

City of Ely
**LAND USE &
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**
2016



PREPARED BY THE

Ely Comprehensive Plan 2015 Steering Committee

WITH ASSISTANCE FROM

Ely Planning & Zoning Commission
and

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*Official maps available for review in Ely City Hall. Current Zoning Map available on City of Ely webpage.

Photos Courtesy of: Al Forsman, Celia Domich, Kara Polyner, Cecilia Rolando, Doug Whitney, Tony Colrich, Rachel Heinrich, Rick Sand, Ely Winton Historical Society, and the City of Ely

The City of Ely

Vision Statement

The City of Ely provides unique opportunities for recreation, culture, and work not often seen in a city of it's size.

Ely continues to offer an excellent quality of life to residents of the region. We strive to maintain our outstanding educational opportunities, a full range of medical services, exceptional outdoor experiences, and an unequaled sense of community spirit.

Ely provides a safe and friendly atmosphere, in affordable neighborhoods that compliment their natural surroundings.

Ely supports business, industry, and entrepreneurship, providing long-term, quality employment and economic vitality.

Historically rich and naturally pure, Ely will gain strength as a regional leader and an anchor to Minnesota Northwood's tourism where residents can "play where they work."



I. INTRODUCTION

As the official long-range policy document for the City, the comprehensive plan guides zoning and land use ordinances, investment in public infrastructure, economic development programs, natural resource use and protection, housing policies, and other issues. The comprehensive plan is a policy guiding document that provides a legal framework for city ordinances, programs and capital investment plans. The plan reflects the community's desired future and guides decision-making by elected and appointed officials on how development, conservation, and public investment take place within the city.

A. Foundation of Comprehensive Planning

The State of Minnesota allows cities the legal authority to regulate land use. Although the State does not require cities to adopt comprehensive plans outside of the seven-county metropolitan area, it is widely recognized that a comprehensive plan is a valuable tool which a city can use to express a vision and develop strategies in order to obtain that vision. A uniform procedure for the adoption of a municipal comprehensive plan for all cities is outlined within the Municipal Planning Act of 2006, Chapter 462. Housing, Redevelopment, Planning, Zoning, of Minnesota State Statute. A comprehensive plan provides the legal framework to enact land use controls and other municipal actions to implement long-term growth and development strategies and regulations. Zoning ordinances (land use) and the official zoning map of the city should be updated to conform to the Comprehensive Plan pursuant to adoption.

A comprehensive plan provides a 20 year outlook into a community's desired future; the Ely plan gives us a glimpse of the city in 2035. The future is described within the plan through projected land use maps and supporting written goals and objectives. Comprehensive plans typically have three key components – background information to define the current situation, maps and goals to support the desired future conditions, and a set of implementation actions to bridge the current situation and the desired future conditions.

Ely's' 1996 Comprehensive Plan provided an initial framework for its current plan. The 1996 Plan has seen many revisions in its nearly 20 year existence, but it is outdated, has been overly simplified, and no longer reflects many of the current needs, concerns, and issues of importance to the residents and businesses of Ely.

This, the 2016, Comprehensive Plan update has dissected the plan more intensively than previous updates. A variety of updated information has become available through the city and non-governmental organizations, including an updated housing study in addition to recent community surveys, focus group meetings, and envisioning from the 2014 visit of the Minnesota Design Team. A vision, set of values, and guiding principles were created to guide the choices for future land use, community services, natural resources and open space, transportation investments, and economic development policies.

B. Steering Committee

Critical to the development of the City of Ely 2016 Comprehensive Plan was the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. Community members were recruited as volunteers to represent a broad range of stakeholder groups. All members of the community were encouraged to participate. The Steering Committee worked closely with the Planning and Zoning Commission, other official city boards and commissions, non profit organizations and City staff in the development of the Comprehensive Plan to ensure that the vision, values, principles, goals, objectives, and strategies outlined within the plan reflect accurately the diversity of interests and needs of the City of Ely. The Committee was the decision-making entity throughout the process and forwarded a recommended plan to the Planning Commission and City Council for final review and adoption.

Content for the 2016 Comprehensive Plan update was identified and prioritized by the steering committee based upon Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation Board (IRRRB) Comprehensive Plan Grant Guidelines. For funding eligibility, comprehensive plans must include, but are not limited to, the following subject areas, with documentation to describe goals, objectives, policies, programs, maps and locations, and any other supporting information:

1. **Issues and Opportunities** – Back ground information on the local governmental unit and a statement of overall objectives, policies, goals and programs of the local government unit to guide the future development and redevelopment of the local governmental unit over a 20 year planning period.
2. **Housing** – Plans for the local governmental unit to provide an adequate housing supply that meets existing and forecasted housing demand in the local governmental unit.
3. **Transportation** – Compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to guide the future development of the various modes of transportation, including highways, transit, transportation systems for persons with disabilities, bicycles, electric personal assistive mobility devices, walking, railroads, air transportation, trucking and water transportation.
4. **Utilities and Community Facilities** – To guide the future development of utilities and community facilities in the local governmental unit such as sanitary sewer service, storm water management, water supply, solid waste disposal, onsite wastewater treatment technologies, recycling facilities, parks, telecommunications facilities, power-generating plants and transmission lines, cemeteries, health care facilities, child care facilities and other public facilities such as police, fire and rescue facilities, libraries, schools and other governmental facilities.
5. **Mining, Timber, Tourism, Natural and Cultural Resources** – For the conservation, preservation, promotion, and effective management of natural resources such as groundwater, forests, current and future mining areas including mineral extraction and associated disturbed lands, environmentally sensitive areas, threatened and endangered species, stream corridors, surface water, floodplains, wetlands, wildlife habitat, metallic and nonmetallic mineral resources consistent with zoning limitations.
6. **Recreation, Open Space and Cultural Arts** – Collaborative plans between local government units and civic, recreation and culture organizations to identify and guide the future development, promotion, preservation, revitalization and

enhancement of all park, trail, recreation, open space and cultural art resources to meet the needs of the communities current and projected population.

7. **Economic Development** – Plans to promote the stabilization, retention or expansion of the economic base and quality employment opportunities in the local government unit, including an analysis of the labor force and economic base of the local government unit.
8. **Intergovernmental Cooperation** – Joint planning, decision making with other jurisdictions, and timelines to initiate each one. Possible areas include school districts, drainage districts, and adjacent local governmental units for sighting and building public facilities and sharing public services.
9. **Land Use** – Information to guide the future development and redevelopment of public and private property. The section shall contain a listing of the various land use types, amount of each, intensity and net density of existing uses of land in the local governmental unit, such as mining, residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural and other public and private uses.
10. **Implementation** – The local government unit must adopt the comprehensive plan before any reimbursement can be made. The adoption of the comprehensive plan shall include the commitment to update the comprehensive plan at least every 4 years.

Steering Committee members not only attended many meetings, read background materials, and provided comments on content, but they were also a primary point of communication to and from other members of the community. Steering Committee members were very successful in recruiting residents and business owners to participate in focus groups and respond to community surveys. Some members even facilitated consultant visits and organized focus groups.

C. Planning Process

November 19, 2014 - The Planning and Zoning Commission recommends the formation of a Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee to be comprised of the members of the commission and community volunteers. The Steering Committee is to act as an advisory group to the Planning and Zoning Commission with the purpose of updating the City of Ely Comprehensive Plan to be presented January of 2016.

January 28, 2015 - A visioning session by the Steering Committee provided insight into key issues and assets. The Committee determined that use of other groups' recent survey data and focus group meetings held in conjunction with the 2014 MN Design Team visit would be sufficient for the purposes of updating the plan,.

March 25, 2015 - Steering Committee identified groups and positions that would be responsible for the implementation of the Goals and Objectives outlined within the 2016 Comprehensive Plan.

April 22, 2015 - A vision for the City of Ely was cohesively developed by the members of the Steering Committee. The vision statement will help guide the formulation of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan as well as provide a glimpse into the perceived future of the City.

July 22, 2015 – The Planning & Zoning Administrator meets with the City of Ely Boards, Commissions & Committees with a stake in Comprehensive Plan Update. The Administrator also compiles currently existing plans from Boards, Commissions & Committees.

August 26, 2015 - Proposed sections distributed to Boards, Commissions & Committees for review and comment. The Plans Vision statement was finalized by the Steering Committee.

December 30, 2015 – The Steering Committee finalized proposed sections, overall layout and design.

January 27, 2016 - **Complete Plan Review/Recommendation** - Final comments and revisions provided by the Steering Committee and a recommendation of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan to the Planning Commission.

February 17 & March 2, 2016 - **Public Comment** - A final draft of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan update was posted online and made available at City Hall to allow for additional public input/comments. A public hearing was held by the Planning Commission.

April 6, 2016 - **Plan Review and Recommendation** - Final revisions and review by Planning Commission. The commission recommended the adoption of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan by the City Council.

April 19, 2016 - **Adoption** - The Ely City Council formally adopted the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update unanimously at their regular City Council meeting.



1. The Updating Process

The City of Ely adopted a new Comprehensive Plan in 1996, after a lengthy process of background studies, engaging residents and businesses, and detailed discussions. The 1996 Comprehensive Plan was the first long range plan completed by the city. Since adoption, many goals of the 1996 Plan have been met, including public investment in new street connections, new economic development initiatives, an updated zoning ordinance, and additional planning efforts. However, changing conditions, including newly annexed areas and downtown business closures, have created both challenges and opportunities not envisioned during the creation of the 1996 Plan. In 2014, the City of Ely Planning Commission suggested a much more in depth review and update of the existing Plan.

Using the 2012 version as a springboard, the Steering Committee worked to: update background studies; integrate small area plans created for downtown and other identified areas; considered the plans of neighboring communities; review and revise the vision, values, and principles; choose a future land use map; and prepared goals, objectives, and implementation actions. Throughout the process, the Steering Committee sought public input through several community surveys, focus groups and public meetings.

2012 Ely Comprehensive Plan

The 2012 Ely Comprehensive Plan was an updated version of the original 1996 Comprehensive Plan developed with assistance from Klaers, Powers and Associates. The updating process identified a community vision, community values, as well as guiding principles, and has been reviewed by the Planning Commission on three year intervals. The vision, values, and principles guided the Plan recommendations for land use and development. City residents and businesses have always had an opportunity to provide input during the Comprehensive Plan review sessions. However, the community has not been integrally involved since the inception of the Comprehensive Plan in 1996.

The 2012 Comprehensive Plan was organized into two sections: the Recommended Plan and an Implementation Guide. The Recommended Plan was broken into separate topic areas, and each topic was presented a set of goals and associated objectives. An Implementation component described: the various implementation tools available to the City; and a recommended plan update protocol. The plan does not identify, however, a timeframe for implementation, nor those organizations or government bodies responsible for the implementation of the action items contained within the plan. Implementation was identified by the Planning and Zoning Commission as one of the items most lacking within the Ely Comprehensive Plan.

The Steering Committee for the plan update considered the original 1996 plan as well as the updated 2012 version in light of changed conditions and updated background information. The Addendum of Completion, added to the Comprehensive Plan in the 2012 update, identified completed actions from previous updates and remaining action items that may need to be brought forward into the proposed 2015 version of the plan.

Comprehensive Plans of Neighboring Communities

The City of Ely is interconnected with adjacent and nearby municipalities. The City of Babbitt, Tower and Breitung Township, and Morse Township impact the City of Ely.

Several of the municipalities utilize the infrastructure and municipal services provided by the City of Ely, including wastewater, water, roads, and electrical services. Choices made by these surrounding communities affect the sustainability of the City of Ely.

These three neighboring municipalities all conduct and follow their own comprehensive plan. Summaries of each community's plan and notable issues discussed within the plans are noted below.

City of Babbitt Comprehensive Plan, 2014

Babbitt adopted its 2014 Comprehensive Plan as its first full comprehensive planning process since adoption of the city's 1998 Comprehensive Plan. The 2014 update, identifies several major industrial projects being built, or proposed to be built in the Babbitt area, and potentially significant changes that the city may experience as a result. The city's development pattern is primarily large lot residential, following an open loop transportation pattern. Commercial and industrial uses are concentrated centrally south of North Drive between Babbitt Road and Alder Road.

Issues identified in the City of Babbitt 2014 Comprehensive Plan included:

- The education, attraction and retention of skilled workers to fill existing needs and future opportunities.
- Diversify local economy by retaining, nurturing and attracting new businesses.
- The City should expand assisted and transitional living opportunities for its aging population, as well as multi-family housing.

The Land Use Plan most notably identifies an area Babbitt is considering for an industrial park near Hwy 70. A large undeveloped portion of land south of Hwy 21 is planned for future housing developments, with modern lot sizes and arrangements.

City of Tower and Breitung Township Comprehensive Plan, 2015

The City of Tower and Breitung Township have undertaken a joint comprehensive planning approach with the city and surrounding township working together on a Comprehensive Plan. These communities both are closely interconnected and will face together the Land Use challenges of this unique area. Several large scale projects will have significant impacts to the City of Tower and Breitung Township in the future including the Tower Harbor project as well as the designation of a vast tract of land as the newly formed Vermilion State Park.

Although not completed at this time, the Comprehensive Plan of these partners shall be considered as the City of Ely moves forward with its development projects.

Morse Township, St Louis County Land Use Plan, 1978

The City of Ely is most closely interconnected with Morse Township, as it completely encompasses the entire city. The surrounding township does not have a comprehensive plan or land use strategy that it has adopted, rather it is regulated by the

antiquated St Louis County Land Use Plan. Although the plan is dated, and in a current state of review, the City of Ely must consider the land use development patterns outlined by the county for Morse Township when determining future developments and projects.



2. Public Involvement

Community Surveys

A number of recent community surveys were completed both publicly and privately and were utilized for development of this plan. When used in conjunction with other public outreach or involvement tools, surveys can validate or challenge other results. The Steering Committee utilized the recent community surveys relating to the MN Design Team, the Regional Recreation Center, Community Library and Youth surveys.

Focus Groups

Another aspect of the public engagement process for the creation of this Plan was a series of meetings with constituency groups. Consisting primarily of the members of the Boards, Commissions and Committees of the City of Ely, these groups provided valuable insight into the existing 2012 plan, as well as input regarding the futures of their areas of individual concern and expertise.

These meetings were mostly conducted by Steering Committee members and the Zoning Administrator and reported to the entire Steering Committee and other constituents through discussion type formats. Feedback provided by the Board, Commission and Committee members was invaluable in shaping the decisions of the Steering Committee and in providing new ideas that had not been considered previously.

The City of Ely 2016 Comprehensive Plan and Implementation Guide is the result of a detailed planning process that will continue to examine the conditions in the City every three years in terms of community planning, zoning and development strategies.

The 2016 Comprehensive Plan seeks to attain the goals and objectives outlined within the Plan by:

1. Identifying the actions and decisions necessary to reach stated goals, and;
2. Recommending an administrative process involving the Plan to resolve land use or developmental strategies.

The 2016 Comprehensive Plan addresses land use and non-land uses that have a bearing on the future of the community. The recommended Implementation Guide identifies actions that are necessary to reach a specific land use or non-land use goal, as well as providing city policy makers and administrators with a decision making process that involves the Plan and seeks to ensure the Plan remains in focus or is revised to reflect changing conditions that were unforeseen at the time this Plan was adopted.

Public Hearings

Two public hearings were held by the Planning Commission in early 2016 to receive comments regarding the content of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan. A public hearing provides an opportunity for members of the public to provide formal testimony on local issues or proposed government actions. Hearing notices were published in the official newspaper, and also made available on the City of Ely website.

3. Implementing the Plan

a. Summary of Land Use Implementation Strategies

The Ely Comprehensive Plan is a flexible document working to the advantage of the community. The Plan Goals and Objectives should be reviewed every three years ensuring relevancy to current conditions and priorities. The Planning Commission should advocate use of the plan, review various projects for consistency with the Plan, and advise the City Council in matters related to implementation. In addition, any projects implemented should detail a timeline and have a funded budget.

The Plan encourages interaction with governmental agencies, non-profits, and local citizens.

Capital Improvement Programs (CIPs) shall be reviewed and updated annually.

b. Summary of Non-Land Use Implementation Strategies

Ely, like most Iron Range cities, faces a number of challenges towards replacing aging infrastructure with a high proportion of low- and moderate-income households and an increasing cost of living. The non-land use portion of the Plan calls for elected officials and administrators to involve a variety of organizations and funding sources to address those issues over time seeking to provide maximum flexibility in the planning and timing of needed public improvements.

The Plan recognizes that Ely has limited financial resources and vast human resources. The citizens of Ely, through their involvement with government and various civic and charitable organizations, will be a key component of the actions necessary to implement the Comprehensive Plan.

The City should involve other City Boards and Commissions, local non-profit organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, Ely-Winton Historical Society and other governmental agencies in planning and funding these future projects.

II. THE COMMUNITY OF ELY

An overview and brief history of the community of Ely is provided within this section. The section is partially adapted from *The Four Environments: Forces Shaping The Ely Community* as prepared for the Minnesota Design Team by Incredible Ely in 2014.

A. Location

The City of Ely is located within a region of northeastern Minnesota known as the Arrowhead approximately 100 miles north of the City of Duluth. Ely encompasses an area of 2.73 square miles or 1,747 acres in northeast St. Louis County. Surrounding Ely is mixed forested land, unique geological formations, and abundant water resources which offer the area scenic beauty and attracting residents and visitors alike.

B. History



During the famous Minnesota gold rush of 1865, two brothers from St. Paul, N.H. and R.M. Eames, discovered what they thought was gold in the Ely area. This later turned out to be iron pyrite, commonly referred to as fool's gold, but the gold rush led to the discovery of massive deposits of iron ore, which in turn led to the birth of Ely.

The community, initially known as Florence, was established in 1887 and renamed "Ely" on April 23, 1888. That same year, the Duluth and Iron Range Railroad reached Ely, which allowed the mines to ship their ore and the village to grow. The population in March 1888 was just 177 people.

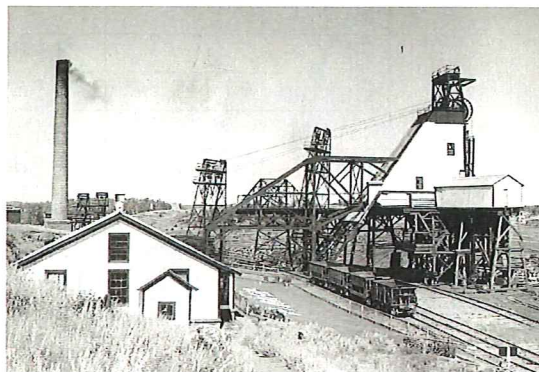
In 1900, the population soared to 3717. Then Ely became a boomtown. The early years were rough and ready, with rooming houses, where miners slept in shifts and saloons where brawls were commonplace. As the town grew, new businesses were needed, families formed, and schools and churches were built. First Ely was populated by speculators, then by an influx of immigrants who were needed to work the mines and fell the trees needed for lumber and to build the new town. Mining, logging and tourism all flourished in the early 1900s. Ely reached its peak population in 1930, boasting a population of 6151.

Mines opened and closed in and around Ely. The Chandler Mine was the first mine discovered, and the Pioneer Mine was the last to close. Shipments ceased in 1967 and a total of 41,112,587 tons of iron ore had been shipped from the Pioneer mine.

After the last iron ore mine closed, taconite mining continued in other range cities. Some people in Ely commuted to nearby towns for mining and other work. Some developed new skills opening small businesses and/or working for the city's biggest employers, the schools and hospital.

The tourist trade was always an opportunity in Ely. A myriad of outfitters and resorts welcomed people from all over the country.

This industry was impacted with the 1964 Wilderness Act and the 1978 Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness Act when many business owners were required to sell their property/businesses to establish the wilderness area.



