

CITY OF  
CRYSTAL FALLS,  
MICHIGAN

# MASTER PLAN

2021

*Final Draft*  
10/25/21





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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Authority and Purpose .....	6
Regional Context .....	6
Historical Background .....	6-8
The Planning Process.....	9
Community Demographics Summary .....	10

## **2. VISION & GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

Vision Statement .....	12
Guiding Principles .....	12

## **3. HOUSING**

Housing .....	14
Housing Characteristics Summary .....	15
Goals and Strategies .....	16

## **4. NATURAL FEATURES/PARKS & RECREATION FACILITIES/ PUBLIC LANDS**

City Owned Recreational Facilities .....	18-22
Non-City Owned Recreational Facilities .....	23-28
Administrative Structure.....	30-31
Goals and Strategies .....	32-33

## **5. CITY INFRASTRUCTURE, PUBLIC FACILITIES, SAFETY & EMERGENCY SERVICES**

City Facilities .....	34
City Services .....	34-37
Educational Services and Facilities .....	37-39
Goals and Strategies .....	39

## **6. TRANSPORTATION, INCLUDING VEHICULAR, PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE**

State Trunkline Highways .....	40-41
Transportation Planning .....	41-42
Snowmobile/ATV Trails .....	42
Non Motorized Transportation Facilities .....	42-43
Air Service .....	43-44
Rail Service .....	44
Public Transportation .....	44
Goals and Strategies .....	44

**7. FUTURE LAND USE & ZONING PLAN**

- Existing Land Use ..... 46
- Future Land Use ..... 47-48
- Goals and Strategies ..... 49-50
- Zoning Plan ..... 52
- Future Land Use Plan ..... 53

**8. DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/REDEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES**

- Downtown Development ..... 54-55
- Economic Development ..... 56-57
- Redevelopment Tools ..... 57-58
- Goals and Strategies .....58-59

**9. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

- Sustainability Guide ..... 60 -61
- Low Impact Development ..... 62-63
- Sustainable Design Rating Systems ..... 63-64
- Goals and Strategies ..... 65-66

**10. WINTER CITY STRATEGIES**

- Winter City Best Practices ..... 68-72
- Goals and Strategies ..... 73-75

**11. IMPLEMENTATION**

- Strategies ..... 76-87

**APPENDIX**

- Community Parks and Recreation Checklist Form PR1924
- Post Completion Self-Certification Reports Form PR1944 and Park Funding Sign Photo
- Summary of Open House Public Comments
- Notice of Public Review Draft Availability and Public Hearing (copy of ad/affidavit)
- Plan Adoption Documents
  - Official City Council Resolution
  - Planning Commission Resolution
  - Minutes of the Public Hearing
  - Letter of Transmittal to WUPPDR
  - Letter of Transmittal to Iron County

# 1. INTRODUCTION

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## AUTHORITY AND PURPOSE

The purpose of the Master Plan is to guide the future of the City of Crystal Falls and help the community develop sustainably through a realistic and well thought out approach. The Master Plan has been prepared under authority of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, P.A. 33 of 2008, as amended. The Master Plan is an important tool for a number of reasons:

- The Master Plan provides the legal basis for zoning, subdivision of land, and other local land use regulations.
- The gathering and analysis of comprehensive community information and data enables community leaders to holistically understand unique challenges and opportunities.
- By involving citizens and stakeholders in the planning process, the Plan serves as the supported community vision, including goals and strategies for achieving the shared vision.
- The Master Plan can serve as a catalyst for desired changes by engaging community action.
- The Plan can help to generate regional collaboration with neighboring communities.

The purpose of the master plan is to guide future development towards the economic and efficient use of land; promote the public health, safety, and general welfare; help guide the preservation of historic resources and character of the City of Crystal Falls; provide for adequate transportation systems, public utilities, and recreation; and ensure efficient expenditure of public funds.

The Plan adoption is subject to a public hearing and approval by resolution of the City of Crystal Falls Planning Commission and City Council. (City Council approval is optional but highly recommended.)

Implementation of the plan is an on-going process, requiring the monitoring of changes in the community as well as the progress towards achieving the plan's goals. The Master Plan should be reviewed every five years and a determination made whether it needs updating or a new plan adopted.

## REGIONAL CONTEXT

The City of Crystal Falls is located in Michigan's western Upper Peninsula and is the county seat for Iron County. Crystal Falls is located approximately thirty miles northwest of Iron Mountain; approximately fifteen miles east of Iron River; and approximately seventy-two miles southwest of Marquette. The City is approximately 5 miles north of the Wisconsin border.

Located directly in the city's downtown is an intersection of three major trunk-line roads in the Upper Peninsula: M-69, U.S. 2, and U.S. 141.

Crystal Falls occupies hilly terrain on the banks of the Paint River which provides panoramic views for city residents. The historical downtown is being revitalized led by the restoration of the Harbour House, Theatre and Bendick Buildings which have become the Museum, Crystal Theatre and Good Times Contemporary Center. The view of downtown up the Superior Avenue hill is crowned with the historical Iron County Courthouse, built in 1892.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Crystal Falls has a rich and colorful history based upon iron mining and logging.

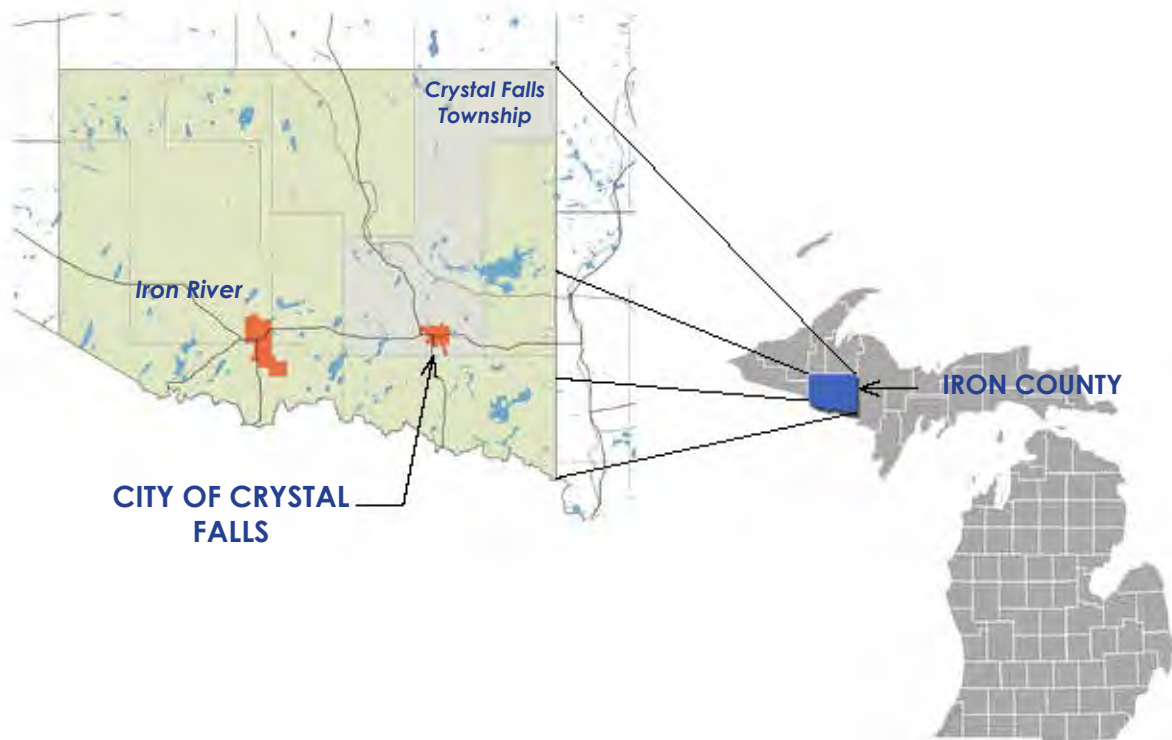
### **Mining**

In the early 1880's Crystal Falls was one of the main iron mining towns in the Upper Peninsula. Solomon D. Hollister, a native of Sparta, Wisconsin made his way to the Crystal Falls area in 1880. He became associated with George Runkel, who was born in Germany, and also came to the area in 1880. Together they discovered that there was much iron ore to be mined here, and formed the Crystal Falls Iron Company. This company made the greatest single contribution toward the development of the district.

In the spring of 1881, Hollister and Runkel were convinced they had discovered a new iron range. The Chicago and North-Western Railroad was completed in Crystal Falls in June of 1882, paving the way for transporting the many



**FIGURE 1.1 - CRYSTAL FALLS**



**FIGURE 1.2 CRYSTAL FALLS VICINITY MAP**

# 1. INTRODUCTION

tons of ore to the ports on the Great Lakes. There were six active mines in the area when the railroad was completed and a total of 42,111 tons of ore was shipped the first year.

Following World War II, a few mines reopened, but were ultimately unable to compete with the larger open pit mines and pelletized ore, causing the railroad to abandon the city. There is currently no rail service to the city, although the Canadian National Railroad (CN) runs from Sagola to Amasa through a nearby area.

## Logging

Logging has been a part of the Crystal Falls area from the beginning of the settlement. The Paint, Net, Fence, Brule, Deer, Hemlock, and Michigamme Rivers served as highways to transport the logs out of the woods to sawmill landings. The logs were moved to the rivers from

the wood lands by horse drawn sleighs in the early 1900's. Figure 1.1 is of an early sawmill once located on the north bank of the Paint River just across from the site of the present day power plant. The logs were "driven" down the river to the sawmill by "log sailors" who repeatedly risked their lives to move the product to the sawmills. Today, modern machinery has made the practice of logging much more efficient and safe. The City of Crystal Falls experiences daily the transport of many tons of trees over the main highways that cut through the town as logging trucks, many with trailers behind, haul their product for processing to paper and sawmills in nearby towns

Like many Upper Peninsula communities dependent on mining and resource extraction, Crystal Falls has struggled with the decline of its population, business and employment opportunities since the mines closed.

FIGURE 1.0 - DOWNTOWN CRYSTAL FALLS



However, there are positive signs that the decline has reversed as the City finds new opportunities for business and employment.

## THE PLANNING PROCESS

Outlined below is a summary of the planning process:

### Data Collection and Analysis

The Plan contains a summary of important information about City of Crystal Falls, current conditions, trends, current issues and opportunities. This information was analyzed and summarized in order to obtain an overview and understanding of the community.

### Previous Plan Review

The following plans were reviewed and relevant information incorporated into the Master Plan:

- Master Plan
- Recreation Plan

### Public Involvement

It is important for a Master Plan to provide opportunities for community engagement, so that the Plan responds to community needs and desires. The City offered several opportunities for people to become involved and express their ideas and opinions.

