

CITY OF GRAND MARAIS COMMUNITY VISION PLAN



WHAT IS THE GRAND MARAIS COMMUNITY VISION PLAN?

The [Grand Marais Community Vision Plan](#) is a roadmap to the future, a document of community voices and ideas, and a collective call to action. The vision, values, priorities, and ideas described on the following pages provide a framework future planning - and serve as a jumping-off point for further discussion, brainstorming, and community investment. This vision plan seeks to inspire solutions and initiatives that will uphold the values of the Grand Marais community and realize an exciting, community-led vision for the future.

THE PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

See the Big Picture

The Grand Marais Vision Plan presents a wide angle view of the community, summarizing key assets, challenges, trends, and aspirations across a range of issues impacting quality of life in the community. The Plan is a resource for residents, businesses, property owners, City staff, and other interested parties wishing to learn more about the community, its current conditions and future direction.

Set a Course for the Future

The Plan presents an exciting, community-led vision that describes how Grand Marais will look, feel, and function in the future. The vision is intended to be ambitious, but achievable - and rooted in the existing qualities, character, strengths, and assets of the Grand Marais community.

Guide Future Action + Decision-Making

The plan establishes a framework of principles and goals for future planning and action. This framework serves as a guide for future decision-making and a jumping off point for discussion, imagination, and action. Community members, City staff, and community leaders all have a role to play to realize the vision and priorities presented here.



THE PLANNING PROCESS

The Grand Marais Community Vision Plan was developed through an eight-month, community-driven process, involving a range of community stakeholders - residents, businesses, property owners, and community leaders. Community members were invited to contribute their own ideas, concerns, and priorities to the development of the Plan through a hands-on community workshop and community survey.



Community input was supplemented by a comprehensive analysis of existing conditions that examined social and economic characteristics, housing, land use, parks, transportation, and other physical conditions. The vision, principles, and goals presented in this Plan represent an in-depth and collaborative effort to understand the forces shaping Grand Marais' future and establish collective direction for the future.

THE PLAN IN ACTION

A variety of potential Community and City-led actions and follow through will be critical to realizing the vision and goals articulated in the Plan:

Potential Community-Led Actions:

Learn Use this plan to learn more about some of the critical issues Grand Marais residents and leaders feel are important. Use the plan as a starting place to begin in tackling the projects you find most interesting.

Organize Organize around specific policies, business ideas, initiatives, and programs. Develop action plans to solve the issues most important to you, building coalitions of support informed by the plan and the appendices.

Potential City-Led Actions:

Strategic Planning The vision and goals presented in this Plan can serve as a basis for formal goal-setting, strategic prioritization, and resource allocation by City Council, staff, and commissions

Zoning + Regulations Targeted changes in the zoning code and other regulatory controls may support implementation of community goals.

Intergovernmental Coordination The City can explore opportunities to coordinate, pool resources, and align efforts with with local, regional, and statewide agencies.

Review and Refresh Periodic updates to the Plan and "check-ins" with the community regarding goals and priorities will keep the Plan fresh, relevant, and useful.

TODAY AND TOMORROW IN GRAND MARAIS...



Grand Marais is a place of creativity and community a place where the natural world inspires, a place close to the heart for both visitors and longtime residents.

Grand Marais Today

Grand Marais has a unique character... invested community members, buildings that date back to its time as a fishing village, a stunning environment dominated by the largest Great Lake in North America, family businesses that generate community prosperity, and a rich heritage intertwining native, immigrant, and frontier traditions. Grand Marais attracts current residents and new visitors because of what it is, but also because of what it plans to be.

The community has embarked on a series of visionary planning efforts. The Highway 53 redesign, the Cook County Cultural Plan, and the 2010 Recreation Park Master Plan are examples of the forward thinking work that characterizes Grand Marais today.



Grand Marais Tomorrow

Neighbors in Grand Marais envision a future that preserves and enhances the city's North Shore feel. The community recognizes the need for comprehensive sustainable thinking. They see a future that enhances existing community assets while also preparing for local and regional trends; and supporting the economy while planning to expand employment opportunities.

Grand Marais is projected to have a population that stays relatively stable, while the proportion of residents who are at least 65 years of age is projected to expand. These and other population forces will inform the choices the city and its residents make while building a thriving Grand Marais for the next generation.



Grand Marais Community Vision:

"Grand Marais is a thriving community that features locally-grown economic opportunity, housing that meets all family needs, and a wide array of educational opportunities. Hallmarks of the Grand Marais way of life include active recreation on the North Shore, commitment to community, an ethos of creativity and innovation, and stewardship of the unique natural environment."



PRINCIPLES OF PLANNING FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH

Throughout the planning process, community members reinforced the importance of community health as a driving factor in defining the Grand Marais' vision and goals. The graphic below identifies nine principles of planning for a healthy community. These principles are based on National best practices in community health planning and have been tailored to address the concerns and context of the Grand Marais community. The principles provide an over-arching framework that serves to guide and connect the community's vision, goals, and future action.



Inclusion

People consistently seek ways to appreciate and utilize the diverse backgrounds, experiences, and skills of all people in the community for the benefit of the whole.



Economic Opportunity

All people can earn an income that allows them to live with dignity. Economic opportunities support individual economic health, as well as the long-term viability of the whole by renewing and sustaining the human and other resources that create the community's economic advantages.



Infrastructure and Services

The community has adequate infrastructure and all people have access to essential services, such as sanitary living conditions, health and social services.



Lifelong Learning

All ages have access to educational opportunities that enable them to participate in and contribute to the economic, political, social and cultural life of the community to their fullest potential.



Community Leadership

There are broad-based leadership structures in which many people fill leadership roles. The same people, or same group of people, do not hold all the elected offices or chair all the committees.



Safety and Security

The community provides appropriate safety and security measures for all - and actively seeks to aid those affected by violence and address the conditions leading to violence.



Spirituality and Wellness

A healthy community recognizes that a person does best when they are sound in body, healthy in mind, and grounded in values that direct their lives.



Environmental Stewardship

The community supports environmental quality and management of natural resources that best provide for a sustainable future.



Recreation and Artistic Opportunities

Everyone has access to a variety of recreational and artistic opportunities.

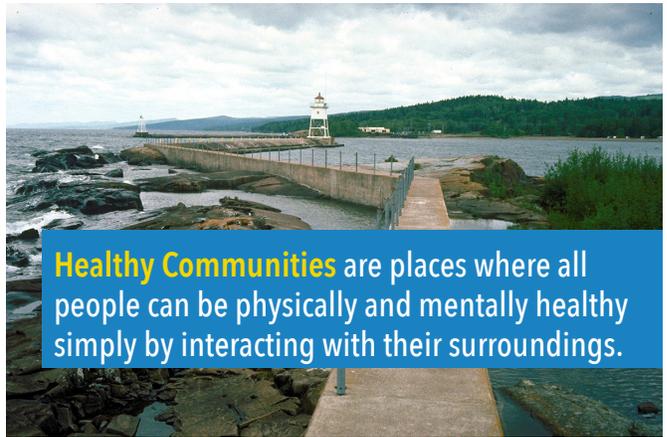
Source: The Blandin Foundation



Healthy Communities allow everyone to participate and play key roles in making positive community change. There are opportunities of all kinds of skill sets to be acknowledged.



