

Silver Bay Sees Multiple Redevelopment Projects Happening All at Once

BY HEATHER RULE

The City of Silver Bay in northern Minnesota is surrounded by beauty — from Black Beach along Lake Superior to Tettegouche State Park — so it should come as no surprise that it's a travel destination for many. This was particularly true during the COVID-19 pandemic when it saw an influx of visitors.

Visitors to the city during that time found that, "Silver Bay is a great, quiet small town and had a lot to offer for recreational opportunities in the area," said Lana Fralich, Silver Bay city administrator.

Now the city of just under 1,900 people is in the process of a variety of redevelopment projects to help make the area even better.

Increased housing development

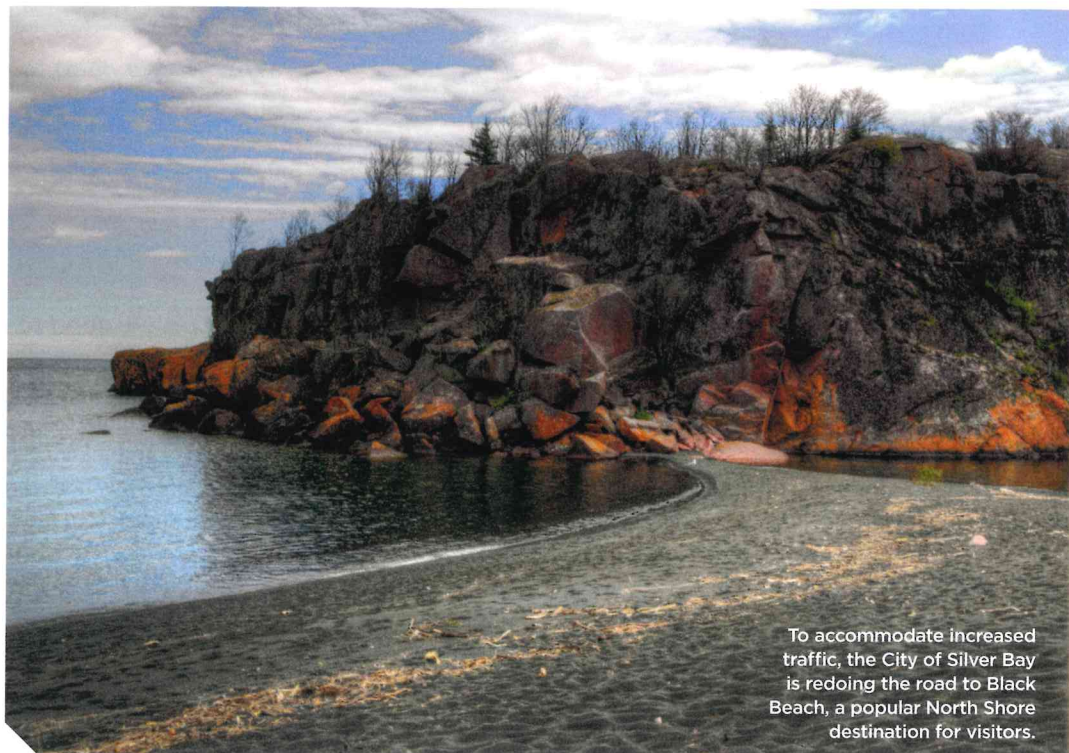
Many redevelopment projects, including housing, were in the works before 2020, but as visitors and interested home buyers flocked to the area during the pandemic, it amplified the need for more. The current redevelopment efforts aim to maintain the city's history while also preparing it for the future.

"It's almost like people came to the North Shore and found out how great it is," Fralich said. "Our housing became much more urgent. We're trying to preserve our history and yet bring a modern twist to this next generation."

The new development started with the city's comprehensive plan for a 2040 vision, adopted through strategic involvement with residents, businesses, and other community stakeholders, according to Fralich.