The logging industry continues to employ people on a limited scale for paper pulp. The tourism industry also continues to thrive within Ely. Recent developments regarding mineral resources found within the area may lead to a re-birth of an Ely mining industry.

C. Demographics

This Section provides a demographic profile for the City of Ely. Demographic information is based upon US Census reports, the US Census American Community Survey 2007-2011,

Demographic trends for the City of Ely may be analyzed and can help the City plan for its future. An aging population for example, would change the type of housing the City would need to provide as well as the level of medical services required within the community. This section contains information about the population age, income, and select housing characteristics of Ely. Housing characteristics are discussed in depth in the housing section of the plan.

1. Population

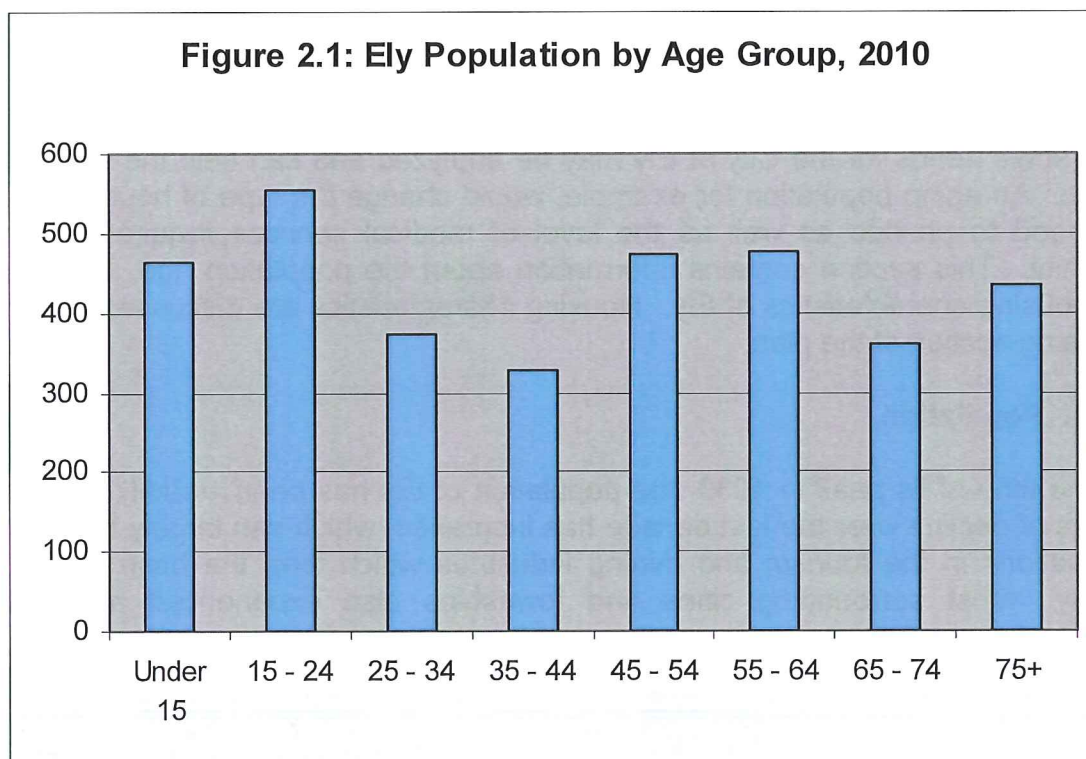
Since the time of its peak in 1930, the population of Ely has been steadily decreasing. The rate of decline over the last decade has increased, which can largely be attributed to fluctuations in the tourism and mining industries which form the base of the local economy. Most surrounding cities and townships also experienced a population decrease of some degree.



TABLE 2.1: Ely Area Population Trends 1990-2010

	1990	2000	2010	% change from 2000- 2010
ELY	3,968	3,724	3,460	-7.09%
Babbitt	1,562	1,670	1,475	-11.68%
Tower	502	469	500	6.61%
Hoyt Lakes	2,348	2,082	2,017	-3.12%
Aurora	1,965	1,850	1,682	-9.08%
Morse Township	1,093	1,229	1,213	-1.30%
St. Louis County	198,213	200,528	200,226	-0.15%
Source: 1990, 2000, & 2010 US Census				

Similar to the State of Minnesota and St. Louis County, the population of the City of Ely is aging. The 2010 Census shows an average age in Ely of 45.3 years compared to that of St. Louis County and Minnesota, 40.3 and 37.4 respectively. As residents age, they will require different housing options, public services and increased medical needs. Likewise, the aging and declining population may pose workforce complications and create issues surrounding future staffing and expansion planning for local businesses.



2. Education

Education is priority for the people of Ely. With the surrounding communities, Ely supports an excellent K through 12 independent school system as well as a post-secondary institution, Vermilion Community College. The emphasis on education, is demonstrated in the population. 93.2% of Ely's population has a high school degree or better. This is higher than the county (92.5%), the state (91.5%) and the country (85.4%). The community also has a higher number of bachelor degrees than the compared populations.



Ely has historically struggled to retain its young adults who graduate each year because of a lack of employment opportunities and the amenities which attract college graduates. Although Ely is home to a post secondary institution, Vermilion Community College, the students who successfully complete higher education course work are provided with few local opportunities to utilize the education they obtained. This can result in under-employment or re-location to areas of higher employment opportunities.

TABLE 2.2: Ely Education Attainment

Education Level	Ely	County	State	USA
Less than HS	6.8%	7.5%	8.5%	14.6%
High School	25.0%	30.2%	27.5%	28.6%
Some post HS or AS Degree	35.6%	36.9%	32.3%	28.6%
Bachelor's Degree	25.6%	17.3%	21.5%	17.7%
Graduate or Higher	7.1%	8.2%	10.3%	10.5%
Source: US Census				

Ely should continue to value equal access to quality lifelong educational opportunities for all residents. Education takes place not only in traditional schools but also in workforce development, continuing education, as well as accessibility to information.

3. Households & Income

The average household size within the City of Ely in the year 2000 was 2.05, while the current household size has decreased to 1.93 as indicated by the 2010 US Census. This decrease mirrors a national trend corresponding to an aging population, postponement of marriage, and smaller family sizes. The Ely statistic is well below the state average household of 2.48 in 2010. These trends will require attention in order for the population of Ely to prosper.

TABLE 2.3: 2013 Median Household Income Comparisons

Minnesota Median Household Income	\$59,836
U.S. Household Income	\$53,046
St. Louis Cty Median Household Income	\$46,517
Ely Median Household Income	\$35,543
Source: US Census 2013	

4. Economy

Ely was built around the traditional resource-based industries of timber, iron ore and tourism. Although these industries continue to provide employment opportunities and economic stimulus to the community, they have been supplemented by other public and private entities. The major industries providing employment, according to the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) are: education, health and social services; agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining; manufacturing; and retail (from highest to lowest).

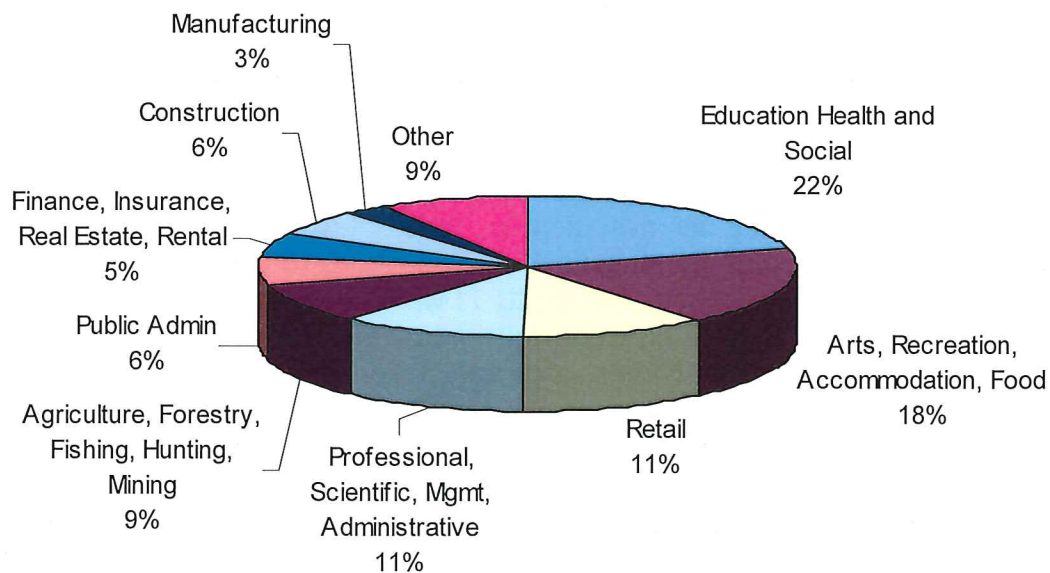
Exploration in new non-ferrous mining projects located immediately around Ely, as well as State government efforts to streamline permitting processes may bring proposed mining projects to fruition in the future providing expanded employment opportunities for Ely citizens and a boost to the local economy.



TABLE 2.4: Leading Ely Employment Industries

Industry	Ely's Population	Ely's Percent	County Percent	Minnesota Percent	US Percent
Education Health and Social	338	20.7%	30.9%	24.0%	22.5%
Arts, Recreation, Accommodation, Food	297	18.2%	10.7%	8.1%	9.0%
Retail	187	11.5%	11.6%	11.6%	11.5%
Professional, Scientific, Mgmt, Administrative	181	11.1%	6.3%	9.4%	10.5%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, Mining	154	9.4%	3.7%	2.4%	1.9%
Public Admin	102	6.3%	4.4%	3.4%	4.9%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, Rental	89	5.5%	5.3%	7.2%	6.9%
Construction	94	5.8%	6.5%	5.9%	6.8%
Manufacturing	46	2.8%	6.6%	13.9%	10.8%
Other	143	8.8%	14.1%	14.2%	15.2%
TOTAL	1631	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: US Census and Community Survey 2007-2011

Figure 2.2 Leading Ely Employment Industries

Source: US Census and Community Survey 2007-2011

III. PLAN GOALS, OBJECTIVES & RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Land Use

The Ely Comprehensive Plan uses the concept of “land use” to describe how the City looks and functions now and in the desired future. “Land use” is related to, and sometimes confused with, other policy and regulatory elements such as zoning districts, land cover, building types, and economic and natural infrastructure. Land use describes literally how the land is being used, distinctly separate from these other elements. The Comprehensive Plan is intended to set policies for efficient land use and allocate land among industry, commerce, residences, public facilities, parks and recreation spaces, open and natural spaces, and other public and private uses. Changes to the economy, population characteristics, housing patterns, transportation needs, environmental concerns, and quality of life needs require that the City review existing policies and allocations and adjust accordingly.

1. Extraterritorial Land Use and Services

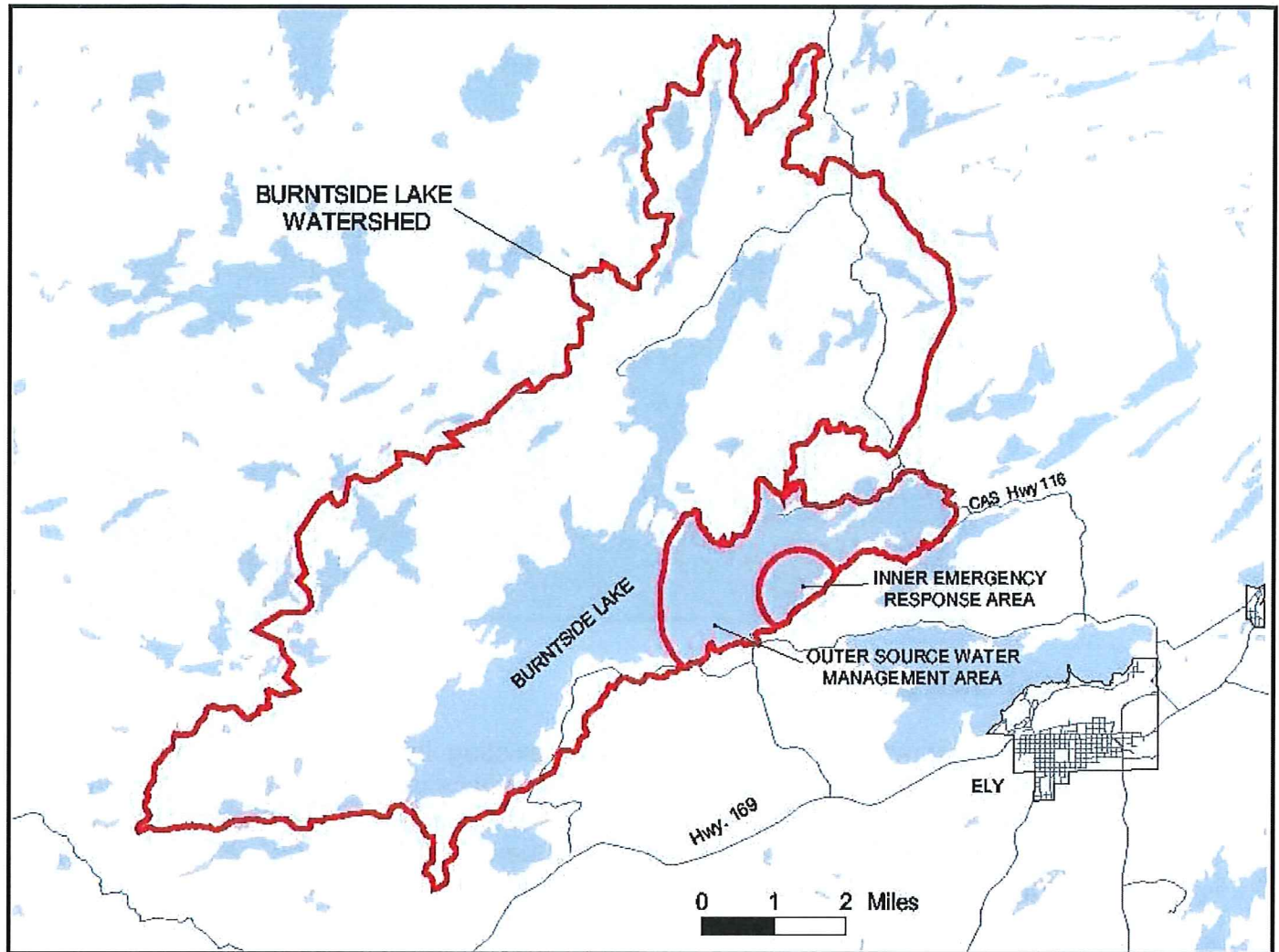
The City of Ely is completely surrounded by Morse Township. Morse Township encompasses 128 square miles and had a population of 1,213 at the time of the 2010 census. Existing land uses within the township are primarily undeveloped land and forest land with residential, commercial, and lake oriented recreational properties mixed in.

There is strong potential for development of lands adjacent to the City within the township as well as lands that lie within the City’s watershed protection zone. Certain land uses are restricted within watershed protection areas to safeguard the raw water source for domestic supply. However, the City is not able to exercise land use controls for areas outside its corporate limits.

St. Louis County administers zoning and other land use controls over the area since the township has not adopted its own zoning code. Lands within the Burntside Lake watershed are zoned primarily Multiple Use Non-Shore (MUNS-4), Residential (RES-5 & RES-7), and Shoreland Mixed Use (SMU-7) which allows for a mixture of residential, commercial, industrial, animal agriculture, recreational, and public facility development through permitting, conditional uses, and application of performance standards. The City itself is adjacent to county zoning classifications towards the west adjacent to Highway 169 of Limited Industrial (LIU-11) and Shoreland Mixed Use (SMU-11), to the south are Forest Agricultural Management zones (FAM-2 & FAM-3), and east of town is primarily zoned Residential (RES-4) and Multiple Use Non-Shore (MUNS-4).



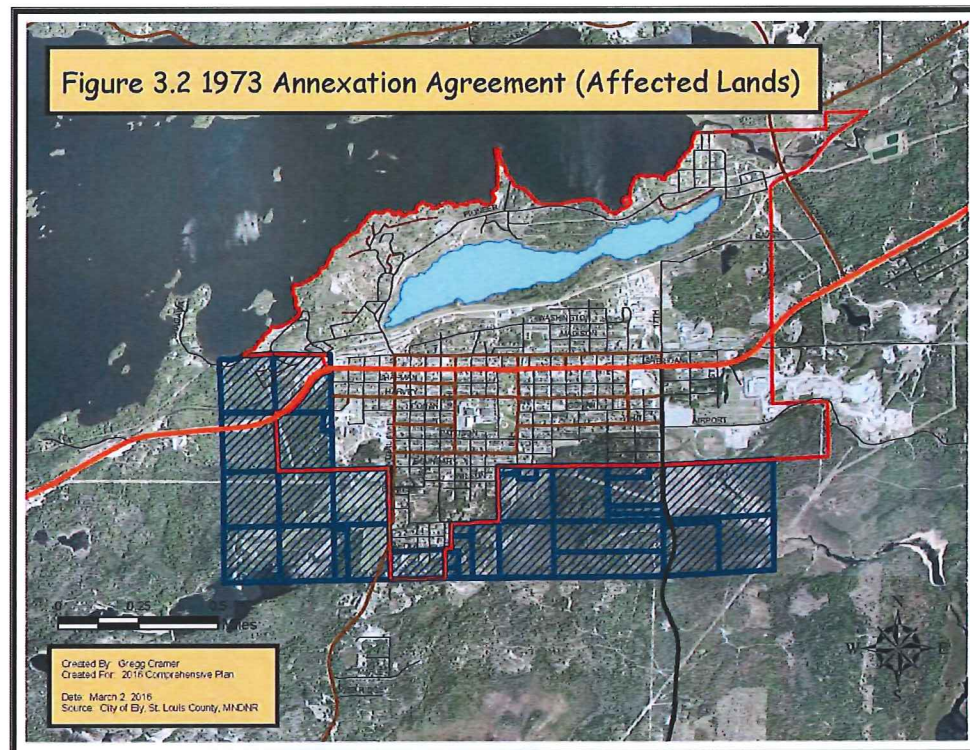
Figure 3.1 City of Ely Source Water (Burntside Lake Watershed)



Development within these zones could create uses that affect the City's source water protection area, increases in demand for City services, and conflict with land use goals of the City. The City of Ely should closely monitor development in these areas for impacts upon the City's interests. The City should also work with St. Louis County, Morse Township and property owners to encourage land uses that are compatible with the City's Comprehensive Plan, source water protection plan, and provision of city services including fire protection, police protection, water, and sewer services.

2. 1973 Annexation Agreement

The City of Ely and the Town of Morse previously designated an area for annexation in an Orderly Annexation Agreement dated November 1973. The area by the annexation agreement is outlined within Figure 3.2. Under the terms of the agreement, the City and Township must negotiate and agree to perfect any annexation within the specified area established in the agreement.