Healthy Communities cherish the protection of community resources, in terms of safety, environmental stewardship, and sustainability.



Healthy Communities are places where all people can be physically and mentally healthy simply by interacting with their surroundings.

GRAND MARAIS COMMUNITY GOALS

The following six community goals are the product of a public process that solicited comments, input, and ideas from a broad cross-section of Grand Marais residents, businesses, and property owners. These goals define community priorities and provide high-level direction for future community action and decision-making. Read on to learn more about the issues, context, community input, and key considerations for future planning.

COMMUNITY GOALS

Support and enhance local business.

Grand Marais is the hub of Cook County, known for locally-owned businesses and livable wages. Land-use and zoning decisions help ensure long-term economic viability of the community.

Ensure access to affordable, lifecycle housing for all people.

The community is concerned about the growing expense of housing and access to a variety of housing types that can serve all people throughout their lives.

Invest in safe, people-friendly infrastructure that supports active living.

Infrastructure is aesthetically pleasing, enhances Grand Marais' historic character and is safe for people who use a variety of transportation modes.

Enhance the community's deep connection to the outdoors and active engagement with the environment.

Lake Superior and the surrounding area are to be protected and celebrated by the community and the City, to be preserved for active use today and for generations to come.

Encourage the expansion of sustainable energy uses.

Community members recognize the value of their unique natural environment. They value preservation, active use of the natural environment, and sustainability in all community practices.

Expand education for the mind, body, and soul.

Grand Marais treasures arts practices, advancing education in all forms, and opportunities for community education and community development.

LEARN MORE

The following pages examine the six community goals in greater depth, providing additional information, context, analysis, and considerations for future planning. The information presented here is meant to inform and inspire community discussion, ideas, and action. Dive into the areas that excite and interest you to learn more and get inspired!



Context + Analysis

This Plan was informed by a comprehensive analysis of existing context and conditions. The following includes a summary of key data points and findings that support the stated goals and potential future actions.



Community Voices

The Plan is a document of collective aspirations grounded in the voices and ideas of the Grand Marais community. The following discussion highlights some of the comments and input received from community members through the planning process.



Roadmap to the Future

Each of the community goals represents a critical step on the path to achieving Grand Marais' vision. The following pages provide general directions related to each goal and describe key challenges and opportunities for the future.



Key Considerations

The community goals are broad ideas that encompass a number of related aspirations, desires, and considerations for the future. Key considerations are presented here to highlight issues and priorities for further examination, discussion, and planning.

SUPPORT AND ENHANCE LOCAL BUSINESS

Grand Marais is the hub of Cook County, known for locally-owned businesses and livable wages. Land-use and zoning decisions help ensure long term economic viability of the community.



A robust, resilient economy is supported by thriving local businesses and the expansion of good jobs that help people live comfortable lives. Asset-based strategies that build on current community efforts are the key to realizing this value.

Over the past 20 years, population and job growth in Grand Marais haven't changed much. While the state economy is gathering strength, it is unclear what impact this growth will have on Grand Marais. Grand Marais' ability to capture some of this growth potential is key for future economic resiliency.

Community members weighed in. They called for growth in good-paying jobs, increasing childcare options, regulating unfair business competition, and making highway 61 a more attractive and safe corridor.

A Growing Need for Licensed Childcare

A recent report by the Center for Rural Policy and Development identifies a **35 percent shortfall** in the Arrowhead region for the number of licensed childcare spaces needed to accommodate children under the age of 6 who have both parents working.

This gap in service has major implications for family costs and job necessities, and the viability of attracting families to Grand Marais.

COMMUNITY VOICES WHAT WE HEARD

54% of survey respondents want more small and local businesses, and 37% are interested in seeing more sustainable energy jobs.

"I think there's a problem with inaccessibility for new business entrants"

"Work harder to channel tourist dollars in to projects that benefit the community, keeping the revenues in town supporting locals."

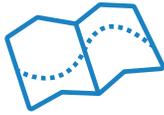
CONNECTING TO COMMUNITY HEALTH

Thriving local businesses help keep income in the community. Local enterprise also builds wealth and community leadership opportunities for residents.



SUPPORT AND ENHANCE LOCAL BUSINESS

PROSPEROUS FUTURE



Key considerations

Diversifying economic drivers

Industry occupations in Cook County generally indicate a local economy based on accommodation, food service, recreation and entertainment. However wage data shows that public administration, education, and trade provide greater gross wages for residents. Identifying expansion areas and building on current industry assets are key ways to start expanding the economic drivers in Grand Marais.

Building the creative economy

An established arts scene is one of the unique cornerstones of Grand Marais. A variety of arts-oriented organizations thrive in Grand Marais, and there are important opportunities to leverage these assets and build a more robust economy for the region. Implementing the recommendations of the Cook County Cultural Plan is key for realizing a thriving creative economy in Grand Marais.

Considering a living wage

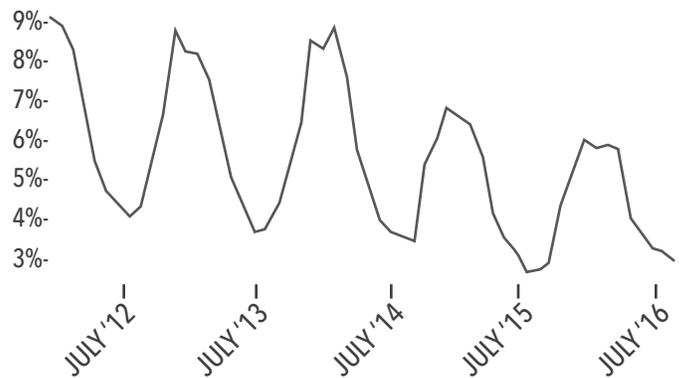
According to the Living Wage Calculator developed by MIT, in Cook County a living wage for a single adult is \$10.16 an hour. For an adult supporting a child it is \$23.17 an hour. The state minimum wage is \$9.50 an hour.

NUTS AND BOLTS



What does the data show?

Cook County has lower unemployment in the summers, with recent years showing less fluctuation across seasons.



Tourism-related industry made up less than a quarter of annual wages in Grand Marais in 2016.

Industry	Annual Wages
Public Administration	\$7,736,523
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	\$6,482,208
Education and Health Services	\$6,422,270
Leisure and Hospitality	\$6,340,205
Financial Activities	\$1,831,260
Professional and Business Services	\$1,047,363
Other Services	\$185,162
Total	\$30,044,991

Source: MN DEED QCEW, 2016

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE



Grand Marais residents have indicated interest in building a diverse, local, creative economy that supports and enhances local business. This vision is hindered by realities of unstable employment, low investment in family infrastructure like childcare, and an unstable tourism economy. Future priorities to overcome these barriers include efforts to **diversify the economy** by attracting **residents who can work remotely** and supporting **green industry**, implement the **creative economy vision** as outlined in the Cook County Cultural Plan, and evaluate policy options to ensure **a living wage** for all residents.