Planning Commission meetings conducted during the planning



FIGURE 1.1 - PAINT RIVER SAWMILL

## A few trends in small town planning relevant to the City of Crystal Falls



### Place matters...

*A strong national trend has developed that defies old thinking about attracting business, industry and new residents. Quality of life factors, such as the arts, recreation, diversity, positive attitudes and community vibrancy, now play the most important role in determining where jobs are created and where people will live.*



### Trails, Complete Streets, walking and biking...

*People today want safe transportation alternatives, sidewalks, walkable neighborhoods, and easy access to nature and recreation trails.*



### Sustainability...

*Energy efficiency, alternative energy systems, locally grown food, environmental stewardship, and stormwater management have become priorities in many communities.*

## Community Demographics Summary

- The City of Crystal Falls population increased 9.3% to 1,598 persons during the decade from 2010 to 2020, reversing a decades-long trend. **Crystal Falls is one of only 5 cities in the Upper Peninsula to see population growth in the last decade!**
- Some of the decline in population over the years is due to citizens choosing to live in the rural and scenic settings just outside of the city limits.
- The majority of the decline over the years has been caused by economic factors that have forced younger families to move to in search of employment. It appears this is no longer the case, as more people are able to work remotely and are choosing Crystal Falls as a place to live.
- Crystal Falls has an aging population; 22.5% of the people are older than 65 years. This compares with only 13.7% over 65 in the State of Michigan. The percentage of persons over 65 in Crystal Falls is slightly less than Iron County (26.3%).
- The median age in Crystal Falls is 49.9, compared to 37.6 in the State of Michigan.
- The percentage of preschool-aged children in Crystal Falls is more than the proportion county-wide, and only 1 percentage point below the statewide average.
- Crystal Falls has a higher percentage of school age and working age persons as compared to Iron County.

process were open to the public and public comments were welcomed. The Planning Commission invited the community to attend an open house meeting on July 19, 2021, and a public hearing on the draft plan was held on September 27, 2021.

## Goals & Strategies

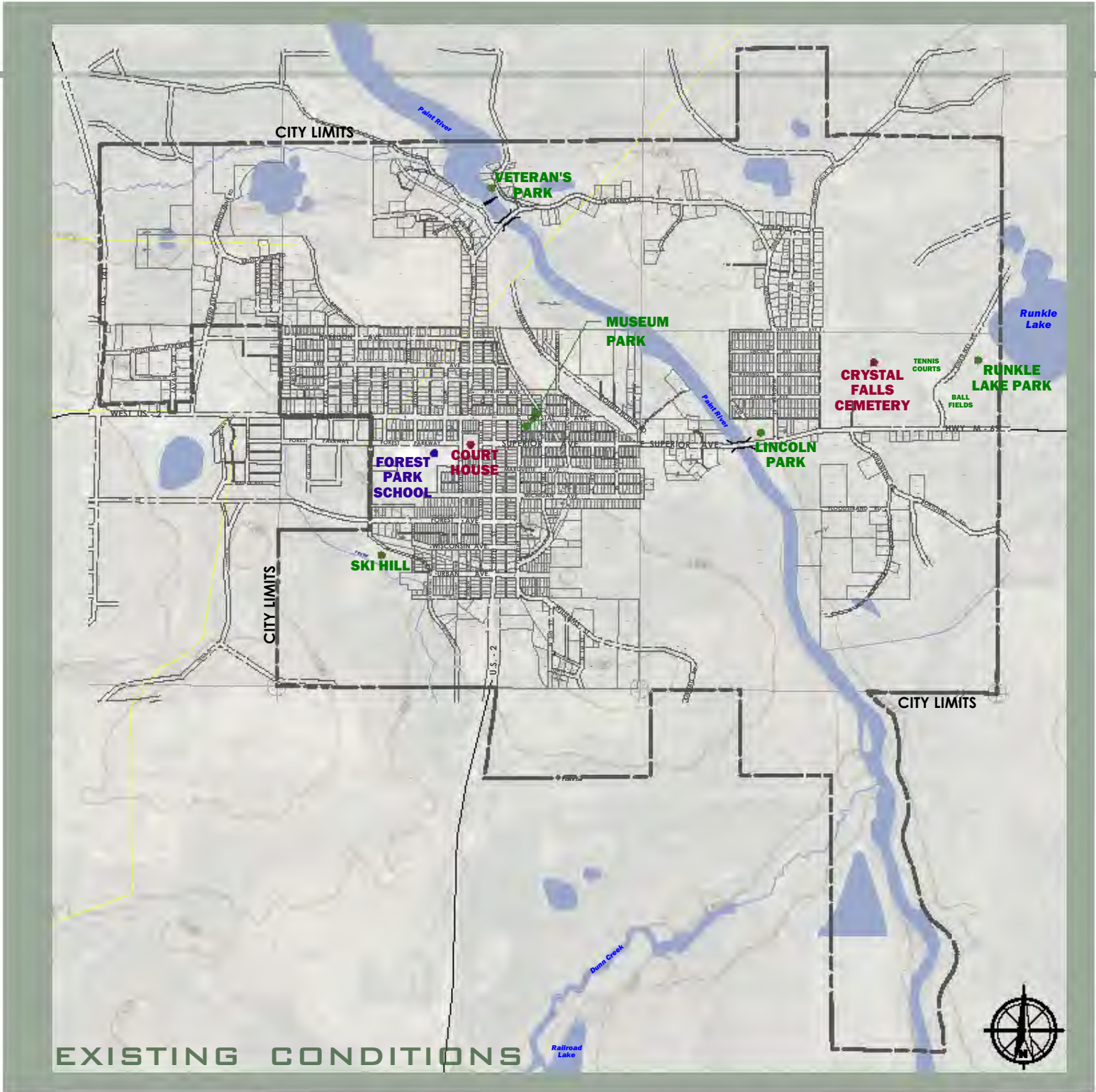
Goals and strategies that describe a course of action are a tool for future decision-making and help to define the character, values, and priorities of the Crystal Falls community.

**Goals** are broad statements that describe a desired outcome, where we want to be. Goals are often long-term in scope.

**Strategies** are a program, action, or practice that supports one or more policy statements. Strategies address at a high level, the “who, what, when, where, and how” of reaching a goal. A strategy may include multiple sub-strategies.

## Implementation

The Plan concludes with a Chapter that provides strategic activities and initiatives to implement the Master Plan.



**LEGEND:**

-  CITY BOUNDARY
-  STREET RIGHT-OF-WAY
-  PARCEL BOUNDARIES
-  WATER BODIES
-  CONTOUR LINES (USGS)

SCALE: 1" = 2000'-0"  
 0 500 1000 2000

FIGURE 1.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS MAP

# 2. VISION & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The City of Crystal Falls values toward growth and development are reflected in their Vision Statement, Guiding Principles, Goals, and Strategies. Following is a summary of the Vision Statement and Guiding Principles.

## VISION STATEMENT

Crystal Falls is a City of Community Pride, featuring a high quality of life, open communication between the City and its citizens, offering outdoor recreation for all ages and in all seasons, and support for businesses and growth.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following are key characteristics of our guiding principles:

- Listen to City residents and work in their interest
- Creatively use funds to move Crystal Falls forward
- Collaborate with neighboring communities to help all grow together
- Foster sustainable job growth that meets the needs of our constituents
- Create an achievable plan and implement it as opportunities and resources allow



**FIGURE 2.0 - FISHING AT LINCOLN PARK**

# 3. HOUSING

Housing in the City of Crystal Falls is dominated by older, single family homes, many constructed in the mining era prior to 1940. The City was developed with a grid street pattern which provides an efficient layout for providing services. Sidewalks are present throughout most of the City neighborhoods. Community pride is evidenced by the appearance of homes and neighborhoods.

Currently, there is a great need for apartments and rental housing in Crystal Falls. There are a few multi-family apartment buildings in the City, most notably the Crystal View Apartments, a historical downtown hotel that was converted to apartments in recent years and Pleasant Valley Apartments operated by the Iron County Housing Commission. The town also has some apartments above some of

the downtown stores. Many of these have not been improved in many years, or have been converted to other uses, however, some are still utilized as apartments.

The Iron County Housing Commission provides low income housing for families, single individuals, and retired people living on fixed incomes. The Housing Commission also provides Section 8 vouchers for individuals on fixed incomes looking to live in private houses, although they currently have 40 Section 8 Vouchers that are available but not being used due to the shortage of rental housing.

Crystal Falls has been known for its very affordable housing, however, the past year, the market has changed. Retirees stay or have moved here

**FIGURE 3.0 - CRYSTAL FALLS NEIGHBORHOOD**



because of the low cost and find they can have a higher quality of life in Crystal Falls than in many other parts of the country. This low cost and good Internet connectivity also makes the City ideal for individuals who perform work that can be done from anywhere. With such a low cost of living individuals can live here and experience a higher standard of living than living in most other parts of the country. The lack of employment opportunities locally causes some residents to commute to Iron Mountain.

The lack of property value increase has been an issue. Rents have been depressed due to low property values, and do not provide sufficient revenues to reinvest in the properties.

Crystal Falls existing housing stock also doesn't meet the needs of people who want to continue to live in Crystal Falls while downsizing to smaller, low maintenance housing. Older residents may want to sell their larger home, especially in the current "hot" seller's market, but cannot find suitable housing that fits their needs.

The City owns several tracts of land that could be developed for housing. The



FIGURE 3.1 - CITY HOUSING

## Housing Characteristics Summary

- **Total Housing Units: 852**
  - Single Family: 83%
  - Multi-family: 15%
  - Mobile homes: 2%
- **Occupied Housing Units: 82%**
- **80% of occupied units are owner-occupied**
- **Lived in same housing unit before 1990: 18%**
- **Median value: \$63,000**
- **Value under \$100,000: 82%**

# 3. HOUSING

cost for constructing necessary infrastructure will make developing these sites difficult. The City is considering options for feasible development. The City should consider higher density development formats that could make development more feasible while providing housing options currently not available in the community.

## GOALS AND STRATEGIES

**Goal 1:** Preserve the “pride of place” ethic in Crystal Falls.

### STRATEGY 1.1

Enforce the City’s Property Maintenance Code. The Property Maintenance Code is a great tool to get landowners to clean up their property and maintain it. Reducing the number of blighted and dilapidated structures will improve the aesthetics of our community and increase property values. Improving aesthetics makes the community more appealing to tourists, people looking to move to the area, and developers.

