties to participate in land use and development decisions.

Borrow Pit Gravel Mining Overview

A borrow pit is a term used in construction for a hole, pit or excavation that has been dug for the purposes of removing gravel, clay and sand used in a construction project such as when building an overpass or embankment. Saint Louis County defines Burrow Pit Gravel Mining as an 'Extractive Use' which requires a Conditional Use Permit in certain zoning districts in the county. The definition has been listed below:

Extractive Use - The use of land for surface or subsurface removal of sand, gravel, rock, industrial minerals, other nonmetallic minerals, and peat not regulated under Minnesota Statutes, sections 93.44 to 93.51

Batch or Crushing plants are accessory uses to mining efforts. Dependent on the mine, typically a batch plant combines the necessary materials to create concrete, and a crushing plant is on site to turn the raw material excavated from the ground into useable, smaller 'gravel. Each of these uses is are all regulated under the Saint Louis conditional use permit process.

While a critical operation for development, gravel mining and similar processing plants inherently create additional noise, potential air contaminants, and large truck traffic within proximity of the site. These impacts should be required to be mitigated, but also puts additional pressure on siting, to minimize conflicts with non-compatible uses. While the extent of long-term environmental impacts is not fully understood, rehabilitation of pits and plants can mitigate potential negative environmental impacts drastically. Additionally, when completed correctly, rehabilitation of a site can lead to a public amenity.

As shown on the following page's map, the Town of Fredenberg has approximately 10 active pits.