3. Existing Land Uses

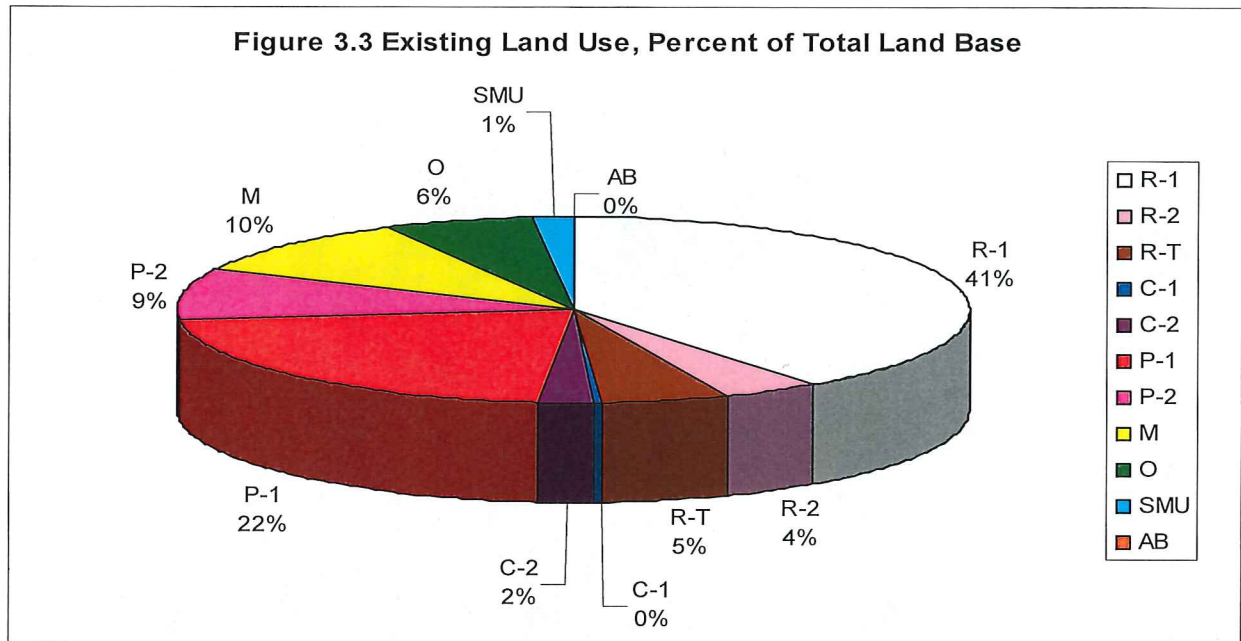
The 2016 Comprehensive Plan analysis of existing land uses were constrained by several factors. The City was mid-way through the annexation process of city owned lands within Morse Township as well as several privately owned residential parcels. This plan also analyzed existing land use based upon zoning category. Zoning categories, however, do not reflect the current land use, but rather the preferred future land use.

Table 3.1 Zoning Districts, 2015

Map Code	District
R-1	Single and Two-Family Residential
R-2	Multi-Family Residential
R-T	Residential Transition
C-1	Central Business District
C-2	Multi-Tourist Services
O	Open Space
M	Industrial
P-1	Parks, Schools and Related
P-2	Public Works and Related
SMU	Shoreland Mixed Use
AB	Adult Business
	Overlay Districts
RTO	Recreational Trail Overlay (RTO)
SCC	Sheridan Commercial Corridor (SCC)

Source: City of Ely

A future update of this plan may wish to include a more accurate land use picture. An improved existing land use map could be created that would allow for a better understanding of the current land uses in the City.



Source: City of Ely GIS



Figure 3.4 Existing Land Use (Zoning Districts)

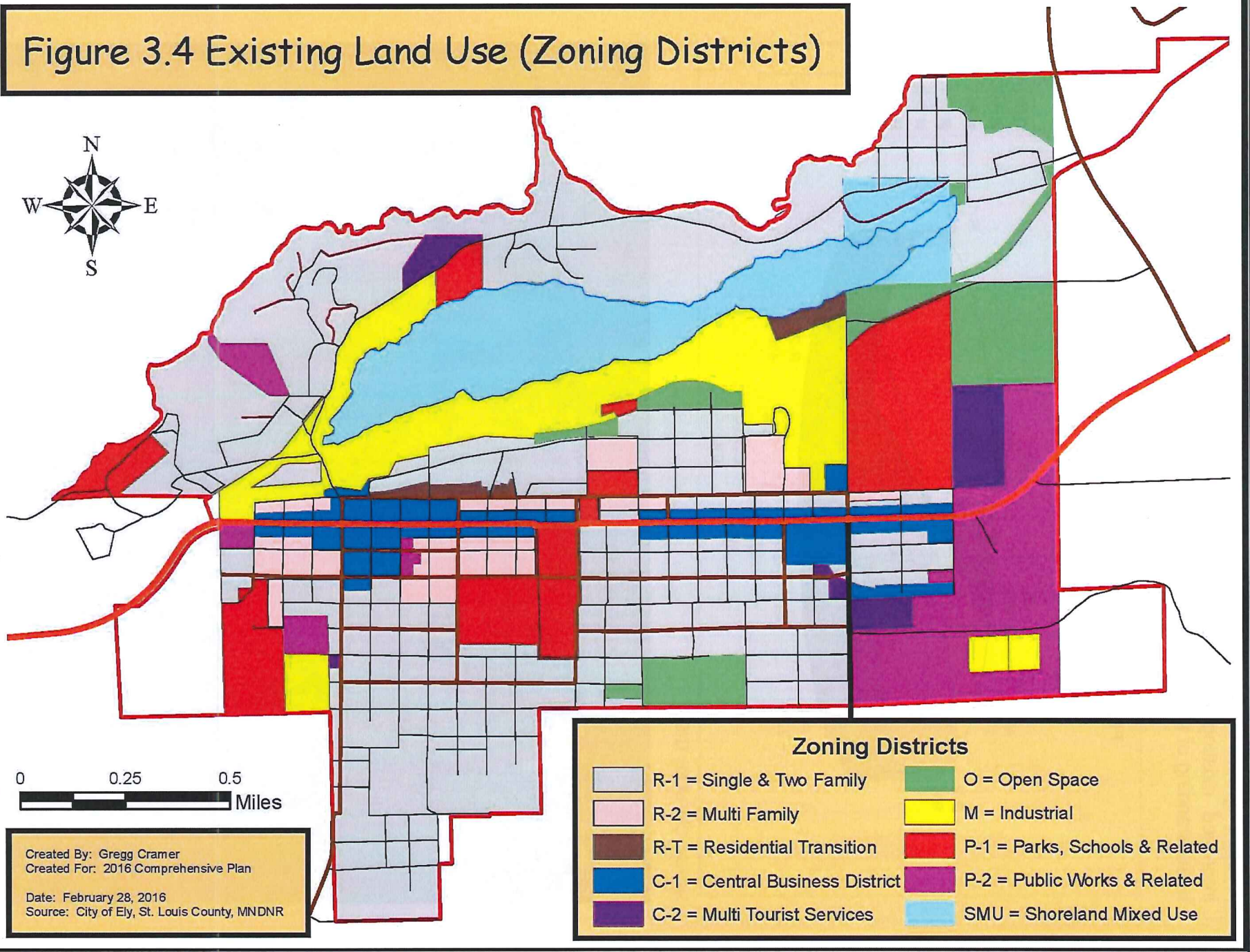


Figure 3.5 Potential Land Use Map

(At the time of adoption, this map continues to be developed by the Planning and Zoning Commission with input from the Projects Committee and City Council regarding future development projects not only within the current municipal boundary, but also potential developments outside of city limits.)

4. Land Use Goals and Objectives

GOAL: Plan for city land use patterns that can be cost effectively served by utilities and services which do not conflict with existing and future development.

OBJECTIVE: Update the community zoning code to reflect current demands and development conditions.

OBJECTIVE: Strive to provide adequate areas for off-street parking for residents, employees and shoppers to strengthen and preserve the downtown core commercial district.

OBJECTIVE: Encourage redevelopment of existing commercial areas.

OBJECTIVE: Provide adequate areas for potential heavy industrial uses.

GOAL: Provide for industrial retention and expansion. The City needs to provide ready opportunity for basic industries to locate within Ely and to expand.

OBJECTIVE: Recognize distinct classes of industrial development and direct industrial development to appropriate land use areas. Different industrial uses require different types of public and transportation infrastructure.

OBJECTIVE: Reserve sufficient industrial area for new large and small industrial projects. The City should plan for new industrial investment of a variety of types, and should be reflected in land use regulation.

GOAL: Safeguard and enhance the diversity and livability of residential areas. Diversity of residential land uses allows for lifecycle housing choices and options within a variety of housing markets.

OBJECTIVE: Integrate different types of residential housing.

OBJECTIVE: Promote neighborhood identity, pride, and sense of place. Regulation and land use decision-making should explicitly attend to character and sense of place, and thoughtfully integrate the City's urban forest, trails and lakes.

OBJECTIVE: Allow uses and activities appropriate to the character of the residential district. In creating and managing land use regulation, recognize and allow secondary land uses that enhance livability or character, while retaining the primary use as residential.

GOAL: Promote development of mixed-use areas. All land use categories include a mix of uses, but the city has relatively few fully mixed areas. Mixed use development has been demonstrated to be extremely efficient in use of public infrastructure and provides market options that are currently limited. Mixed use land use categories include the residential transition and shoreland mixed use zoning districts.

OBJECTIVE: Encourage new, planned mixed-use developments, in which the attributes of traditional neighborhoods and small commercial are merged. New mixed use development should include both residential and commercial land uses, incorporating design and performance standards as necessary to limit nuisances.

OBJECTIVE: Promote the full mix of uses in existing mixed use areas.

GOAL: Prohibit the extension of city services to areas outside current city limits without annexation agreements.

OBJECTIVE: Procure annexation agreements prior to the extension of city utilities and services.

5. Land Use Recommendations

The City of Ely has achieved some goals of past land use plans. However, some priorities remain unfulfilled and new priorities have arisen. Issues identified include:

- *Changing demographics of the City.* Noted within the Demographics section, the City is facing the same aging trend seen throughout Minnesota and across the United States. Land use patterns can be affected by such demographic changes as demand for various housing types and amenities shift.
- *Preparation for economic expansion.* The City needs to be prepared for another potential expansion in natural resource industries, which would bring new demand for housing, industrial, and commercial land uses.
- *Development in Stages.* The rate of economic expansion and market demand is uncertain, which requires the City to balance zoning sufficient land and the risk of inefficient and disconnected sprawling effects.
- *Integrate natural infrastructure with the urban interface.* The City of Ely could make better utilization and protection of rivers, lakes, urban forest, and other elements of the City's natural infrastructure.
- *Integrate the transportation system into the urban interface.* Transportation infrastructure and land use goals are integrally linked. Concepts such as "complete streets" and pedestrian orientation may be enhanced by new studies.
- *Land use categories and regulation could incorporate character and design.* The design of neighborhoods and commercial areas affects livability and economic viability. The City has an opportunity to identify and encourage design for development and redevelopment that recognizes characteristics affecting livability, visual character, function, and connectivity.

Land Use Controls and Development Regulation

1. Continue to evaluate new development for compatibility with and sensitivity to existing land uses, particularly in evaluating application for rezoning, variances, and conditional use permits.
2. Develop criteria for the evaluation of rezoning applications, determining if extensions of services are efficient use of tax dollars and land, and if proposed changes in land use will support redevelopment priorities.
3. Continue to work with Morse Township and St Louis County to stage development from a regional perspective and minimize land use conflicts at political boundaries.
4. Zoning Districts
 - Create new zoning districts or modify existing districts to allow development that matches the Residential Transition (R-T) land use category.
 - Create new zoning districts or modify existing districts to allow development that matches the Shoreland Mixed Use (SMU) land use category.
 - Create a new zoning classification for industrial development that recognizes that some forms of industrial development are not compatible within certain areas of the City.
5. Commercial Development
 - Modify commercial zoning districts to recognize and distinguish the different types of existing and future developments identified in the future land use map.
 - Ensure that commercial zoning and development regulations are sufficiently flexible to encourage redevelopment and expansion of existing commercial land uses within commercial corridors and the downtown area.
 - During development of commercial zoning and regulatory standards, encourage the continued use of current uses which exist within the zoning district either through the re-evaluation of the List of Permissible and Conditional Uses as outlined within zoning code, re-zoning to match the existing use where appropriate, or establish the use as conditionally allowed. This is most vital to the businesses within the Sheridan Street Commercial Corridor.
6. Industrial
 - Make zoning map amendments as necessary for industrial land uses to create a clear path to industrial expansion.
 - Mitigate negative impacts to residential and commercial areas that are located near industrial uses.
7. Design Standards
 - Evaluate Residential Transition (R-T) zoning district uses and consider design standards within this and commercial districts that are adjacent to residential districts.
 - Consider pedestrian design standards throughout the City, including commercial retail areas.

Considering Connectivity and Access

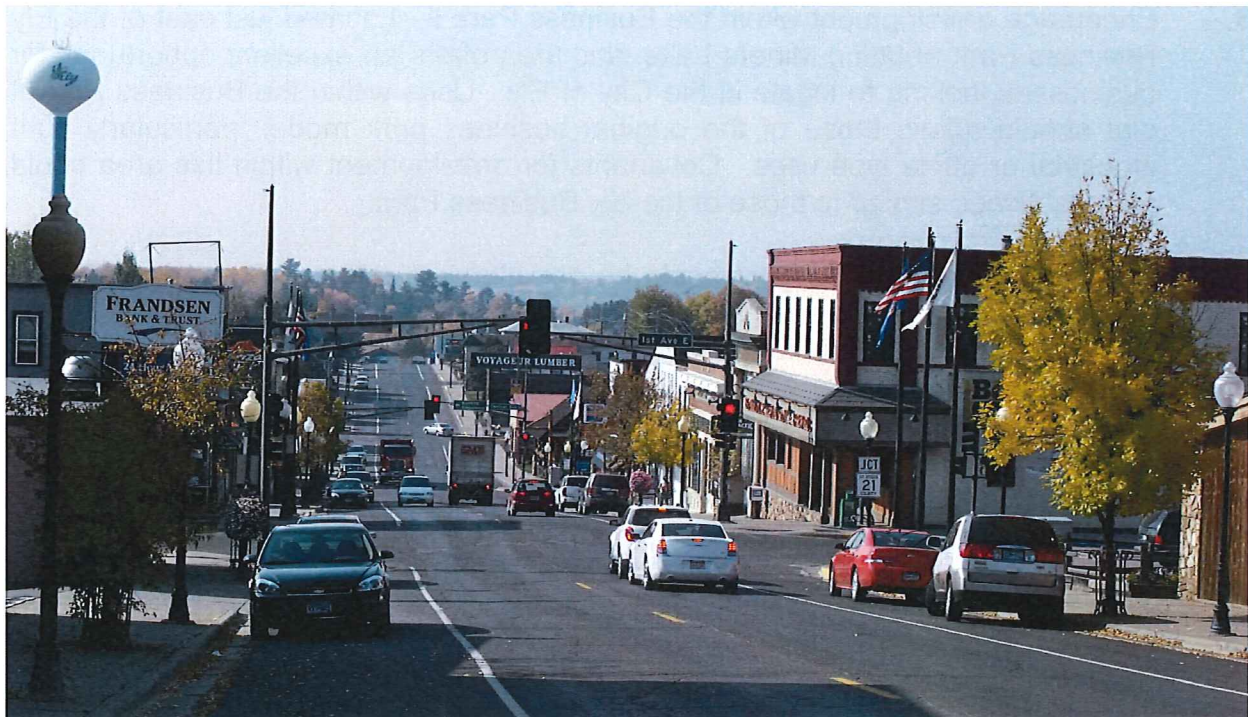
1. Enhance neighborhood safety and promote healthy living by creating greenbelts, arterial sidewalks, and bicycle paths/routes connecting residential neighborhoods with commercial and institutional destinations.
2. Ensure that development and redevelopment standards create connections between land use districts, including subdivision standards requiring a designated rights-of-way (RoW) for connecting to adjacent parcels.
3. Enforce the accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Minnesota State Building Code regarding development and redevelopment.

Include Neighborhoods in Capital and Land Use Policy Decisions

1. Develop standards that allow evaluation of whether neighborhood amenities are distributed equitably throughout the community to assist in capital planning and land use decision making.
2. Provide open space that is easily accessible to residents at the neighborhood level.
3. Strive to provide a range of housing options throughout the City of Ely by allowing a mix of housing types within residential land use areas and by improved connectivity between different housing areas.

Support a Mix of Land Uses

1. Modify existing residential zoning districts to allow for a mix of land uses primarily along the Sheridan Street Commercial Corridor and the Downtown Commercial District.
2. Review and, if appropriate, modify the Residential Transition (R-T) zoning standards and uses for compatibility with residential neighborhoods.
3. Continue to group medical uses, including medical offices and residential care, with related commercial and residential uses.



Identified Key Development and Redevelopment Sites

The recommended 2016 Land Use Plan for the City calls for several redevelopments, with much of the city remaining as it is currently designated.

1. The largest proposed development area is located on the west end of Ely, south of Sheridan Street.

The Ely Planning and Zoning Commission along with the Projects Committee and the Ely City Council will continue to plan for the development of this area following its recent annexation. This area has been designated to include the proposed regional trail head as well as a mix of commercial and other public uses.

2. The former Ely Public Works garage site should be considered for redevelopment. The facility is currently for sale by the City of Ely and is intended to be re-zoned to a Residential Transition district, which should facilitate the sale of the existing structures as well as the vacant lands which could be sub-divided into conforming single or two family residential lots.
3. Single family housing is proposed for parcels north of the Savoy Road within the East Spaulding First Addition plat.
4. Areas south of the existing city limits could also be developed for new housing, mixed uses and the potential development of new business/industrial parks.
5. Ely also needs an area for heavy industrial uses. Areas for heavy industrial uses have been proposed adjacent to the current Industrial districts along the eastern municipal border, and to the south of the existing city limits as identified in the above development location.
6. Encourage development within the Business Park II. Located just east of the Ely Business Park abutting Miners Lake, this area offers an excellent opportunity for businesses looking to locate in the City of Ely. Uses within the Business Park II plat should mimic those of the original business park model, particularly light industrial or office type uses. Covenants for development within this area could be established similar to those of the Ely Business Park.
7. The Trezona Trail parking lot could be complemented by another large lot that could serve downtown employees and visitors. A site plan review process must be employed by the Planning Commission for all new development in this area. The City should pursue acquisition of the privately owned industrial properties near the intersection of Central Avenue and Miners Drive for further development of this public use area. Additional parking and visitor information are desired within this area which would establish a connection between the downtown, Trezona Trail and Miner's Lake.
8. The demolition of the JFK Building located on grounds owned by ISD #696 provides another area for redevelopment. Development and use of this land must be approved not only by the City of Ely, but also by the school district.



The Plan also recommends the City consider expanding boundaries to the east, west and south. The City of Ely could expand eastward to Grant McMahan Boulevard and encompass the United States Forest Service Kawishiwi Ranger District complex in addition to several smaller privately owned parcels. Several county tax forfeit 40 acre parcels to the south of city limits could also be incorporated for development.

6. Land Use Implementation Strategies

The following implementation actions will aid the City in realizing the goals and objectives described within the Land Use Section of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan. These priorities must also be understood within the context of the Vision, and the goals, objectives, and implementation priorities in other sections of this Plan.

The Land Use Component of the Plan is difficult to implement because of its complexity and the cost of acquiring and assembling needed land. The City needs to examine the options available for carrying out redevelopment projects involving the necessary groups, committees and commissions.

The plan for future land use in the community calls for redeveloping specific subareas of the existing city where there are conflicting or blighting land uses. By phasing out these uses over time and redeveloping the area for a more specific set of land uses, the result is a better use of the properties.

The future Land Use Plan identifies general areas for future multiple family, single family and student housing developments. The Plan is inclusive in terms of standards for land uses, building styles, parking requirements other site improvements and signs.

Finally, the Plan looks to the future annexations and expands the city limits primarily for economic development, and residential subdivisions.

The Land Use Plan components are important for resolving current land use conflicts resulting in blight, reduced property values and delays in redevelopment activities by providing the necessary direction to issues that are important to maintaining the character of Ely, and its future economic vitality.

The Commission should consider adopting goals and objectives that will protect open space and the environment. The City should also be cognizant of the planning activities of adjacent units of government and other affected public agencies.

The recommended guiding principles for implementing the land use provisions of the Comprehensive Plan are as follows:

a. Planning and Initiating the Redevelopment Project

The City should decide when to initiate the project by preparing a detailed plan for redevelopment of the project area.

b. Timing

The City should only undertake redevelopment projects that can be completed within a reasonable timeframe.

c. Land Acquisitions

Successful redevelopment projects involve agreement on a detailed plan, proper zoning, and the ability to subsidize land acquisition to accelerate purchase, cleanup and resale of substandard properties. The City should specifically identify each redevelopment area project boundary and identify which properties would be included.