Housing is a key piece in the redevelopment. Silver Bay worked with an economic developer to help focus the vision. Plus, the city and a private developer collaborated on Boathouse Bay, which includes townhomes, rental units, storage, and an event center.

Besides Boathouse Bay, the city-owned golf course is surrounded by properties with about 40 lots available. The city is in the platting stages with hopes of getting some lots ready to sell later in the year, according to Fralich.



To accommodate increased traffic, the City of Silver Bay is redoing the road to Black Beach, a popular North Shore destination for visitors.

City leaders are also focused on ensuring there are enough housing options for the area's workforce, and are collaborating with the Lake County Housing Redevelopment Authority to develop apartments. The city also continues to "think outside the box" to incentivize the development of housing, Fralich said.

Creating more recreational opportunities

Known for recreation, Silver Bay plans to revitalize a new section of town with a trailhead center that will have nonmotorized and motorized access, lighted parking, and 24-hour shower facilities. The amenities will allow people to directly reach the trail system along the North Shore.

Residents also wanted a campground and public beach area, so the city is redoing the road to Black Beach — the East Lakeview Drive project — to accommodate higher traffic volume as the beach gains more popularity and visitors.

Upgrading streets and infrastructure

The area's infrastructure will also see some upgrades. Silver Bay is redoing its city-wide street program over phases across a 10-year period, and there's an improvement project for the water treatment facility, including adding a booster station. A city

library addition will be constructed and completed this year, and the Lake Superior School District has a renovation project under construction that is scheduled to be completed in 2025.

"I think everybody here loves the community and wants to see the community succeed and wants to do everything we can to make sure it succeeds in the future," Fralich said. "This little town has a lot to offer. We hope people find that this is the place they want to live and stay."

Development planning, funding, and buy in

Funding for the various projects takes time, and the process includes everything from writing grants and lobbying to researching new ways to financially support the projects, according to Fralich. What's resulted is a lot of projects that have been at different stages or in the works for years, and they're now coming to fruition simultaneously.

Silver Bay is in the process of redoing its city codes, ordinances, and permits, since "things go a little smoother" when those are all current with the vision, Fralich said.

One other piece that's been helpful for Silver Bay's planning is to have a good team of people for these projects. That's people who have skillsets, good experience, and understand pieces of the development to complement city officials, according to Fralich. Keeping realistic timeframes in mind for projects is a key piece, she added.

With so much going on in Silver Bay, Fralich said that "all facets that make a great community great are being touched," with these various projects.

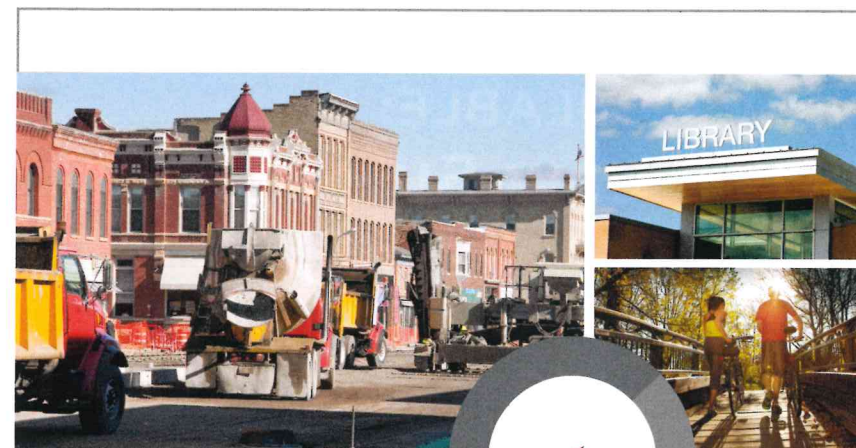
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Fralich said they are a little overwhelmed with all these projects happening at the same time, but she added that it's also good because "if you do nothing, you get nothing." ☐

Heather Rule is a freelance journalist.



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