

This chapter describes the existing conditions in the Township and discusses what future trends may be affecting the Township in terms of planning for its future. This Chapter is divided into three parts: The community, the land, and the interconnection of those components creating the economic conditions for the community.

Tofte is located in the west end of Cook County along the North Shore of Lake Superior about 90 miles northeast of Duluth, MN. It serves as a commercial center for the west end of the county.

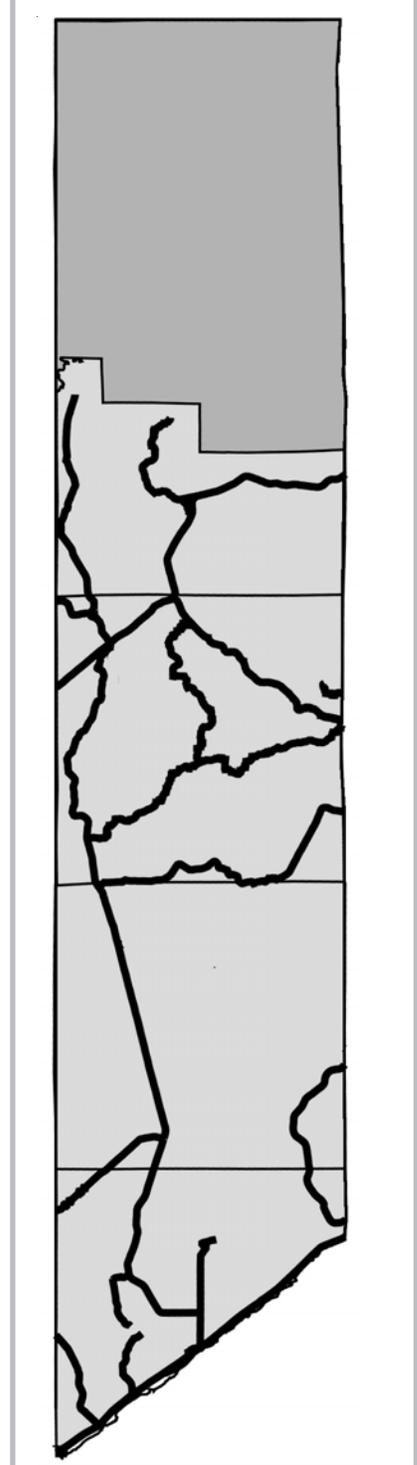
Tofte Township extends from the shore of Lake Superior over 24 miles inland into the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) covering over 164 square miles. The majority of the residents live along the North Shore within three miles of the Lake. This is a function primarily of public land ownership as well as the location of infrastructure and early settlement patterns.

Native Americans arrived on the North Shore shortly after the retreat of the last glaciers 12,000 years ago. French explorers and voyageurs arrived about 350 years ago. Tofte's European white settlement began in 1893 when three Norwegian fishermen settled in the area. Brothers Andrew and John Tofte and their brother-in-law Hans Engelson sold lake trout and bluefin to markets in Duluth, the Twin Cities, and Chicago. The Tofte pier was an important landing point for travelers and commerce before communities were connected by road. The North Shore Commercial Fishing Museum, a replica of the original twin fish houses tells the story of commercial fishermen on Lake Superior.

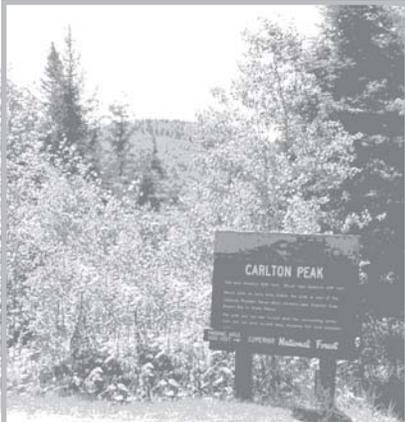
The Scandinavian influence in Tofte is reflected in its buildings that have steep roofs to shed snow. The buildings also reflect a usage of material native to the area. In addition, these Scandinavian influenced buildings reflect clean, simple utilitarian lines.

At the turn of the century logging was a mainstay of the area's local economy. There are numerous remnants of old logging railroads inland from the Shore. In fact, early railroad beds now serve as roads.

### The Community



## Where We Are Now and Who We Are Now; Future Challenges



Carlton Peak, rising above the settlement of Tofte is the highest peak on the North Shore. It rises 927 feet above Lake Superior and 1,529 feet above sea level. At the turn of the century the peak was owned by Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing as a possible source for abrasives. Subsequently, a quarry on the south side of the peak supplied the material for the Taconite Harbor breakwater.

