

IV. Desired Future Conditions

What is a “Vision Narrative”?

Silver Bay’s Comprehensive Plan identifies the City’s development, preservation, and infrastructure priorities as the City faces the challenges of the 21st century. The first step in the planning process is identifying long-range goals, looking out 20 – 25 years, so that near-term decisions can be made to move the City toward the vision of a better Silver Bay. The long-range goals are described in the vision narrative. The vision portrays Silver Bay’s desired future in a way that guides the details of the rest of the Plan.

The City of Silver Bay has created a vision narrative to describe the desired future. The narrative is written in the present tense, but is referring to how a person would describe the City in the year 2040, assuming the Comprehensive Plan has been successfully implemented. The vision narrative strives to provide enough details to guide decision making both during and after the Comprehensive Plan process. The vision must be both general enough to provide flexibility, and specific enough to provide direction.

The primary purpose of the vision is to guide the direction that the community is moving rather than how far the community is capable of moving. As a result, the vision narrative may seem, to some readers, to be overly optimistic. But progress toward a goal is the first step to reaching the goal, and the vision sets an endpoint that allows progress to be measured.

What are Goals and Objectives?

The Goals and Objectives are Silver Bay’s official policy statements. Goals are general statements that follow from the Vision narrative, defining the City’s priority outcomes. Objectives are more specific and action-oriented statements that both define the goal and direct action priorities for implementing the goal.

The vision, goals, and objectives create the foundation for the Future Land Use map, shown on page 55. The different elements of the Plan (vision, goals, objectives, and map) work together and must be considered comprehensively rather than in isolation.

Silver Bay’s City-Wide 2040 Vision Narrative

In 2040, Silver Bay is a regional destination with a thriving small-town culture and atmosphere. People are drawn from across the region by its welcoming businesses, natural environment, and numerous recreational opportunities. Trails carry explorers by foot, ski, snowmobile, and ATV through the woods where they enjoy a return to nature. Lake Superior’s beautiful shoreline welcomes sightseers, kayakers, sailors, and charter boats. The community is thriving with a diverse manufacturing and tourism economy, while maintaining a strong mining presence. Families have access to quality education and services, young adults have high-paying jobs and recreation opportunities, and the elderly receive excellent care, local services, and access to assistance. The City has a reputation as a friendly and accommodating community and a place where people are welcome to escape for relaxation and enjoyment of life.

The following plan presents a vision narrative for eight distinct components of the Silver Bay community, followed by goals and objectives that connect the vision to specific actions. The land use section also provides goal and objective language for ten geographic subareas of the City.

City of Silver Bay Comprehensive Plan

Land Use Vision

Silver Bay has several areas with distinct characteristics and land uses. The original residential area, with updated housing and well-maintained streets and sidewalks, still provides much of the housing for the community. New homes are being built along the golf course and at the eastern end of the original housing plat. Redevelopment and new developments have incrementally expanded the neighborhood, while retaining walkability and character. The City commercial center has been redeveloped with updated buildings, creating curb appeal in the City's vibrant downtown. Across Highway 61, Northshore Mining continues to operate and characterize the landscape. At the City gateway entrance on Highway 61 and in the eastern lakeside area, the gateway and business park areas are strategically developed and linked to the downtown, accommodating new restaurants, businesses, multi-family housing, and lodging that complement downtown businesses. The adjacent eco-industrial park has expanded to include new technology manufacturing businesses that help support the local economy with well-paying jobs and offers new community amenities such as a community shared-solar garden. The natural areas north of the original City plat remains a prominent feature of the community with wooded areas, trails, parks, and scenic vistas that continue to be protected from development and have become a prominent second entry to Tettegouche State Park.



Goals and Objectives by District

The Land Use section of the Plan identifies ten distinct districts each with its own set of goals and objectives. The ten districts are:

1. Gateway/Gateway Corridor
2. Original Housing Plan
3. Housing Expansion
4. City Center
5. Highway 61/Northshore Mining
6. Business/Eco-Industrial Park
7. Forestry/Recreation
8. Cultural Center
9. Commercial (non-center)
10. Lakeshore Recreation

Gateway/Gateway Corridor. The City has four gateway areas where visitors enter the community. The gateways are located at the east and west entry points of County 5, with the primary gateway at the intersection of Highway 61 and County Highway 5, where visitors move from primary highway into the developed community. Additional gateways at the east entry of Highway 61 at the City limit and at Hwy 61 by the Marina entrance. The primary gateway corridor runs along County Highway 5 from Highway 61 to the Town Center area.

1. Create a welcoming gateway into the community at Highway 61.

- a. Redevelop the primary gateway with a commercial or public use that speaks to Silver Bay's community and assets.
- b. Develop signage and wayfinding at both gateways and the gateway corridor to promote Silver Bay's businesses, parks, and trails that would appeal to tourist traffic.
- c. Develop non-motorized gateways to Silver Bay.

City of Silver Bay Comprehensive Plan

Create a clear and welcoming corridor to the City Center.

- a. Maintain landscaping or design elements along the public right of way to create the feel of a corridor.
- b. Create a gateway or entrance with public space, landscaping or other design elements at the City Center.
- c. Create public uses or trails along the undeveloped corridor that enhance the curb appeal along the corridor.

Original Housing Plat. The original developed plat for the City's housing, developed in the 1950s and 60s, and the newer additions extending off Penn Boulevard (County Highway 5).



1. Increase the variety and improve the quality of Silver Bay's housing stock.

- a. Encourage appropriate consolidation of small lots for housing redevelopment that would enable homes and amenities to respond to housing market demands.
- b. Encourage rehabilitation of older homes to retain a starter home market and enable senior residents to remain in their homes.
- c. Clarify and enforce nuisance ordinances and building code standards.

Housing Expansion. The private or city-owned lands available for new housing development adjacent to the golf course, the eastern side of the original plat, and along Penn Blvd.

- 1. Enhance opportunities for new housing development consistent with changing markets.**
 - a. Investigate alternatives and costs of extending utility infrastructure to enable private development along the golf course.
 - b. Consider incentives for private housing development at the golf course that pay for infrastructure improvements such as needed road connections.
- 2. Retain the connected urban service area for new subdivisions or housing developments.**
- 3. Ensure that new housing areas include pedestrian and bicycle connections to the community's developed portions.**
- 4. Support limited development of housing beyond the urban service area.**

City Center. The commercial core of the City, centering on the Shopping Center and including adjacent commercial land uses along Outer Drive and government buildings on Davis Drive.