Substandard properties which include buildings that cannot be economically rehabilitated or are not historically significant should be acquired and demolished if funding is available.

Engineering plans for reworking the utilities and streets should be designed according to the redevelopment plan with those improvements included in the capital improvement budget.

d. Zoning Consistent with the Plan

The City should strive to make the zoning map for the community consistent with the Plan, and all new rezoning requests must be evaluated for consistency with the plan before receiving approval.

B. Infrastructure

The 2016 Comprehensive Plan outlines and describes the publicly-owned utilities and other community facilities in Ely. In addition to managing the City's publicly built infrastructure, the City manages many programs, regulations, and policies to serve the public's need, and collaborates with other local governments, state agencies and private corporations to provide other services. These services include education, public safety, economic development, and management of facilities and rights-of-way. Community services are discussed within Section C of this plan.



City Departments and Commissions

Although the organizational structure of city facilities has not significantly changed, the structure and responsibilities of city departments and commissions has yet to be identified within the Comprehensive Plan. The 2016 update identifies several separate entities which are engaged in overseeing the City's infrastructure and the services associated with that infrastructure:

- *Ely Utilities Commission* - The EUC consists of five members appointed by City Council responsible for the development, production, purchase, and distribution of all electricity, water, sewage, waste water, and other utility services of the City.
- *Park and Recreation Board* – The Park and Recreation Board guides the planning, maintenance and development of the parks and recreation amenities in Ely. To improve the quality of life for all ages, backgrounds and physical abilities of residents of the City of Ely and surrounding areas.
- *Heritage Preservation Commission* – The HPC is charged with safeguarding Ely's heritage through the preservation, protection and perpetuation of areas, buildings, structures and other objects that have historic value.
- *Public Works Department* - Public Works is responsible for the maintenance and administration of most city facilities along with street lights and stormwater infrastructure.
- *Projects Committee* - The Projects Committee consists of nine members who make recommendations to the City Council in regards to city projects, the use of Street and Infrastructure funds, as well as addressing public concerns and complaints concerning infrastructure.
- *City Engineer* - The City Engineer is responsible for capital improvements and long-term planning for facilities and utilities.

- *City Building Official* - The Building Official oversees many of the policy and regulatory tools as outlined within City Code, the International Building Code and State Building Codes. Additionally, the Building Official is responsible for the City of Ely's rental licensure program.
- *Planning and Zoning Commission/Board of Adjustment* - This seven member commission/board provides a number of services in long-range planning. Many of the policy and regulatory tools used to implement the comprehensive Plan are managed by the Planning and Zoning Commission, including but not limited to zoning and subdivision regulations. Planning and Zoning provides many recommendations to City Council regarding land use. The Board of Adjustment is the decision making authority of the City of Ely for land use issues related to variances and conditional uses.

Electric System

The City of Ely has a municipally owned and operated electric utility managed by the Ely Utilities Commission. The EUC shall provide electric distribution service to all Ely residents and businesses.



Table 3.2: EUC Customers by Electric Service Class

(This data was unavailable prior to the completion of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan, but should be added in a future update to this Plan.)

Table 3.3: Kilowatt Hour Sales, Revenue and Customer Meters

(This data was unavailable prior to the completion of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan, but should be added in a future update to this Plan.)

Telecommunications and Information Systems

Within the City of Ely, residents and businesses can connect to a state of the art communication network. Several companies offer local phone and competitive information services, such as internet access, long distance, and television, in the Ely area. In June of 2012, Lake Connections began constructing a network to offer High-Speed Internet, Digital TV and Voice services to residents of Lake and eastern St. Louis Counties. Currently in its final phase of development, the fiber network, may offer its services to locations throughout the Ely community.

1. General Infrastructure Goals & Objectives

GOAL: Provide cost effective and quality City services. Infrastructure of built utilities and facilities is critical to sustaining economic stability and community health. Providing high quality services in the most efficient and sustainable manner is a primary Comprehensive Plan goal.

OBJECTIVE: Sustainably operate and maintain drinking water infrastructure and facilities, wastewater collection and treatment infrastructure and facilities, storm water utilities and natural infrastructure components of the stormwater system.

GOAL: Plan for expansion of public utilities to facilitate healthy and sustainable community growth. Expansion of utilities is likely to be needed over the next 20 years to support new development.

OBJECTIVE: Ensure adequate service for future business and residential demand without degrading or diminishing service to existing users.

OBJECTIVE: Modern technological enhancements should be utilized where practical and appropriate to support growth. For example, new electrical systems could be buried where feasible.

OBJECTIVE: Criteria should be established for prioritizing projects. The community should understand why priorities are set and the rationale behind the decisions.

OBJECTIVE: Maintain and enhance open and on-going cooperative efforts with other governments, private utilities, and community organizations.

2. Water Supply and Distribution Goals & Objectives

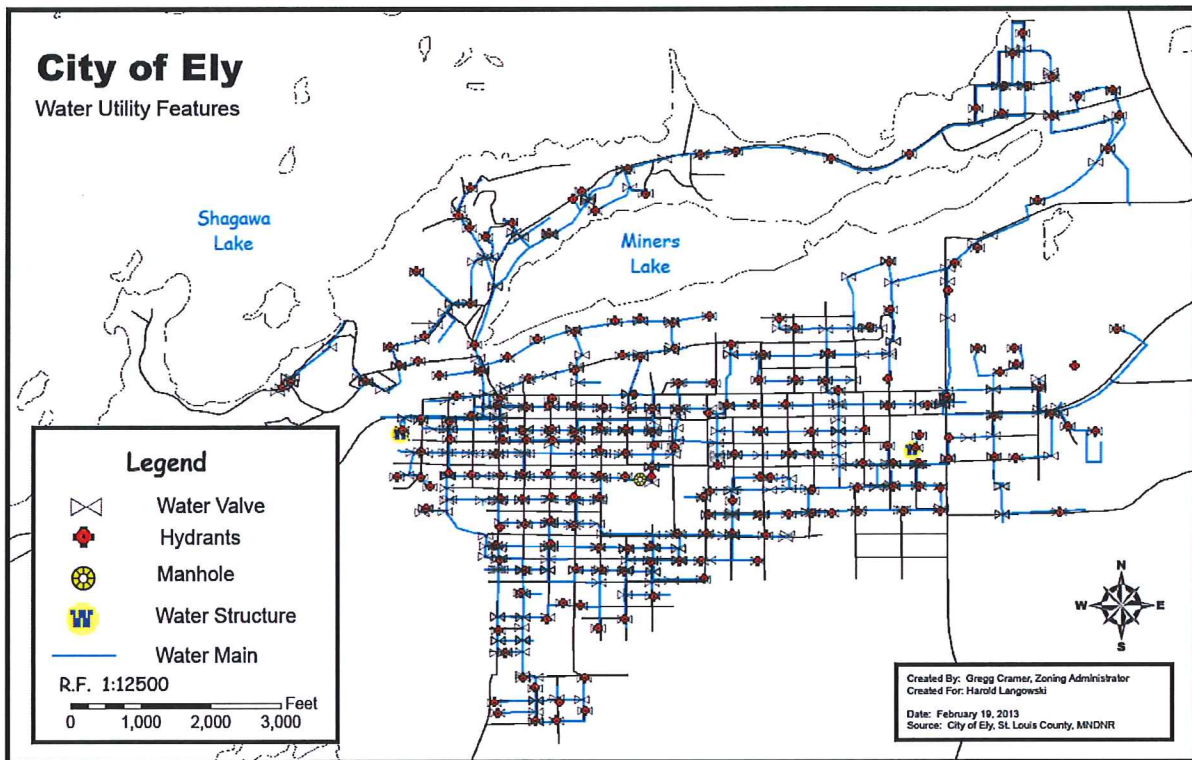
GOAL: Preserve infiltration water access by taking steps to protect and preserve the city pump house, wellheads and its watershed.

OBJECTIVE: Update wellhead protection plan as required by state law.

OBJECTIVE: Monitor activities such as dumping of hazardous materials within watershed in order to preserve water quality for residents.

OBJECTIVE: Secure Reed Road access to City of Ely pump house.

Figure 3.6: City of Ely Water Utility Features



3. Sanitary Sewer Goals & Objectives

The system size and service area for sewage infrastructure and facilities has not changed significantly since the 1990's. Figure 4.2 shows the City's centralized sanitary sewer system. Sewer services from the main to the home are the responsibility of the property owner for construction, maintenance and repair.

GOAL: Provide the highest level of sanitary sewer treatment consistent with state and federal standards in the most cost-effective manner.

OBJECTIVE: Reduce the amount of clear water entering the sewage collection system to the lowest level technically and financially attainable.

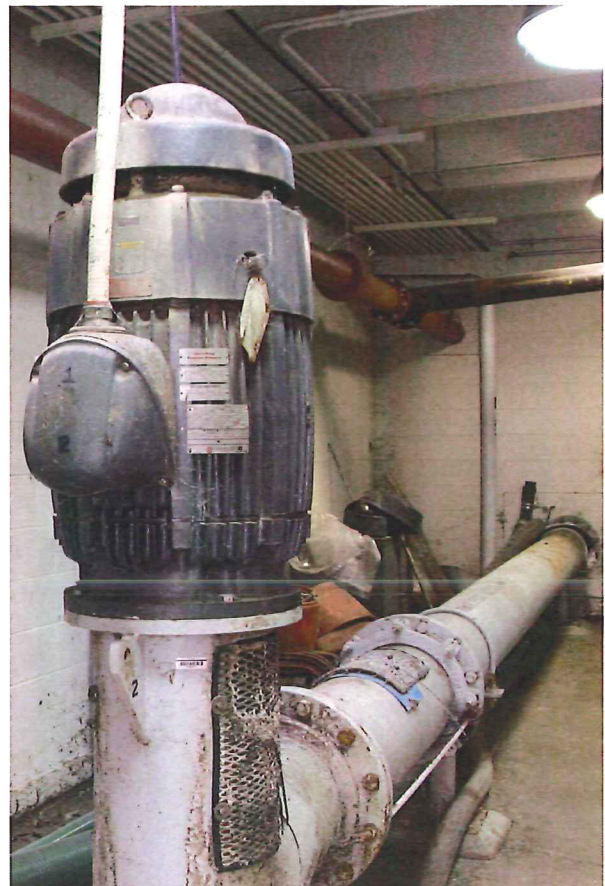
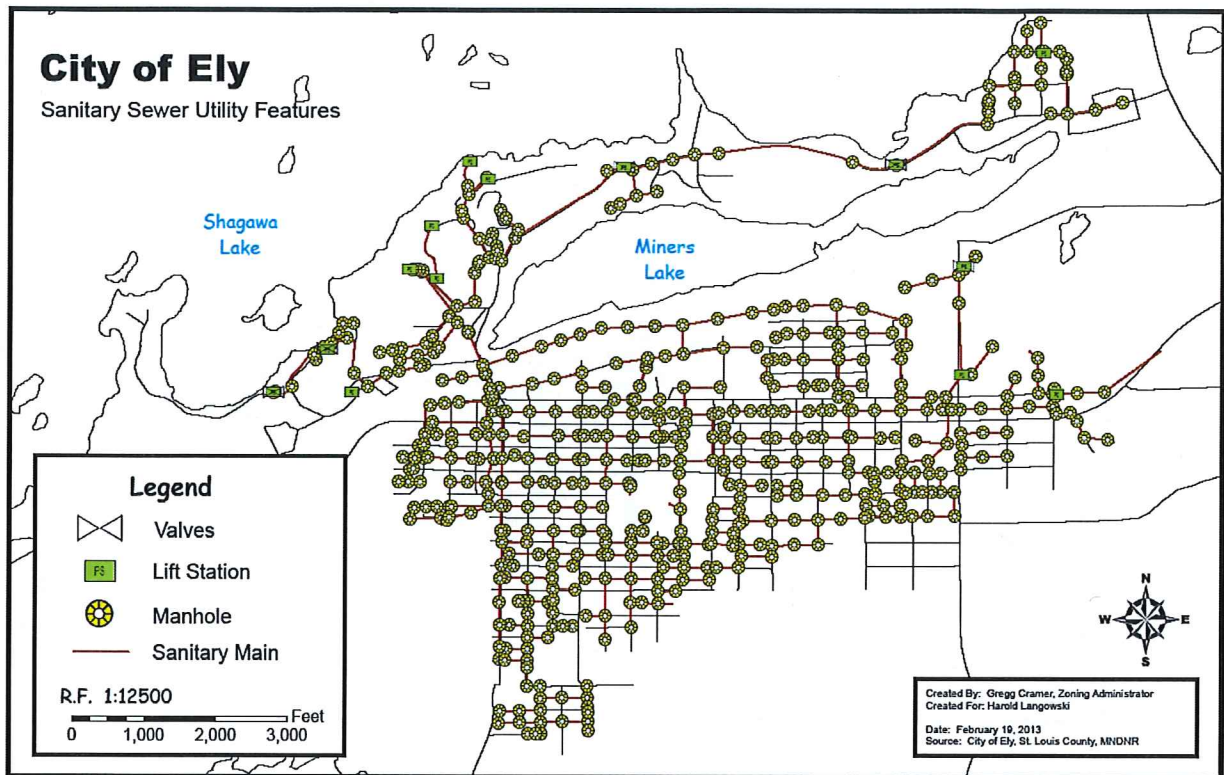


Figure 3.7: Sanitary Sewer Utility Features



4. Stormwater Collection Goals & Objectives

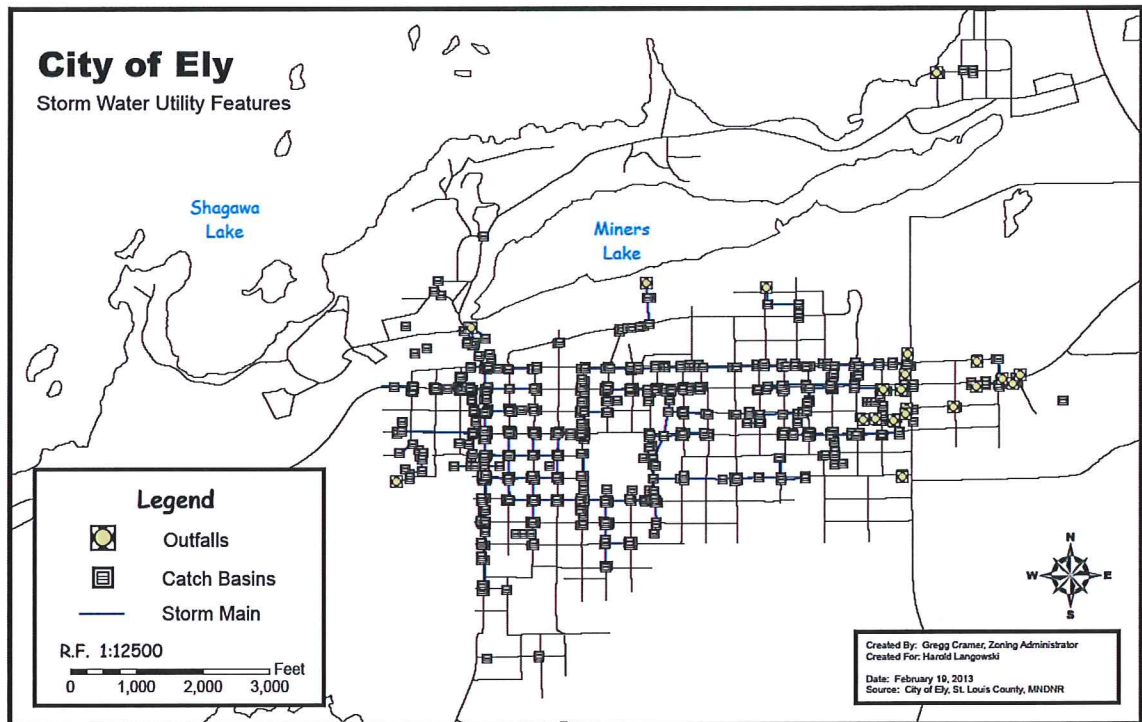
The City of Ely's wastewater collection system consists of sewage lift stations and sewer mains, including both forced and gravity systems. Treatment is done at the City's Waste Water Treatment plant located at 21 W Chandler.

GOAL: Sustainably operate and maintain the stormwater utility and natural infrastructure components of the stormwater system.

OBJECTIVE: Expand the stormwater collection system, where feasible and necessary. Utilize natural infrastructure, such as rain gardens and stormwater retention ponds, whenever possible to reduce congestion within the built wastewater collection system.



Figure 3.8: Storm Water Utility Features



5. Telecommunications Goals & Objectives

GOAL: Provide state of the art telecommunications opportunities to Ely residents and businesses, as well as for use by the City itself.

OBJECTIVE: Enhance and expand access to communications and information networks. Information networks are a critical component of business competitiveness and residential quality of life.

OBJECTIVE: Continually upgrade technologies utilized by the City of Ely as they become available.

6. Infrastructure Recommendations

The City's Projects Committee, operations director and city engineer identified issues to be addressed within the updated plan:

- Maintain quality of service. The maintenance of service quality shall remain a priority. Investment in new and regular maintenance of infrastructure is an important goal for keeping service levels high.
- Strive to keep utility costs low. Utility costs can squeeze household and business budgets. Keeping these costs down without the degradation of service quality is a delicate balance for utility managers.

- Economic use of infrastructure. Priority in development and redevelopment within the existing service boundary provides the City with economic benefits without incurring the costs of extending services. However, in order to capture economic opportunities, some extension of infrastructure may be needed. By identifying areas where extension is relatively easy given topography and capacity with other infrastructure the City can enhance the service reliability to existing customers.
- Proactive and reactive extension of infrastructure. At some point in time, circumstances may require the extension of services. Speculative extension without a source of outside funding is risky, putting upward pressure on the service costs of existing customers and should be avoided
- Challenges and opportunities for sustainable energy use. Energy markets have become increasingly uncertain in regard to fuel supply, environmental regulation, and risk associated with intensive capital projects. Capturing the opportunities of local energy resources and transitioning energy systems will require a number of challenging infrastructural decisions for the City.

7. Infrastructure Implementation Strategies

The 2012 Plan included recommendations for the repair and upgrading of infrastructure goals and objectives, some of which are ongoing and are still relevant to the updated goals and objectives. Additionally, new housing issues and needs call for fresh implementation actions to be included within updated plan.

The following actions are directed by the goals and objectives as outlined within the Housing Section of this Plan. Actions must fall within the context of the overall Plan: Community Vision; Future Land Use Map and Policies; and Goals and Objectives.

Priorities are presented in the categories of: infrastructure, facilities, education, and services.

Infrastructure

1. Participate in development and land use proposals of the Drinking Water Vulnerability Areas with St. Louis County.
2. Participate in regulatory processes to address impaired waters and continue to incorporate a range of best management practices in new developments and in public right-of-ways during street and trail construction.
3. Exceed (within financial constraints) State and Federal effluent discharge standards for wastewater treatment systems.
4. Continue to adopt local government best practices for improving energy efficiency in public buildings, which in turn encourages private sector investment in local renewable energy, bio-fuels, and energy efficiency resources, and improving Ely's energy sustainability. Take advantage of technical and informational assistance for best practices through programs such as Minnesota GreenStep Cities, U.S. Green Building Council Standards, and similar programs.
5. Investigate and encourage public and private investment in solar energy potential and the potential for wind energy installations within the City's rural areas.

6. Identify potential environmental and natural resource conflicts concerning new facilities or upgrades to existing facilities prior to design phase. Consider criteria that identify and recognize environmental constraints, as described in the natural infrastructure section.
7. Be aware of new wastewater treatment technology, including systems applicable to rural areas.
8. Take into account proven technology and competitiveness when reviewing, renewing, or assigning franchises.
9. Encourage partnerships among appropriate parties that provide the most effective, lowest cost communication services.
10. Continue the engagement of the public on public utility planning and service assessment. Promote better understanding of improvement projects and their relationship to quality of life and the greater good of the community.