Tofte, with its prominent “Welcome to Superior National Forest” sign is a gateway to the National Forest and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. The Town is also a gateway in terms of providing outfitting services, resorts, and cabin accommodations for visitors.

The U.S. Forest Service Ranger Station in Tofte has a number of the log buildings that were constructed by the Minnesota Civilian Conservation Corps and are still used as residences. Inland, logging camps, and the Sawbill CCC Camp were also built with rough hewn logs and timber planks. Only remnants of the foundations of the CCC Camp remain today.

Tofte maintains picnic facilities and a public boat launch in the Tofte Town Park and celebrates its heritage with a fireworks display every Fourth of July. The Park, with its pedestrian bridge and wishing well are fine examples of cobblestone masonry. As with most of the public services in Tofte the maintenance of the park is done by volunteers, which reflects the active involvement of its citizens.

The Town also provides emergency services through its First Responders and a volunteer Fire Department. The Fire Hall and Town Hall are adjacent to each other on the shore of Lake Superior. The Town also maintains its Cemetery.

Temperance River State Park, on the west side of the Town was established in 1957. It offers camping, hiking, skiing, and swimming.

Birch Grove School is a focal point for the community. As well as being a school it serves as a community center where residents can use the facilities for meetings and other gatherings. It also has a computer lab available for residents’ use. In addition, once a week, it provides space for a health clinic. There is also a youth hostel located in the School.



The population of Tofte, according to the 2000 census is 226. The 1990 Census indicated that Tofte's population was 231, a very slight loss in population. See Appendix C, Demographics, for a detailed summary of the demographics of Tofte. In general, Cook County has experienced an increase in population, although it appears that Tofte is basically stable at around 230 people.

Population

The State demographer predicts that Cook County's population will grow from its current population of 5168 (2000 Census) to 5690 in 2005; 6250 in 2010; and 6850 in 2015 or about a 9% increase in population per 5 years. The 1997 Cook County Land Use Guide projections of a "high " growth rate for 2015 of 4,550 have already been exceeded in 2000.

If Tofte were to experience a cumulative 9% growth every 5 years, the population could increase by 65 people by 2015. It is expected that there will be a net-migration increase in Cook County in the 55 to 74 age group (1997 Cook County Land Use Guide). Cook County (by percentage) is one of the fastest growing areas in the State. About 31% of the population in Tofte are in the 45 – 60 year age group. With in-migration of older people, that age group will experience the most increase. This is also being experienced across the State. The 1997 Cook County Land Use Guide anticipates an out-migration of younger people. Planning implications for an aging population are related to facilities for older people and health care facilities. In addition, the decline in younger populations has workforce availability implications as well as implications for maintaining the Community School.

As there are no statistics for the future growth of Tofte, one can only project future scenarios. And, growth in the Township is also dependant upon a combination of interrelated factors as well as, to an extent, local planning policies.

Housing



Land use, jobs, and the ability for a community to grow are all strongly tied to housing. A community's future, its health, wealth, and vitality are also interwoven with a community's housing availability. The community has and does recognize the need for affordable housing for all its residents. The average value of new housing has risen from \$38,000 in 1990 to \$80,000 in 1994 and continues to rise today.

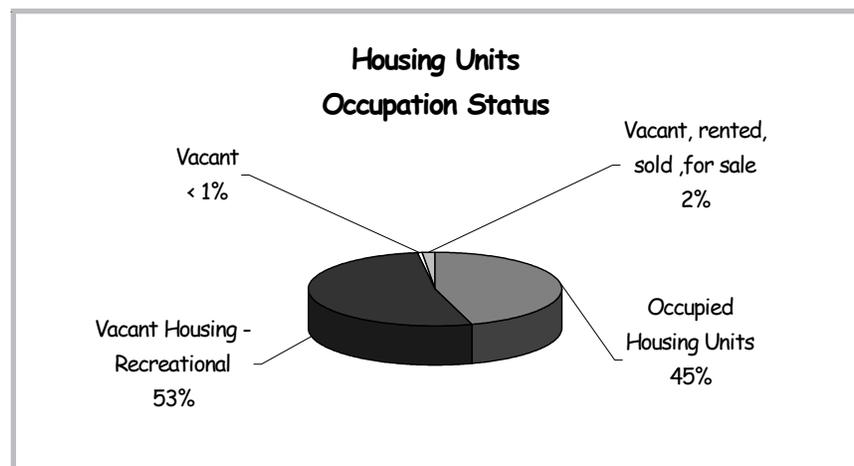
In Tofte, there are 225 total available housing units of which 118 are vacant / recreational housing. This statistic also reflects that there is a considerable seasonal population fluctuation in Tofte. The ramifications for this include the increased need for public services during those months as well as a boost to the local economy.