DEVELOP ACCESS TO HOUSING THAT ALL PEOPLE CAN AFFORD THROUGHOUT THEIR LIVES

The community is concerned about the growing expense of housing and access to a variety of housing types that can serve all people throughout their lives.



Housing is the key to stability for all community members. The cost, location, and quality of our housing are factors that have deep and lasting effects on community health. A holistic community approach to enhancing and expanding the housing stock can have positive impacts on Grand Marais.

Current concerns include homeownership affordability, rental availability, and a shifting demographic makeup that will have long-term impact on the type and structure of housing in Grand Marais. To put it simply: seniors are the future of Grand Marais. The housing stock should be structured to accommodate this future.

Cost-burdened households in Grand Marais

A household is cost-burdened when it is paying more than 30 percent of its monthly earnings towards housing costs including rent and/or mortgage, and utilities. In Grand Marais, **31 percent of households are cost-burdened**, and more than half of those cost-burdened households make less than \$20,000 per year. People who are cost-burdened struggle to pay for other critical expense areas like health, food, and education. Cost-burdened low-wealth households are posed with a more challenging task to achieve upward mobility, including attaining homeownership status and supporting children in college education.

COMMUNITY VOICES WHAT WE HEARD

57% of survey respondents want housing built in town. 33% prefer housing be built on the edges of town or in adjoining rural areas.

"We need affordable housing for working people. And that is not \$200k houses."

"We need programs to help homeowners improve or maintain their home's condition and also assisted living facilities"

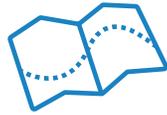
CONNECTING TO COMMUNITY HEALTH

Stable, affordable housing options directly or indirectly provide far-reaching health benefits, from safety and a sense of community pride to economic stability and healthier lifestyles.



DEVELOP ACCESS TO HOUSING THAT ALL PEOPLE CAN AFFORD THROUGHOUT THEIR LIVES

HOUSING ISSUES



Key considerations

Affordability

Housing is not affordable for all Grand Marais residents. The graph of residential property values shows most homes are valued at more than \$125,000. There are 95 total units of rent subsidized affordable housing in Grand Marais.

Growing with the Senior Population

The Cook County senior population is expected to increase a total of 62 percent over the next 20 years, even as overall population is projected to stay relatively constant.

Description	Amount
Occupied households	540
Owner occupied households	327
Renter occupied households	213
Number of Rooms	
1 room	4%
2 to 5 rooms	54%
6+ rooms	41%
Homeownership rate	61%
Percent of owned units built before 1950	20%
Percent of owned units built from 1950 and 1979	33%
Percent of owned units built in 1980 or later	47%

Source: 2014 American Community Survey 5-year estimates

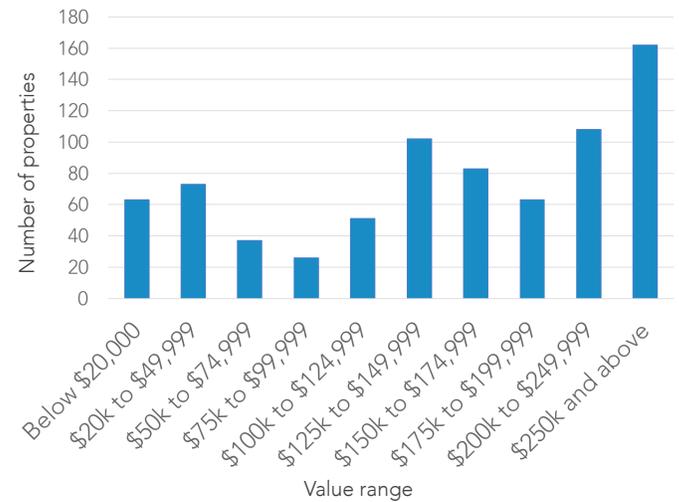
NUTS AND BOLTS



What does the data show?

Residential Property Values

There are far fewer low-value properties than high-value properties, suggesting few starter home opportunities in Grand Marais.



Source: Cook County Assessor Data 2017

County Population Projections

The MN Demographer expects Cook County's 65 and over population to grow substantially, making up close to half the county population by 2035.

	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035
Total Population	5,261	5,371	5,443	5,482	5,507
Senior Population	1,347	1,719	2,031	2,188	2,180
Senior Pop % Change	-	28%	18%	8%	0%



LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Grand Marais has an affordable housing problem. About a third of residents are cost burdened, and there are nearly double the number of residential houses valued about \$250,000 as there are homes valued under \$100,000. Also, low population growth disincentivizes new development investment even as the proportion of seniors in Grand Marais and the county as a whole is projected to increase 62 percent over the next twenty years. Future priorities include **developing senior housing options** and evaluating creative **relief policies for cost-burdened households**.

INVEST IN SAFE, PEOPLE-FRIENDLY INFRASTRUCTURE THAT SUPPORTS ACTIVE LIVING

Infrastructure is aesthetically pleasing, enhances Grand Marais' historic character and is safe for people who use a variety of transportation modes.



The future of Grand Marais is multi-modal. The community has clearly stated support for policy strategies that lead to a more environmentally sustainable future. A key component of that future is a system of infrastructure that encourages more sustainable transportation modes like walking, biking, and taking transit.

Arrowhead Transit currently operates a dial-a-ride services as well as regular shuttles to Duluth. Current bike infrastructure includes: A bike lane along Wisconsin and Broadway, and a 1.5-mile segment of the Gitchee-Gami multi-use trail along Highway 61.

The future of trails in Grand Marais

The 2016 Cook County Comprehensive Trails Plan proposes trail improvements that have an impact on Grand Marais, including:

- » Collaboration opportunities between city, county, state, and federal entities to provide trail maintenance
- » Building a county trails kiosk in downtown Grand Marais, indicating routes to navigate the county's many trail opportunities
- » Implementing a county trails kiosk at the Cook County school site in Grand Marais
- » Considering the development of ATV trails that connect Lake County to Grand Marais
- » Improvement of pedestrian connectivity in Cook County communities by expanding and connecting trails

COMMUNITY VOICES WHAT WE HEARD

51% of survey respondents prioritize the maintenance of existing roads and infrastructure. 48% want improved pedestrian crossings along Highway 61.

"Improve/add sidewalks and keep them walkable during winter"

"Provide GM-Lutsen subsidized shuttle for low-wage-earners to live in one area but work in the other depending upon season"

CONNECTING TO COMMUNITY HEALTH

Community infrastructure is the backbone for economic activity, community safety, and development potential. Investing in people-scale infrastructure has far-reaching health impacts.



Invest in safe, people-friendly infrastructure that supports active living

GETTING PLACES

Key considerations



Trails and connections

The 2016 Cook County Trails plan recommends a county trails kiosk in downtown Grand Marais, directing trail users to connections throughout the county. Community members can support the enhancement of trail connections by planning and implementing wayfinding signage throughout the community.