- 1. Revitalize and update the physical design and appearance of the City's commercial core.**
 - a. Conduct a visual preference survey or similar community engagement to identify design guidelines and goals.
 - b. Consider creating a zoning overlay district that references design standards and prioritizes "downtown" type businesses.

City of Silver Bay Comprehensive Plan

- 2. Create opportunities for expansion of existing businesses and location of new businesses in the city center.**
 - a. Investigate the opportunities and locations to create a small business incubator building with a variety of space options for entrepreneurs to locate.
 - b. Modify zoning to encourage destination and gathering-place businesses such as restaurants, coffee shops, specialty shops, tap room or bar, to locate in the city center.
- 3. Evaluate feasibility of consolidating government operations in or adjacent to the city center.**
 - a. Analyze the cost/benefit of revitalizing and upgrading existing City buildings providing services to the public compared to repurposing and consolidating operations.
 - b. Discuss with County and other governmental entities the opportunities for consolidating operations in a single facility.

Hwy 61/Northshore Mining. Northshore Mining operations and land on both sides of Highway 61, east of the Marina and west of the Eco -industrial Park.

- 1. Support on-going operations and improvements to processing operations.**
- 2. Work with Northshore Mining to identify land use and design opportunities to announce the City of Silver Bay along the Highway 61 corridor.**

Business/Eco-Industrial Park. The City business and industrial park between Highway 61 and Lake Superior, east of the Northshore Mining land and operations extending to the City limits.

- 1. Develop commercial opportunities in the business park**
 - a. Create a development plan specific to the business park area.
 - b. Identify types of businesses that can capture tourist traffic and that complement lakeshore amenities, but are distinguished from downtown businesses.
 - c. Modify zoning to reflect commercial priorities described in the development plan.
 - d. Identify design and landscaping goals that enhance appeal to tourist markets.
 - e. Develop and promote the Black Beach recreation area.
 - f. Extend trail systems to the Business Park area to enhance recreational markets for commercial investment.
- 2. Develop compatible industrial opportunities for the Eco-Industrial Park.**
 - a. Examine opportunities for district heating or other sustainable energy systems consistent with the Eco-Industrial market.
 - b. Work with Northshore Mining and Minnesota Power to identify support industries that could locate in the industrial park.
 - c. Identify financing options, incentives, or other access to capital that can create an easy path for businesses to locate in the industrial park.

Forest/Recreation. Publicly owned and managed land and trail corridors from Tettegouche State Park at the north City limit and extending south to the private lands and housing around the original city plat, and including the golf course and tourist-focused parks.

- 1. Enhance access to Tettegouche State Park and regional trail amenities.**
 - a. Continue to support maintenance and improvement of regional trail systems in collaboration with county, regional, and state entities.
 - b. Maintain local trail connections that extend into the developed areas in the City.
 - c. Support continued forest, habitat, and recreation uses for State-owned land.

City of Silver Bay Comprehensive Plan

- d. Work with the Minnesota DNR to enhance Tettegouche State Park amenities within the City or accessed through the City.
2. **Continue to maintain and improve of the Golf Course and nearby area.** Identify potential for synergistic commercial development in conjunction with the golf course operations.
3. **Support sustainable forest maintenance, harvest activities, and recreation uses on private rural lands, such as Grants-in-Aid (GIA) trails.**

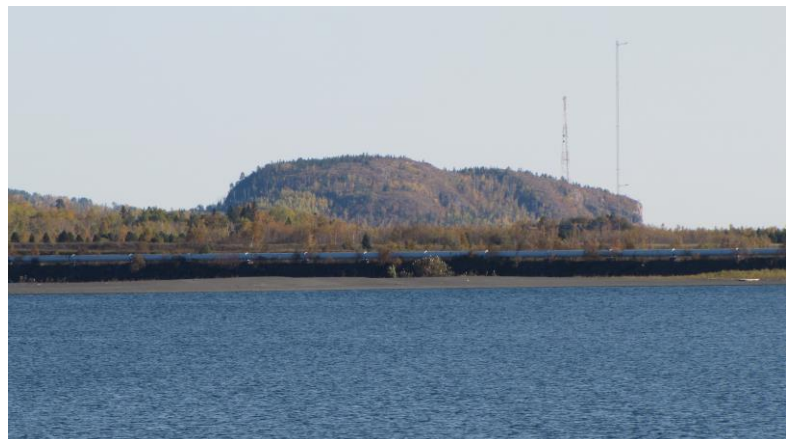
Commercial (non center). The commercial and industrial land uses that are not part of Northshore Mining or the City Center, including uses along Golf Course Road, the Mary MacDonald Center, and public and private commercial operations accessed from Shop Hill Road.

1. **Improve the amenity value of the scenic overlook.**
 - a. Improve the gateway and access to the scenic overlook.
 - b. Connect the Northshore Mining scenic overlook to nearby recreational destinations and amenities such as a campground, the Gitchi Gami trailhead, the ATV trail access points.
2. **Transition the Mary MacDonald Center to private sector ownership, or consider other long-term opportunities for redevelopment.**
3. **Support development of expanded health services in the health service area near the Veteran's Home and clinic.**
4. **Support existing commercial operations and sites outside designated commercial areas (City Center, Business Park, Golf Course).**
 - a. Ensure that commercial uses are compatible with surrounding land uses and corridors.
 - b. Consider selective redevelopment with willing landowners or when properties are in ownership transition.

Cultural Center. The area centering on the school and recreational assets adjacent to the City Center, including the ice arena.

1. **Support continued use and improvement of the Rukavina Arena.**
2. **Identify areas for the development of a campground that maximizes trail access and links to existing attractions such as the scenic overlook, and has easy access to the commercial districts.**
3. **Support continued use and reinvestment in the existing school and its facilities.**

Lakeshore Recreation. The parks and recreation areas focused on Lake Superior, including the Marina and Marina Park on the west edge of the City's lakefront and the Black Beach area near the eastern edge of the City's lakefront.



1. **Develop recreational opportunities at and around Black Beach.**

City of Silver Bay Comprehensive Plan

- a. Improve public access and features at the Black Beach site.
- b. Create a gateway and wayfinding system to promote use of the site.
- c. Incorporate Black Beach area into Business Park planning, development and promotion efforts.

2. Enhance amenities and use of marina area.

- a. Work with landowners and state agencies to bring appropriate commercial development to the marina area.
- b. Develop kayak trail services.
- c. Continue to work with Northshore Mining and other entities to link the marina to nearby commercial and recreational amenities.
- d. Improve signage, wayfinding, and promotion of marina.