Town of Fredenberg: Borrow Pits & Land Ownership

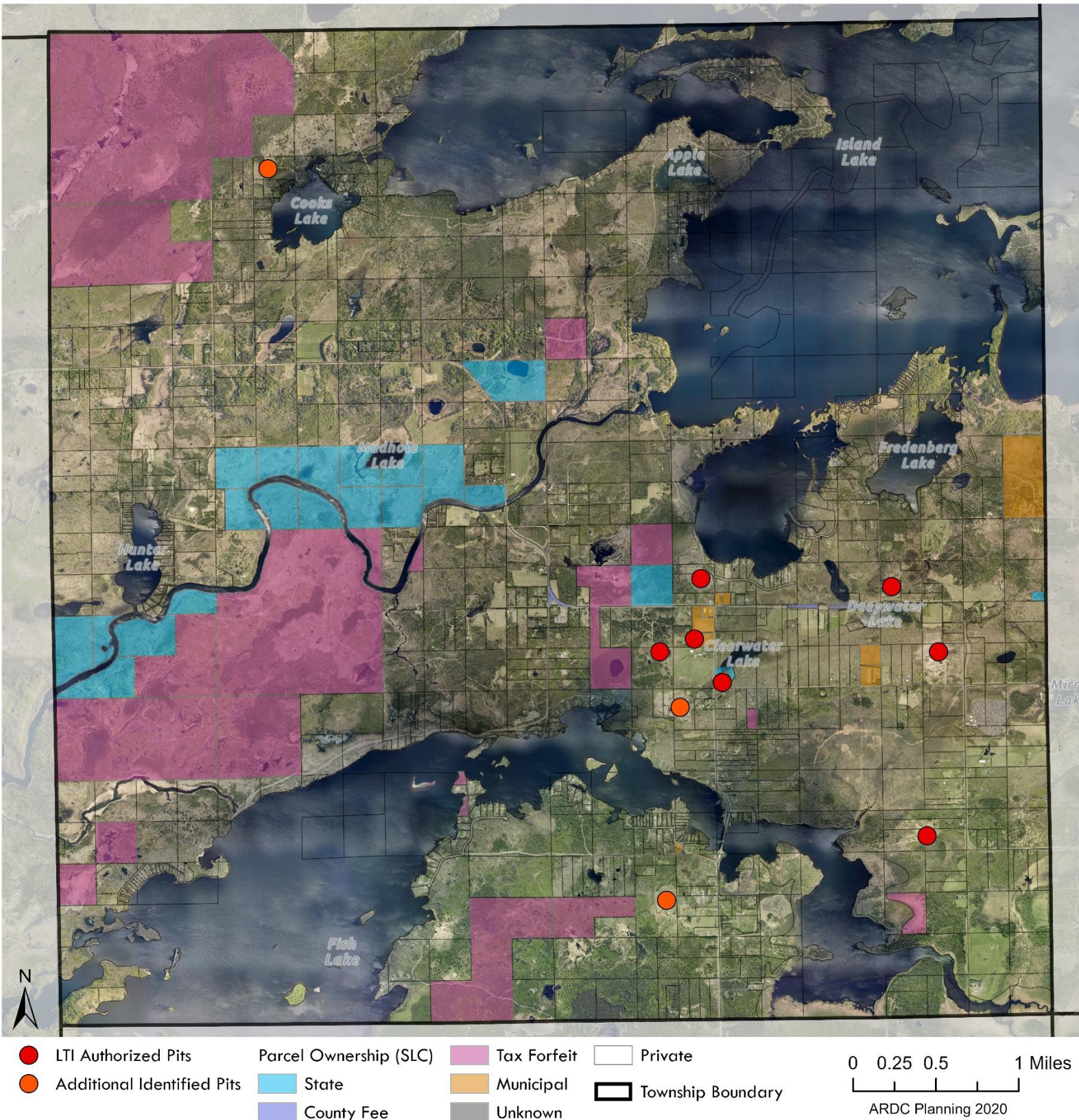


Figure 3 Town of Fredenberg Borrow Pits / Land Ownership

History of Local Zoning Control and Legal Precedence of Regulation

A brief history of the local zoning control in the Town of Fredenberg is outlined in their previously referenced community plan. The following has been extracted from that document:

Fredenberg established its own zoning by a vote of the residents on September 11, 1962. The Town Board was empowered to implement local zoning regulations.

The Town Board voted, on November 10, 1965 to adopt the St. Louis County zoning ordinance to govern zoning in Fredenberg Township. In later years, several amendments were adopted establishing additional restrictions. The Town Board appointed a 5-member zoning commission, a board of adjustment, and a zoning administrator who issued land use permits for building construction.

In 1987 the residents of Fredenberg voted to end Township zoning, and supervision of Fredenberg zoning was turned over to St. Louis County. Even though the County administers Township zoning, it is important for the Township to develop its own Comprehensive Plan to serve as a guide to the County when they make zoning decisions affecting Fredenberg.

Recent development pressure has spurred this planning process and questions on if the Town board can/should retain their zoning authority. An inquiry was made to the Minnesota Association of Townships regarding what their options are for regulations. Excerpts of that response has been placed below:

Townships can adopt land use ordinance no different than counties or cities. Town zoning is under the same statute as cities, Minn. Stat Ch 462. The town's ordinances need to be consistent with the county, meaning they must be as restrictive or more restrictive, but not less restrictive. Towns are not required to do 'all or nothing' zoning. Just like cities and counties, the local government regulates only the things they choose. The town can adopt an ordinance that addresses only the mining issue if they like. Many towns adopt a limited ordinance like that, regulating only the few issues they feel are not adequately governed by the county ordinance. The town enforces and administers its own ordinance, and the county ordinances, if any apply exist in parallel with the towns. An applicant would need to apply to both local governments and get approvals from both.

It is expected that for the town to regulate the land use without taking on some zoning. Towns have general welfare powers, but that does not usually extend to land use regulation. If regulating, the Township does not take anything from the county. Instead, the town and county administrations exist alongside one another as two governing bodies.

It is with this understanding that, if desired, the Town of Fredenberg could obtain land use zoning restrictions for a certain use (i.e. gravel burrow pit zoning or related use), but not be required to obtain authority over all other zoning regulations within the Township. An ordinance limiting the use or additional permitting process appear to be legal options for the Township to have further input and control over the development of these (or other) related uses within the community.