Highway 61 corridor crossings

The \$10.5 million dollar Highway 61 redesign project includes improved pedestrian crossings for this major transit corridor. These improvements are critical for safety and enhanced business accessibility. For example, a safe crossing where Wisconsin Ave meets Highway 61 would be greatly beneficial to Voyageur's Brewing Company, which currently has no pedestrian infrastructure connecting to downtown.

Getting around later in life

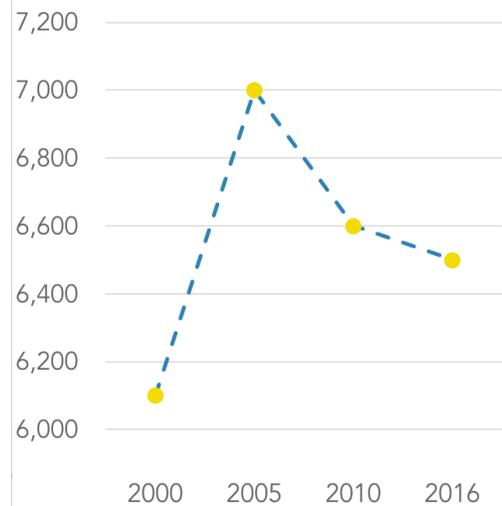
Walkable communities make it easy for individuals to choose walking over driving. About 20 percent of Americans 65 and older do not drive, according to AARP. Developing safe, people-friendly infrastructure that takes into account the needs of seniors with limited mobility, limited sight, and hearing loss, will be a critical amenity for a growing senior population.

NUTS AND BOLTS



What does the data show?

MnDOT tracks adjusted average daily number of trips along Highway 61 between 8th Ave and 3rd Ave. Trips have been dropping since 2005.



Active Living is the integration of physical activity into daily routines. If the goal is to get 30 minutes of physical exercise a day, one can achieve this without setting aside time for the gym. Walking or biking to work, to get groceries, or to go to a friends house are all ways to incorporate physical activity into the fabric of your daily life.



LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Infrastructure investment is coming to Grand Marais that will prioritize pedestrian uses more than before. State and local governments have acknowledged that there should be investment in people-scale transportation infrastructure considering people with disabilities, pedestrians, bikers, and transit users as well as private vehicles. This kind of newer thinking includes: a highway 61 redesign that prioritizes **pedestrian and bicycle crossings**; comprehensive thinking about the transportation and economic impacts of **a robust year-round trail system**; and **active living, health, and an aging population**.

ENHANCE THE COMMUNITY'S DEEP CONNECTION TO THE OUTDOORS, AND ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH THE ENVIRONMENT

Lake Superior and the surrounding area are to be protected and celebrated by the community and the City, to be preserved for active use today and for generations to come.



The strong relationship between Grand Marais and its natural environment has a long history. From early native American villagers and fur trappers to today's snowmobilers and adventurous campers, people who have come to live on the Big Lake have a deep, proactive relationship with the outdoors.

The community has indicated that it is important to plan for the preservation of the natural environment to continue the tradition of active outdoor engagement. Preservation and enhancement starts with current environmental resources within the city, including key locations like the lake, Harbor Park, Beartree Park, the Marina, Artist's Point, and the Golf Course area. It's also important to think holistically about day-to-day community environmental considerations like stormwater management, tree conservation, and trail improvements. Enhancing the Community's connection to the outdoors means investment: in time, dollars, and ideas.

This plan section identifies the key issues Grand Marais is facing regarding its environment and identifies starting places for action.

COMMUNITY VOICES WHAT WE HEARD

53% of survey respondents said it was critically important to preserve Grand Marais' natural setting.

"We need environmental education."

About 62% of survey respondents said "outdoor recreation opportunities" was the main thing they loved about Grand Marais

CONNECTING TO COMMUNITY HEALTH

Environmental stewardship, lifelong learning, active recreation, and community building all guide the policies of this section, dedicated to enhancing the community's relationship to the outdoors.



ENHANCE THE COMMUNITY'S DEEP CONNECTION TO THE OUTDOORS, AND ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH THE ENVIRONMENT

THE GREAT OUTDOORS



Key considerations

Trails

Grand Marais is well-suited to be the premier year-round trail hub for the Northwoods region. Hiking, biking, snowmobile, mountain biking, cross-country skiing, and ATV trail opportunities surround Grand Marais. Investing in infrastructure, wayfinding, and related facilities will help make this hub a reality. Coordinating implementation of the city's Recreation Park Master Plan with the county's Comprehensive Trails Plan will be a productive step in this direction.

Future concerns

- » Mercury in the lake: Grand Marais has been mandated to reduce the amount of mercury in its treated wastewater effluent. The cost of this investment is expected to be somewhere between \$7 and \$9 million dollars.
- » Warming climate: As the climate warms, outdoor activities and community engagement with the environment will change. Snowplowing and snowmobiling may become activities of the past. Lake Superior's summer water temperature is climbing a steady 2° per decade, and summer warmth is coming earlier each year.



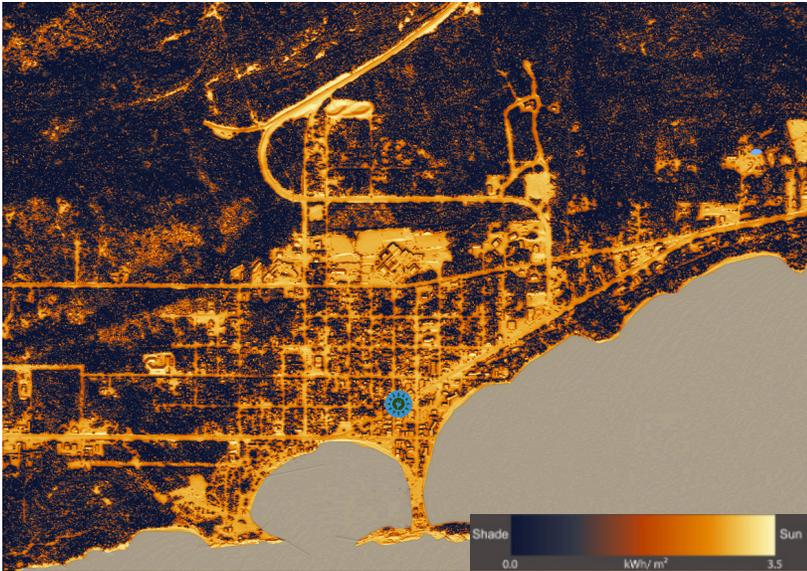
LOOKING TO THE FUTURE



Outdoor recreation and active environmental stewardship are identified as cornerstones of the Grand Marais way of life. Mapping analysis shows a city surrounded by wetlands, forest stands, and of course Lake Superior. The trail system in and around Grand Marais is key to accessing and engaging many of its natural wonders. Future changes to the environment will dictate the protections and policies that the community will want to take to protect their precious resources and iconic natural setting. Key concerns include: Global warming which alters winters and can severely impact the lake; and pollution which effects natural areas and the lake's water quality...

ENCOURAGE THE EXPANSION OF SUSTAINABLE ENERGY USES

Community members recognize the value of their unique natural environment. They value preservation, active use of the natural environment, and sustainability in all community practices.