City of Silver Bay Comprehensive Plan

Future Land Use Map

The Future Land Use map (see Figure 30) is a snapshot of the preferred mix of land uses at a point 25 years in the future. The Future Land Use map is therefore more conceptual than the Existing Land Use map. The Future Land Use map shows the City's future landscape assuming the vision and goals of the Comprehensive Plan are met. Boundaries between land use districts are not intended to be precise; the view of the City is from 20,000 feet rather than from on the ground. The actual boundaries will be shaped by the market conditions, demographic changes, and economic events that occur over the next 25 years.

Because the future land use map is looking out 25 years, it does not address issues of staging or prioritization. As reflected in the text of the goals and objectives, the housing expansion areas, for instance, are subordinate to the redevelopment of the original housing plat. Moreover, for the housing in Silver Bay to expand, market conditions must be right. Consequently, the Future Land Use map is not the equivalent of the City's zoning map; zoning is changed when market conditions are right and other development priorities have been met. Correct staging of development and redevelopment will ensure efficient use and expansion of infrastructure and directing private sector development consistent with community priorities.

Not a Zoning Map . . .

Land Use Map – a 20-year distant snapshot of the community's preferred future mix of land uses. The map shows what the community prefers to be in the future, guiding land use decisions for the next 25 years.

Zoning Map – a regulatory map for the immediate future. The map shows what the community has decided to allow today.

Key Development and Redevelopment Sites

Some key development and redevelopment concepts that were addressed during the planning process are highlighted on the Future Land Use Map:

1. Redevelopment of the City Center/Downtown
2. Development of the Business Park
3. New recreation and tourism development adjacent to the Marina
4. Creation of "gateways" at three critical entrances
5. Redevelopment of Mary McDonald site
6. New greenfield housing development if warranted by market conditions
7. New park and recreational infrastructure, including campgrounds, in three priority locations
8. Targeted health services development around existing health facilities.

More detail on these and other development priorities are provided in the Implementation section as well as the goals and objectives in this (Desired Future Conditions) section. For instance, the redevelopment goals for the original housing plat area is to diversify the housing stock without having to expand or extend road, water, and wastewater infrastructure.

City of Silver Bay Comprehensive Plan

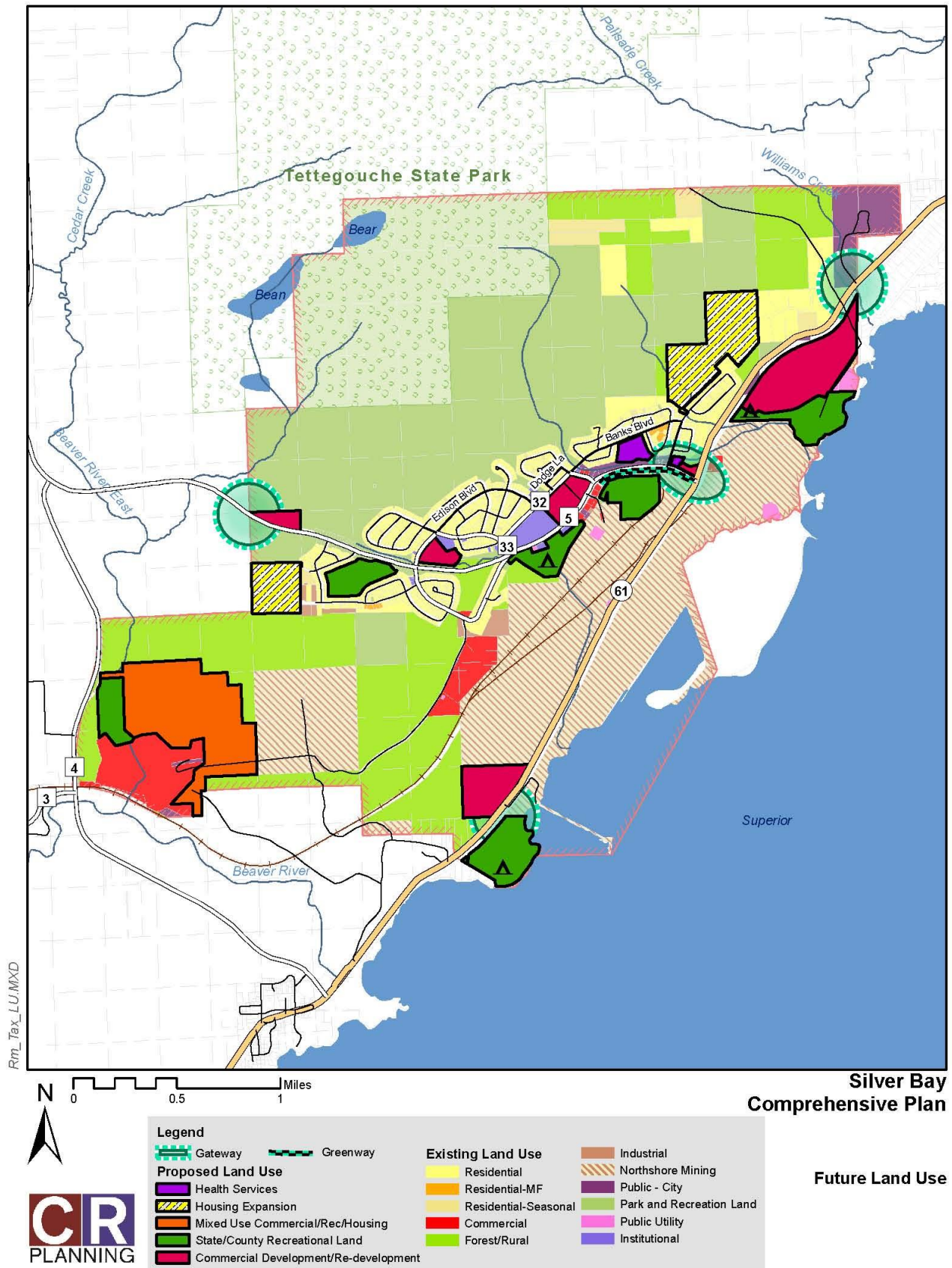


Figure 30 Source: City of Silver Bay

City of Silver Bay Comprehensive Plan

Natural Resource Vision

Natural resources are the bedrock of the community. Healthy natural systems within the City are protected and make Silver Bay a desirable place to live or visit. The economy is driven by the sustainable extraction of taconite and iron ore and the tourism businesses which is supported by outdoor recreation opportunities. The public has access to the lake and trail networks that take them along the scenic views of the Superior Hiking Trail, Red Dot ATV trail, and into Tettegouche State Park. The forest provides an abundance of opportunity for recreational and educational activities. Local renewable energy resources provide sustainable energy to the community, adding value to the City's electric and gas infrastructure.