8. Financing City Government and Other Public Improvements

Ely has an aging infrastructure and housing stock and the City needs to aggressively work to upgrade public utility systems and housing during a time when household budgets are tight, and financial assistance from federal and state sources could be drastically reduced. The plan should be continually evaluated in light of possible changes to taxes and local government aid.

The City Council should maintain vigilance over proposed property tax law changes and consider alternate means of paying for government services

Current City of Ely funding mechanisms include, but are not limited to:

- Local Property Taxes
- Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)
- Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board (IRRRB)
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
- Business Development Public Infrastructure (BDPI)
- Local Government Aid (LGA)
- Taconite Production Tax (Taconite Aid)

a. Public Infrastructure

The Plan recommends those City departments that operate on a coordinated Capital Improvement Program (CIP) review such CIPs on an annual basis. Ely's streets, sidewalks, water lines, sanitary sewer lines, storm sewers and water plant are in need of upgrades and replacement.

The CIP should identify the source of the funds to make the improvement and in most cases require a detailed specification and bid document as the basis for a final cost estimate or assessment hearing.

As a part of the CIP, the Council should review its policies for funding and assessing public improvements. Administrative policies for funding and assigning costs should be based on a consistent set of policies that clearly define who will pay for future street and other city improvements.

The Ely Utilities Commission and the City need to work closely on future infrastructure improvement projects to ensure coordination and to maximize public financial resources.

Most of the responsibility for this item falls on the City Clerk, City Engineer, Operations Director, Ely Projects Committee, Ely Utility Commission and the Ely Public Works Department. Street and utility repairs/improvements need to be programmed and coordinated. Effective and clear local assessment policies are an important consideration

C. Community Services and Facilities

The City of Ely manages many programs, provides regulation and policies to serve the public's need, and collaborates with other local governments and state agencies to provide a variety of community services. These services include public safety, emergency services, and management of public facilities.

Facilities Maintenance

The Public Works Department makes certain that city buildings are maintained and repaired, and ensures cost-effectiveness and that both interiors and exteriors of city buildings are kept in good condition. Some Buildings maintained by Public Works are:

- City Hall, Police Station, and Fire Hall
- Ely Public Library
- Whiteside and Semer's Beach Park pavilions, restrooms and band shell
- Ely Municipal Airport terminal
- Rec Center

Cemeteries

The Ely Cemetery Committee is committed to providing a beautiful and serene final resting place open to all people. The Committee, appointed by the Ely City Council, advises the City Council on the administration, maintenance, preservation and protection of the current Ely Cemetery and the Pioneer (Rosa's) Cemetery.

These cemeteries give comfort to the families and individuals by meeting final needs with excellence in operations, maintenance, and historical knowledge, resulting in places of quiet beauty and peace for the repose of the dead.

Libraries

The Ely Public Library's mission is to enrich the lives of its patrons by providing the resources and environment to explore imagination and achieve life-long learning goals.

Ely's Friends of the Library group is one of the five largest in the state. The library has been designated as an "American Star Library" by Library Journal on five separate years - only about 3.5% of libraries nationwide receive this designation each year which is based on per capita usage.

The library is centrally located in the downtown at 224 E Chapman St. The building is directly across the street from City Hall and across the alley from the Post Office and less than five blocks from the Ely school campus. This building was constructed in 2014 and key factors in the design included energy efficiency and patron input. The

facility is 6,630 square feet and includes a flexible layout, private study rooms, indoor and outdoor seating areas, a pollinator habitat rain garden, and parking lot shared by the library, city hall, and downtown shoppers.

The Ely Public Library serves as a resource for the area providing materials and programming. The library has 3,300 video items (DVD & VHS), 1,350 audio items (music CDs, books on CD & MP3), 70 periodical subscriptions, and 32,000 books for circulation as of July 2015. The library also holds 327 non-circulating reference items for use within the library. Circulation for the library was 68,310 in 2014.

Educational and entertaining programming for adults and children is offered through the year. Story times are held weekly, and the library runs a 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten for young children. In 2014, 2,083 patrons attended 90 library programs.

Other resources that the library offers include: interlibrary loan service, wireless internet access, nine public computers with printing and internet access, downloadable audio and eBooks via the Arrowhead Library System, online educational databases, disc resurfacing service, and more. Display cases are also available to local groups and individuals and are changed on a regular basis.

The Ely Public Library is a member of the Arrowhead Library System - a group of 28 public libraries who serve northeastern Minnesota. The Arrowhead Library System also provides direct service to rural residents through the Bookmobile and Mail-A-Book programs.



1. Solid Waste Collection and Disposal Goals & Objectives

The City of Ely currently maintains a recycling center, which is located on the West end of town on Highway 169. Recycling is open to all St. Louis County residents with brush and mulch recycling restricted to Ely residents. Northwoods Transfer Station, located on Highway 21 and operated by St. Louis County, also offers recycling collection (including cardboard), brush and mulch recycling, and disposal options for other solid wastes for area residents and businesses.

The City of Ely currently maintains an exclusive agreement with a private business which specializes in residential and commercial trash collection, with numerous cart and dumpster sizes available, and flexible scheduling to accommodate specific needs.

GOAL: Continue to improve cost-effective systems for collecting and recycling solid wastes.

OBJECTIVE: Collaborate with county and state agencies, as well as private contractors, to ensure Ely residents have access to adequate facilities for disposal, collection and recycling of solid wastes.

OBJECTIVE: Annually review the costs of solid waste programs to ensure user equitability.

Solid waste collection and disposal requires the involvement of the appropriate agencies and contractors. If problems arise, these agencies and contractors must be notified and discussions should be held to formulate feasible solutions.

2. Emergency Services Goals & Objectives

Emergency Services, including police, fire, ambulance and other emergency responders, are a critical component of the community's public service infrastructure.

Law Enforcement Protection

The role of law enforcement protection is to ensure public safety through the protection of people and their property. Fair and effective law enforcement has the benefit of enhancing the quality of life within a community. The perception of a low crime rate and an adequately funded and efficient law enforcement service can help make a community an attractive place for businesses and families to locate. The Ely Police Department headquarters are located in City Hall, and the St. Louis County Sheriffs Department also has an office located in City Hall.



Fire Protection

Adequate fire protection is an essential service within any community, often saving lives and property. Manpower, equipment, and a good emergency response system are important for both current Ely residents and for prospective residents and businesses.

The Ely Fire Department (EFD) provides fire protection throughout the City and has mutual-aid agreements with several other area communities. The EFD is comprised of volunteer firefighters and a fire chief. The building official acts as part-time fire inspector for enforcement of fire codes. The fire station is located in City Hall.

Emergency Medical Services

Like fire protection, emergency medical response is an essential service within any community. The ambulance provider is Ely Area Ambulance Service (EAAS) conveniently located next to both Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital and Essentia Health-Ely Clinic.



EAAS also provides event stand-by and medical support within its service area. These services provide personnel and equipment, and selected ambulance support to such activities as athletic events, community wide festivals, and any events requiring on-site EMS medical support as dictated by insurance or licensing.

EAAS is the only licensed medical team allowed to respond with the United States Forest Service in order to fly into the BWCAW for med-e-vac and emergency rescue operations.

Table 3.4: Annual Emergency Medical Calls

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Calls	460	473	447	453	553	455	421
Source: Ely Area Ambulance Service							

GOAL: Ensure the safety and security of the Ely community. A community's sense of safety and security often rely upon the quality of emergency services.

OBJECTIVE: Provide for police patrol visibility in residential areas. Visibility of emergency service providers, especially police, creates a sense of security within the community.

OBJECTIVE: Ensure adequate emergency response times.

OBJECTIVE: Promote inter-agency cooperation (mutual-aid) in providing services to the City of Ely and surrounding communities. Ely provides services to both City residents and residents and businesses in nearby communities. Capturing opportunities for inter-agency cooperation makes better use of limited funding, reduces upward pressure on taxes and fees, and generally provides for better service.

3. Community Services Recommendations

Facilities

1. A variety of tools should be used for investment and management decisions to meet fiscally responsible goals, including fiscal impact analysis, cost-revenue analysis, lifecycle cost-benefit analysis, impacts on fees, and capital budgeting analysis.
2. Use business planning procedures for facilities management to place responsibility and accountability on department heads for efficient budget expenditures, all under the guidance of the City Council.
3. Fiscally self-sustaining facilities and programs should be a management goal, while recognizing that some facilities and programs contribute substantially to or are essential to maintaining quality of life even if operations do not pay for themselves. Consider the creation of criteria for measuring efficiency and investment priorities.

Services

1. Continue to support quality-of-life services including schools, libraries, and recreational activities. Partnerships with private and public entities provide programs and services more cost effectively while finding opportunities to enhance services.

Education

1. Develop an understanding of current and future school district infrastructure needs that recognize temporary fluxes in the number of school age children.
2. Continue the management of facilities to minimize the lifecycle costs and to improve the learning environment.
3. Continue to support safe routes to school goals, including safe walking routes to and from school through the provision of appropriate sidewalk infrastructure and strategically placed compliant lighting, crosswalks, signage and crossing guards.
4. Involve school district staff in planning efforts and participate in district planning initiatives.
5. Collaborate with continuing education providers to determine the needs of continuing education in the community and identify any actions/activities the City could undertake to improve the quality of and opportunities for continuing education.
6. Be proactive in addressing the need for extracurricular activities within Ely.

4. Emergency Services Recommendations

1. Develop measurable criteria for determining adequate levels of staffing which meets a designated level of service, including response times and visibility in the community. Consider community policing practices to improve visibility.
2. Ensure public safety through adequate traffic enforcement. Establish criteria for the determination of what constitutes an adequate level of traffic enforcement.
3. Establish methodology for measuring level of service for fire response and capability.
4. Coordinate with surrounding communities on emergency service protection to maximize service coverage and minimize costs.
5. Plan for the relocation of the police impound building in order to prepare the site for potential redevelopment in the area.

5. Building Code and Maintenance Priorities

- Encourage roof, siding and window upgrades.
- Encourage energy and mechanical (heating and air conditioning) upgrades.
- Assist property owners through residential rehabilitation loan programs.
- Provide incentives for improving accessibility and assist business owners through storefront rehabilitation loans.
- Support federal, state, and county programs that encourage property improvement.
- Encourage upgrading the electrical wiring of existing buildings as a consideration for public safety and prevention of major fire events.

6. Visitor Information and Directional Signage

The Plan calls for a coordinated public informational sign system to help guide visitors to city attractions

The City should continue the development of visitor information and directional signage as deemed necessary. Collaborative opportunities exist among the City of Ely, The Ely Chamber of Commerce, and Incredible Ely for the development, installation, and maintenance of visitor information kiosks as well as directional signage.

The Plan recommends the City work with the Chamber of Commerce and Incredible Ely to develop a visitor directional sign and information system.



D. Transportation

The mobility and accessibility needs of all City of Ely residents, businesses, and visitors must be recognized and served by the city's transportation system. The system should include the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, snowmobiles, and ATVs in addition to automobiles, trucks, motorcycles, airplanes, and buses. People of all ages and abilities should be provided safe mobility options within the city's municipal boundary. In order to meet these needs, the transportation section of this Comprehensive Plan presents the City of Ely's plan for developing a comprehensive, integrated, connected network for all modes of transportation.

The transportation system of the City of Ely is primarily comprised of collector and residential streets. The maintenance of this system serves the needs of residents and businesses alike, while increasing opportunities for growth. Development of residential, commercial, or industrial land uses should be directed where existing or planned roads meet the functional needs of the proposed land uses.

Pedestrians and Bicycles

During the 2012 Comprehensive Plan review, the Planning Commission recognized and added city walkability to the plan. The goal was to promote pedestrian activity as a viable alternative to automobile use, and it remains key to this Comprehensive Plan.

The ability for residents to get from one place to another is a necessity; however, some do not have access to automobile, cannot use automobiles, or simply prefer the option of walking or bicycling. Transportation planning shall consider the needs of bicyclists, pedestrians, automobiles, ATVs and snowmobiles, and that these needs are intermodal, or used by multiple forms of transportation.

The City of Ely has the ability to create safe, comfortable and inviting pedestrian and bicycling environments by integrating walking and biking facilities into appropriate roadway construction and reconstruction projects. Additionally, the improved health and vitality of the city's residents can benefit by promoting walking as a mode of transportation.

Some developments which are automobile dependent have affected the walkability of the City in a few areas. Some neighborhoods and neighborhood extensions developed over the last 4 decades are less likely to have sidewalks or other pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. The downtown area is walkable, and the City continues to improve pedestrian traffic with the Safe Routes to School campaign in addition to Complete Streets consideration on road projects. As part of the Complete Streets process, the City should consider guidelines for the development of bikeways and pedestrian connections. Designs for bikeways favor direct, flat routes with adequate lane width, lower traffic volumes, and controlled speed of motorized vehicles. Bicycle routes should have adequate road markings, signage, and be sufficiently maintained.

Aviation

The Ely Municipal Airport, owned by the City of Ely, is a general aviation airport that is open to the public and used for corporate, government, and personal air traffic. It has about 8,000 aircraft operations per year. The airport is used primarily for general and transient aviation flights. The facility has the ability to serve executive and private transportation needs benefiting the community, as well as the materials and delivery needs of the city's industries.

The Ely Municipal Airport is located 5 miles south of the city on 760 acres. The City of Ely opened the airport in 1970. Since then, the airport has made many improvements and added amenities including paving and construction of hangars and other buildings.

Recent improvements include:

- US Forest Service Helitack Base Construction in 2013
- Runway reconstruction and lighting upgrades in 2015

The Ely Municipal Airport currently supports a variety of uses including government (forestry, DNR, State of MN, FAA, etc.), flight training, air charter service, corporate traffic, fire fighting, search and rescue, and private pleasure operations. There are approximately 21 aircraft based locally.



Transit

Transit is an important component of the transportation network of the City of Ely and St. Louis County. The primary transit provider for the City is Arrowhead Transit, which operates in the seven county region of northeast Minnesota. The agency provides coordinated public transportation service with several flexible routes to choose from by using Dial-A-Ride. Transit connects residential areas with major shopping areas, public buildings, employment centers, healthcare facilities, and tourist attractions. Funding for the system comes through the Arrowhead Economic and Opportunity Agency (AEOA).

Road Right of Way

Road right-of-way maintenance includes street sweeping, storm sewer maintenance, pothole patching, tree trimming, and boulevard maintenance such as sidewalks, general mowing and trail maintenance. The Public Works Department maintains city right-of-ways as well as providing snow and ice control. Transportation planning, including implementation of the “Complete Streets” policies, is led by the City Clerk, City Engineer and Projects Committee.

Parking

The design and availability of parking has the potential to shape both the look and feel of a city, the quality of life of its citizens and visitors, and the potential for new growth and development. The need to accommodate parking must be balanced with other competing goals for the built environment such as livability and economic development. The City of Ely will seek to accommodate the parking needs of visitors, residents, businesses and community facilities in a manner that is open and clear.

1. Transportation Goals & Objectives

GOAL: Provide an adequate and safe transportation system that equally serves automobiles, commercial traffic, pedestrians, bicyclists, and those with limited mobility and which links neighborhoods, businesses, and community destinations.

OBJECTIVE: Incorporate *Complete Streets* concepts such as sidewalks, non-motorized trails, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant curb cuts, to create and maintain better streets, which promote a mixture of uses including vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrian traffic.

OBJECTIVE: Promote land use policies as necessary to maintain safe and efficient operation of the existing road system, as well as offering opportunities for energy efficient forms of transportation. These systems should be protected and given high priority to operational maintenance, capacity and safety improvements that are cost effective and improve service.

OBJECTIVE: Industrial development should occur where primary access to Highway 169, Highway 21, and Highway 1 can be utilized. If this is not possible, truck and other associated industrial traffic should be routed along collector streets avoiding residential streets.

OBJECTIVE: Coordinate street and sidewalk improvements with other infrastructure improvements. Additionally the city should continually analyze road extensions and/or straightening of roads as opportunities present themselves.

OBJECTIVE: Support Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency's (AEOA) transportation program, Arrowhead Transit, for enhancements and maintenance of this transit system.



OBJECTIVE: Cooperate with private interests to provide specialty transportation needs within the community and the Ely area. Currently, privately owned companies provide transportation services.

GOAL: The City of Ely should strive to become a “walkable” city, as well as promote bicycling for commuters and recreational riders.

OBJECTIVE: Maintain all sidewalks as funds and staffing allow and as prioritized by Projects Committee, non-motorized trails, motorized trails and streets. Sidewalk and crosswalk, as well as trail locations and crossings should be addressed if impacted during city infrastructure improvement or development plans.

OBJECTIVE: The City may assess part of the cost of street and sidewalk improvements.

OBJECTIVE: Support the installation of both public and private bike racks at local businesses and at community facilities at the discretion of the City.

OBJECTIVE: Encourage use of non-motorized and motorized trails by providing connections to the main trails, destinations and community facilities, in addition to secure storage options.

GOAL: Provide an aviation facility to meet the needs of passengers, the City, and general aviation in a safe and efficient manner

OBJECTIVE: Future airport developments should be sufficient to satisfy the current and potential aviation demands of passengers, the City, charter airlines, airport dependant businesses, the United States Forest Service (USFS), and general aviation flyers.

OBJECTIVE: Support efforts to enhance airport revenue through new or expanded services.

GOAL: Ensure adequate off-street parking facilities for both public and private land uses.

OBJECTIVE: Continue to provide public parking opportunities and evaluate parking requirements for new developments and redevelopments.

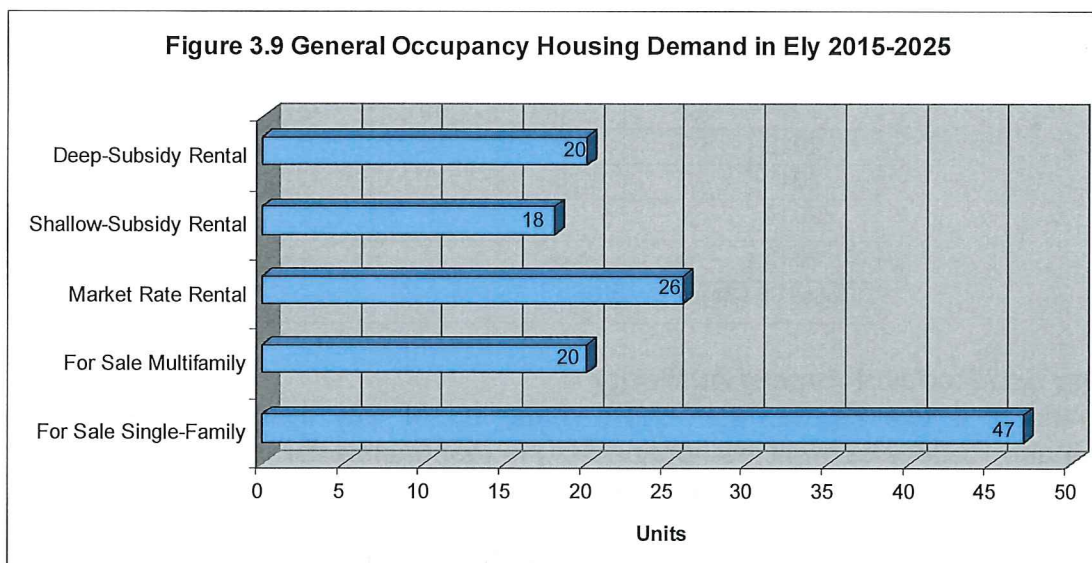
OBJECTIVE: Required parking spaces must be available for the intended uses, and not obstructed or used for other purposes. The parking policy of the City of Ely requires a sufficient amount of on-site off street parking to meet the anticipated parking demand of the development. Development of a “payment in lieu of parking” fee might temporarily allow reduced parking requirements upon the request of local business owners. Fees collected should be used for maintenance and expansion of public parking facilities.