Grand Marais solar capacity map

Many Grand Marais community members have dedicated themselves to sustainability. Becoming a GreenStep City, opening and growing the Cook County Whole Foods Co-op, leading the locally-sourced craft movement, and staying proactive on a variety of climate-resiliency initiatives are a few examples of community member support for sustainable living and sustainable use of energy. It is a community-wide priority to expand the reach of sustainable practices throughout the city.

A Green Step City

Grand Marais has elected to be a Minnesota Green Step City, a program that challenges, assists, and recognizes cities who work to achieve sustainability and quality-of-life goals. Since 2014 Grand Marais has completed 30 individual sustainability actions. Notably, the City developed a joint City/County Energy Conservation and Renewable Energy Plan. It also partnered with the County and Sawtooth Mountain Clinic in launching a “Moving Matters” active living campaign. The program will help guide the City’s future climate adaptation and mitigation initiatives.

COMMUNITY VOICES WHAT WE HEARD

“Install charging stations for electric vehicles”

“We need CLEAN, sustainable businesses”

“Include a local response to climate change in our plans and make energy efficiency and renewable energy a priority when the City and County plan to build new structures, create transportation systems and plan for the future.”

CONNECTING TO COMMUNITY HEALTH

This section is guided by priorities of health, active living, sustainability, and business development. Sustainable energy can be both good for community health and good for business development.



Encourage the expansion of sustainable energy uses.

A GREENER CITY

Key considerations



Solar capacity

The solar capacity map of Grand Marais (on the previous page) shows that there is substantial space for expansion of solar energy capture on rooftops around the city. Encouraging the installation of photovoltaic (PV) systems on homes and businesses is one way to move forward on using this solar capacity. Not only is solar energy capture an environmental solution, it is also an economic development tool and a way of reaching alternative energy use goals. Indeed, the Solar Generation Potential chart shows that installing solar on the top 10 solar-potential buildings would already meet about half of a 25% solar generation government goal.

Land Use

Grand Marais' land use choices can have impacts on long-term community sustainability. The future land use plan is a map attached to this document. The land use plan provides a simple set of zones where certain kinds of development should go. This plan will help guide Grand Marais preserve open space, mitigate environmental impacts, and encourage compact development to adequately accommodate all residents.

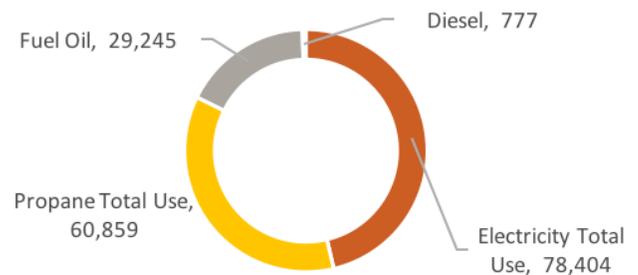
NUTS AND BOLTS

What does the data show?



Nearly half of Grand Marais energy use is electric

Energy Use by Type (MMBtu)



Data Source: 2013 Regional Indicators Initiative Report. Chart by Great Plains Institute

Solar Generation Potential (MWh/yr)



Example of Solar Potential and Community Goal. Source: Great Plains Institute



LOOKING TO THE FUTURE



Grand Marais has taken steps to prioritize sustainable community practices and policies. Chief among these is the act of becoming a Green Step City. With the Green Step designation, Grand Marais is committed to internal and external sustainability goals. Priority expansion areas for sustainable Grand Marais living include: **solar capacity expansion**, sustainable land use plan, and **policies and incentives to reduce waste and improve composting**.

EXPAND EDUCATION FOR THE MIND, BODY, AND SOUL

Grand Marais treasures arts practices, advancing education in all forms, and opportunities for community education and community development.



Photo source: Gear Patrol, 2017

Grand Marais residents have a variety of education needs. Early childhood education and childcare expansion are critical concerns in an area with few options for new parents. There is a need for higher education options that can certify students in the professions of tomorrow - from information technology to green energy. Also, the longstanding arts scene has a desire to expand its education opportunities as it develops a robust northwoods creative economy.

This plan section identifies current concerns, examines educational attainment, and outlines potential paths forward in realizing the vision of holistic education in Grand Marais. It is the intent of this section to provide a starting place for guiding future investment in these educational priorities and to celebrate the unique educational opportunities provided by community members today.

Formal and informal education

Current formal education facilities in Grand Marais include: Sawtooth Elementary School, Great Expectations Charter School, Cook County Middle School, Cook County High School, North House Folk School, Cook County Extension Service, and Grand Marais Art Colony. Informal education opportunities abound in the Grand Marais area, with myriad outdoor activities close at hand.

COMMUNITY VOICES WHAT WE HEARD

"Education to encourage newer, greener industry for people in Cook County"

"We need activities for teens, young adults, not involving alcohol"

"I had difficulty finding childcare when it was pertinent to me and I know it has gotten worse."

CONNECTING TO COMMUNITY HEALTH

Solid educational infrastructure is critical for a vibrant community. Lifelong learning, achievement, and business development are enhanced by a broad set of education opportunities for all ages.



Expand education for the mind, body, and soul

EDUCATION TODAY

Key considerations



Education attainment

Grand Marais residents over the age of 25 have a higher rate of Bachelor degrees than the county or state. The City also has more residents who's highest educational attainment is a high school degree (35%) than the county (23%) or state (26%). Analysis of Grand Marais ACS data shows a correlation between educational attainment and median income, with residents who have a graduate degree having an income that is on-average about \$20,000 more than those who solely have a high school diploma.

Growing Creative Education Opportunities

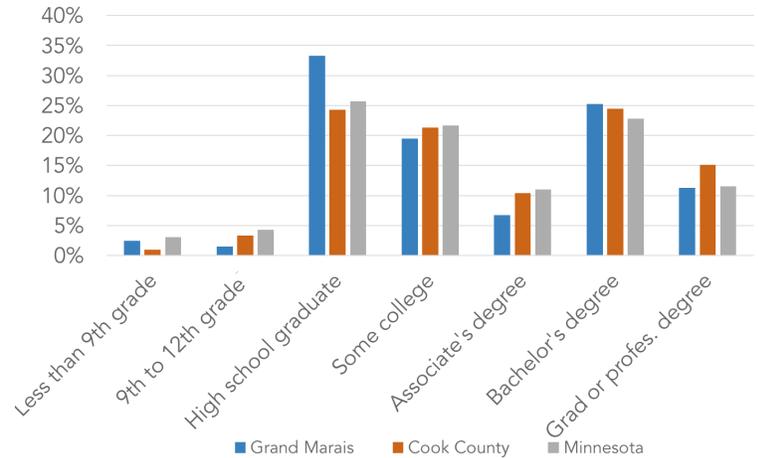
The Cook County Cultural Plan identifies arts and culture as "prosperity drivers" key to future economic and social vitality in the county. The plan outlines four strategic framework focus areas: telling our story, working together, placemaking, and guiding implementation. These strategic focus areas guide work towards a wide range of objectives, from housing and cultural facilities to cross-sector partnerships and increased public dollars for artist salaries.