Goals & Objectives

1. Protect habitat, scenic vistas, and natural systems.

- a. Emphasize new development in areas adjacent to existing development to minimize impact on recreation and habitat areas.
- b. Work with Northshore Mining and other large institutional land owners to identify industrial areas available for development within or outside city limits.
- c. Enhance developed areas by encouraging or providing incentives for developing and maintaining the urban forest.
- d. Establish landscaping standards or goals in developed areas and gateways.
- e. Encourage low impact development standards in sensitive watersheds.

2. Protect and promote recreation areas.

- a. Maintain, improve and expand local trail system such as ATV, snowmobile, hiking, skiing and biking trails.
- b. Manage and promote lakeshore parks and aquatic recreation areas.
- c. Consider developing new active recreation areas, events, or facilities that will use Silver Bay's natural amenities.
- d. Protect Silver Bay's public vistas of Lake Superior and lake access areas.

3. Use available local natural resources for energy needs (electricity and heating).

- a. Work with energy providers to implement a community shared solar project available to residents and businesses and to develop electric vehicle charging infrastructure.
- b. Investigate development opportunities for Silver Bay's local and regional energy resources.
- c. Consider incorporating district heating in the development of the business park.
- d. Encourage low-impact clean energy and energy efficiency utilization in public and private building and facilities.

City of Silver Bay Comprehensive Plan

Parks, Trails and Recreation Vision

The parks and trails are a premier destination for hikers, birdwatchers, hunters, skiers, snowshoers, ATVers, and snowmobilers. The Silver Bay section of the Superior Hiking Trail is popular among backpackers as it brings them from town into Tettegouche State Park. Visitors and residents can choose from a number of trails that take them along the shore or up into the hillside. The Gitchi Gami path has been completed, connecting bikers to Gooseberry Falls and Split Rock State Parks. Silver Bay is the site of a modern visitor center located near the City campground and new downtown public gathering space. Black Beach is no longer a local secret; paths lead visitors down to the beach to view pristine waters and impressive geologic features. Water activities are also popular among locals and visitors. Kayaks can be rented from local outfitters to be used along the Lake Superior water trail and charter boats from the Marina take people out fishing on Lake Superior. In town, residents and visitors enjoy a City park where they can participate in community activities or relax and enjoy the scenery from park benches.

Goals & Objectives

- 1. Become a premiere recreation destination along the North Shore.**
 - a. Develop recreation-based programs and events to attract visitors to the area.
 - b. Improve signage to direct visitors to the various trailheads, scenic views, and lakeside recreation activities.
 - c. Promote Silver Bay as a premiere outdoor recreation community. Consider development of organizational capacity for promotional campaign, expanding the Silver Bay Area Tourism Association.
 - d. Acquire Regional Significance Designation from the Minnesota DNR.
 - e. Work with surrounding communities to expand funding sources that support local tourism promotion, such as the lodging tax.
- 2. Enhance access to recreation destinations including Lake Superior, scenic views, and trailheads.**
 - a. Work with the Minnesota Department of Transportation to prioritize the completion of the Gitchi Gami trail where it connects to Beaver Bay, Tettegouche, Palisade Head.
 - b. Develop spur trails to connect regional trail systems.
 - c. Develop Black Beach as an easily accessible attraction for visitors and residents, while maintaining the natural beauty of the beach and lake environment.
 - d. Improve the signage and visual appeal of the road up to the scenic vistas of the Processing Plant, Lake Superior, and the City.
 - e. Ensure the Park System capital plans are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan goals.
- 3. Create opportunities for visitors to stay and play in Silver Bay.**
 - a. Build campgrounds in town and near the lake with appropriate amenities to provide lodging for cyclists, hikers, and other North Shore tourists.
 - b. Recruit an outfitter or existing business to provide rental equipment, maps, guide services and other gear or services for visitors and residents to use during their stay.

City of Silver Bay Comprehensive Plan

Economy Vision

The Silver Bay economy is healthy, continuing to grow and diversify. The taconite processing plant continues to provide regional employment, but is a smaller portion of the economic base as other industries grow and create living-wage jobs. The City's regulations are transparent and fair, allowing the responsible development of new businesses and fostering entrepreneurs. Silver Bay's



economic base is comprised of both external and local resources. Tourists who come to explore the parks, trails, marina, and Lake Superior shore fill restaurants, coffee shops, and lodging in the new lake shore commercial district and marina facilities. The Eco-Industrial Business park is a leader in sustainable enterprise, providing good jobs for locals. In town, visitors and residents enjoy fresh caught lake trout at the local grille and handcrafted beer from the neighborhood brewpub. Plans are in motion for a business park expansion.

Goals & Objectives

- 1. Investigate opportunities to fund and staff a Silver Bay economic development office working in conjunction with other local organizations.**
 - 2. Develop tourism supportive businesses in business park and town center.**
 - a. Encourage recreation-based businesses to develop and expand through appropriate zoning, financing opportunities, and recruitment.
 - b. Conduct marketing analyses and develop promotions to attract tourists.
 - c. Work with existing businesses to appeal more broadly to the tourism market.
 - 3. Create business opportunities that diversify the economic base.**
 - a. Facilitate development of space for small businesses to start up or move from home-based businesses as they expand.
 - b. Work with Northshore Mining and other large land owners to create opportunities for manufacturing or supportive businesses, and land use flexibility (i.e. can lands be traded / donated / etc.).
 - c. Implement transparent and fair regulations for small business development.
 - d. Work with financing industry and government entities to ensure access to capital.
 - e. Link individual and small entrepreneurs with regional economic development and technical assistance and strategic planning providers.
 - f. Identify State and regional resources geared to sustainability and business development.
-

City of Silver Bay Comprehensive Plan

Transportation Vision

Highway 61 remains the major access route for Silver Bay. While automobiles are the primary mode of transportation for people getting to and from Silver Bay, daily shuttles connect Silver Bay to Two Harbors, Duluth, and North Shore State parks and attractions. Within the community, people easily get around on foot or bike with pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure linking neighborhoods and regional



trailheads to amenities including the school, ice arena, central business district, and City buildings. The streets have been updated as “complete streets,” designed to meet the needs of all residents regardless of age or ability. Electric charging stations in the town make it easy for visitors to charge their vehicles, bringing additional patrons and revenue to downtown businesses.