There are 2.26 people per owner occupied housing unit, with a similar occupancy in rental occupied units with 2 per household. Were one to combine a scenario where Tofte were to experience a cumulative 9% growth every 5 years with the current occupancy per unit, it could be expected that the community may need 30 more units. Using projections based on The Cook County Land Use Guide of 50 units per year and 72 units per year in the County, the proportional increase in housing for Tofte would be 1.4 per year and 2 per year. In the year 2015 this would result in an increase in units ranging from 15 to 22 units. Possible scenarios, then, range from a 15 to 30 unit increase by 2015.



There are virtually no statistics available for the increase in the number of vacation, rental housing units.

Figure 1.



Currently, about 98% of the land use in the Township is in Forest - Agricultural -Recreational land use. The remainder of the land uses are residential (R1), commercial (GC), and resort / commercial (RC/ R) and Lakeshore Residential (LSR). See Table 1. In terms of land use, the significant variable for providing opportunities for housing as well as other development is the amount of available private land for development. See the Map Appendix for a current zoning map displaying land uses.

Of the approximately 80,200 acres in the Township (Outside of the BWCAW) 5% is privately owned. The majority of private land is adjacent to the Shore following an historic settlement pattern and subsequent development of roads and services.

In Tofte's early years, prior to the development of the North Shore Highway in the early 1900's, ships provide the transportation for goods and people. Inland, railroads provided for the movement of timber.

Today, the majority of the roads in the Township are Forest Service roads serving the inland portions of the Township. Highway 61 serves as is the primary road connecting Tofte with Duluth to the west and Canada to the east. This highway serves both the tourism industry and is the major international transportation route going to and from Canada. It is expected that the Highway will be reconstructed within the next few years.

The major access going inland is the Sawbill Trail (Cook County 2) winding northward for 23 miles and terminating at Sawbill Lake, an entry point to the BWCAW. The only inland commercial business is an outfitter at Sawbill Lake. East / west access is the "600 Road" and Cook County 3 and FR 165. These inland roads serve for timber hauling and in the Fall are very important for Fall Color Tours. Driving any of these roads in the inland area provides many opportunities for wildlife viewing.

Currently there is only one Township road, the road to the Cemetery.

Land Use



Roads

Table 1.

| Tofte Township                                |              |         |              |         |              |
|---|--------------|---------|--------------|---------|--------------|
| Zoning District Summary (Not Including BWCAW) |              |         |              |         |              |
|   | Private Land |         | Public Land  |         | All Land     |
| Zone District                                 | Acres        | Percent | Acres        | Percent | Total Acres  |
| FAR 1   | 1973         | 3%      | 66269        | 97%     | 68242        |
| FAR-2   | 333          | 3%      | 9652         | 97%     | 9986         |
| FAR -3  | 183          | 69%     | 83           | 32%     | 266          |
| GC  | 130          | 99%     | 0            | 0%      | 130          |
| LSR   | 45           | 100%    | 0            | 0%      | 45           |
| R-1   | 884          | 70%     | 376          | 30%     | 1260         |
| RC / R  | 152          | 58%     | 113          | 42%     | 265          |
| <b>Totals</b>                                 | <b>3700</b>  |         | <b>76493</b> |         | <b>80193</b> |

**Trails**

There are many hiking, skiing, and snowmobile trail in Tofte Township. Snowmobile Trail access is provided adjacent to the Temperance River State Park. The Superior Hiking Trail runs along the ridge and provides many scenic viewing opportunities. The Sugar Bush Ski Trail provide cross country skiing opportunities. There are many old logging roads providing hunting, hiking, and bicycling opportunities. In addition, the Township has thousands of acres of land to simply walk in the woods. There is a lake-walk trail following the shore and will eventually connect to Tofte Town Park. (Map Appendix)

**Telecommunications**

There is a high speed DSL Line which runs along Highway 61. In the near future, there will be cell phone coverage available for the North Shore area of the Township.

**Electrical Power Supply**

Approximately 90 % of the Township is does not have electrical power service, as almost all the residents live adjacent to the North Shore. The furthest extent of inland electric power lines is to the area around White Pine Lake. Those living inland, generally use renewable energy power sources.