NUTS AND BOLTS

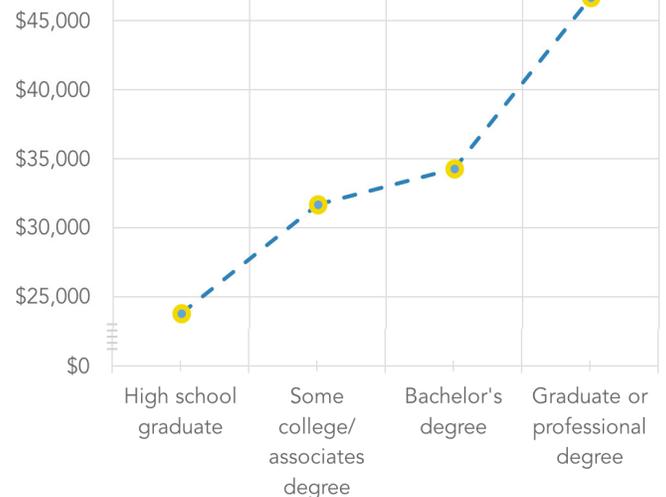
What does the data show?



More than half of all Grand Marais residents have at least some college experience



Residents with a graduate degree have a median income nearly \$20,000 higher than those with only a high school degree



LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Grand Marais has a variety of education opportunities including K-12, Cook County Higher Education extension services, and arts education at places like North House Folks School and Grand Marais Arts Colony. Educational attainment is critical to developing whole people and vibrant local culture. It is also critical in preparing a competitive workforce with skills that can lead to higher earning capacity. The data of local earning and education attainment demonstrates this connection.

COMMUNITY GOALS

SUPPORT AND ENHANCE LOCAL BUSINESS

CONTEXT + ANALYSIS



Once an hub of activity for logging, fishing, and trapping, Grand Marais has become a destination for outdoor recreation, scenic beauty, arts, and tourism, with a concentration of jobs in related industries of hospitality, food services, and retail. Small, locally-owned businesses are a cornerstone Grand Marais' economy and are a defining aspect of the community. In addition to providing core services and employment opportunities for residents, shops and small businesses are part of the community's fabric, showcasing local character and history through locally-made products, arts and creative endeavors, local foods, and events.

While tourism-related industries have been and will continue to be important drivers for the local economy, supporting about 23 percent of local (county) jobs and 21 percent of local wages today, the community recognizes the need for greater business diversity, protections and support for local businesses, and expansion of sustainable, year-round employment opportunities.

Key opportunities and challenges for the future include:

- » Attracting a sustainable, year-round workforce
- » Supporting existing local businesses and encouraging growth of compatible enterprises
- » Building on the strengths and character of existing businesses
- » Providing services and products that meet local needs
- » Leveraging and coordinating existing economic development efforts (Cook County Chamber, ARDC, AEOA, Cook Count/Grand Marais Economic Development Authority, etc.)

COMMUNITY VOICES



Overall economic health and opportunity and support for local businesses were key concerns raised by the community. Concerns included the need for good-paying jobs and workforce housing, lack of childcare options, unfair business competition, and the need for safety and design improvements to the highway 61 commercial corridor.

*55% of survey respondents want more **small and local businesses** and **41%** identified a need for more **housing**.*

*"...Channel tourist dollars into projects that **benefit the community**, keeping revenue in town and using it to **support the locals** and prospective locals..."*

*"I love that each business is **family-owned** and **unique** with great **history**."*

ROADMAP TO THE FUTURE



In the Future... Grand Marais is the economic hub of Cook County, known for locally-owned businesses and livable wages. Land-use and zoning decisions help ensure long-term economic viability of the community.

Supporting and enhancing local business is an important goal that aligns with key principles of planning for a healthy community. Thriving local businesses keep dollars in the community; promote economic opportunity through living wages and entrepreneurship; and build wealth and opportunities for community leadership.

Grand Marais stands to capitalize on the unique strengths and character of local businesses and to leverage local policy changes and economic development efforts to achieve the community's vision for a vibrant, home-grown local economy.



KEY CONSIDERATIONS



Protecting and Promoting Local Businesses

Zoning and land use regulations such as form-based zoning, formula-business ordinances, and design guidelines, can be effective tools to protect small businesses and enhance local character in key areas (e.g. highway 61). Other economic development efforts like “shop local” campaigns and small business incubators and support programs can encourage growth of new industries and services.



Building the creative economy

An established arts scene is one of the unique cornerstones of Grand Marais. A variety of arts-oriented organizations thrive in Grand Marais, and there are important opportunities to leverage these assets and build a more robust economy for the region. Implementing the recommendations of the Cook County Cultural Plan is key for realizing a thriving creative economy in Grand Marais.



Attracting a Sustainable Workforce

Strong wages, affordable housing, and robust training programs are the key ingredients for attracting and sustaining a workforce. According to the Living Wage Calculator developed by MIT, in Cook County a living wage for a single adult is \$10.16 an hour. For an adult supporting a child it is \$23.17 an hour. The 2018 state minimum wage is \$7.87 an hour.

COMMUNITY GOALS

DEVELOP ACCESS TO HOUSING THAT ALL PEOPLE CAN AFFORD THROUGHOUT THEIR LIVES



Housing is a basic need and a major concern for many households and individuals. The cost, location, and quality of housing are factors that have deep and lasting effects on quality of life and community health. While Grand Marais' existing, largely single-family housing stock provides options for some, the community has expressed concerns about current and long-term housing affordability and diversity.

Today, about a third of Grand Marais residents are "cost-burdened," that is, they pay more than 30% of their monthly income toward housing-related expenses. This housing cost burden is especially pronounced for the lowest income earners.

With the senior population projected to grow by 62% by 2040, the community will face increasing demand for new and different housing types in the future. At the same time, overall population is projected to remain relatively flat, which presents a challenge for the development of new housing.

Key opportunities and challenges for the future include:

- » Expanding senior, rental, and multifamily options
- » Providing opportunities for homeownership
- » Adapting existing housing stock to meet changing needs
- » Ensuring a range of appropriate, affordable options that meet the needs and preferences of changing populations
- » Overcoming market challenges to new development

COMMUNITY VOICES



Residents expressed concern about the lack of affordable housing options for low- and middle-income residents.