Goals & Objectives

- 1. Work with paratransit and public entities to create transit or shuttle services.**
 - a. Work with local health providers and businesses to create local paratransit services.
 - b. Work with existing shuttle or cab services to create regional shuttle services, particularly for recreational trail use.
- 2. Develop and implement complete green streets standards.**
 - a. Ensure that street and sidewalk redevelopment connects housing to the Town Center for pedestrians and bicycles.
 - b. Incorporate landscaping and green infrastructure to manage storm water.
- 3. Develop wayfinding systems that clearly promote and direct Hwy 61 traffic to Silver Bay business and recreational amenities.**
 - a. Work with appropriate state agencies to update and coordinate signs to various destinations.
 - b. Brand City signs to help visitors find business destinations and recreational opportunities.
- 4. Explore options to support alternative fuels and emerging technologies in personal transportation.**
 - a. Work with the MN DOT and other state agencies to identify trends and markets for alternative fuels.
 - b. Work with Minnesota Power and other energy providers to install electric vehicle charging stations near business districts and recreational trailheads.
 - c. Identify other pilot projects for alternative fuels or technologies that help distinguish Silver Bay.

City of Silver Bay Comprehensive Plan

Public Services and Infrastructure Vision

The City provides excellent services to its residents while maintaining fair utility rates and taxes. There are greater shared services between the City, County, and school district to provide educational, health, and housing assistance to residents. Taxes remain low due to careful staging of infrastructure improvements. William M. Kelley School continues to provide high quality educational opportunities for young people and families, and lifelong educational opportunities are easily found in and around Silver Bay. City infrastructure has been updated and includes modernized systems to support the community. The storm water system is improved to mitigate flooding while maintaining water quality in streams and Lake Superior. Public buildings and infrastructure incorporate cost-effective, low-impact and green design features that provide an example of responsible development to the rest of the community. Renewable energy and district heating are integrated into Silver Bay's Eco-Industrial park to provide clean energy for the business's use.



Goals & Objectives

- 1. Provide high quality services in an equitable manner.**
 - a. Maintain a transparent and fair utility rate structure.
 - b. Produce an annual report highlighting City services and successes.
 - 2. Improve efficiency of services delivered to residents.**
 - a. Where feasible, work with the School District and County to eliminate duplicate services.
 - b. Adopt a plan to maintain strategic savings for unplanned City needs.
 - 3. Invest in green design strategies for all buildings.**
 - a. Institute a green design requirement for all new public buildings.
 - b. Create incentives for green design on new private buildings.
-

City of Silver Bay Comprehensive Plan

Housing Vision

Affordable single-family housing remains the primary housing style in the community. Many of the original 1950s era homes have been substantially improved or redeveloped, broadening the housing market for new residents while retaining the traditional affordability of Silver Bay. While new development beyond the cost-effective reach of existing infrastructure is limited, new housing development connects new neighborhoods in the east and west to existing neighborhoods. The City works with the County to ensure that emergency housing is available year round to those in need. Quality multi-family housing in the town center, the medical center, and in the business park near the shore offers both senior housing opportunities and second-home/seasonal housing for visitors. Housing design for all new development meets sustainable design goals to reduce the ecological footprint, and architectural designs add long-term value to neighborhoods. The City accommodates seniors who wish to stay in their homes through transportation support, meal delivery, and centrally located daily activities. New high-end housing along the golf course is filled.

Goals & Objectives

- 1. Develop housing with amenities to accommodate different groups including seniors, families, low-income, and seasonal residents.**
 - a. Encourage a mix of housing to suit the demand of current and future residents including single-family housing, multi-family, and townhomes.
 - b. Work with the County to ensure safe emergency housing is available for those in need.
 - c. Provide assistance to senior citizens wishing to stay in their homes.
 - d. Encourage development of additional senior institutional facilities with medical infrastructure.
 - 2. Improve the appearance and structural integrity of the housing stock.**
 - a. Continue to encourage property owners to maintain homes and yards.
 - b. Allow existing housing to be redeveloped.
 - c. Create opportunities for new housing developments where feasible.
 - 3. Create a development environment that encourages sustainable building practices.**
 - a. Encourage or offer incentives for sustainable design on new housing construction.
 - b. Identify energy financing programs for homeowners to improve the efficiency of existing homes.
-

City of Silver Bay Comprehensive Plan

Cultural Vision

Silver Bay maintains its unique identity of a small North Shore community while also embracing its outdoor appeal. New small businesses, updated streetscapes, and local events have created a sense of place for residents, a destination for visitors, and a magnet for regional companies looking to expand or relocate. There is no shortage of recreation opportunities throughout the year. In the winter, community



events add festive charm to the town center while the ice arena is a hub of local activity. Cross country ski, snowshoe, and snowmobile trails link the community to Tettegouche State Park and regional trail systems. In the spring, locals enjoy a view of Lake Superior from the City Park and golfers tee off at one of the most scenic golf courses in the state. In the summer, seasonal residents and tourists return from all over the region to take in the natural world; many camp in the City campground, while others prefer to stay in local lodging overlooking Lake Superior. Residents and visitors alike enjoy access to hiking and ATV trails, as well as taking in the fresh air as they walk or bike along the shore, Black Beach, and the marina. In town, locals and visitors gather for outdoor concerts and family movie nights. In autumn, fall colors backdrop Lake Superior as residents and visitors take in one of the most beautiful spots on the North Shore.

Goals & Objectives

- 1. Promote Silver Bay to residents and to visitors and tourist markets.**
 - a. Develop a tourism strategy, identify financial support, evaluate results.
 - b. Regularly assess residents and visitors opinions on perceived needs in both public and private sector services and businesses.
- 2. Engage residents in public sector decision-making.** Ensure that participation is easy and encouraged, such as going to where people already gather (school, church, community events).
- 3. Continue to support and develop local community events.**
 - a. Support and publicize community events of all types.
 - b. Develop new events that engage Silver Bay businesses and encourage collaboration in marketing and promotion.
- 4. Enhance community services to all age and economic classes.** Work with the County, school district, and State and Federal agencies to reinvent and improve services to children, families, and senior citizens.

This page is intentionally left blank

V. Implementation Priorities

Identifying what Silver Bay wants to become over the next 25 years, its desired future condition, determines the end point of the city's effort. In order to put Silver Bay on the path to achieving its goals, the City has identified a set of priority strategies and actions.