D. Housing

A typical central goal of community planning is to provide an appropriate range of housing types for populations with varying needs and income levels. The buildings that provide shelter also define neighborhoods and enhance or detract from the sense of community. Once constructed, housing will define neighborhoods for generations.

During 2015, Maxfield Research completed ***A Comprehensive Housing Needs Analysis for the City of Ely, Minnesota*** which compared housing demand in the City of Ely drawing from a primary market area of several nearby townships and municipalities. Housing recommendations provided within the study included:

- A total of 67 new single-family housing units over the forecast period (2015-2025) equates to a growth rate of approximately 7 units per year. The pace of growth would be somewhat higher than the rate of single-family residential development activity that occurred in the City between 2000 and 2014 (3 units per year).
- 50 new multifamily units equate to an annual average of roughly 5 units per year. Few units have been built in Ely of the past several years, but there have been many conversions of owned homes to rental housing, which has de facto increased the rental pool in the community.



Source: Maxfield Research Inc

Iron Range Housing Market Analysis, 2008

Encompassing an area adjacent to Highway 169 from Itasca County to the east edge of St. Louis County, the Iron Range Housing Market Analysis (Bonestroo, 2008) looked at 31 communities and 54 townships within the study area. Divided into 5 sub-regions, the City of Ely is found within the Northeastern Sub-region. The goal was to create a dynamic analytical tool to project housing needs in the Iron Range based on different economic development scenarios. Three economic growth scenarios were tested to estimate housing needs from 2008 to 2013. As the scenarios have yet to transpire, but are still in development, within the Northeast Sub-region, the study remains relevant:

- Low Job Growth - No development projects underway or anticipated.
- Medium Job Growth - No development projects underway or anticipated
- High Job Growth - Included two tentative development projects.

The key findings of this study would indicate with the 2 identified development projects, the Northeastern Sub-region as a whole would require an estimated 1,500 or more units of permanent housing and an additional 1,500 or more units of temporary housing.

Trends in Housing Development

Table 3.5 Residential Construction, 2000-2015

	Single Family Homes	Multi Family Homes	Demos	Total New Homes
2000	0	0	na	0
2001	7	0	na	7
2002	1	0	na	1
2003	2	0	na	2
2004	4	0	na	4
2005	8	0	na	8
2006	0	0	na	0
2007	5	0	na	5
2008	3	0	na	3
2009	4	0	na	4
2010	0	0	na	0
2011	2	0	na	2
2012	0	0	na	0
2013	1	0	3	-2
2014	2	0	1	1
2015	3	2	1	4
Source: US Census, City of Ely				

Housing and Redevelopment Authority

Comprised of a five (5) member board made up of City residents, the City of Ely Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) is responsible for the management of five rental properties consistent with the HRA mission.

The HRA offers safe, decent, and affordable housing for low and moderate-income persons without discrimination. The HRA is committed to effective management with wise and prudent use of public funds, in providing housing options and opportunities to enhance the quality of life in our communities.

Northwood's Townhomes is a market rate property managed by the Ely HRA which includes 26 units. The remaining four public housing buildings have a total of 120 low/moderate income units.



1. Housing Goals & Objectives

GOAL: Encourage adequate housing for all Ely residents, a variety of single family homes, urban to rural neighborhoods, and multi-family housing from market-rate apartments to subsidized facilities.

OBJECTIVE: Guide residential development to reflect a pattern of interconnected housing types.

OBJECTIVE: Provide incentives for private renovation and rehabilitation of the Ely housing stock.

OBJECTIVE: Provide incentives for off-street parking and garages.

OBJECTIVE: Continue to develop life-cycle housing options for Ely area residents.

GOAL: Maintain licensing standards for rental properties.

OBJECTIVE: Provide safe and sanitary housing stock for renters.

OBJECTIVE: Maintain an owner/landlord database.

OBJECTIVE: Encourage non-owner occupied properties be well cared for, and to improve residential property values.

2. Housing Recommendations

A number of housing issues have been identified within the 2016 Comprehensive Plan. The housing inventory and results of both the Maxfield Research, Inc *Housing Needs Analysis* and *Iron Range Housing Market Analysis* verify housing issues including:

- Population growth and housing demand based upon potential scenarios have not yet materialized, but should be considered. The City needs a contingency plan to provide for the diversity of housing that may be needed for new temporary and permanent workers and families.
- The City of Ely's aging population will increase the demand for non-single-family housing types, particularly for older residents. The Future Land Use Plan designates sufficient land area for a great variety of multi-family housing, including townhouses, apartments and condos, and various senior housing options.
- The Plan also considers issues of neighborhood character and livability in addition to housing types and affordability. Neighborhood connectedness and the prevention of isolated housing types may both be accomplished by focusing new housing developments in and around the downtown or within existing neighborhoods.
- New housing should be connected to current and potential new job and commercial centers, through transportation options or by strategic location options, which are critical to sustaining the community.
- The City should attend to the growing need for rental housing as demographics change.
- The quality of housing stock and rehabilitation of existing housing remains a top priority and continues to require attention and funding.





3. Housing Implementation Strategies

The following actions are directed by the goals and objectives as outlined within the Housing Section of this Plan. Actions must fall within the context of the overall Plan: Community Vision; Future Land Use Map and Policies; Goals and Objectives found within other sections of this Plan.

Affordability

1. Reports and updates to City officials should be obtained from the Ely Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA).
2. Collaborate with other entities in housing options to structure financial options for affordable housing. Work with the HRA to ensure adequate long-term affordable housing.
3. Continue to assist low-income persons to finance upgrades to existing single-family homes.
4. Proactively identify and support areas for development of new housing.
5. Build and strengthen relationships with major area employers to promote public/private partnerships in the development of affordable housing.

Market Demand and Diversity

1. Plan contingencies for housing development as identified in the *Iron Range Housing Analysis*. Contingency plans should address limiting financial and quality of life impacts on existing residents and businesses while minimizing risks to natural resources and infrastructure systems.

2. Consider the fiscal impacts to existing residents and businesses when considering extending utilities to accommodate new development.
3. New housing developments and permitting standards should be considered multi-generational, rather than being dictated only by current market conditions.
4. Make consistent zoning map changes aligned with the Future Land Use Map to create a diverse yet integrated housing landscape.
5. Continue licensure and inspections of all rental units by the Building and Fire Inspectors to ensure rental units are maintained in a safe and livable fashion.

Neighborhood Character

1. Allow secondary land uses within neighborhoods, but consider reasonable limits to protect neighborhood character.
2. Continue to engage neighborhood residents in development decisions and plans.

Repair and Upgrade Housing Stock

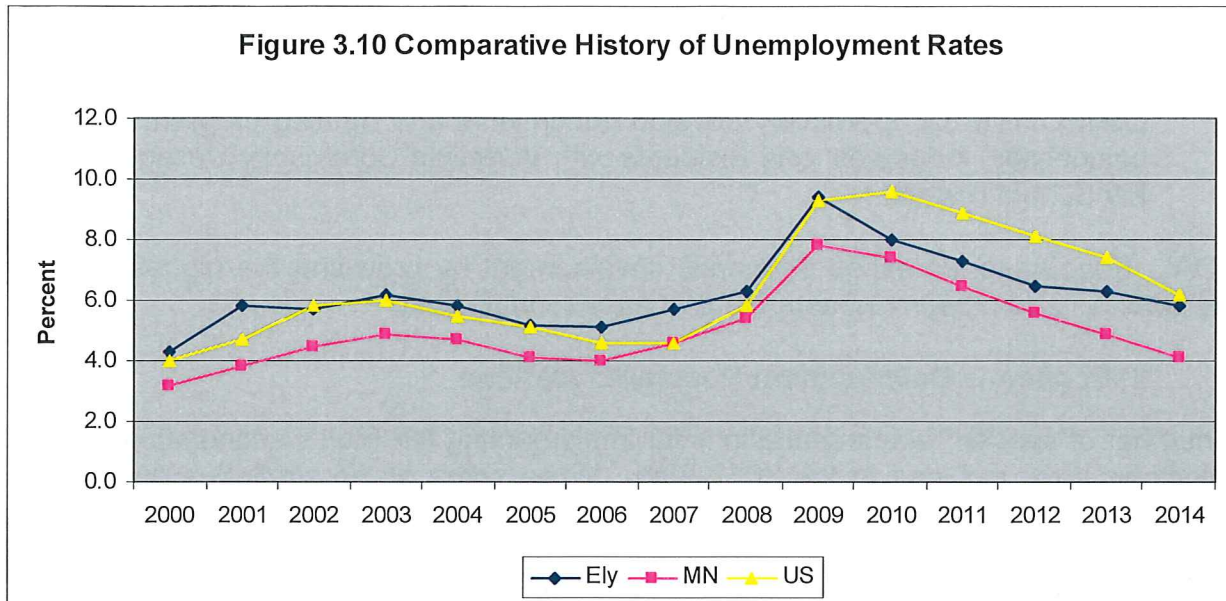
1. There is a demand for reasonably priced affordable housing and updated housing.
2. The City program providing low-interest loans to property owners for rehabilitation should be continued and expanded, if possible.
3. Current programs should be continued. New programs should be investigated as they become available.

E. Economic Development

The purpose of this section is to expand and enhance the City's commercial and industrial base. The overall goal is to establish a healthy, thriving business community that will maintain and enhance the City's high quality of life. An expanded business community will provide an expanded tax base, increased local employment, a greater variety of jobs, and a full range of goods and services for its citizens.

Ely's business community is concentrated along the Sheridan Street Commercial Corridor and the historical downtown business district. The majority of the City's retail and service businesses are still located along the corridor and within the downtown area. Retailers include both neighborhood convenience businesses and specialty retailers. There are a variety of automotive uses as well as service businesses within the downtown. Most of the businesses are independently owned local businesses with very few national chains or franchises.

The City should continue to identify strengths and opportunities for economic development. In addition, the City should identify barriers to new business development and seek ways to eliminate or minimize those barriers. The City should continue this effort by asking existing business owners to identify barriers and opportunities through an outreach survey.



Ely Business Park

The Ely Business Park was platted in 1987, and the last remaining lot was sold and privately developed in 2015. Located on Miner's Drive with convenient access to Highway 169, Highway 1, and County Road 21 the street frontage associated with this business park was paved in fall of 2015. The second phase expansion of the business park also began in late 2015 with the establishment of two additional lots.

Central Avenue Business Park

The privatization of the old United States Forest Service complex in 2015 has spawned a new opportunity for business investors. This complex boasts several options within the existing structures for businesses from storage and offices to large industrial spaces that are all available for lease in this newly established business park. Located adjacent to Central Avenue, this business park offers immediate access to County Road 21. The location has been permitted for limited commercial and industrial uses.

The City of Ely has several notable entities focused on economic development. These entities shall collaborate in and around Ely on economic development activities. The Ely Economic Development Authority (EEDA) plays the primary economic development tool within the City. A number of other local and regional entities are engaged in economic development activities in and around the Ely area, often in collaboration with EEDA and other local partners.

1. Economic Development Goals & Objectives

GOAL: Develop a balanced economic program that provides skilled jobs.

OBJECTIVE: Seek out companies offering living wage jobs.

OBJECTIVE: Provide an incentive program for companies locating in the Business Park.

OBJECTIVE: Consider incentives for companies locating on private properties within the city limits.

OBJECTIVE: Cooperatively develop educational and training programs for area businesses, industries, and residents with Vermilion Community College and the Ely School District.

GOAL: Encourage increased economic development by providing the highest level of city services and modern infrastructure at a reasonable cost.

2. Economic Development Recommendations

A number of specific recommendations for implementing the Plan's economic goals and objectives were included in the 2012 Plan. While some of the strategies and actions were completed, some are ongoing and still maintain relevance to the updated goals and objectives, and others are incomplete and need to be included in this new Plan. Additionally, new economic priorities and opportunities call for additional implementation measures to be included within this update.

The following long and short term recommendations implement the goals and objectives as outlined within the Economic Development section. Actions shall thus be directed by and constrained by the stated goals and objectives. Long-term actions are more general in nature and are expected to be undertaken five or more years in the future. Short-term actions are fairly specific and are expected to be undertaken within three years and completed within five years.

Issues identified within the Economic Development section of this plan to be addressed include:

- Continue to diversify the City's economic base. Development efforts must address the potential conflicts between enhancing Ely's competitive advantage and increasing economic dependence on one industry or market.
- Anticipate and prepare for cycles in natural resource based industries. The paper, pulp and mining industries have long been a competitive segment of the region's economic base. These industries are cyclical, and investments and decline create economic upheaval when jobs are lost or gained. Investment in these industries must minimize risk while capturing opportunities.
- The City and the region must be positioned for large scale industrial development. The development of mining operations may provide opportunities for the City of Ely on a regional scale.
- Make strategic investments in education and training programs. Education provides for job training and is a substantial quality of life indicator. Industry will invest when the workforce is well trained, the public schools are high quality, and the community is invested in creating opportunities for all residents.

- Community medical services play a role in economic vitality. Medical services are one of the City's largest industries. The medical campus helps make Ely a regional economic center, and substantially adds to the quality of life of the City.
- Recognize the value of tourism. Recreational assets benefit both the tourism industry and offer one of the regions competitive opportunities.
- Artistic and cultural assets should be further developed. Sustainability of the economy overlaps with other elements of sustainability, including quality of life. Thriving artistic and cultural communities creates economic diversity, enhances the community image, and is a primary indicator of community stability.

Short-Term Economic Recommendations

1. Engage in direct marketing and solicitation of private development interests on properties that the City of Ely controls in a manner consistent with the desired mix of land uses as discussed in the Comprehensive Plan.
2. Develop new promotional efforts to market industrial parks and vacant commercial properties.
3. Continue to support actions that market Ely's identity in regional and statewide markets, particularly in key tourism sectors.
4. Improve marketing of EEDA and City of Ely available sites, incentive programs and community assets by actively maintaining the City's webpage.
5. The City of Ely, Joint Powers Board and EEDA should continue to work cooperatively to attract companies that pay living wages with benefits.
6. Develop business retention programs citywide to sustain businesses in their existing spaces, or to find new appropriate space for businesses looking to expand.
7. Continue to support events and temporary land uses that create community gathering places, such as the farmers market.

Long-Term Economic Recommendations

1. Continue to make high quality, high wage jobs a priority in economic incentive programs.
2. Work with Vermilion Community College to develop educational components to support economic opportunity goals, such as developing and enhancing programs which support the region's natural resource industries.
3. Investigate opportunities that use Ely's information and communications infrastructure to develop businesses that have a national market.
4. Continue to support investment in medical technology, training, and marketing to enhance Ely's position as the regional center for medical services.
5. Assess expansion and retention needs for existing businesses and re-commission expansion/retention programs to meet the evolving markets and barriers faced by existing businesses.
6. Evaluate opportunities for regulatory efficiency to minimize barriers to business expansion.
7. Encourage public and private sector entities to re-commission Ely's branding and marketing goals.
8. The City's art and entertainment assets shall be recognized as a critical component of meeting economic development goals. Consider programs to encourage artistic and cultural entrepreneurs.

9. Encourage existing local businesses to increase their number of full and part-time employees, and independent workers to re-locate businesses to the City of Ely.

3. Economic Development Implementation Strategy

The City will attempt to utilize or work cooperatively with agencies dealing with economic development.

F. Natural Infrastructure

Natural infrastructure includes all systems that relate to natural resources and contribute to an improved public life. Natural infrastructure considers the full range of natural resource uses including economic, environmental, health, cultural, and aesthetic. This broad view leads us to include surface water, groundwater, stormwater, wastewater, drinking water, mineral resources, geology, topography, soils, natural areas, open space, green spaces in urban areas, urban forest, habitat, vegetation, scenic views, and parks and trails in natural infrastructure.

Natural infrastructure is a key element in planning where development should or should not take place within a city. This element is important to communities and development as it avoids certain development hazards, provides health benefits to citizens, protects ecological systems and enhances biological diversity, supports economic activities such as mining and forestry, and offers communities unique quality of life components.

Consideration of natural infrastructure ensures that homes are built upon stable dry soils, provides clean drinking water, accounts for resource based economic activities, provides scenic views and open spaces, and plans development that respect the integrity of natural systems and incorporate natural features into development.

This background assessment presents natural infrastructure information that was used in the future land use map and goals and objectives to:

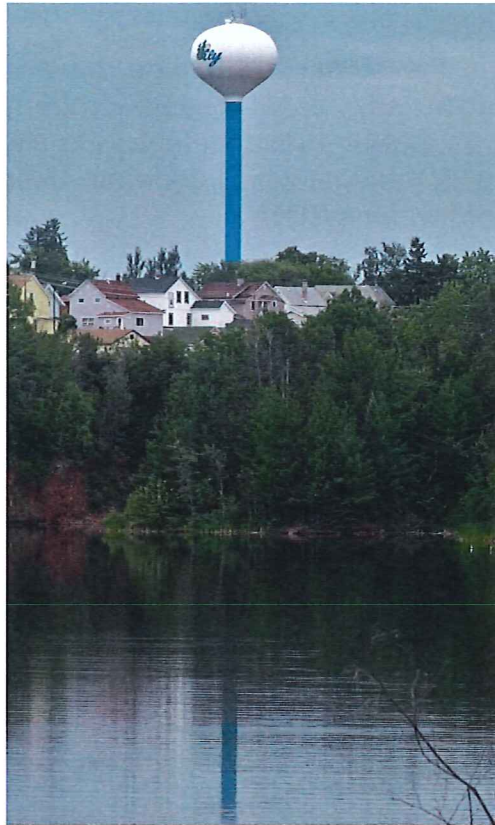
- Identify where to encourage protection of natural resources
- Describe where to encourage development
- Define where natural systems can work with development and define neighborhoods
- Encourage natural resource protection within development areas

In 2014, a natural resources section was added to the City of Ely Comprehensive Plan by the Planning and Zoning Commission. Although some relevant information was included within other sections of the plan (e.g. wastewater and parks and trails), the plan has previously neglected to present a unified picture of natural infrastructure. The City of Ely recognizes the contribution of natural infrastructure to the physical, social, and economic health of the community. The city acknowledges the status and importance of natural infrastructure in land use choices. This section brings together information on parks and recreation, open space, water and wetland resources, topography, geology, vegetation, and drinking and wastewater systems to form a cohesive natural infrastructure picture.

Surface Water

The City of Ely, is a “gateway” to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. The water filled Miners Pit is centrally located within the city. It was created from the

flooding of collapsed underground mining operations. The city is bordered on the north by Shagawa Lake and Shagawa River, and City water is drawn from nearby Burntside Lake.



These water bodies are used for recreation, and residents enjoy the lake and river views from their homes. They provide positive recreation and aesthetics, which are recognized by the City of Ely. Future land use choices should consider the impact of development choices on water quality and quantity. Excess nutrients and pollution sources typically come from residential turf management, stormwater runoff, and agricultural practices which can be influenced by local land use choices.

Drinking Water Supply

An adequate supply of clean drinking water is important to the health of citizens and to economic development activities. Drinking water sources are a critical component of Ely's natural infrastructure. The Plan thus considers the vulnerability of the City's drinking water resource as part of its natural infrastructure, although the source does not lie within the municipal boundaries.

Figure 3.1: City of Ely Source Water Assessment Area, portrays the Drinking Water Supply Vulnerability (DWSV) areas as defined by the Minnesota Department of Health. Geologic sensitivity, type of wells, and water chemistry are factors used to indicate vulnerability. Burntside Lake, the City's drinking water source, is governed by the land use controls of St. Louis County. The City of Ely should communicate and work closely with the county to ensure the longevity of this water source. Land use activities that have a high risk of contributing pollutants should be located in areas outside of DWSV areas.