### STRATEGY 1.2

Determine if a vacant property registry would be beneficial to the area. A Vacant Building Registry requires all owners of vacant buildings to register their buildings and pay an annual fee. The registration includes local emergency contacts and other general information to make contacting the owner easier if there is an issue. Many towns have found these programs to be useful to disincentivize retaining vacant buildings. This area may be more difficult to implement such a program due to a large number of vacation homes.

### STRATEGY 1.3

Work with local citizens interested in keeping empty lots clean and maintained with the Adopt-a-lot program. This is a grass roots program intended to utilize community volunteers to maintain empty

lots. Keep a data base of all participating volunteers and publicly thank them for their contributions.

### STRATEGY 1.4

Inform residents about the USDA-RD grant and low interest loan program designed to assist homeowners with repairs. This program can help homeowners get new roofs, siding, windows, etc. This is a very valuable program that the City should share with residents especially while addressing blighted structures.

### STRATEGY 1.5

Inform property owners and potential property owners of opportunities to address blight through MEDC’s Brownfields program. If a developer purchases a structure that is blighted or is in some way environmentally contaminated, the developer can utilize Brownfield’s for low interest loans which can be paid back through a Brownfields TIF, thereby saving the developer significantly.

### STRATEGY 1.6

Explore enacting a City-wide clean-up day to encourage citizens to dispose of junk materials in their yard.

**Goal 2:** Address Housing Demand

### STRATEGY 2.1

Actively recruit investors to build single family homes, renovate existing unused apartments, and encourage infill development to provide more housing. Infill development helps maintain walkable neighborhoods and lessens the harmful effects of sprawl.

### STRATEGY 2.2

Actively explore alternatives to develop two vacant City-owned sites. Consider higher density development formats that could make development more feasible while providing housing options currently not available in the community.



**FIGURE 3.2 - TYPICAL NEIGHBORHOOD STREET**

# 4. NATURAL FEATURES/PARKS & RECREATION FACILITIES/PUBLIC LANDS

The City of Crystal Falls and the surrounding area are blessed with an abundance of recreational opportunities. The City has been committed to providing recreation facilities to enhance the quality of life for residents for many years.

Most of the 760,000 acres of Iron County are available for outdoor recreation. Public forest lands include lands within the Ottawa National Forest and the Copper Country State Forest. Privately owned timber lands in Iron County listed under the Commercial Forest Act can be used by the public for hunting and fishing.

Iron County contains more than 2,000 lakes and ponds (of which 522 are named) totaling 29,456 acres. In addition there are 900 miles of rivers and streams that can be used for fishing, boating, swimming and canoing.

There are over 200 miles of maintained snowmobile trails. Downhill and cross country are popular winter sports with approximately 35 miles of cross country ski trails available, downhill skiing facilities are available at the city operated Crystella Ski Hill in Crystal Falls, the Caspian City Ski Hill, and Ski Brule, a private development south of the City of Iron River.

Public and private campgrounds are located throughout the county.

The City of Crystal Falls has over 113 acres available for outdoor recreation. The City maintains approximately 90 acres and the Forest Park School District maintains approximately 23 acres.

A canoe access to the Paint River adjacent to highway M-69 in the City is maintained by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. A number of privately owned indoor facilities are also located in Crystal Falls and the surrounding area.

In recent years, the City of Crystal Falls sold the City-owned 37-acre Crystal View Golf Course to a private entity, as annual operating expenses exceeded revenues, requiring an annual subsidy from the City General Fund.

## CITY-OWNED RECREATIONAL AREAS

### *Runkle Lake Municipal Park* 65 Acres

Runkle Lake Municipal Park was developed in 1939 under a federal work study program that constructed the original beach house and caretaker's residence. Named for one of the town's founding fathers, George Runkle, the park contains 65 acres of which approximately 25 acres have been



**FIGURE 4.0 -CAMPGROUND AT RUNKLE LAKE MUNICIPAL PARK**



**FIGURE 4.1 - RUNKLE LAKE MUNICIPAL PARK VICINITY MAP**

developed. Map 4 shows the general layout of the park. Located on the west end of Runkle Lake, the park offers swimming, camping, picnicking, tennis, baseball, a children’s playground, fishing and other water related activities.

**PARK INVENTORY:**

- Campground with 49 sites (18 with water/sewer/ electric and 31 with water and electric available)
- Beach
- Beach house
- Fishing pier
- Softball diamond, fenced with bleachers, backstop and lights, concession stand, and batting cage
- Little league field, fenced, backstop
- Soccer/football field
- Two tennis courts

- Basketball court
- Three shuffleboard courts
- Volleyball courts
- Wigwam and Picnic area
- Caretakers cabin with concession stand
- Public boat landing
- Shower and Bathroom facilities
- Playground apparatus

The park opens Memorial Day weekend remaining open until Labor Day. A campground host is employed by the City to oversee the collection of camping fees and run a modest concession stand. Lifeguards have not been employed in the recent years due to a decline in revenues. The city crews pick up trash and take care of the spring and fall clean up while also maintaining utilities, do upgrades and necessary repairs. City police patrol the park

# 4.

and help the campground host with enforcement of park rules.

The Runkle Lake Municipal Park is an outstanding recreation facility within the City. However, the campground revenues have not traditionally covered operating expenses, requiring annual injection of funding from the City General Fund. Unlike many community recreation facilities, a municipal campground does not benefit the general public. A deed restriction on the property requires it be used for recreation, however, the City

is considering options to lease the campground facilities to a private operator.

## **Crystella Ski Hill** 10 Acres

In 2011, the City of Crystal Falls entered into a lease agreement with the Crystella Recreation Association in order to lease the operation of the city-owned ski facility with downhill skiing, snowboarding, cross-country skiing, sledding, a warm-up building and skating rink.

The ski hill offers two rope tows. The smaller tow is located at the ski lodge and serves the smaller hill, which has a vertical drop of 34 feet and a run length of approximately 300 feet. The larger hill has an approximate vertical drop of 96 feet and a run length of approximately 700 feet. The ski hill operates as weather conditions permit. The hill is open to the public with a minimal fee charged for access.

The skating area is located just to the East of the ski lodge. It is maintained on a volunteer basis by City employees and is available for use free of charge.

The ski lodge serves as a warming house in the winter and is heated primarily by wood. A pool table offers an alternative to the outdoor activities.





**FIGURE 4.3 - LINCOLN PARK AND PAINT RIVER BOARDWALK VICINITY MAP**

## **Lincoln Park and Paint River Boardwalk**

**10 Acres**

Lincoln Park is a neighborhood park located adjacent to the Paint River Walk on the east bank of the Paint River just north of Highway M-69. This is a city owned and maintained facility with a playground area that includes a slide, swings, climbing apparatus, merry-go-round, and other assorted equipment put into place in 2009 following a fundraising effort by a group of local volunteers. Picnic tables are also available for the public to use.

The Paint River Walkway is a facility that was completed in the summer of 2002. It is a raised

wooden walk, with parking facilities; handicap access to the Paint River, fishing sites, benches, and tables adjacent to Lincoln Park. With the cooperation of the Forest Park Elementary student’s interpretive nature signs have been posted along the walkway to make the walkway more informative. The project was accomplished with a \$238,000 grant, matching funds, City labor and very generous community volunteer labor

As part of a project to re-license the Paint River dam, the City will be extending the river pathway approximately 2,000 feet to meet FERC re-licensing requirements. Through the generosity of an adjoining landowner, the City will extend the pathway an additional 3,000 feet to the Veterans Park and the Paint River Dam.

# 4. NATURAL FEATURES/PARKS & RECREATION FACILITIES/PUBLIC LANDS

## Paint River Boat Launch

1 Acre

The City of Crystal Falls owns and maintains a boat launch adjacent to the water retention area of the City owned power plant and dam. This facility has a ramp for boat launching, a parking area, restroom facilities and a handicap accessible fishing pier. It is located on Rock Crusher Road just north of Fairbanks Drive.

## Veteran's Park

2.5 Acres

Veteran's Park is a City-owned park on the Paint River, located adjacent to the City's hydroelectric dam. Maintained by the City, this park features a fishing pier, picnic tables, and a monument to a local fallen soldier. A trail will be constructed to connect Veterans Park to the Paint River Boardwalk.

## Museum Park

1 Acre

Museum Park contains the Harbour House Museum and the grounds surrounding it. Built in 1898, the

FIGURE 4.4 - VETERAN'S PARK AND PAINT RIVER BOAT LAUNCH VICINITY MAP



Harbour House Museum is a city-owned property that is leased to the Crystal Falls Museum Society, which oversees the day-to-day operations of the museum inside. The property surrounding the museum is used to host exhibits and festivals.