Some of the strategies and actions are specific to a geographic area or policy area, while others are more topical or apply across the city. Similarly, some strategies are supported by multiple goals or objectives, and some are directed toward a single goal. The City has identified eight strategy priorities to move the City toward its long-term vision:

1. Create new economic development capacity and programs.
2. Update development regulation.
3. Enhance and promote recreational infrastructure.
4. Create specific area plans for critical subareas.
5. Create wayfinding systems.
6. Create new housing programs and investment.
7. Enhance City services and public facilities.
8. Improve transportation options.



1. Economic Development

The City's goals and objectives have a strong focus on economic development outcomes. Three primary implementation efforts include:

- a. Enhancing Silver Bay's economic development resources and programs,
- b. Recruiting or developing businesses to enhance diversity of the City's economic base, and
- c. Enabling entrepreneurs to create and grow small businesses.

A. Enhance Economic Development Capacity

Silver Bay has an Economic Development Authority, but has no dedicated staff to conduct initiatives and create programs, and does not use its levy authority to fund economic development initiatives. The EDA has undertaken financial and promotional initiatives in the past, including providing gap financing, storefront loans, and administering community/business partnerships. Moreover, Silver Bay does work with a number of local and regional entities in the private and public sector to conduct economic development activities. As identified in the Plan's goals and objectives, economic development needs to include business recruitment, development of promotional campaigns, identifying access to capital, providing technical assistance to growing businesses, and developing collaborations with surrounding communities. However, the City currently has limited ability to initiate such efforts. The City should investigate opportunities to develop Silver Bay capacity to conduct and direct economic development activities and better leverage the existing public and private economic development work conducted by others.

Creating new economic development capacity in Silver Bay allows more control over programs and initiatives for the benefit of the city, and more direct connection between City goals and economic development activities. Local capacity also allows greater focus on undeveloped or underused local resources and better connections to existing businesses.

City of Silver Bay Comprehensive Plan

The City should consider options for creating economic development capacity. Economic development options including engaging consultants or other private sector companies to conduct specific programs or marketing efforts, hiring City staff and creating an economic development office, and forming a separate semi-public entity such as an Economic Development Authority (EDA). A key component of selecting a path forward is avoiding duplication of services and deliberate coordination with existing entities and programs the benefit the community.

B. Business Recruitment

Silver Bay has identified several specific business recruitment goals including:

- Attracting new private sector investment.
- Work with Northshore Mining and Minnesota Power to identify and recruit support industries that would expand the economic benefit of those large private sector entities.
- Recruit recreation-focused businesses such as an outfitter, or enable existing or new businesses to provide equipment and services to support a new core recreation industry in Silver Bay.

The City should create specific initiatives that focus on priority recruitment goals. Developing a coherent and successful recruitment strategy involves developing consensus on the appropriate business types, identifying existing businesses (in the region or outside) that are looking for expansion opportunities, assembling financing or other incentives, and ensuring that regulations offer a clear path to achieving recruitment goals. Recruitment is more than developing a marketing campaign, and frequently is a long-term strategy that requires upfront investment and a payoff that might not occur for several years.

C. Create opportunities for small businesses and entrepreneurs in or near the city center.

Silver Bay has a business incubator in the Mary MacDonald Center, but that space has little availability and has limited value for small businesses that cater to tourist or retail markets. Moreover, some opportunities may exist for redeveloping that space for other uses or moving the facility to private ownership. Developing an incubator or “move-in ready” space for small businesses in the city center area allows for greater visibility, increased synergy with existing businesses, and a clear connection to existing social and cultural events and activities that draw people. Silver Bay has home-based businesses that could move to a more visible area that would enable the businesses to more readily grow, in addition to providing a place for entrepreneurs to locate.

Silver Bay should evaluate options for creating entrepreneurial or incubator space in the city center. Options for creating “move-in ready” space include developing new space in the city center as noted above, repurposing existing under-used buildings, or working with existing businesses to expand and reconfigure space. While all the options are likely to require some level of community investment, some opportunities exist for leveraging state or regional economic development resources, or working with private sector funders.



2. Update development regulation to reflect Comprehensive Plan priorities.

With each new revision of the Comprehensive Plan, the City should ensure that its zoning regulations are consistent with Plan goals and objectives. Silver Bay's zoning ordinances have not been comprehensively overhauled through at least two Plan iterations. Consequently, updating development regulations is a high priority, particularly in light of several significant proposed land use changes and redevelopment priorities included in this Plan.

Development regulations, primarily the zoning ordinance, are the primary implementation tool for realizing the Plan's vision narrative, goals, and objectives. However, regulatory tools have several limitations and the City needs to engage the community to determine the extent that regulation is an appropriate tool. Regulations, for instance, are inherently reactive tools; if no development is occurring, the regulations are irrelevant. Moreover, regulations move decision-making authority away from the property owner and toward the community, via the Planning Commission and City Council. The City's legal authority over land use decision-making is fairly broad in this regard, but the community needs to consider the extent to which the City will constrain or direct choices that are being made in the private sector.

A complete ordinance overhaul will reconsider the list of uses identified in the zoning ordinance, the definitions of uses, the list and definitions of zoning districts, and current and new types of standards to be included in regulation that help meet the Plan's goals. Recommendations for updating that ordinance, as articulated in the Plan's goals and objectives, are described below.

- *Identify an appropriate mix of uses for each zoning district or development area.* Re-examine the categories of land uses that define zoning districts, particularly for the City's commercial areas. Not all commercial uses are equivalent; some commercial uses are complementary, while others conflict. For instance, restaurants, coffee shops, and certain types of retail businesses create a synergy when located together. Including an auto repair facility in the same location may detract from that synergy, and uses limited building or land space more appropriately reserved for a complementary use.
 - Encourage destination and gathering-place businesses such as restaurants, coffee shops, specialty shops, tap room or bar, to locate in the city center.
 - Encourage businesses whose market is dependent on tourist traffic to locate on Highway 61.
 - Explicitly limit use types in areas reserved for recreational land uses, such as the proposed County Highway 5 gateway, and create a land use category for recreation-oriented land uses.
 - Limit development opportunities in those areas designated for specific types of development, such as the County 5 gateway and the golf course, until appropriate opportunities arise.
- *Consider creating design standard and landscaping standards* for key development areas in the City, including:
 - Gateway areas, announcing entry into the city.
 - Businesses Park, emphasizing Lake Superior access, views, and recreational amenities.
 - City center, emphasizing pedestrian and "downtown" design.
 - Street standards, reflecting "complete street" design for multiple "modes" of travel (car, bike, pedestrian, and ADA-compliant designs).
 - Encourage "green" or sustainable building design that meets environmental or energy certification standards (Energy Star, LEED, Green Globe, SB2030, etc).