**Sewage Treatment**

Currently all of the sewage treatment on residential and commercial properties are individual systems. Tofte is a member of the Tofte Schroeder Sanitary District (TSSD). This group has explored options for sewage treatment systems and is continuing to do so.

All residential houses rely on wells for their water supply.



Tofte has a wealth of natural resources – Lake Superior, vast forested tracts, inland lakes and streams, most having very limited development on them and healthy populations of various plant and animal communities.

Tofte is in the coniferous biome and over the years the landscape has been formed by natural forces such as wildfire, insects, and other natural change agents. With European settlement, the natural environment has been altered through logging, road and trail construction, trapping, and other human activities such as fire suppression. However, natural forces today still continue to have a significant role in shaping the environment.

Tofte is rich in the number and diversity of flora and fauna. There are 146 identified sensitive species in the Township. (See Map Appendix). There is a broad mix of conifer and hardwood components. The ridge along Lake Superior has northern hardwood types which, in the Fall, gloriously display their colors, beckoning many visitors to venture into the forest. Heading inland to the Canadian Shield country, coniferous forests become more dominant.

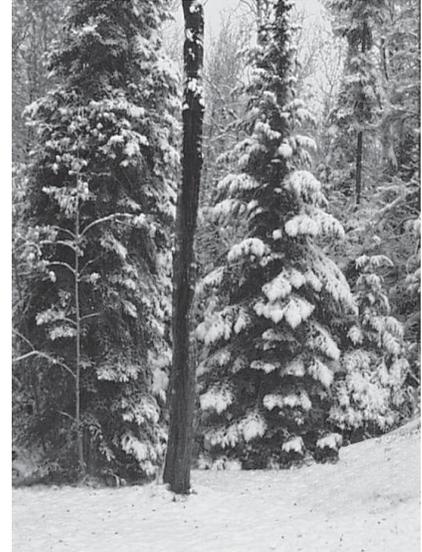
Tofte is separated by a continental divide into two major watersheds: One flowing north into Hudson Bay via the Rainy Lake Watershed and the other into Lake Superior. There are numerous, smaller watersheds. The Temperance River watershed is one of the relatively large watersheds in the County draining about 18,600 acres. (See Map Appendix)

Lake Superior is the world's largest body of freshwater, containing over 10% of the total surface freshwater on earth. Most of the shore is forested and rocky.

There are no known coastal wetlands along Lake Superior in Tofte Township. Inland, wetlands are scattered amongst the uplands forming a rich mosaic of interconnected landscapes.

There is limited information on ground water conditions in Tofte.

## Vegetation



## Watersheds, Wetlands



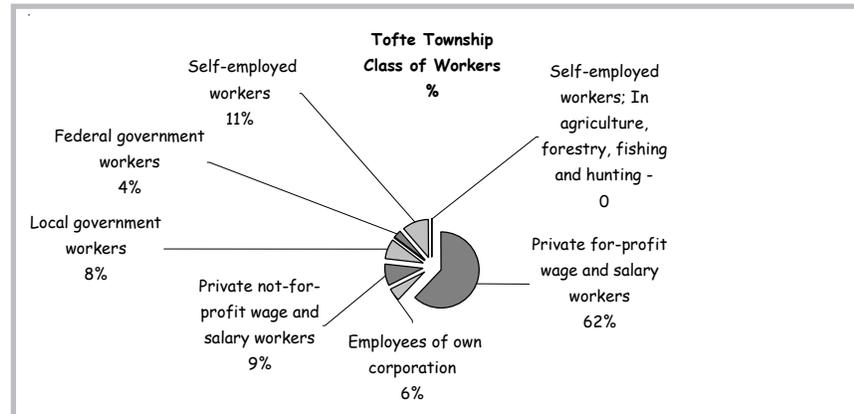
## Where We Are Now and Who We Are Now; Future Challenges

### Class of Workers

People's livelihoods have always depended on natural resources in Tofte Township. Initially it was fur trading and fishing, and timber. Currently tourism is a major component of the Tofte economy. Although timber harvesting is significant in Tofte Township, there are no workers in the Town directly making their living off of timber harvesting. Figure 2 displays the classes of workers in the Township.