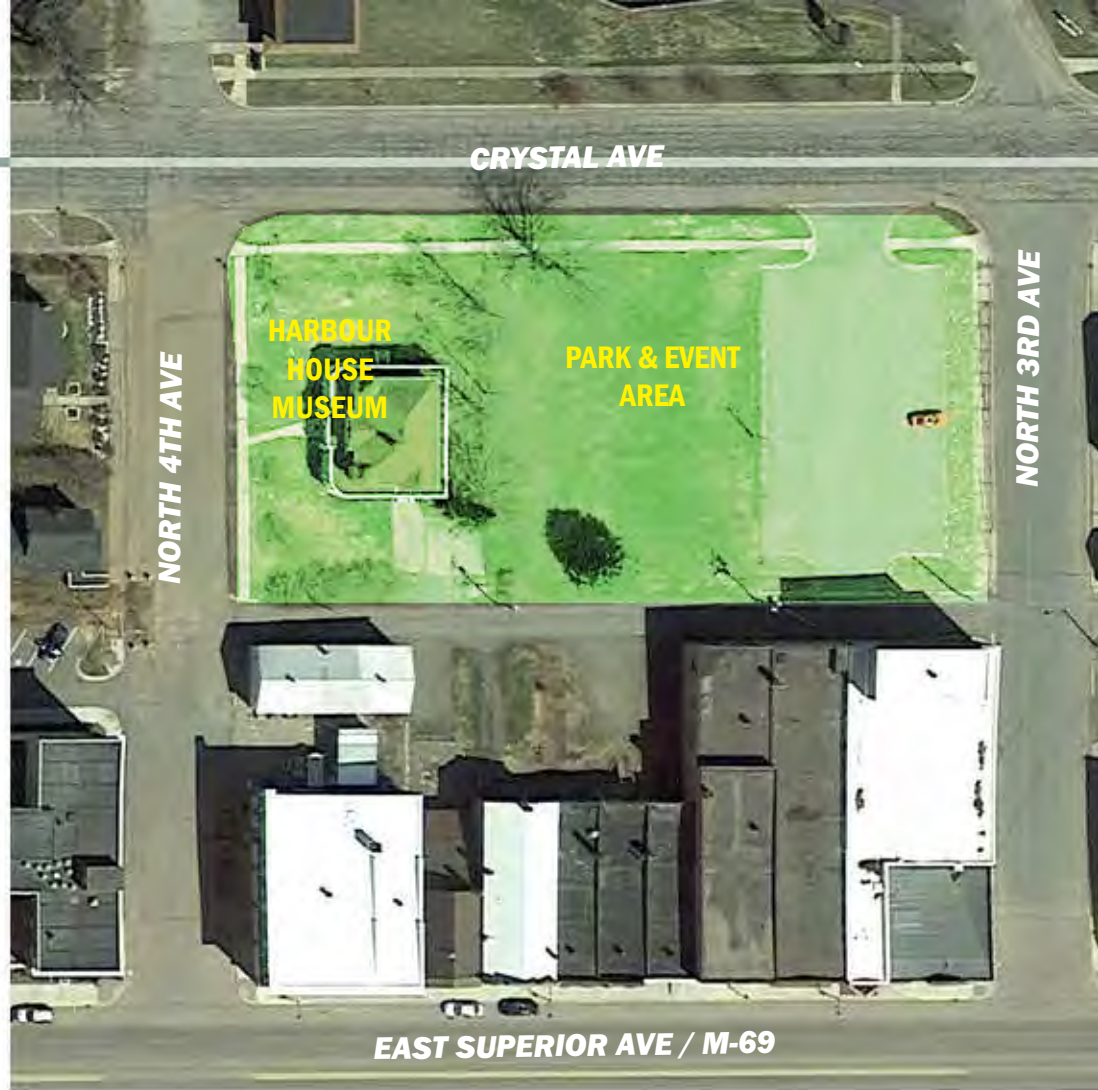
## NON-CITY OWNED RECREATIONAL AREAS

### **Crystal View Golf Course** 47 acres

This facility was a City owned and maintained nine-hole course until recently, when the City sold it to a private entity due to the cost of operation. It is located within the city adjacent to the Paint River Walkway just North of the banks of the Paint River. The Course is played over rolling hills among pine and maple trees. The course affords a panoramic view of the City, thus the name, Crystal View. The course consists of 9 holes, a club-house, parking area, two (2) golf cart storage garages, and an equipment storage building.

### **Paint River Canoe Access**

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources maintains a public canoe access site on the west bank of the Paint River across from the Paint River Walk and just north of Highway M-69. The site was developed in the 1960's it is a carry in canoe launch site only no other facilities are offered.



**FIGURE 4.5 - MUSEUM PARK VICINITY MAP**

### **Forest Park School District Recreational Facilities**

The Forest Park School District owns and maintains recreational facilities in the City of Crystal Falls. Due to recent budget cuts the availability of these facilities is in question but are extensive including:

- Football field
- Five (5) outdoor tennis courts
- Outdoor track (300 meters)
- Two outdoor basket ball courts
- Playground apparatus
- One (1) gymnasium with seating for 1,700 spectators
- One (1) gymnasium with limited seating
- Weight lifting area.

The City of Crystal Falls recognizes the Forest Park School District facilities as an important aspect of

# 4. NATURAL FEATURES/PARKS & RECREATION FACILITIES/PUBLIC LANDS

the City’s overall recreational offering, likewise, the Forest Park School District recognizes the role their facilities play by offering community wide use within time and budget constraints. The district currently opens their doors during the winter months to allow indoor walking in the early morning hours.

## Crystal Lanes

Crystal Lanes is a privately-owned bowling alley. It offers 8 bowling lanes, a bar, and a lunch counter. These lanes are used primarily in the winter months by men’s and women’s bowling leagues.

## Paint River Hills Campground

This is a privately owned facility located on the west bank of the Paint River north of M-69 with rustic cabins, RV parking, campsites and a scenic trail along the Paint River.

## Racquet Ball Court and Fitness Center

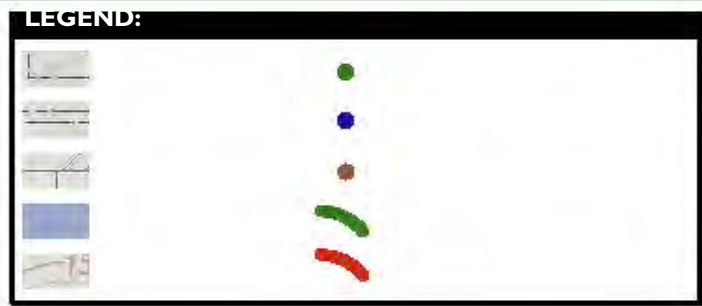
The racquet ball court is a privately owned facility with a fitness center open to the public.

FACILITY	TYPE	LOCATION	OWNERSHIP	ACTIVITIES
RUNKLE LAKE / MUNICIPAL PARK (2)	OUTDOOR	WITHIN CITY LIMITS	CITY	CAMPING, SWIMMING, TENNIS, SHUFFLEBOARD, BASKETBALL, SOFTBALL, VOLLEYBALL, SOCCER/FOOTBALL
CRYSTELLA SKI HILL (1)	OUTDOOR	WITHIN CITY LIMITS	CITY – LEASED TO CRYSTELLA RECREATION AUTHORITY	DOWNHILL & CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING, ICE SKATING, SLEDDING
LINCOLN PARK/PAINT RIVER WALKWAY (2)	OUTDOOR	WITHIN CITY LIMITS	CITY	PLAYGROUND, PICNIC TABLES, BOARDWALK, FISHING PIERS, INTERPRETIVE TRAIL
BOAT LANDING-PAINT RIVER (2)	OUTDOOR	WITHIN CITY LIMITS	CITY	BOAT ACCESS TO RESERVOIR BEHIND CITY POWER PLANT, HANDICAP ACCESSIBLE FISHING PIER
VETERAN’S PARK (2)	OUTDOOR	WITHIN CITY LIMITS	CITY	FISHING, SCENIC VIEW, REST AND RELAXATION, SPECIAL EVENTS
MUSEUM PARK (1)	CITY OWNED	WITHIN CITY LIMITS	CITY	MUSEUM GROUNDS, FESTIVALS, PICNICS

### ACCESSIBILITY RATING:

- (1) None of the facilities meet Accessibility Guidelines
- (2) Some of the facilities meet Accessibility Guidelines
- (3) Most of the facilities meet Accessibility Guidelines
- (4) Facilities meet Accessibility Guidelines
- (5) Entire facility developed/renovated using principles of Universal Design

TABLE 4.0: CITY OWNED RECREATIONAL AREAS



**FIGURE 4.6 PARK & RECREATION MAP**

# 4. NATURAL FEATURES/PARKS & RECREATION FACILITIES/PUBLIC LANDS

## **Wilderness Canoe Trails**

The WE Energies power company has developed over 30 recreational sites near 13 hydroelectric plants in Northern Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. These areas are open to the public and offer wilderness camping, fishing, hiking and hunting opportunities. These recreational areas extend from south of Crystal Falls passing through town along the Paint River around most of Peavy Pond, and south to the Brule and Menominee Rivers.

## **Wilderness Shores**

Developed by WE Energies Power Company near 13 hydroelectric plants in Northern Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, Wilderness Shores consists of more than 25 wilderness recreation areas where visitors can explore and create a variety of memorable outdoor experiences. To enjoy a unique, primitive camping experience the development of these areas has been kept to a minimum.

## **Snowmobile Trails/ ATV Trails**

Throughout Iron County abandoned railroad grades have been obtained for recreational use and are tied together with trails maintained by the Iron Range Snowmobile Association. There are 182 miles of trails currently in operation a section of which passes through the City of Crystal Falls and extends to Florence,



**FIGURE 4.7 - BOARDWALK AT LINCOLN PARK**

FACILITY	TYPE	LOCATION	OWNERSHIP	ACTIVITIES
CRYSTAL VIEW GOLF COURSE (2)	PRIVATE	WITHIN CITY LIMITS	PRIVATE	GOLFING – 9 HOLES
PAINT RIVER CANOE ACCESS	OUTDOOR	WITHIN CITY LIMITS	MICHIGAN DNR	CARRY-IN CANOE ACCESS
FOREST PARK SCHOOL DISTRICT (4)	PUBLIC OUTDOOR INDOOR	WITHIN CITY LIMITS	SCHOOL DISTRICT	TENNIS, TRACK, BASKETBALL, PLAYGROUND, GYMNASIUM, VOLLEYBALL, FOOTBALL
WOODY'S LANES (2)	PRIVATE INDOOR	WITHIN CITY LIMITS	PRIVATE	BOWLING
PAINT RIVER HILLS CAMPGROUND (2)	OUTDOOR INDOOR	WITHIN CITY LIMITS	PRIVATE	CAMPING, HIKING TRIALS, CABINS
WESTERN U.P. HERITAGE TRAIL (5)	OUTDOOR	WITHIN CITY	VARIOUS	SCENIC ROUTE & HISTORICAL SITES
IRON-BELLE TRAIL	OUTDOOR	PASSES THROUGH CITY LIMITS	MICHIGAN DNR	SCENIC ROUTE & HISTORICAL SITES
RACQUET BALL (1)	PRIVATE INDOOR	ADJACENT TO CITY LIMITS	PRIVATE	RACQUETBALL AND FITNESS CENTER
WILDERNESS CANOE TRAIL (1)	PUBLIC OUTDOOR	PASSES THROUGH CITY LIMITS	WISCONSIN ELECTRIC POWER CO.	CANOING, FISHING, & WILDERNESS CAMPING
FORTUNE PIT (2)	OUTDOOR	2.5 MILES W OF CITY	MICHIGAN DNR	FISHING PIER
WILDERNESS SHORES (1)	PUBLIC OUTDOOR	6 + MILES NE, E, AND SE OF CITY	WISCONSIN ELECTRIC POWER CO.	FISHING, BOATING, AND CAMPING AREAS
SNOWMOBILE TRAILS	PUBLIC OUTDOOR	6 + MILES NE, E, AND SE OF CITY	IRON COUNTY/IRON RANGE SNOWMOBILE ASSOCIATION	SNOWMOBILING
PENTOGA PARK CHICAGON LAKE (2)	OUTDOOR	6 MILES SW OF CITY	IRON COUNTY	SWIMMING, CAMPING, BOATING, FISHING, MINIATURE GOLF, NATURE TRAILS, PLAYGROUND
BEWABIC STATE PARK FORTUNE LAKE (2)	OUTDOOR	3 MILES W OF CITY	STATE OF MICHIGAN	CAMPING, SWIMMING, BOATING, FISHING, TENNIS
LAKE MARY PLAINS PATHWAY/GLIDDEN LAKE STATE FOREST (2)	OUTDOOR	4.5 MILES E OF CITY	MICHIGAN DNR	CAMPING, BOAT RAMP, FISHING, CROSS COUNTRY SKIING

**ACCESSIBILITY RATING:**

- (1) None of the facilities meet Accessibility Guidelines
- (2) Some of the facilities meet Accessibility Guidelines
- (3) Most of the facilities meet Accessibility Guidelines
- (4) Facilities meet Accessibility Guidelines
- (5) Entire facility developed/renovated using principles of Universal Design

**TABLE 4.1: NON-CITY OWNED RECREATIONAL AREAS**

# 4. NATURAL FEATURES/PARKS & RECREATION FACILITIES/PUBLIC LANDS

Wisconsin and Iron River, where it splits north and south.