See Figure 3.1 Map of Drinking Water Supply Vulnerability (Section III. A. 1.)

Wastewater Management

Collection and treatment of wastewater are primary functions of the Ely Utilities Commission (EUC). Wastewater management is primarily grey as most of the City's wastewater treatment is composed of wastewater collection and treatment facilities. St. Louis County oversees on-site wastewater systems in the rural areas outside of the City's municipal boundaries.

See Figure 3.6 Sanitary Sewer Utility Features Map (Section III. B. 3.)

Stormwater Management

Stormwater management systems have an effect upon the surface waters of the City's natural infrastructure, and may include combinations of both natural systems and grey

infrastructure. Natural stormwater management systems include the watersheds of area lakes, natural drainage ways, and infiltration areas, as well as the vegetation and urban forest. Discussion of the constructed elements of the stormwater system is included in the Public Infrastructure section.

The City of Ely Public Works Department maintains the storm sewer pipe, several stormwater retention ponds, and rain gardens. Additionally, some private property owners also utilize natural systems similarly for wastewater management. On-site management of stormwater is the preferred management method, which generally uses the natural rather than constructed elements of the stormwater system.

See Figure 3.7 Stormwater Utility Features Map (Section III. B. 4.)

Parks, Trails, and Protected Land

The City of Ely's two parks encompass a total of 13.4 acres of city property. Nearly 6 miles of multi use trails are found within the city. Residents and visitors alike enjoy the variety of year-round recreational opportunities these parks and trails provide. Additionally, an abundance of other recreational opportunities are available a short distance from the municipal boundaries. As the "gateway" to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW), Ely serves as an international outdoor recreation destination and provides excellent quality of life for its residents.

It is the regional recreation attractions outside of the City limits which draw tourists to the area and into Ely. The areas resorts, trails, and proximity to the BWCAW contribute to Ely as an outdoor recreation destination for many travelers.

Mineral Resources

Established in the late 1880s, the City of Ely grew around iron mining. This industry supported the peoples of the town for many years. Although the iron ore mines that were located in the heart of the City have long ceased operations, current and proposed regional mining will continue to play an important economic role within the community.

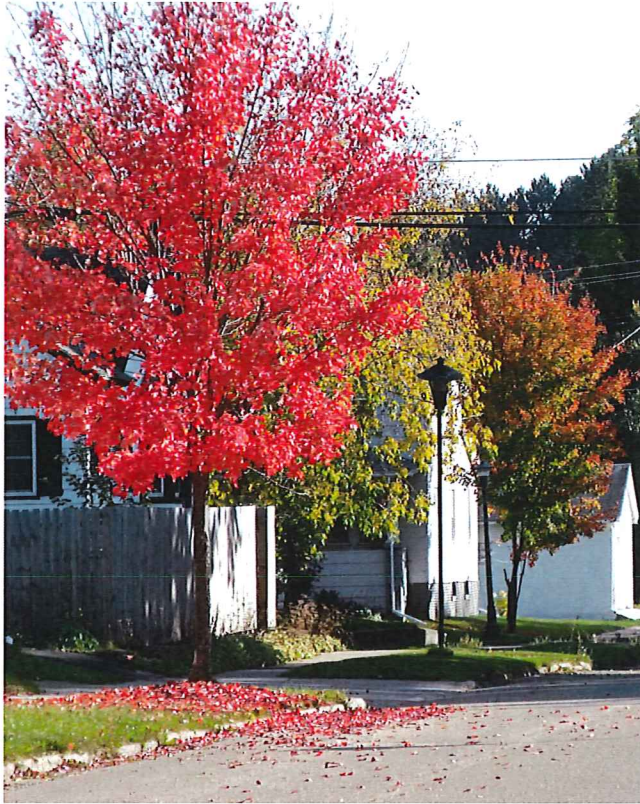
Although mining operations are unlikely to be re-established within its boundaries, several proposed mining projects may have an impact upon the City of Ely. Most notably, they include:

Polymet - Northmet Project: This project is proposed to be located just south of the eastern end of the Mesabi Iron Range, part of Minnesota's Duluth Complex. The Duluth Complex is one of the world's largest known undeveloped deposits of copper, nickel, and other precious metals. The proposal consists primarily of three open pits. It will employ approximately 360 people and will generate an estimated \$515 million in wages, benefits and spending for St. Louis County, according to a study by the University of Minnesota Duluth Labovitz School of Business and Economics.

Twin Metals Minnesota - Underground Copper, Nickel, Platinum, Palladium and Gold mining Project: Also part of Minnesota's Duluth Complex, the proposed underground mine project is to be located about 10 miles south of Ely near Birch Lake. Currently, Twin Metals Minnesota is conducting a 'Pre-feasibility Study' which evaluates details including mine design, facility locations, mining rate, transportation

and transmission corridors, economic benefits, job creation, and environmental protection. The Twin Metals project is proposed to bring both short term construction and long term mining jobs.

Urban Forest



The City's public and private urban areas, including residential, commercial, and industrial land uses within the urban service area, are part of the City's urban forest. The urban forest helps create and maintain the Northwoods character of the City, adds value to property, provides stormwater management value, and provides habitat. The City can require retention of trees within the development process as a means of retaining the character of neighborhoods and to create visual buffers. The City also maintains the urban forest on public right-of-ways and public lands within Ely's municipal boundaries.

In 2013, with aid from the University of Minnesota Department of Forest Resources, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Division of Forestry, and the U.S. Forest Service, community volunteers compiled the Community Tree Fact Sheet for the City of Ely. The document provides an inventory of both public and privately owned trees. In conjunction with this study, the City also established the advisory City of Ely Tree Board during the same year. The Tree Board is responsible for development and recommendation of the City Tree Plan which outlines the planting, care, pruning, preservation, removal and disposition of trees in all public spaces including, but not limited to parks, boulevards, sidewalks, and green spaces.

1. Natural Infrastructure Goals & Objectives

GOAL: To conserve, preserve, promote and manage effectively the natural economic assets of the City.

OBJECTIVE: Maintain existing resources utilizing current zoning and overlay districts, such as the Recreational Trails Overlay (RTO) as well as the Shoreland Mixed Use zoning designation. The City should ensure that land uses above and adjacent to natural resources will allow for the eventual economic removal and use of mineral and timber resources.

OBJECTIVE: Recognize the connection between recreational assets and other natural infrastructure goals. Recreation and tourism is a basic industry, and natural assets can be used for some recreational activities without disturbing future forestry or mining resources. Habitat conservation is similarly compatible with protection of economic resources.

OBJECTIVE: Support environmental permitting policies and actions. Permitting standards are a very important component used to enforce the sustainability of the natural resource and the health and safety of the community. The City should work with the other public agencies to expedite and facilitate the permitting policies and practices already in place on both State and Federal levels.

OBJECTIVE: Encourage educational institutions and research facilities to help create methods and products that sustain the community economically, socially, and environmentally both now and in a potentially climate altered future environment.

GOAL: Integrate natural infrastructure within the urban core of the City. Natural infrastructure should be supported by protecting and restoring wildlife corridors, ecosystems, water quality, and recreational opportunities for the immediate area and within the context of protecting the Shagawa River and lake watersheds.

OBJECTIVE: Create and/or protect buffers along the riverfront and lakes. Natural buffers provide for water quality protection, enhance habitat, and provide recreational and visual benefits.

OBJECTIVE: Support and enhance the urban forest. Forests are a critical component of native ecosystems and can be integrated into the urban fabric. Even within urban areas, forests provide habitat, water quality and quantity protection, shade, and an aesthetically pleasing and social environment for the community.

OBJECTIVE: Define and promote natural system infrastructure within future development and re-developments. Development design standards should take into consideration public water supply protection, sanitary sewer treatment systems, urban forestry, and stormwater quality and quantity for the protection and utilization of natural infrastructure protection.

OBJECTIVE: Businesses, residents, and visitors should be educated upon the importance of protecting the City's natural infrastructure.

GOAL: Provide support and management of the City's parks and trails. Parks and trails enhance the City's natural infrastructure, support the economic engine, and provide for the social, mental, and physical well-being of the community.

OBJECTIVE: Promote bicycle and pedestrian connectivity within neighborhoods and between destinations. Maintain and improve connections to the pedestrian, biking, and recreational trails. Multi-modal connections between neighborhoods and commercial areas promote community health, reduce traffic congestion and enhance recreation options.

OBJECTIVE: Improve access to motorized trails. Continue the maintenance of snowmobile trails and organize connections within the City to motorized trails.

OBJECTIVE: Manage and promote parks within City boundaries. The City of Ely has several parks and recreational options within City limits. Continue to maintain parks, support information and educational programs for all types of recreation and all ages, and work with other entities to enhance the overall park system.

OBJECTIVE: Collaborate with adjacent local governments and with the State. Ongoing improvements and maintenance of state trails should be supported, and work to provide connections between cities and townships.

2. Natural Infrastructure Recommendations

The 2012 Plan did not include a natural infrastructure component. The City of Ely recognizes its relationship with natural systems as well as the close connectivity of its residents to the natural world that surrounds the City. The 2015 Plan sets a number of new natural infrastructure goals that use new information and reflect the continued community priority of integrating nature into the urban fabric.

The following actions are directed by the goals and objectives as outlined within the Natural Infrastructure Section of this Plan. Actions must fall within the context of the overall Plan: Community Vision; Future Land Use Map and Policies; and, Goals and Objectives.

- Protection of mineral resources for future use. The City's and adjacent areas mineral resources are valuable to the region's economic engine. Aggregate is vital to roads and housing development. Some land uses are compatible with protecting access to minerals, while other land uses make extraction economically unfeasible.
- Protection of timber and pulp resources. Paper and wood-based products are an important base of the City's economy, and the forestry resources within or owned by the City are a new consideration in land use and economic development decisions. The surrounding Morse Township has many acres in forest product production. This land is in private ownership, corporate ownership, and public (County, State and Federal) ownership. Land use decisions will have to consider the appropriate and economic use of forest lands in the rural areas surrounding the City.
- Protection of scenic and recreational areas. Within its boundaries, the City of Ely has important scenic and recreation resources. The City has a scenic lake and parks within its municipal boundaries, and is bordered to the north by Shagawa Lake and Shagawa River.
- Integration of natural elements into the City. The citizens of the City of Ely remain interested in continuing the management of the urban forest, as well as the expanded use of natural systems within development plans, and to connect people to green spaces.

3. Natural Infrastructure Implementation Strategies

Economic Natural Resources

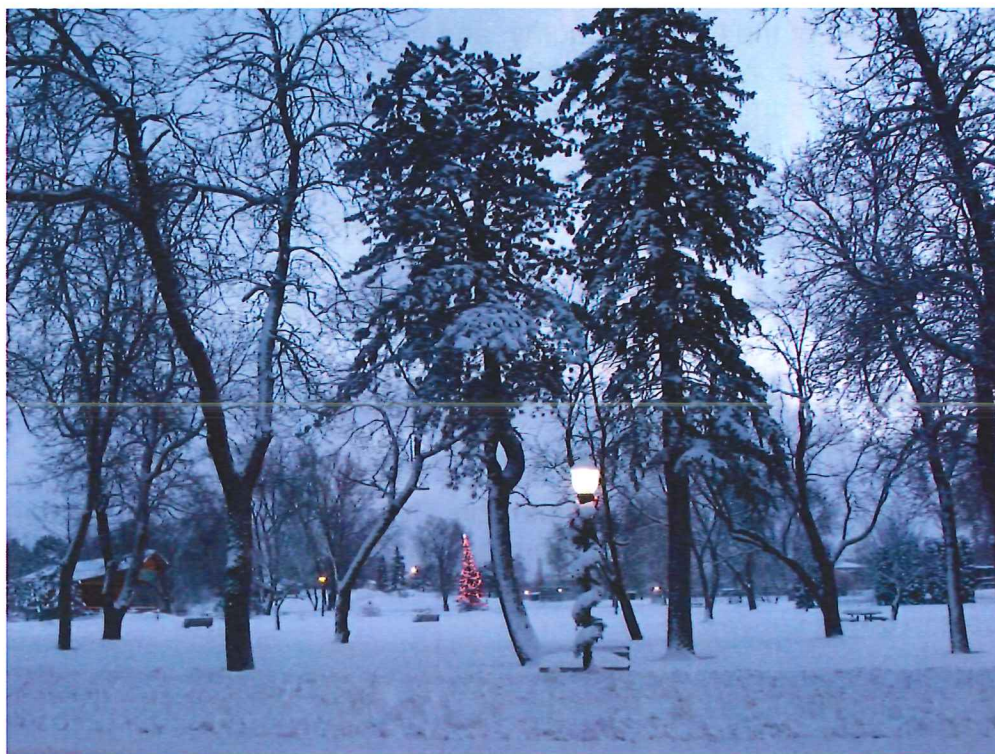
1. Incorporate protection of mining and forestry resources into zoning and other development guidelines.
2. Within the subdivision process, designs for rural residential and resource management areas should allow development while protecting natural systems and economic natural resources while being consistent with future anticipated land uses in the Future Land Use map.
3. Consider setting standards to mitigate risks to the drinking water supply.

Surface Water Quality

1. The stormwater management plan should include educational efforts on stormwater protection in urban and rural areas and encourage on-site management of stormwater where appropriate.
2. Expand the use of rain gardens and natural infiltration techniques with new developments, redeveloping, and along roads.
3. Cooperatively work with businesses and organizations to comply with Stormwater Utility Standards. Investigate and promote opportunities for design assistance, funding of watershed and buffer restoration, and publicly recognizing successful efforts.
4. Collaborate with the Minnesota DNR and Department of Health in controlling the spread of invasive species into area lakes and waterways.

Urban Forestry

1. Protect existing trees within City boulevards and replant trees as needed.
2. Support urban forest development through the CityTree Plan.
3. Monitor and take initiative toward curtailing the spread of invasive insect and plant species such as buckthorn.



G. Parks and Recreational Facilities

The City of Ely provides excellent opportunities and an unparalleled quality of life for its residents and visitors due to its natural setting and proximity to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW). Within the city itself, Ely offers many recreational amenities including Semer's Beach Park, boat landings on Shagawa and Miners Lakes, walking, bike, cross country ski trails, ATV and snowmobile trails, and an ice rink. Other amenities are located very close by, including a golf course, gun club, as well as connections to additional multi use regional trails.

A city can benefit in many ways by providing recreational amenities and a healthy environment: property values can increase; costs from erosion may be minimized through greenspace; spending on recreational activities by local residents will increase; parks and open space influence the quality of life and location decisions of families and businesses; and community attractiveness and recreational opportunities for tourism may increase.

1. Parks and Recreational Facilities Goals & Objectives

GOAL: Provide a wide range of recreational opportunities.

OBJECTIVE: Allocate the costs of providing and maintaining recreational facilities and programs to ensure user equitability.

OBJECTIVE: Maintain all community recreational facilities to the highest safety and aesthetic levels possible.

OBJECTIVE: Provide exceptional recreational opportunities for multiple use and special purposes.



2. Parks and Recreational Facilities Implementation Strategies

1. Seek funding for new trail connections interfacing with the urban fabric, including new pedestrian crossings. Consider funding for trail planning, designs and maintenance. Design trails to reduce sedimentation and erosion and be accessible to all.
2. Work with neighboring municipalities to improve trail and pedestrian connections between cities.
3. Continue to improve connections between established residential areas and park and recreation corridors and destinations.
4. Determine a route for the connection of snowmobile and ATV/OHV trails, and identify a suitable location for a “Trail Head” for convenient access to these trails.

H. Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Resources

Our way of life is powered by energy. From the construction process to home heating to getting around the community, affordable and reliable energy sources are counted on to sustain our needs. Energy also drives the economy and has significant impact on the environment. These roles are important to consider when planning for future sources, distribution, conservation efforts, land use, transportation, and development patterns. The City’s commitment to manage land use to conserve energy is based upon the *Energy Action Plan* (EAP) adopted by the Ely City Council on November 16th, 2010.

Ely residents envision a future where access to reliable energy supplies and their use do not degrade the environmental quality of the community. They recognize the importance of renewable energy resources for the economy, the value in conservation efforts, and the significance of land use and transportation planning on energy consumption. The community also recognizes that the City can employ new techniques and technologies in municipal operations, as well as encouraging citizens to take a personal interest in energy consumption and conservation.

1. Energy Goals & Objectives

GOAL: Demonstrate leadership and commitment to energy planning and implementation.

OBJECTIVE: Formalize Ely leadership for *EAP* planning and implementation.

OBJECTIVE: Actively engage community members and stakeholders in energy project efforts and raise public awareness of Ely’s energy efforts.

GOAL: Maximize energy efficiency of homes, businesses and community facilities.

OBJECTIVE: Provide and promote energy efficiency education and training to Ely home owners, businesses, and schools.

OBJECTIVE: Identify and promote funding assistance programs for home and business energy efficiency improvements, as well as within City owned properties.

OBJECTIVE: Assess energy use in community facilities and identify areas for improvement.

GOAL: Maximize the use of renewable energy by homes, businesses, and facility development or redevelopment projects.

OBJECTIVE: Encourage the use of local renewable energy resources, including appropriate applications for wind, solar, and biomass energy.

OBJECTIVE: Identify and promote financial assistance to support renewable energy projects for homes and businesses.

OBJECTIVE: Incorporate renewable energy options in facility development projects when possible.

I. Historic Preservation

The City of Ely has a long, rich heritage based on its natural features, structures and buildings, civic and social organizations, and over 125 years of recorded local history. The citizens of Ely recognize and appreciate this heritage and its manifestation in the physical characteristics of their community. However, this rich heritage needs attention to protect it from the erosion that can occur over time.



The Ely Pioneer Mine site, historic Sheridan and Chapman Streets, the Semers Park NYA buildings, and the magnificent schools are all assets to the city and its citizens. They are concrete reminders of Ely's fascinating history - the struggle of the early pioneers and the ingenuity of the early entrepreneurs. They are also important assets in attracting residents and tourists, thereby stimulating business, industry and population growth.

The historic preservation sections in this comprehensive plan provide a strategy as well as concrete steps to encourage the preservation of these and other historic resources. There are also proposals for educational programs to interpret local history which may be tied to preservation, recreation programs and heritage tourism.

1. Historic Preservation Goals & Objectives

Community Goals, and Objectives

GOAL: Continue and encourage a preservation program that identifies and protects historically significant artifacts, buildings and sites.

OBJECTIVE: Understand Ely's assets by conducting a survey of the historic artifacts, buildings and sites in the area.

OBJECTIVE: Understand Ely's opportunities for preservation by developing a list of available resources, stakeholders, and opportunities.

OBJECTIVE: Understand Ely's priorities for preservation by soliciting input from citizens.

OBJECTIVE: Use information collected to allow the city to become a resource for the preservation constituency and other interested parties.

GOAL: Employ Ely's historic resources as an effective way to bring the relevance of history to people's daily lives.

OBJECTIVE: Expand interest in preservation by increasing public awareness and forging relationships.

OBJECTIVE: Develop programs to recognize preservation successes.

OBJECTIVE: Develop programs to promote historic tourism and economic development through preservation.

GOAL: Provide support for public and private owners of historic properties

OBJECTIVE: Provide more options for funding by assisting property owners with information regarding grants, fund raising and incentive programs.

OBJECTIVE: Provide preservation assistance through grant writing.

Historic Downtown Goals & Objectives

Ely's historic downtown is one of its most valuable assets. This section addresses the goals, objectives and strategies for specific downtown needs.

The downtown is a mix of architectural styles. The early styles include the frontier style (log buildings), mining era (lapboard facing with clean simple lines) and Queen Anne Victorian. Later styles include Arts and Crafts, WPA-era designs and other more contemporary forms.

Sheridan, Ely's main street, is actually a State Highway (#169). This has caused certain restrictions and requirements to be implemented to meet state regulations.