The top 4 housing types desired by residents in Grand Marais:

More affordable housing	65%
Single family detached housing	30%
Multi family dwellings	25%
Townhomes/Attached	22%

**survey allowed multiple selections*

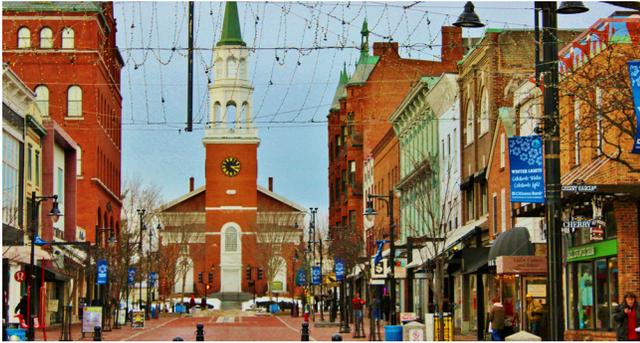
*"...I believe this community is a **good one** for the most part, but what I feel we lack is housing for the **working class!**"*

*"...there is a lack of **affordable housing** in relationship to **low levels of pay...**"*

APPENDIX

- Case Studies: Zoning for a Vibrant Local Economy
- Community Maps

CASE STUDIES: ZONING FOR A VIBRANT LOCAL ECONOMY



Concept: Formula Business Ordinance

Jersey City, NJ

Jersey City passed a Formula Business ordinance that restricts the total ground level gross commercial floor space that can be inhabited by a formula business. Formula businesses are defined as establishments that are “contractually obligated to maintain two or more standardized characteristics” including “merchandise, menu items, facade design, signage” etc. Overall, the ordinance functions to restrict formula businesses from dominating a community’s main street and driving out local vendors through low prices, cheap labor and access to outside capital. Select language from the ordinance is included in the appendix.

Application to Grand Marais

A formula business restriction could be a compromise between restriction of all new chain stores and welcoming any new development no matter the kind or potential impact.



Concept: Form Based Zoning Code

Beacon, NY

Form based code (FBC) is a proactive way to apply the vision of a community to guiding development. By focusing on physical form rather than land use, FBC encourages mixed-use developments that promote quality, walkable street scapes. The City of Beacon, NY implemented form based code in 2013 to encourage redevelopment in their Central Main Street District. By replacing the seven separate zones along the corridor with one mixed-use district, the zoning was simplified. In addition to building size, setback, parking and street scape criteria, Beacon implemented building design standards based on local architecture, avoiding big-box building design.

Application to Grand Marais

Form based code can best fit into the desires of a clear community vision. It addresses concerns about look, feel, and use. It can be coordinated with the values of the comprehensive plan.



Concept: Architectural Guidelines

Cold Springs, MN

In 2008 the town of Cold Springs, MN amended the zoning ordinance to prohibit franchise architecture within the Downtown Commercial District. Franchise architecture, often synonymous with generic, brightly colored facades and large parking lots, have also been banned in overlay districts in places such as Hopkins, MN (shown above), Asheboro, NC and Georgetown, CO. The intent of these guidelines is to maintain a unique town character while still allowing franchise or “formula” stores to operate. In these cases, franchise businesses must adjust their signs and architecture to match the surrounding community. Similar to these restrictions are signage laws which have been successfully tried in the court system.

Application to Grand Marais

In Grand Marais architectural guidelines can address the cosmetic concerns of formula businesses, but do not directly address concerns of formula businesses creating low wage jobs and unfair competition with small businesses.



Concept: Corridor Commission

Cape Cod, MA

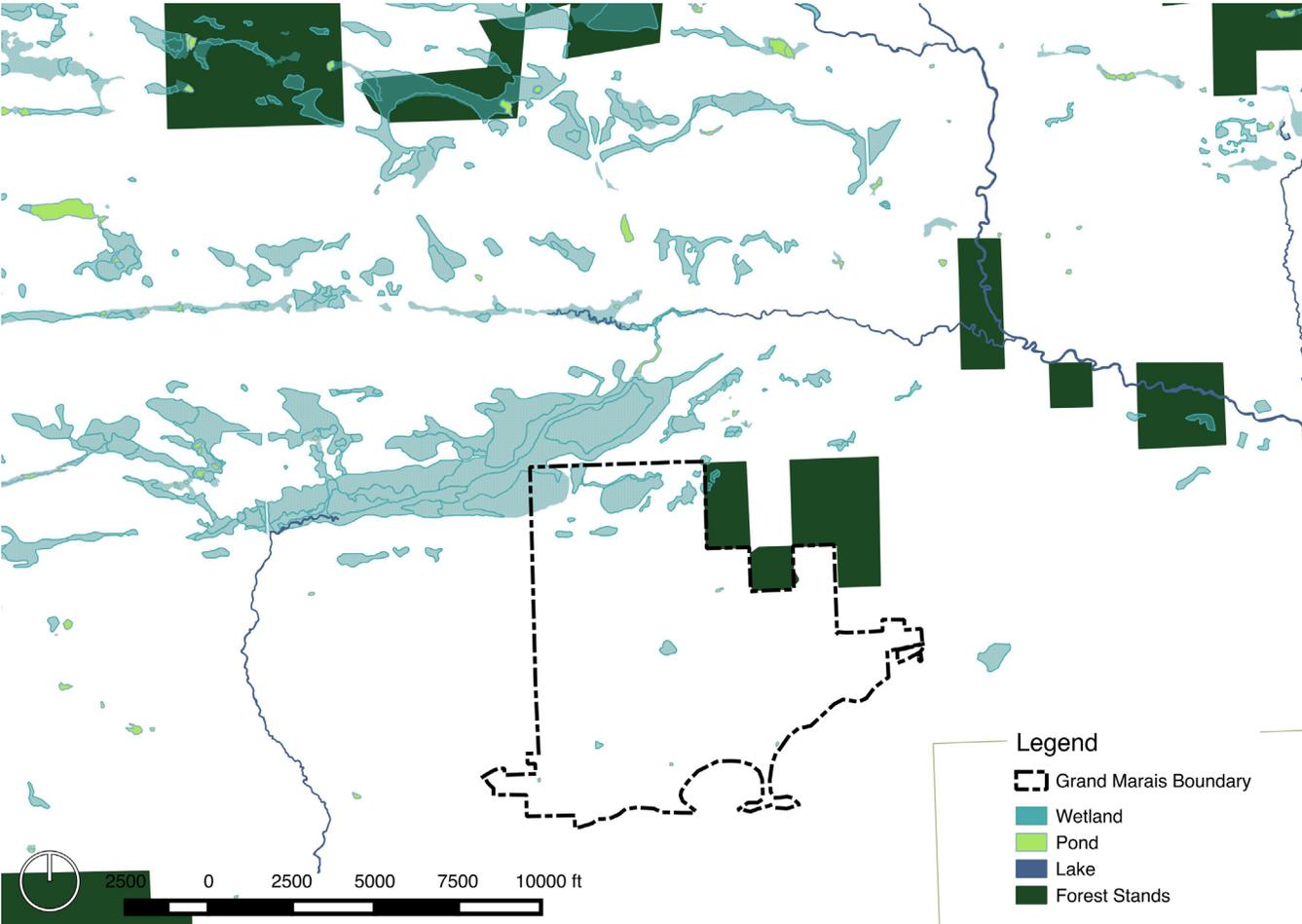
Adjacent small towns that share similar economic and aesthetic interests can coordinate efforts to guide the look, feel and business community within their geographic area. The Cape Cod Commission, created by state legislation and approved by Barnstable County in 1990, has the power to approve or deny permits based on their regional impact and/or compatibility with the regional land use plan. The regional body, comprised of 15 towns, recognizes the importance of preserving the shared natural and man made character of the area and has had great success by acting as a region.