Town of Fredenberg: Zoning (St. Louis County)

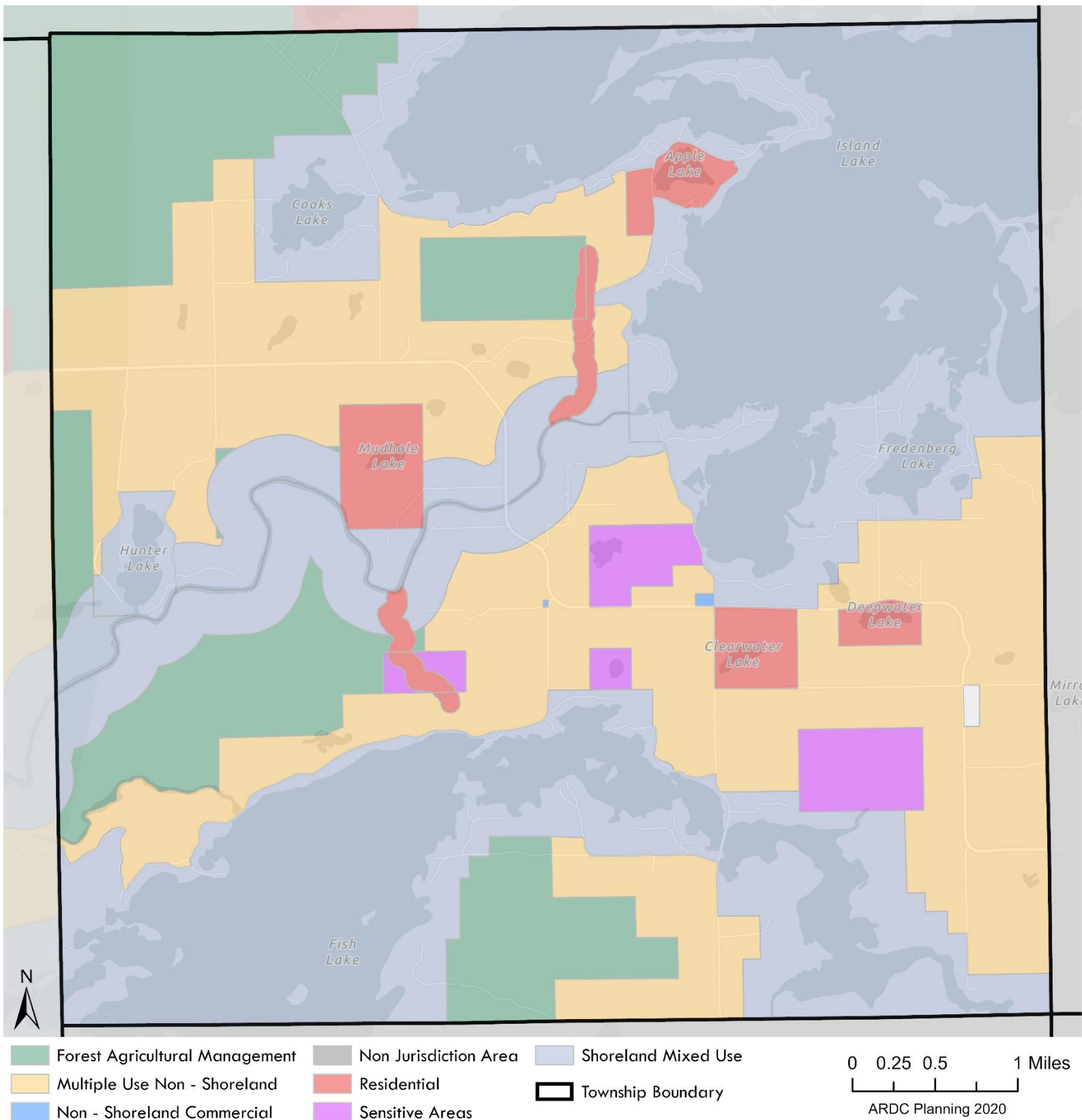


Figure 4: Town of Fredenberg Zoning Map (Administered by Saint Louis County)

Public Input Summary

A public comment/input session is scheduled for the end of July. At the meeting, this report will be presented and specific questions and general input from public attendees will be sought after. A summary of the input along with an appendix of any received written comments will be added to this section of the report for review.