For this reason it can be challenging to maintain some of the historic aspects of the downtown area. However, work can be done by making well-considered choices in the areas of lighting, signing, tree and plant placement, and managed public spaces.



GOAL: Maintain the unique character of Ely's historic Downtown by encouraging 'Period Renovation' which simply stated, restores buildings to their original style.

OBJECTIVE: Support an increase in the number building that are restored and re-used to maintain the historic flavor of the city.

OBJECTIVE: Support a decrease in the number of building that are demolished or replaced.

OBJECTIVE: Encourage renovations and replacements to be sensitive to existing historic structures and neighborhoods in the downtown area.

GOAL: Maintain the small town quality of Ely's downtown while still meeting state requirements.

OBJECTIVE: Select lighting, foliage, signing and other elements to compliment the historic downtown area when possible.

OBJECTIVE: Create a sense of place in the downtown area by refashioning unsightly and underused spaces, especially empty lots.

Parking and Traffic Circulation

Off-street parking for customers and employees is an important component to preserving an historic downtown area. In Ely there is an opportunity to increase the amount of convenient downtown parking.

Traffic, on the other hand, is not generally an issue in the downtown area. However opportunities exist to investigate options that could improve traffic flow.

GOAL: Improve parking availability in the downtown area.

OBJECTIVE: Improve safety and accessibility through increased and improved parking options included but not limited to public lots and angled parking on selected streets.

GOAL: Investigate options for potential future traffic needs.

OBJECTIVE: Prepare for future demands and/or improved quality of life by investigation of traffic rerouting options.

2. Historic Preservation Recommendations

Ely has a long and colorful history that remains today through industrial artifacts, architecture, and layout of the city. Initially, an assessment (or survey) should be completed of the City's historic assets, its opportunities and challenges and the resources and partnerships that are available for preservation. Second, a collection of best practices can be developed to provide useful information to the decision makers in the historic areas identified in the survey. With the information from these efforts, a more detailed plan can be developed which would address planning and zoning strategies, economic development strategies, education and advocacy strategies and incentives.



3. Historic Preservation Implementation Strategies

Through the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) the City should develop and recommend to the City Council a detailed plan which could include:

- Surveying the current environment to understand and document historic properties, opportunities and challenges, and available resources.
- Surveying the community to understand and document the community's historic priorities.
- Establish a prioritized list of activities which could include:
 1. Identification of preservation best practices.
 2. Development of a program to provide educational support to owners of historic properties.
 3. Development and/or communication of incentive programs for historic preservation.
 4. Development of a program to promote historic tourism and economic development.
 5. Development and communication of education and advocacy programs.
 6. Development of fund raising efforts to support historic programs.
 7. Development of an HPC support organization to expand the preservation community.
 8. Development of a method to ensure important public documents and artifacts are preserved and maintained.
 9. Development of a recognition program that will high-light those people in the community who have achieved success in preservation.
 10. Identification of streetscape improvements in the historic areas including improvements in lighting, signage and foliage, as well as empty lot redevelopment and parking improvements; and a vision on how to provide the upgrades.
 11. Development of an annual report to be presented to the Council which would include the previous years accomplishments and the future years plans.



J. Education

School District 696

Independent School District 696 (ISD 696) is comprised of Ely Memorial High School, Ely Memorial Middle School and Washington Elementary. The approximately 550 enrolled students truly get the best of all educational worlds: dedicated teachers who know every student, a variety of state-caliber sports and extracurricular activities in which to excel, and a safe environment and supportive community in which to learn.

ISD 696 has an annual operating budget of \$6 million dollars. In recent and projected years, school funding has remained merely adequate to keep up with rising costs, while eliminating some activities to offset and balance the budget. School district and city officials should meet on a regular basis to communicate plans that may impact educational facilities and neighborhoods within the city.



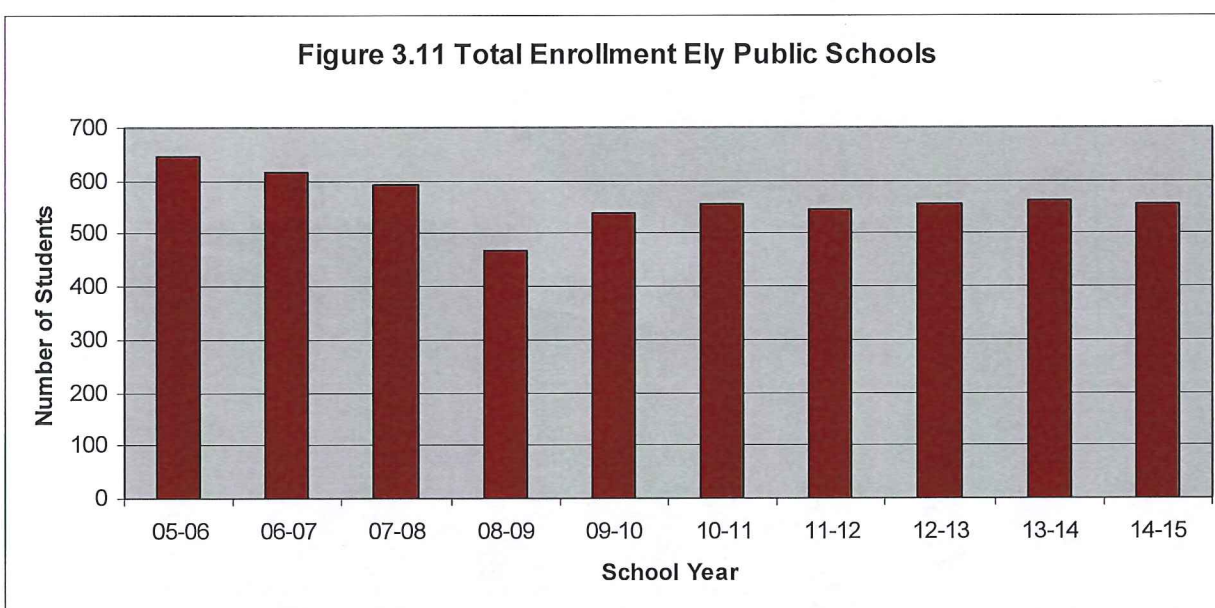
During 2013-2014, ISD 696 developed and adopted a World's Best Workforce plan to support and improve teaching and learning in alignment with creating the world's best workforce. An annual summary informs constituents of curriculum, instruction, world's best workforce and student achievement progress over the prior school year. Additionally, the report informs as to best practice strategies that were implemented and that are showing evidence of impacting closing the achievement gaps. The report includes additional information regarding:

- District Goals, Strategic Planning Process, and Building Improvement Plans
- Academic Standards and Curriculum Alignment
- District Assessment Plan
- Q Comp Plan
- Teacher Evaluation Plan
- Principal Evaluation Plan

Table 3.6 Student Enrollment ISD #696-Ely Public Schools

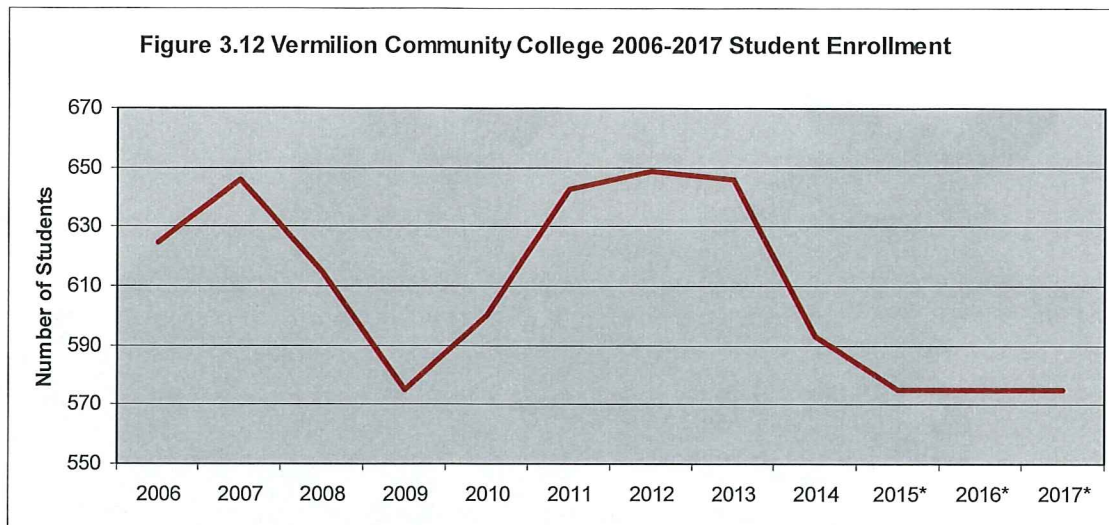
School Year	Total Males	Total Females	Total Students
05-06	338	307	645
06-07	323	293	616
07-08	311	280	591
08-09	208	260	468
09-10	286	252	538
10-11	304	252	556
11-12	300	244	544
12-13	301	255	556
13-14	310	251	561
14-15	292	262	554

Source: Minnesota Department of Education



Post-Secondary Education

Vermilion Community College (VCC) is located near the eastern border of the city's municipal boundary. VCC is a two-year college offering a wide variety of programs and courses, which brings approximately 500 full-time students to the community from throughout the State of Minnesota and multiple surrounding states. VCC has a strong reputation for not only its associate arts degree which allows students to complete their first two years of a four-year degree, but also its law enforcement and natural resources programs. Vermilion recognizes its dependence and interconnection with the community and promotes and supports seasonal employment opportunities, as well as recognizing recreational opportunities as an important factor in recruiting students to the college.



Other Educational Opportunities

Beyond the traditional types of classroom education for students, Ely boosts a variety of opportunities available to all citizens regardless of age. The Ely-Winton Historical Museum, International Wolf Center, International Bear Center, and Dorothy Molter Museum offer unique learning options. Additionally, the Ely Folk School as well as Ely Community Resource (ECR) and Ely Community Education provide community based courses and activities that help young and old alike learn new exciting things from locals who are experts in their specific fields.

1. Education Goals & Objectives

GOAL: To enhance learning opportunities and quality of education within a positive learning environment for area students, of all ages.

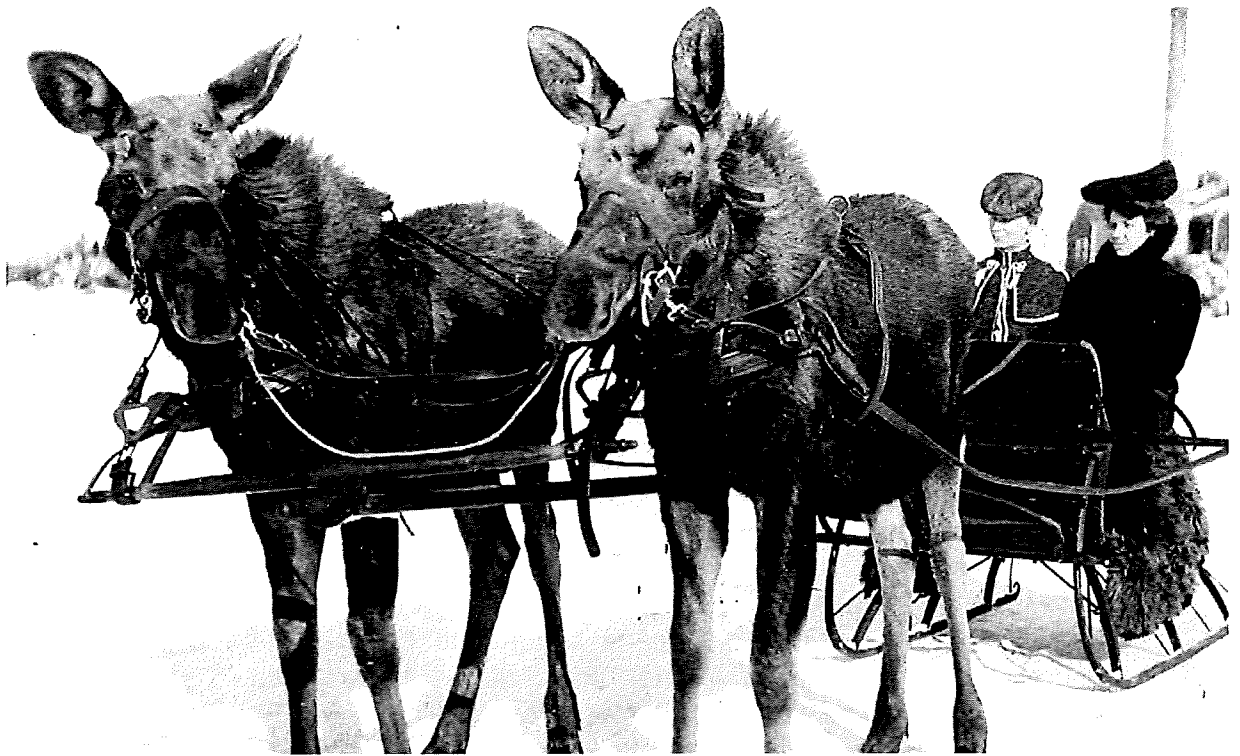
OBJECTIVE: Improve opportunities and quality of continuing education. Determine and evaluate if the needs of continuing education in the community and identify actions/activities the city could undertake to improve the quality and quantity of opportunities.

OBJECTIVE: Proactively address the need for extracurricular activities within the community. Education is not just about classrooms, but having opportunities to apply learning within the community. Cultural and recreational activities help play that role.

GOAL: Coordinate education opportunities with Independent School District 696, Vermilion Community College, Ely Folk School and neighboring communities.

OBJECTIVE: Continue and enhance working relationships between city staff, VCC and the school district. Planning and investment between the City and education providers needs to be coordinated, especially between ISD 696 and VCC

OBJECTIVE: Continue to collaborate with VCC in order to offer students on and off campus housing options.



IV. IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

Road Right of Way

Road right-of-way maintenance includes street sweeping, storm sewer maintenance, pothole patching, tree trimming, and boulevard maintenance such as sidewalks, general mowing and trail maintenance. The Public Works Department maintains city right-of-way as well as providing snow and ice control. Transportation planning, including implementation of the "Complete Streets" policies are led by the City Engineer and are discussed more in depth within the Transportation section of this plan.

Facilities Maintenance

Public Works also ensures that city buildings are maintained and repaired, and ensure cost-effectiveness and that both interiors and exteriors of city buildings are kept in good condition. Some buildings maintained by Public Works are:

City Hall, Police Station, and Fire Hall

Ely Public Library

Whiteside and Semer's Beach Park pavilions, restrooms and band shell

Ely Municipal Airport terminal

Rec Center

Cemeteries

The Ely Cemetery Committee is committed to providing a beautiful and serene final resting place open to all people. The Committee, appointed by the City Council, advises the City Council on the administration, maintenance, preservation and protection of the current Ely Cemetery and the Pioneer (Rosa's) Cemetery.

These cemeteries give comfort to the families and individuals by meeting final needs with excellence in operations, maintenance, and historical knowledge, resulting in places of quiet beauty and peace for the repose of the dead.

Libraries

The Ely Public Library's mission is to enrich the lives of its patrons by providing the resources and environment to explore imagination and achieve life-long learning goals. Ely's Friends of the Library group is one of the five largest in the state. The library has been designated as an "American Star Library" by Library Journal on five separate years – only about 3.5% of libraries nationwide receive this designation each year which is based on per capita usage.

The Library is centrally located in the downtown at 224 E Chapman St. The building is directly across the street from City Hall and across the alley from the Post Office and less than five blocks from Ely school campus. This building was constructed in 2014 and key factors in the design included energy efficiency and patron input. The facility is 6,630 square feet and includes a flexible layout, private study rooms, indoor and outdoor seating areas, a pollinator habitat rain garden, and parking lot shared between the library, city hall, and downtown shoppers.

The Ely Public Library serves as a resource for the area through materials and programming. The library has 3,300 video items (DVD & VHS), 1,350 audio items (music CDs, books on CD & MP3), 70 periodical subscriptions, and 32,000 books for circulation as of July 2015. The library also holds 327 non-circulating reference items for use within the library. Circulation for the library was 68,310 in 2014.

Educational and entertaining programming for adults and children is offered through the year. Story times are held weekly, and the library runs a 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten for young children. In 2014, 2,083 patrons attended 90 library programs.

Other resources that the library offers include: interlibrary loan service, wireless internet access, nine public computers with printing and internet access, downloadable audio and eBooks via the Arrowhead Library System, online educational databases, disc resurfacing service, and more. Display cases are also available to local groups and individuals and changed on a regular basis.

The Ely Public Library is a member of the Arrowhead Library System – a group of 28 public libraries who serve northeastern Minnesota. The Arrowhead Library System also provides direct service to rural residents through the Bookmobile and Mail-A-Book programs.

Community Services Recommendations

Facilities

A variety of tools should be used for investment and management decisions to meet fiscally responsible goals, including fiscal impact analysis, cost-revenue analysis, lifecycle cost-benefit analysis, impacts on fees, and capital budgeting analysis.

Use business planning procedures for facilities management to place responsibility and accountability on department heads for efficient budget expenditures, all under the guidance of the City Council or appropriate Board or Commission.

Fiscally self-sustaining facilities and programs should be a management goal, while recognizing that some facilities and programs contribute substantially to or are

essential to maintaining quality of life even if operations do not pay for themselves. Consider the creation of criteria for measuring efficiency and investment priorities.

Services

Look for efficiencies in managing regulatory processes to ensure prompt response to reasonable requests.

Continue to support quality-of-life services including schools, library, and recreational activities. Partnerships with private and public entities provide programs and services more cost effectively while finding opportunities to enhance services.

Education

Develop an understanding of current and future school district infrastructure needs that recognize temporary fluxes in the number of school age children.

Continue the management of facilities to minimize the lifecycle costs and to improve the learning environment.

Continue to support safe routes to school goals, including safe walking routes to and from school through the provision of appropriate sidewalk infrastructure and strategically placed compliant lighting, crosswalks, signage and crossing guards.

Improve school district staff in planning efforts and participate in district planning initiatives. Collaborate with continuing education providers to determine the needs of continuing education in the community and identify any actions/activities the City could undertake to improve the quality of and opportunities for continuing education. Be proactive in addressing the need for extracurricular activities within Ely.

Financing City Government and Other Public Improvements

Ely citizens need to understand how their current city operations are funded and how changes in state policies regarding state aids to local governments may change. Ely has an aging infrastructure and housing stock and the City needs to aggressively work to upgrade public utility systems and housing during a time when household budgets are tight, and financial assistance from federal and state sources could be drastically reduced. The plan should be continually evaluated in light of possible changes to taxes and local government aid.

The City Council should maintain vigilance over proposed property tax law changes and consider alternate means of paying for government services.

Current City of Ely funding mechanisms also include, but not limited to:

- Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)
- Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board (IRRRB)
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
- Business Development Public Infrastructure (BDPI)
- Local Government Aid (LGA)
- Taconite Production Tax (Taconite Aid)

Public Infrastructure

The Plan recommends those City departments that operate on a coordinated Capital Improvement Program (CIP) review such CIPs on an annual basis. Ely's streets, sidewalks, water lines, sanitary sewer lines, storm sewers and water plant are in need of upgrades and replacement.

The CIP should identify the source of funds to make the improvement and in most cases require a detailed specification and bid document as the basis for a final cost estimate or assessment hearing.

As a part of the CIP, the Council should review its policies for funding and assessing public improvements. Administrative policies for funding and assigning costs should be based on consistent set of policies that clearly define who will pay for future street and other city improvements.

The Ely Utilities Commission and the City need to work closely on future infrastructure improvement projects to ensure coordination and to maximize public financial resources.

Most of the responsibility for this item falls on the City Engineer, Operations Director, Ely Projects Committee, Ely Utility Commission and the Ely Public Works Department. Street and utility repairs/improvements need to be programmed and coordinated. Effective and clear local assessment policies are an important consideration.