## **Bewabic State Park**

Bewabic State Park, which includes the Fortune Lakes is located approximately four miles west of Crystal Falls on Highway U.S. 2. The park contains 200 acres and offers swimming, fishing, woodland hiking, 144 campsites, water skiing, boat launch and rentals. This park is handicap accessible and open year round. See Map #3 for park location.

## **Pentoga Park**

Pentoga Park is located approximately 10 miles southwest of the City of Crystal Falls on Chicagoan Lake. The park is owned and operated by Iron County. The park consists of: 160 acres providing 100 campsites, picnic facilities, playground apparatus, hiking trails, swimming, fishing, canoe and boat rental, launch facilities, water skiing, miniature golf and a visitor's center. The park opens

on the end of May and closes in early September.

## **Other Recreational Facilities**

The above are the facilities located in the city, passing through or major sites within the county. There are many smaller facilities located within the county as well, operated and maintained by other governmental units including camp grounds, museums, historical sites, lake sites, and river boat launch sites.



FIGURE 4.8 - VETERAN'S PARK



**REGIONAL RECREATIONAL FACILITIES**

**LEGEND:**

	CITY BOUNDARY		CITY OWNED TRAILS
	MAJOR HIGHWAY		SNOWMOBILE TRAILS
	WATER BODIES		IRON-BELLE TRAIL
	STATE PARK		



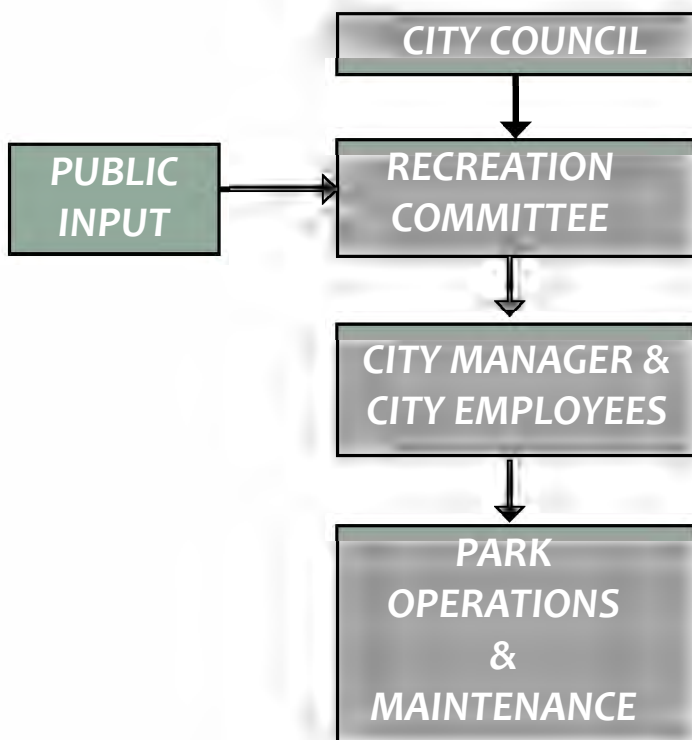
SCALE: 1" = 6000'-0"  
 0 1500 3000 6000

**FIGURE 4.9 PARK & RECREATION MAP**

# 4. NATURAL FEATURES/PARKS & RECREATION FACILITIES/PUBLIC LANDS

## ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

In the City of Crystal Falls, park and recreation facilities are managed primarily by the City Manager, with oversight by the City Council. A Recreation Committee provides input and recommendations on management and development of the City's parks and recreation facilities. An organization chart is shown below. The City supports and maintains recreation facilities through annual General Fund appropriations. Maintenance functions are carried out by City employees.



**TABLE 4.2: PARK AND RECREATION ORGANIZATIONAL CHART**

## Description of the Recreation Planning Process

The development of the City of Crystal Falls Community Parks and Recreation Plan was conducted as a part of preparing a new City Master Plan. The planning process involved residents, the Planning Commission, and the Recreation Committee.

A Recreation Plan Open House for the purpose of soliciting public involvement was held on July 19, 2021. This event was publicized by a published public notice and posting on the City website. Approximately 15 persons attended the Open House, and had informal discussions about current and future recreation projects.

Following the preparation of the draft Master Plan/Recreation Plan, a notice was published in the Iron County Reporter on August 24, 2021, and started the 30-day public comment period. The notice indicated the Recreation Plan was available for viewing on the City website and at the City offices. The same advertisement advised citizens where to obtain a copy of the draft Master/Recreation Plan, as well as provide notice of the Public Hearing scheduled for September 27, 2021.

The City Recreation Committee met to review the Master Plan, specifically the Recreation Chapter, on September 20, 2021, and approved the document.

The Public Hearing was held by the Crystal Falls Planning Commission on the Master Plan/Recreation Plan on September 27, 2021, to receive any public comments or concerns on the draft plan. The Planning Commission approved the Master Plan following the Public Hearing. The City Council met and approved the Master Plan that same day.

## Action Plan

The following table identifies proposed recreation improvement projects in the next five (5) years:

YEAR	PROJECT	COST	LEAD AGENCY	FUNDING SOURCE
2021-22	Extend the Paint River Boardwalk 5,000 feet to Veterans Park	\$4,700	CITY	CITY
2022	Evaluate Runkle Park Operations and prepare new Master Plan	unknown	RECREATION COMMITTEE & PLANNING COMMISSION	CITY
	Install bike repair station downtown	unknown	CITY	CITY
2023	RE-establish ski trails at Crystella	unknown	CRYSTELLA	CRYSTELLA

**TABLE 4.3: 5-YEAR ACTION PLAN**

## Annual Recreation Budget

The City annual budget for Recreation Operations and Maintenance is \$163,810.

## Recreation Plan Attachments

The following Recreation Plan documentation is provided in the Master Plan Appendix, as required to meet DNR Recreation Plan requirements:

Community Parks and Recreation Checklist Form

PR1924

Post Completion Self-Certification Reports Form

PR1944

Park funding sign photos

Summary of Open House Public Comments

Notice of Public Review Draft Availability and Public Hearing (copy of ad/affidavit)

Plan Adoption Documents

Official City Council Resolution

Planning Commission Resolution

Minutes of the Public Hearing

Letter of Transmittal to WUPPDR

# 4. NATURAL FEATURES/PARKS & RECREATION FACILITIES/PUBLIC LANDS

## GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Goals and Strategies have been developed for the City of Crystal Falls Parks and Recreation. These are based upon the following guiding principles:

- Take care of what we have before allocating resources on new projects.
- Enhance existing parks and facilities after we have taken care of what we have.
- Create new opportunities when we have made the enhancements that are needed to existing facilities
- Protect the environment.
- Provide health and wellness opportunities.
- Provide safe places for children and families to play.

### Goal 1:

Maintain existing City park facilities

#### STRATEGY 1.1

- Create a process to evaluate opportunities to resolve the annual operating deficit at the Runkle Park campground that might include:
  - o Leasing the park and campground as is to a private entity.
  - o Re-imagining the park through a new park master plan that may or may not include camping.

### Goal 2:

Support the continued development of the Iron Belle Trail.

#### STRATEGY 2.1

Locate a bike repair station in downtown

#### STRATEGY 2.2

Identify and implement trail connections within the City to improve access to the Iron Belle Trail.

#### STRATEGY 2.3

Design and implement a wayfinding sign system.

### Goal 3:

Engage in efforts in support of local and regional collaboration for improving recreational opportunities.

#### STRATEGY 3.1

Continue to work with the Forest Park School District in support of providing needed recreation facilities and opportunities.

### Goal 4:

Consider opportunities to use existing park facilities in the winter

#### STRATEGY 4.1

Consider adding winter uses to the Runkle Lake Park and the Paint River Boardwalk/Trail.

#### STRATEGY 4.2

Work with the Crystella Recreation Authority to continue improvements to the ski area.

#### STRATEGY 4.3

Cooperate with volunteer efforts to develop a ski trail/hiking trail on City property surrounding the Crystella Ski Hill.

### Goal 5:

Enhance the Museum Park as a central gathering place in the downtown district.

#### STRATEGY 5.2

Prepare a Master Plan for the Museum Park area.



**FIGURE 4.10 - FISHING SITE AT LINCOLN PARK**

# 5. CITY INFRASTRUCTURE, PUBLIC FACILITIES, SAFETY & EMERGENCY SERVICES

Services such as public safety, water, wastewater systems, street, park operations, and solid waste disposal are essential to a community's homes and businesses. Facilities, such as government buildings, schools, hospitals, parks, etc. are the physical structures required for these services. The condition, efficiency and capacity of services and facilities are indicators of community's governance and administration.

Some of these facilities and services are provided directly by the City of Crystal Falls, sometimes under

joint arrangements with other units of government, or by contract. Other facilities and services are provided by other local, county, state or federal agencies, or by the private sector.

As part of the Master Plan, these services and facilities are described and evaluated as to their present condition and adequacy to meet present and future needs of the City.

## CITY FACILITIES

### *City Hall*

The Crystal Falls City Hall is located at 401 Superior Avenue. Built in 1914, the City Hall houses most City offices, including the City Manager, City Clerk/Treasurer, City Council chambers, police and fire departments, electric department, and public works department. Shop and garage facilities for the fire, electric, and public departments are also located at City Hall, as is a mechanic shop and garage. The third floor of the City Hall building is home to an auditorium with a balcony and stage area. The entrance on the west side of City Hall is handicapped accessible, and accessible restrooms are located on all three floors of the building. An elevator was installed in 1994, at the same time as the accessible restrooms.

### *Other City Offices/Buildings*

The Cemetery office is located at the cemetery. A caretaker's cabin, bathrooms, wigwam, and changing house are located at Runkle Lake Park, and there is a warming house at the municipal ski hill. The electric and public works department store equipment and materials at a warehouse at the former Bristol Mine site.