City of Silver Bay Comprehensive Plan

- *Update environmental or natural resource standards.* A number of new best practices for protecting natural resource functions or economic uses have been developed over the last 10-15 years. Silver Bay should ensure that standards reflect current state and federal law, and consider enhanced standards in areas with impacted watersheds or high quality natural amenities. Examples include:
 - Low impact design standards appropriate for North Shore conditions.
 - Conservation design for greenfield sites, allowing flexibility in lot size and shape in order to protect visual and ecological amenities.
 - Buffers around recreational amenities.
 - Standards for renewable energy use – solar, wind, and biomass land uses in their varied forms and scales.
 - Create a recreation district or overlay for the State lands abutting Tettegouche State Park.

3. Enhance Recreational Assets and Infrastructure

Part of Silver Bay's desired future is to be a recreational center on the North Shore, emphasizing the trails, parks, and water recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. This theme runs throughout the Plan, and the goals and objectives describe a number of infrastructural improvements and investments over the next 25 years that will help the City realize this component of its long-term vision. The Plan identifies three focus points for recreational infrastructure investments:

- a. Gateways
- b. Parks and Scenic Areas
- c. Regional Trails and Parks

A. Gateways

The four Gateway areas targeted for investment in recreational assets include: the entrance to the developed City at the intersection of Highway 61 and County 5; the County 5 entry at the west end of the City, the Hwy 61 entry at the Marina, and the east Hwy 61 entry. An additional gateway can be considered at the County 5 entry to the City Center. Gateway improvements are a combination of city, state, and private investments to connect Silver Bay's gateway areas to commercial and recreational assets. City dollars can likely leverage state or regional grants to enhance trail systems and developing non-motorized (bike and pedestrian) gateways to Silver Bay. Private sector enhancements can potentially be added at the time of commercial redevelopment

B. Park and Scenic Areas

A number of recreational and natural feature amenities in Silver Bay could be targeted for strategic investments to achieve the City's vision of being a regional recreational center. The City should prioritize the investment opportunities and seek funding and strategic partners. Some of the opportunities can become part of commercial redevelopment, while others will require upfront public dollars or grants. The Plan identifies a number of investment opportunities:

- Connect the Northshore Mining scenic overlook to nearby recreational destinations and amenities such as a campground, the Gitchi Gami trailhead, Black Beach, and the ATV trail access points
- Build campgrounds as noted on the future land use map with appropriate amenities to provide lodging for cyclists, hikers, and other north shore tourists. Black Beach and the Marina

City of Silver Bay Comprehensive Plan

site will require participation of Northshore Mining. Public access at Black Beach and other amenities will also create substantial activity and interest if coupled with campground facilities.

- Develop and manage lakeshore parks and aquatic recreation areas, including the kayak trail and public access points.
- Consider developing new active recreation areas, events, or facilities that will use Silver Bay's natural amenities.

C. Regional Trail/Park Improvements

Silver Bay has access to a number of regional park and trail amenities that already draw thousands of people. Access to these amenities and supporting facilities are, however, necessary to fully realize the potential of these assets. Most notable among these assets are Tettegouche State Park, the ATV and snowmobile trail connections, and the Gitchi Gami bicycle trail. Connections to DNR trail and park assets are already designated as having “regional significance” which qualifies these investments and planning projects as eligible for State funding. The City should work with the State to designate additional local resources and connections as regionally significant in facilitate completing trail connections and developing trailhead amenities for these assets. A longer term but ambitious element of the Plan is to work with the State to create a “backdoor” entrance for non-automobile traffic to Tettegouche, with supporting facilities inside the City limits.

4. Engage Community and Develop Specific-Area Plans

The Plan identified several priority areas for development or redevelopment over the next 25 years. The City should engage its community residents and businesses, and out-of-community people and businesses that are potential markets for the redeveloped areas, to create development or redevelopment small-area plans for these areas:

- City Center (Downtown)
- Business Park
- Golf Course Area
- Marina Areas
- Gateway areas

A. Downtown

The most significant priority is likely to be the Downtown (city center) area. This is the commercial heart of the City and many of the existing public and private buildings could be updated to create visual appeal and a better sense of this area as the heart of the community. Public space that takes advantage of the scenic lake views would add significantly to the “pull” of this space for both visitors and residents, and create more activity for retail commercial businesses. The City should complete a small-area plan that includes urban design changes and new public space to create “pull,” engaging residents about priority outcomes, and conducting a market analysis by a qualified professional. Part of the study could be a visual preference survey or similar community engagement to identify design guidelines and outcomes. Moreover, the City should investigate developing a downtown organization by participating in the Minnesota Main Street program, or creating a similar program to coordinate community and individual business efforts to build economic resiliency in the downtown.

City of Silver Bay Comprehensive Plan

B. Business Park (Silver Bay Eco Park)

The Business Park on the lakeside of Highway 61 has substantial development potential, but has not attracted much investment since its creation. The Plan identifies several options for the City to explore a redesign and create a small-area plan for the area that takes advantage of the newly created Black Beach and recreational amenities. Options to be considered in the small area planning process include:

- Conduct market analyses for developing tourist-oriented businesses in the area.
- Examine opportunities for district heating, community shared solar, or other sustainable energy systems.
- Identify priority businesses for a recruitment and marketing strategy, emphasizing businesses that have synergy or common theme.

C. Golf Course/Commercial Area

A large area of undeveloped City-owned land north and east of the golf course was originally slated for golf course expansion. Such expansion may be feasible in the future, but the area also has potential for development of other amenities including housing, recreational and tourist amenities, and complementary development to the golf course. Market demand for new development is uncertain, and additional study is warranted. Two infrastructural investments are needed for the realization of this development concept; extension of water and wastewater systems to the area, and construction of a road and bridge over the East Beaver River connecting to County Highway 4.

D. Gateways

Silver Bay's gateways are currently unremarkable and largely fail to create "pull" or stopping power for potential visitors traveling along Highway 61. A conceptual gateway sub-area or design plan would include the following elements:

- Create concept gateway designs for all four gateway areas.
- Identify landscaping or design elements along the public right of way from the gateway into the city, to create the feel of a corridor.
- Identify costs associated with maintaining landscaping or new infrastructure along rights-of way.