Application to Grand Marais

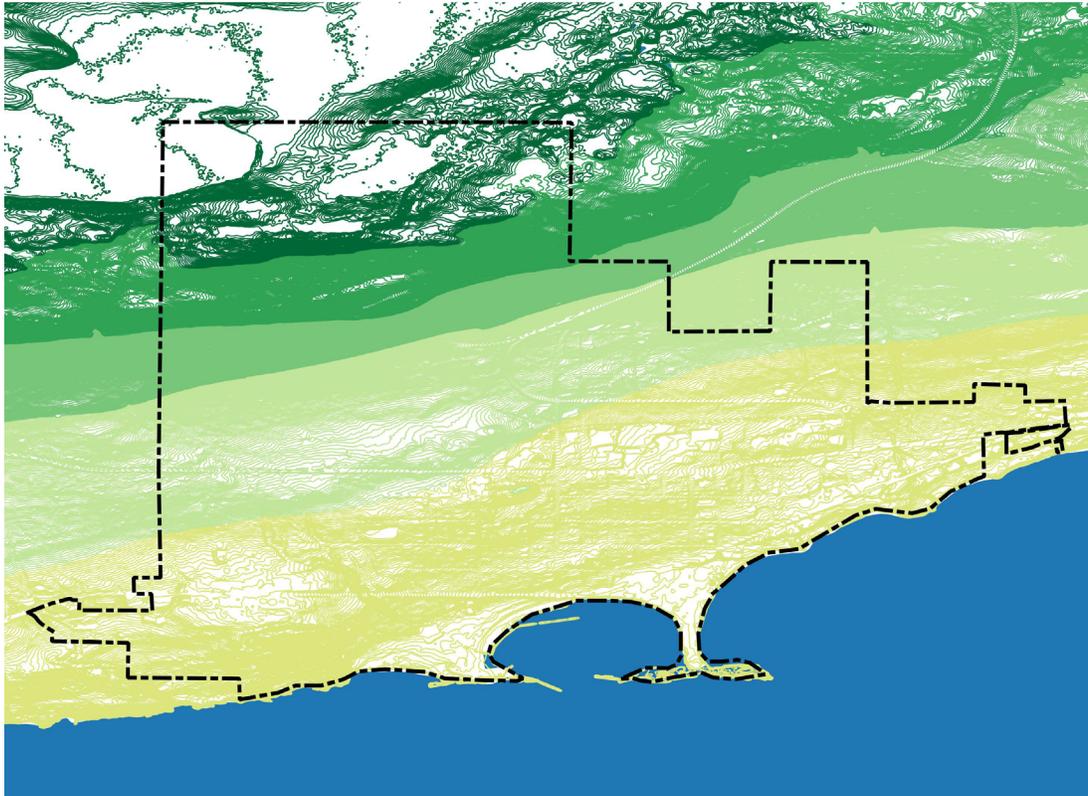
Many towns along Highway 61 share an interest in preserving the small businesses ethos that draws tourists. Creating a Commission with other towns between Duluth and Grand Portage can help the corridor steer clear of big-box development like

COMMUNITY MAPS

MAP 1: Grand Marais and Surround Area Natural Amenities



MAP 2: Topography



Legend

 GrandMaraisBoundary

Topography

 598 - 816 feet

 816 - 1034 feet

 1034 - 1252 feet

 1252 - 1470 feet

 1470 - 1688 feet

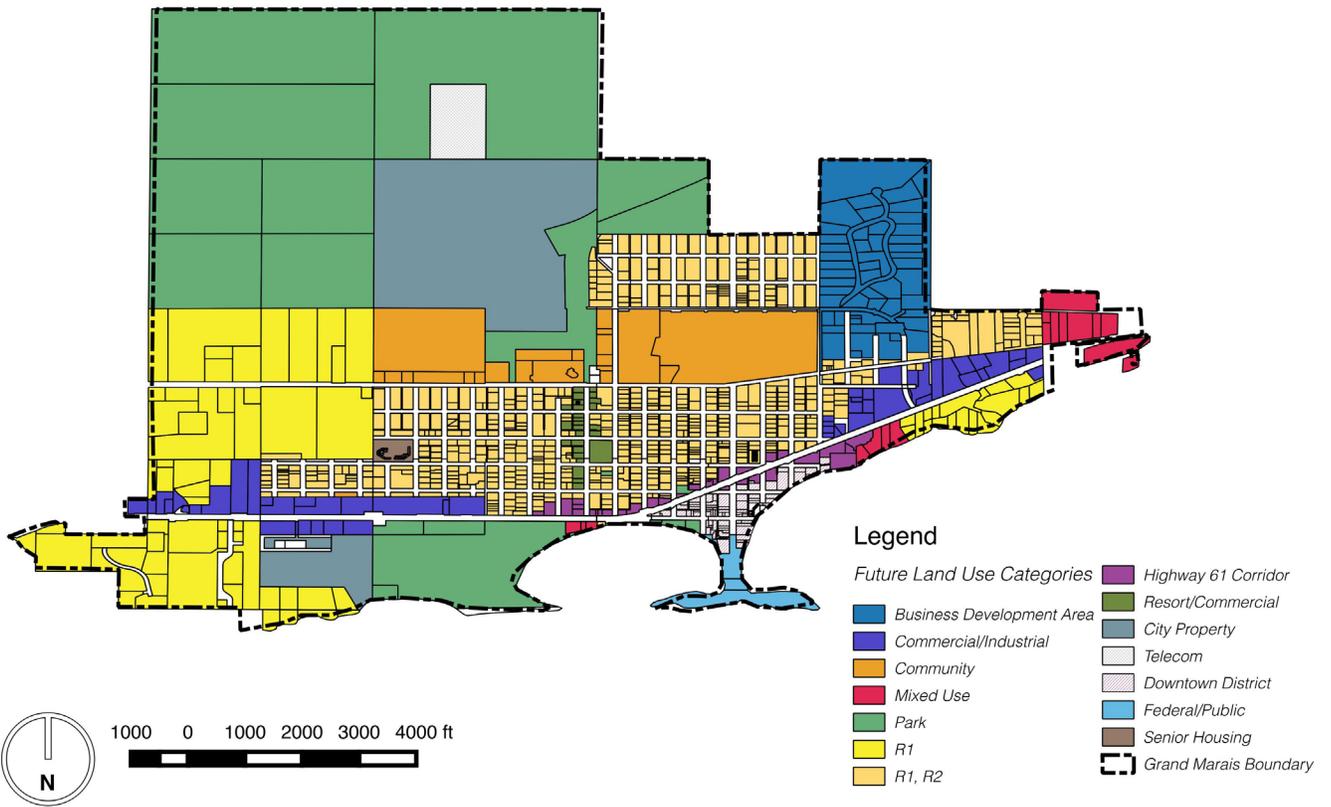


1000 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 ft



A horizontal scale bar with markings at 1000, 0, 1000, 2000, 3000, and 4000 feet.

MAP 3: Future Land Use



MAP 4: Highway 61 Project Scope