FIGURE 5.0 - CITY HALL

## CITY SERVICES

### **Municipal Water and Wastewater Systems**

The City of Crystal Falls provides municipal water and wastewater treatment services to City residents as well as some residents of Crystal Falls Township.

### **Water System**

The municipal water system obtains water from Crystal Falls Township at a valve located in the City's Industrial Park. The water is then pumped to a 200,000 gallon elevated storage tank located near the Iron County Courthouse. The tank provides gravity flow to the entire service area for the system. The City has made several water system improvements; however, many areas of the city are still supported by an aging infrastructure. The water provided to all customers in the City is monitored by a metering system to insure correct billing for usage but also allows for timely alerts for water breaks.

The City is working towards implementation of a major water system improvement. The Wagner-Fairbanks water-main project will replace an aging main as well as any galvanized service lines encountered during construction. It is anticipated that the project will be constructed in 2023.

### **Wastewater System**

The wastewater treatment is a lagoon system, constructed in approximately 1968. The system is currently in compliance with state and federal standards. There are areas in the City that are not served by the wastewater system, and these



**FIGURE 5.1 - HYDROELECTRIC DAM**

residents must rely on on-site systems such as septic tanks. These areas are generally not economically feasible to serve with sewer service because of low density of development.

A major wastewater lift station, force main, and lagoon upgrade project is scheduled to begin in the fall of 2021. The \$8.5 million project is being financed through a Rural Development grant and loan combination.

### **Storm Water System**

Separation of storm and sanitary sewers began in 1993-94. The first phase of the project was along Crystal Avenue, followed by a phase two project encompassing the remainder of the City with the exception of Superior Avenue. Phase Three of the sewer separation work was constructed in 2008 in conjunction with a planned downtown streetscape project using MOOT funds.

The areas outside of the City limits which are served by City water and sewer are those areas along U.S.

# 5. CITY INFRASTRUCTURE, PUBLIC FACILITIES, SAFETY & EMERGENCY SERVICES

2 west where the irregular corporate limit results in areas under the jurisdiction of the Township being intermingled with the City.

## **Electric Department**

The City of Crystal Falls owns a hydroelectric dam on the Paint River. The dam and associated hydroelectric power plant produce about one megawatt of electricity, which provides approximately one-third of the City's needs. Additional power is purchased from WE Energies through a contract with WPPI and all power is distributed on City-owned lines. The automated hydro plant and dam are in good condition.

Production of hydroelectric power allows the City to keep electrical rates low, and offer an attractive rate to large users such as industrial concerns.

The City's affiliation with WPPI (Wisconsin Public Power Inc) brings many advantages to the operation. An ARRA Grant in 2010 allowed for the purchase and installation of "smart meters". This has served to bring the monitoring of the electric usage by City customers to a level of advanced technology.

## **Law Enforcement**

The Crystal Falls Police Department is housed at City Hall and provides limited law enforcement protection to the City. The department is staffed by one full-time officer. The Crystal Falls Police Department assists the Iron County Sheriff's Department by providing backup as needed for incidents outside the City, and the Sheriff's Department provides backup in the City. The Iron County Sheriff's Department also provides County-wide animal control services, marine, ORV and snowmobile patrol, and supports the volunteer

search and rescue team. The Sheriff's department office and 50-bed correctional facility are housed at the Iron County Courthouse Complex in Crystal Falls. The animal shelter is located in the City of Iron River. The snowmobile and ATV patrols are provided by the Sheriff's department in cooperation with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources

## **Fire Protection**

The Crystal Falls Township Fire Department provides protection for the City of Crystal Falls through a contract. Volunteer firefighters staff the department, offices and equipment are located in Crystal Falls at the City Hall complex. In addition to responding to calls within the area served by the department, response is provided through mutual aid to other departments as needed.

## **Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling**

Weekly curbside garbage pickup is provided to all City residents and businesses on Monday of each week. The City contracts with Waste Management (WM) to provide this service. WM provides trash containers, although residents may choose the option to purchase stickers for their own bags instead of using the trash containers. Recyclable items are also collected and recycle bins are provided for this. Once a year, residents may have junk picked up. Hazardous material collection is available upon request. Yard waste is picked up in spring and fall by the City, as these items are not picked up by WM.

## **Cemetery**

The City of Crystal Falls maintains a cemetery, known as Evergreen Cemetery, in the eastern part of the City. A variety of sizes of lots are available for purchase. Costs for burials from outside the local area (the City of Crystal Falls, Crystal Falls, Mansfield and Mastodon townships) are higher. The cemetery is of adequate size to provide for the area's needs.

## **Other Emergency Services**

Ambulance service is provided by Aspirus Hospital. The primary base for this service is near the Aspirus Hospital in Iron River. An ambulance and attendants use the Aspirus Clinic located at the U.S.2/U.S.141 and Bristol Mine Road intersection as a “home base” in the Crystal Falls community.

Iron County is served by an enhanced 911 system, wherein a single call to 911 serves to dispatch the appropriate emergency services. The dispatch center is located at the Iron County Sheriff’s Department, and is staffed 24 hours per day, seven days a week. In 2015 the ability to send text messages to the 911 dispatch system was added.

## **Internet and Cable TV**

High speed Internet is now considered critical

community infrastructure. High-speed Internet and cable TV are offered to City residents through a variety of providers including Astrea, ATT, Merrit and satellite providers. Both ATT and Baraga Telephone provide telephone and DSL high speed Internet service in Crystal Falls.

## **EDUCATIONAL SERVICES AND FACILITIES**

The Forest Park School District provides education for students in grades kindergarten through 12 in the City of Crystal Falls as well as in Crystal Falls, Hematite, Mansfield and Mastodon townships. Both the elementary and high schools are located in the City of Crystal Falls, at 801 Forest Parkway. The high school was constructed in 1970, and the elementary school in 1998. In 2020 – 2021, 443 students were enrolled.



**FIGURE 5.2 - FOREST PARK SCHOOL**

# 5. CITY INFRASTRUCTURE, PUBLIC FACILITIES, SAFETY & EMERGENCY SERVICES

Also available is the Dickinson-Iron Intermediate School District (Technical Education Center) which is located in Kingsford, MI on North Boulevard. The ISO is comprised of four (4) departments; Early Childhood Education, General Services, Special Education, and Technical Education Services. The

ISD serves the surrounding school districts: Forest Park, Norway Vulcan, Iron Mountain, Breitung Township, West Iron County, and North Dickinson.

Local residents desiring to continue their education beyond high school must travel from the community in order to do so. Several community colleges and universities serve residents of the Upper Peninsula, including Michigan Technological University (85 miles) and Northern Michigan University (72 miles). Bay College also offers classes from two campuses, one in Iron Mountain (28 miles) and in Escanaba (82 miles).

## Health Care

A variety of health care professionals, including doctors, dentists, home health care, and other specialties, serve residents of Crystal Falls. The Aspirus Hospital, located in Iron River, provides in- and out-patient services; Dickinson County Memorial Hospital in Iron Mountain, about 30 miles away, is also close enough to provide services on a routine basis. Marquette General Hospital in Marquette provides regional health care services, with access to specialists which might not be available locally.

Long-term skilled nursing care is provided at the Iron County Medical Care Facility about two miles west of Crystal Falls. The Medical Care Facility has services for Alzheimer's patients and those suffering from dementia.

The Iron County Medical Care Facility also provides the Victorian Heights Assisted Living facility, with 13 studio and 12 I-bedroom units. Assisted living offers residents the opportunity to live independently with maintenance, most



FIGURE 5.3 - IRON COUNTY COURTHOUSE

utilities, light housekeeping and other services included in the monthly cost. While some personal care is available, assisted living is designed for those still able to live on their own, rather than requiring assistance with daily activities.

Meals are available, although each unit has kitchen facilities and residents may prepare their own meals. Assisted living is a relatively recent phenomenon, and may become more commonplace as the population ages.

### **Other Utilities**

Natural gas is provided throughout most of the City by DTE Energy, formerly known as Michcon. Availability of natural gas in Iron County is generally limited to the cities and the primary highway corridors.

Local telephone service throughout the City is provided by AT&T and by Baraga Telephone. A variety of long distance providers also serve the community, and customers can select their own provider based on rates, quality of service, etc.

### **Library**

The Crystal Falls District-Community Library is located at 237 Superior Avenue in Crystal Falls. In addition to its collection of books and magazines, the library offers movie rentals, a copy and fax machine, laminating, interlibrary loan for books not available locally, and computers with Internet access available for use by library patrons. The library is open Monday-Saturday.

### **Iron County Courthouse**

The historic Iron County Courthouse is located in Crystal Falls, at the top of the hill overlooking the Paint River. Built in 1890, the Courthouse was designed by architect J.C. Clancy and cost about \$40,000 to construct. The clock tower and bell were added later. The courthouse and associated

buildings house Iron County offices. The location of the Courthouse in Crystal Falls draws county residents to the community to conduct business, and the unique structure is an attractive feature of the community.

### **Elderly Services**

Nutrition, social and information programs are provided through centers operated by the Dickinson-Iron Community Services Agency. Senior centers are maintained in several location in Iron County, including the Crystal Falls location at 601 Marquette Avenue. The Center is open Monday through Friday and Sunday; hours of operation vary depending on the day of the week and the programs offered.

## **GOALS AND STRATEGIES**

### **Goal 1:**

Maintain and improve City water and sewer systems.

#### **STRATEGY 1.1**

Implement the sewer lift station, force main and lagoon upgrade project.

#### **STRATEGY 1.2**

Implement the Wagner-Fairbanks water main replacement project/

### **Goal 2:**

Continue to collaborate with regional jurisdictions for services, such as fire and police protection.

# 6. TRANSPORTATION: VEHICULAR, PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE

Local roads and streets draw the most attention from residents and visitors. All residents use roads, either as drivers of vehicles, or as passengers, or depend on them for the transport of good needed for daily life. People also use roads, and sidewalks, for active transportation and recreational activities such as walking, bicycling, roller blading, etc. Unlike underground infrastructure such as water and sewer lines, which are equally vital to a community,

roads are highly visible, and deteriorated roads and bridges are readily observed by all who travel them.

Michigan Act 51 of 1951 requires that all counties, incorporated cities, and villages establish and maintain road systems under their jurisdiction, as distinct from state jurisdiction, as identified on the City's official Act 51 map.

## STATE TRUNKLINE HIGHWAYS

The state trunkline system includes state and federal highways that connect communities to other areas within the same county, state and other states. These roadways provide the highest level of traffic mobility for the traveling public. While the state trunkline system carries more than half the total statewide traffic, it makes up only eight percent of total Michigan road miles. State and federal highways are designed by the prefixes "M" and "U.S." respectively.