Seventeen percent of the workers are self-employed or own their own corporation. The majority (62%) are privately employed wage and salary workers. Government workers account for 12% of the workforce

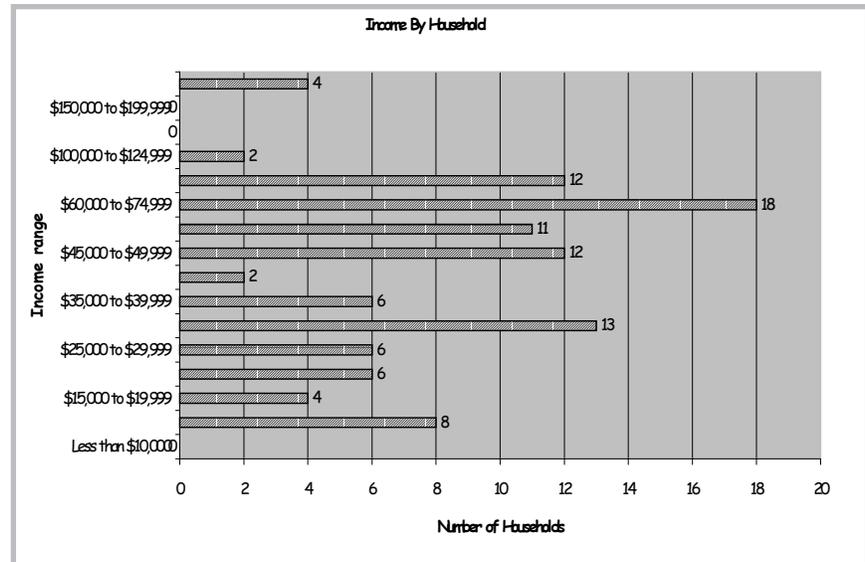
Figure 2



### Income

Median household income is \$47,188. Figure 3 indicates that earnings fall into two categories: 43% of the workers earn from \$10,000 to \$45,000; and 53% earn from \$45,000 to \$100,000.

Figure 3



Lodging and retail business constitute the major sectors in Tofte Township. Seven facilities provide lodging for visitors to the Township. Retail establishments include gift shops, bait shops, a food market and a gas station / store. Services in Tofte include outfitters, charter fishing businesses, car and snowmobile repair, construction services, machine services, and a bank. (See Appendix B for a list of businesses)

Economic Sectors

There are no business and labor statistics kept on a Township level. In fact, most projections and outlooks are on a regional basis. Figure 4 displays employment outlooks for the Northeast Region of Minnesota. (Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, 2004

Regional Outlook

Service occupations including food preparation and serving and home care aides are expected to add the most workers. Professional workers are expected to add the most workers in health care, registered nurses. Sales and related occupations are expected to increase for cashiers and retail salespersons. Temporary foreign workers are a significant part of the seasonal workforce.

According to the DEED Labor Market Information Office Region 3 Labor Market Profile (June 2004), “unless labor force participation rates change dramatically- and they have been fairly constant over the last decade- the size of the active workforce will level off.” This factor, coupled with affordable housing opportunities may affect the growth of Tofte’s economic sector

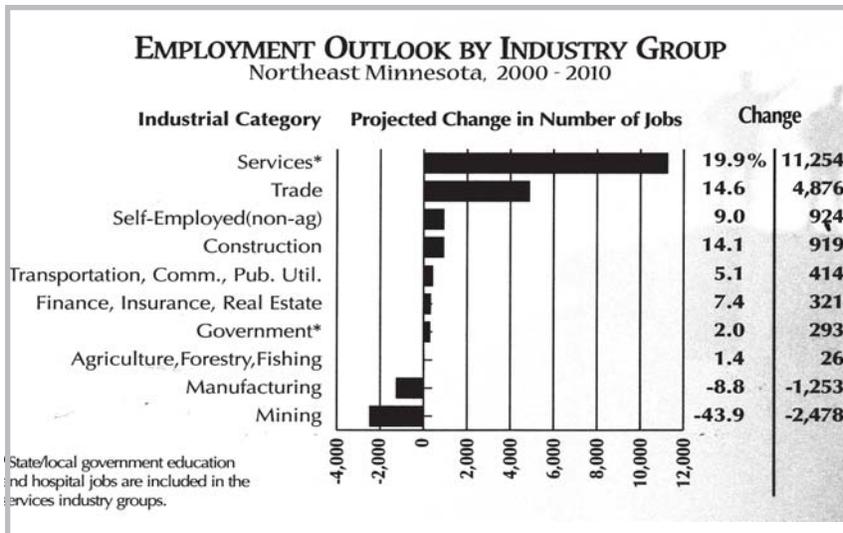


Figure 4