E. Marina

The Marina and associated park area is one of the City's most underutilized amenities. Moreover, some opportunity may exist to work with Northshore Mining to create a commercial or recreational "gateway" on the upland side of Highway 61. While the potential is great for this area, a number of barriers also exist in ownership, liabilities, connectivity, infrastructure, and availability of capital. The City should develop a small area plan to frame out barriers and opportunity, aid in fund raising or private sector recruitment, and identify new private or public investments necessary to fully utilize the substantial scenic and natural amenities of this area.

City of Silver Bay Comprehensive Plan

5. Wayfinding

Silver Bay has a number of economic, natural and recreational amenities that are underused by visitors to the region. Some of the Plan's priority goals are to enable Silver Bay to become a regional center for recreation, and to diversify the economy via improved links between business and natural/recreational traffic. One relatively simple but essential step in doing so is to create a "wayfinding" system and brand to assist visitors in both knowing about and finding Silver Bay's many assets. Wayfinding concepts include:

- Branding City signs with a highly visible and consistent look that helps visitors see information and directions to public amenities and businesses catering to visitor needs.
- Signage that directs visitors to business destinations and recreational opportunities, from the perspective of a visitor who may never have been to the City.
- Develop welcoming and directional designs of streets and rights-of-way at gateways to assist in guiding visitors to business areas.
- Clear identification of all of Silver Bay's recreational assets, trails, trail heads, parking, etc.
- Branded signage announcing Silver Bay's Lakeshore assets; the marina and marina park, Black Beach, and Scenic Overlook.

The City should consider working with MNDOT, the County, and business associations to create a brand and a wayfinding system. The process would need to also engage the community and tourism and wayfinding professionals to understand what works in a wayfinding system and the varying level of public investment needed to complete such a system. The City may be able to leverage state and regional economic development resources with some of its own public investment and discuss with businesses the opportunities and value of sponsorship.

6. Housing

Silver Bay's population forecast is for a stable and possibly declining population and a slight increase in the number of households over time. Consequently there is no large demand for new housing. However, even to support a stable population Silver Bay needs to actively attend to the diversity and condition of its housing stock. Most of Silver Bay's existing housing stock was built in the same generation, from the 1950s through the 1960s. While many of these homes have been well-maintained and improved, many others are near the end of their life and are targets for housing redevelopment. Moreover, as the community continues its transition from a mining town to a stand-alone regional center on the North Shore, the housing styles and diversity of housing types needs to follow the market. Finally, the demographic changes faced by Silver Bay and the rest of the State warrant attention to sustaining housing stock with an increasingly older population.

The Plan's goals and objectives direct specific priorities for encouraging new investment in housing by current residents, new residents, and the public sector. The Plan calls for several deliberate housing programs or strategies:

- Rehabilitation of homes to preserve the small, affordable, housing market. Silver Bay's small homes respond well to an important part of market demand, but encouraging additional amenities and updated services will preserve those homes over the long-run. Ensuring smaller homes can support an aging population allows existing residents to age

City of Silver Bay Comprehensive Plan

in place and will appeal to future older residents looking for an affordable home on the North Shore.

- Redevelopment within the existing City plat to diversify housing stock. Redevelopment is the most cost-effective strategy for diversifying the housing stock, as it uses existing infrastructure (streets and sidewalks, water, wastewater, gas and electric, stormwater). Diversifying the housing stock and creating a new generation of homes within the historic housing plat will help sustain the neighborhoods over time.
- Prepare selected areas for new housing development as market conditions warrant. Some large lot development will appeal to an important part of the housing market, and should avoid needing to extend water and wastewater infrastructure. Some pro-active extension of infrastructure (within the existing City boundaries) may be warranted to encourage development of some amenities, such as the golf course area.

The City should consider creating programs that encourage rehabilitation or redevelopment of the existing housing stock. Selective redevelopment can occur within the private sector market if the City modifies regulations to encourage combination of lots and development of new homes. Some public sector investment may be warranted to acquire dilapidated homes when available on the open market and assembly of lots for redevelopment.

New housing stock should be encouraged to be built to enhance sustainability and minimize development impacts on Silver Bay's natural environment. When the City is a financial partner in a development (via financial incentives, assembly of lots, or special regulatory approvals) the City can ensure that cost effective energy efficiency and natural system infrastructure are incorporated into the housing stock. Doing so makes the housing stock more viable over time, lower cost over time, and placing a lower burden on City services and natural systems. The City can consider encouraging new homes to meet sustainable building standards, including LEED, Energy Star, Green Globe, Solar/Renewable Energy Ready, or SB2030 standards.

7. City Services and Management

A significant part of the Plan is the assessment of City facilities and services. The City should develop a specific facilities plan to address systems at or near the end of their life, identify financing needs for meeting infrastructure investment needs, and consider adequacy of facilities (condition and capacity) for the services being provided.

- Discuss with County and other government entities the opportunities for consolidating operations in a single facility. Analyze the cost/benefit of revitalizing and upgrading existing City buildings providing services to the public compared to repurposing and consolidating operations.
- Develop a capital facilities planning process that responds to the facilities analysis included in this plan and engages residents and stakeholders in prioritization and financial planning.
- Consider green design requirements for new and substantially renovated public buildings.

Additional action items for City administration and services include:

- Adopt a financial plan to maintain strategic savings or reserves for unplanned needs.
- Produce an annual report on City services and events for residents and businesses that highlights City services and successes.

City of Silver Bay Comprehensive Plan

- Working with the County, school district, and State and Federal agencies to reinvent and improve services to children, families, and senior citizens.
- Ensure that public participation in City planning and decision-making is easy and encouraged, such as going to where people already gather (school, church, community events) in order to get feedback on residents' priorities and concerns.

8. Transportation

The Plan identifies a number of transportation initiatives that will help the City realize its long term vision and desired future condition. The highest priority items are to develop financing and an implementation plan for improving local streets and sidewalks, consistent with the capital improvement section of the Plan. Several other transportation implementation initiatives were identified in the Plan, including:

- Develop “complete street” standards that guide the street and sidewalk redevelopment process that connects housing (existing and new) to the Town Center. Incorporate landscaping and green infrastructure to manage storm water into street designs when redeveloping.
- Begin discussions with local health providers and businesses on creating local paratransit (small scale public/private transit) services or options. Work with existing shuttle or cab services to create regional shuttle services, including offering services for people utilizing the areas recreational trail system.
- Work with Minnesota Power and other energy providers to install electric vehicle charging stations near business districts and recreational trailheads.