Three State and Federal highways serve the City of Crystal Falls. U.S. Highway 2 connects Crystal Falls with St. Ignace to the east and Wisconsin to the west, continuing on west as far as the Pacific coast. U.S. Highway 141 runs concurrently with U.S. Highway 2 as it enters the city from the south, but then continues northward to intersect with M-28 and U.S. 41. U.S. 141 provides connections to Houghton to the north and to Green Bay and points beyond to the south. Finally, M-69 enters the city from the



FIGURE 6.0 - M-69

east, forming Superior Avenue until it terminates at the intersection with U.S. 2/141 at South 5th street. M-69 provides the most direct access from Escanaba. This state trunkline network offers good highway access to the City of Crystal Falls.

Act 51 requires that MDOT bear all maintenance costs consistent with department standards and specifications for all state highways including those within incorporated communities. In a city the size of Crystal Falls, no cost sharing at the local level is required. MDOT contracts with the City of Crystal Falls for maintenance and snow management on the highways that run through the City.

### County Road System:

County roads are classified as primary and local. Local roads comprise the most miles in the county system, but have the lowest level of traffic. Road funding is based on the mileage of each road system. Roads within the City are not included in the county system; however, city streets often continue outside corporate limits as county roads, providing further access to surrounding areas. There are 269.9 miles of primary roads and 364.0 miles of local roads in Iron County.

### Major Street System:

A system of major streets in each incorporated city or village is approved by the state highway commission pursuant to P.A. 51. Major streets are selected by the City of Crystal Falls on the basis of greatest general importance. Streets may be added or deleted from the system subject to approval of the state highway commissioner. The City has an inventory of 7.02 miles of Major Streets within its boundaries.

### Local Street System:

City streets, exclusive of state trunklines, county roads and those included in the major street system,

make up the local street system. The process of approval, additions and deletions is the same as with other road system designations. The City has an inventory of 14.82 miles of Local Streets within its boundaries. Iron County road millage does provide some funding for local streets in the City.

## TRAFFIC VOLUMES

The Michigan Department of Transportation conducts annual vehicle counts on highways. The Average Daily Total (ADT) is used to identify traffic trends and needs for improvements. The 2020 ADT for highways running through the City of Crystal Falls are listed below:

2020 Average Daily Total (ADT)		
Highway	Location	ADT
U.S. 2/141	South of City Limits	3,358
U.S. 2/141	West of Downtown	6,571
U.S. 141	North of U.S. 2	3,164
M-69	Crystal Avenue	3,268
M-69	East of City Limits	1,887

**TABLE 6.0: ADT TRAFFIC COUNTS**

Traffic counts/ADT have remained very stable for the last 20 years through the City of Crystal Falls.

## TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Planning for transportation improvements takes place at both the state and local level. The Michigan Department of Transportation maintains a statewide long-range transportation plan, and holds hearings around the state to gather input regarding residents' needs and desires. In addition to the long-

# 6. TRANSPORTATION: VEHICULAR, PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE

range plan, MDOT prepares a five-year program for road improvements statewide. The various phases, such as right-of-way acquisition, design, and construction, are scheduled over a multi-year period so as to keep large projects on track.

Local planning efforts consist of the City's annual prioritizing of street improvement projects, as well as small urban area task force meetings to plan projects for Category F funding. Some local planning efforts address specific issues, and may receive support from MDOT, as in the case of corridor studies and access management plans.

## **SNOWMOBILE/ATV TRAILS**

The Iron Range motorized trail runs through Crystal Falls. This trail is maintained as part of a regional motorized sports trail network providing snowmobilers and ATV riders a safe trail around the region.

## **NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES**

In recent years, the construction of non-motorized facilities has increased in many areas in response to public interest. Walking and bicycling are among the top five individual exercise activities according to a national survey (walking is number one). Alternate modes of transportation are encouraged and made safer by facilities such as sidewalks, bike lanes and walking paths. A non-motorized path was constructed in 2010 from Park Street in Crystal Falls to the Iron County Medicare Facility in Crystal Falls Township. This had added greatly to the walkability of the Crystal Falls Community.

Fortunately, most of the City of Crystal Falls has sidewalks that have connected residents to their neighborhoods, schools, stores and workplaces for many years. Sidewalks and bike paths help promote a sense of neighborhood and community, as well as potentially reduce traffic congestion. Where

## **Access Management**

Access management refers to long-term planning for access to highway corridors, in order to preserve the long-term capacity of the roadway, improve safety, and maintain accessibility. Access management examines the spacing and location of driveways, access roads and intersections, and access management plans can recommend such measures as driveway consolidations, front or rear access roads, turn lanes, intersection realignments, addition or removal of traffic control devices, and other measures. Implementation can involve use of zoning and subdivision control ordinances, private road ordinances, Road Commission standards for subdivision design, and use of local review boards in granting driveway permits.

Access management plans are generally developed cooperatively by local units of government within a specific corridor area, with technical assistance from MDOT. Local committees enter into a Memorandum of Understanding to insure commitment to the planning process and implementation, and a consultant is usually retained to develop the actual plan by working closely with MDOT and the corridor group. At this time, these efforts are usually funded by MDOT.



**FIGURE 6.1 - RUNKLE LAKE PARK TRAIL**

sidewalks are not present, the City’s residential streets generally have light traffic that allows for safe walking and bicycling.

The City of Crystal Falls replaces deteriorated sidewalks, on a 50/50 cost sharing basis.

Winter, with its snow and cold temperatures, creates challenges for walking. The City performs winter maintenance/snow plowing on sidewalks along U.S. 2/141, and M 69 through the City. In neighborhoods, sidewalk snow removal is sporadic, forcing walkers to use streets as needed.

The Riverwalk that connects Lincoln Park near M-69 with the Paint River consists of a boardwalk and concrete pathway, and offers a fishing pier, benches, and the natural environment of the river. There are plans to expand this walk

north to the power plant bridge in the near future.

The Iron Belle Trail is a State of Michigan initiative to create a non-motorized trail from Belle Isle, in Detroit, to Ironwood, on the far western end of the Upper Peninsula. This trail follows U.S. 2 and M-69 through the City.

## **Non Motorized Transportation Funding**

Funding for non-motorized transportation projects is available on a competitive basis through several grant programs. The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) is a competitive grant program that funds projects such as bike paths, streetscapes, and historic preservation of transportation facilities that enhance Michigan’s intermodal transportation system, promote walkability, and improve quality of life for Michigan citizens. The Safe Routes to School (SRTS) grant program is a school-based international movement to make it safe, convenient and fun for children, including those with disabilities, to bicycle and walk to school.

# 6. TRANSPORTATION: VEHICULAR, PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE

## AIR SERVICE

The nearest airport providing commercial and charter passenger service is the Ford Airport in Kingsford, a distance of about 30 miles. Delta Airlines provides several daily flight service to and from Minneapolis-St. Paul, and one flight a day to Detroit.

Other airports offering a greater selection of airlines and destinations are located at a further distance. The Marquette County Airport, located at the former KI Sawyer Air Force Base near Gwinn is served by American Eagle, Northwest and Midwest Connect, and is about 80 miles away. Green Bay is served by several airlines with both jet and turboprop service, and is located about 100 miles from Crystal Falls. Passenger service is also available at Escanaba, about 80 miles away, which is served by Midwest Connect with service to Milwaukee.

## RAIL SERVICE

Crystal Falls no longer has railroad service within the city. Most of the active rail lines in the Upper Peninsula are owned and operated by Canadian National, which acquired the Wisconsin Central Ltd. Railroad in 2001. The rail line from Amasa to Sagola, owned by CN, is the closest active rail line to the City. This line cuts across Crystal Falls Township, but does not enter the city.

While the importance of rail transportation has declined in recent years in the U.S., it remains a critical form of transportation in many areas. The presence of rail service could be a potential advantage in attracting new industry to the area, if a spur could be extended to the industrial park.

## PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Transportation for elderly and handicapped persons is provided by the Dickinson-Iron Community

Services Agency on a demand-response basis. No public transportation system exists in the county. There is no taxi service available in Crystal Falls. This lack of public transportation service means that those in need of transportation must rely on friends, relatives and neighbors.

## GOALS AND STRATEGIES

### Goal 1:

Maintain and update existing streets.

#### STRATEGY 1.1

Inventory the condition of City streets using the Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (Paser) system and/or other objective program to identify the streets most in need of repaving and/or reconstruction.

#### STRATEGY 1.2

With the City's financial position improving, develop a Capital Improvements Plan to prioritize and project street improvements.

### Goal 2:

Improve non-motorized/pedestrian facilities.

#### STRATEGY 2.1

Inventory the condition of existing sidewalks and prioritize replacement.

#### STRATEGY 2.2

When street corners are reconstructed, the corner curbing should be made ADA compliant.

#### STRATEGY 2.3

Work with MDOT to identify and implement appropriate crosswalk locations on U.S. 2/141 and M-69, especially in downtown, near the Forest Park School, and near Lincoln Park/Paint River Boardwalk.



**LEGEND:**



**FIGURE 6.2 TRANSPORTATION MAP**

# 7. FUTURE LAND USE & ZONING PLAN

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Natural resources, history and transportation have shaped the existing land use in the City of Crystal Falls. From its early beginnings as an iron mining town, Crystal Falls has evolved to its current function as a residential and recreational services community, as well as providing industrial employment opportunities.

This chapter of the Master Plan provides a Future Land Use Plan, Land Use Goals and Strategies, as well as a Zoning Plan.

## EXISTING LAND USE

The City of Crystal Falls contains a variety of land uses that include residential, commercial, industrial and vacant properties. The City is situated on a hill with steep slopes, providing dramatic views of the surrounding forested land.

Existing land use in the City of Crystal Falls is described as follows:

The downtown district is located on either side of Crystal Avenue (M-69) and includes a number of historic buildings, civic, commercial, housing, and office land uses. Some residential units are located above commercial space in downtown buildings. The downtown includes a number of vacant lots suitable for new infill construction of mixed use retail, office and residential buildings.

The U.S. 2/141 west corridor is characterized by a mix of older and newer commercial development, residential land use, and a few vacant properties.

There are several commercial/office land uses on Fifth Street, and a popular restaurant (U.S.2/41 South).

Industrial land uses are located north and west of the downtown.

Residential neighborhoods of varying densities surround the central core of the City.

## FUTURE LAND USE

For the most part, the future land use of Crystal Falls will follow the existing land use patterns and zoning designations.

### *Residential*

There are currently 4 zoning districts for residential land use in the City, based upon different lot sizes and densities.

As evidenced by the number and type of building permits issued in recent years, Crystal Falls lags behind the surrounding townships in the number of permits issued for new construction. Most of the new housing being built in Iron County is being built in the townships, where lake shore properties, large lots, and attractive home sites are available.

Many of the city neighborhoods are in good condition and provide affordable housing opportunities. These neighborhoods should be protected by enforcement of building and zoning codes. Concerns about the number and quality of rental units should be addressed by restricting the number of rental units in a single family-type home to two or (duplex unit), requiring adequate off-street parking in the rear or to the side of the homes, and enforcing zoning and building codes.

The platted areas in Crystal Falls are largely built out. Some vacant lots are available but are too small to accommodate new development in the form of large single-family homes with multi-vehicle garages.

However, as discussed in Chapter 3, there is a growing need for housing other than large homes on suburban-type lots. There is a demand for apartments, and multi-family housing formats such

as townhouses, and smaller sized homes for downsizing households. Development of other housing formats frees up existing homes for young families and entry-level buyers.

There are several areas in the city which are potentially suitable for residential development. In the northeastern corner of the city, northwest of Runkle Lake Park, lies a parcel which could offer attractive home sites. Municipal utilities are available nearby, and could be extended.

Areas along the Paint River, including some river frontage and other areas with views of the river, could be developed for upscale residential use. Some of this property along the river is city-owned, while other areas are owned by private individuals.

The City owns a 70 acre parcel east of U.S. 2 along the south City boundary that could be developed for commercial and residential development. There may also be areas near the ski hill which could support residential development as well. The City owns 160 acres near the ski hill, some of which is in Crystal Falls Township. This area offers great potential for combining housing and recreational development to complement the ski hill, such as



**FIGURE 7.0 - DOWNTOWN CRYSTAL FALLS**

cross country ski trails, biking and hiking trails, etc. Trails and greenways to connect this area to the Riverwalk, the golf course, and Runkle Lake Park are also envisioned, offering both residents and visitors the opportunity for non-motorized access throughout the community

### **Downtown Commercial**

Downtown Crystal Falls and Superior Avenue presents a charming image, with its hilltop terminus at the Iron County Courthouse. While several buildings are somewhat run down, others have been renovated and new uses have emerged in

# 7. FUTURE LAND USE & ZONING PLAN

other buildings. The downtown streetscape looks good but additional landscaping and amenities should be implemented.

A better streetscape and community gateway the U.S. 2/141 and M-69 intersection would help improve the image of the highway and enhance business development downtown. Future commercial land use requiring small sites in the City of Crystal Falls should be directed to downtown, as recommended elsewhere in this plan.

Development of vacant and underutilized properties in the Downtown District should be encouraged to include commercial on the ground floor and office or residential uses on upper levels.

## **General Business**

This district is focused on the U.S. 2/41 corridor west of downtown, and the south gateway to the City. Land immediately east of U.S.2 at the south

gateway to the City should be rezoned to allow for commercial development, such as a hotel or other tourism service businesses.

## **Mixed Use**

This district includes the corridor from downtown south through the existing residential neighborhood, to encourage redevelopment of existing housing to office and commercial use.

## **Industrial**

Several areas are designated for industry. East of downtown, and at the western edge of the City. The zoning ordinance has 2 zoning districts for industrial development.



FIGURE 7.1 - SUPERIOR AVENUE, DOWNTOWN CRYSTAL FALLS

## GOALS AND STRATEGIES

### Goal 1:

Encourage the development of new single and multi-family housing in the City, and maintain/improve current residential areas.

#### STRATEGY 1.1

Identify City-owned properties suitable for residential development and explore opportunities for developing a variety of housing options.

**STRATEGY 1.2:** Consider extending municipal infrastructure to areas unserved by infrastructure but suitable for development. Costs for such infrastructure would preferably be covered by the developer.

**STRATEGY 1.3:** Review the Zoning Ordinance and other City ordinances, and amend if necessary to encourage maintenance of existing residential neighborhoods, eliminate blight, and rehabilitation/removal of deteriorated structures

**STRATEGY 1.4:** Utilize the Zoning Ordinance and other local regulations to encourage consistency and connectivity between old and new neighborhoods, e.g. by discouraging lengthy cul-de-sac streets and encouraging the extension of the grid street system into new development.

#### STRATEGY 1.5

Adopt and enforce appropriate

blight and rental-inspection ordinances and utilize Municipal Civil Infractions methodology for enforcement.

#### STRATEGY 1.6

Encourage maintenance/upkeep of properties with incentives and volunteer efforts.

#### STRATEGY 1.7

Improve maintenance and reconstruction of infrastructure/roads in the neighborhoods to encourage private investment.

## Smart Growth Tenants

- **Create a range of housing opportunities and choices.**
- **Build/enhance walkable neighborhoods**
- **Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration**
- **Foster a distinctive, attractive community with a strong sense of place**
- **Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost-effective**
- **Mix land uses**
- **Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas**
- **Provide a variety of transportation choices**

# 7. FUTURE LAND USE & ZONING PLAN

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## **STRATEGY 1.8**

Add small neighborhood parks, gathering areas, trails/trail connections, and community gardens as needed or desired within neighborhoods.

## **Goal 2:**

Ensure that new development follows Smart Growth tenets, such as prioritizing compact development and channeling new development to make the best use of existing infrastructure. This will enhance efficiency in public service provision and infrastructure maintenance, and help preserve natural resource lands

## **STRATEGY 2.1**

Provide incentives for ground-floor retail combined with upper-level residential uses, including the use of tax increment financing, low-income tax credits (affordable housing), and façade improvement funds, and reduced land cost.

## **STRATEGY 2.2**

Prioritize the rehabilitation or reuse of vacant and underutilized properties or the conversion of single-uses into mixed-use developments as a preferred strategy over new development.

## **Goal 3:**

Foster a distinctive, attractive community with a strong sense of place.

## **STRATEGY 3.1**

Encourage new development or redevelopment that is compatible with the scale and architecture of existing properties (especially in the traditional, historic neighborhoods and Downtown) while preserving existing natural features as much as possible.

## **STRATEGY 3.2**

Require landscaping or public art or other such aesthetic treatment along long, blank walls to improve community aesthetics, and encourage pedestrian activity.

## **STRATEGY 3.3**

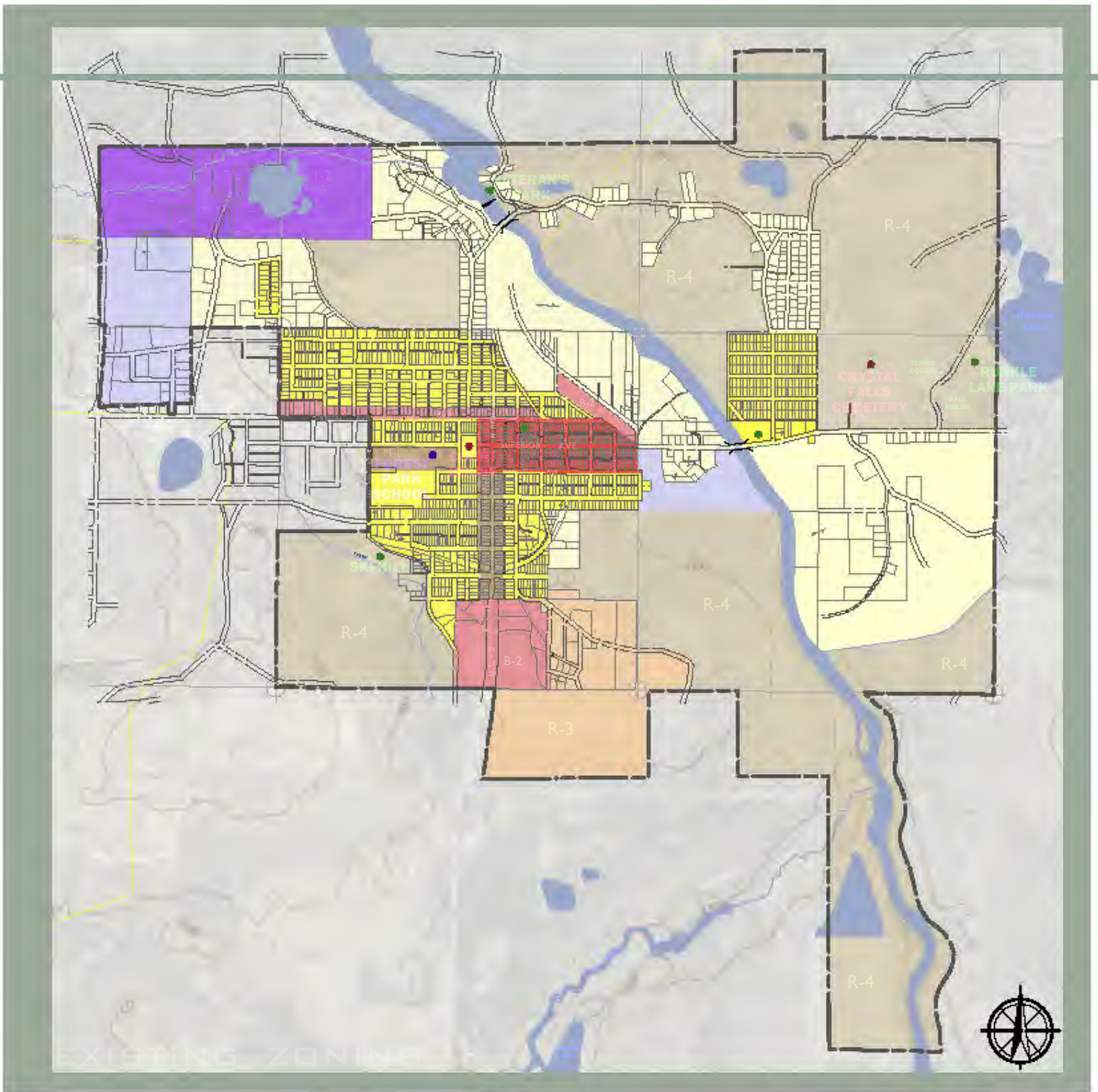
Pursue streetscaping and aesthetic enhancements for the U.S.2/141 corridor through the City, including pedestrian scale lighting, street trees, bicycle amenities such as parking facilities, bicycle lanes, and wayfinding and gateway signage.

## **STRATEGY 3.4**

Implement access management principles to create a safer, more aesthetic highway corridor while preserving function and capacity of the highway system while supporting non-motorized transportation elements.

## **STRATEGY 3.5**

Follow smart growth and access management principles when considering commercial development at the south gateway to the City on U.S.2.



**LEGEND:**

**EXISTING ZONING CATEGORIES**


**FIGURE 7.2 EXISTING ZONING MAP**

# 7. FUTURE LAND USE & ZONING PLAN

## ZONING PLAN

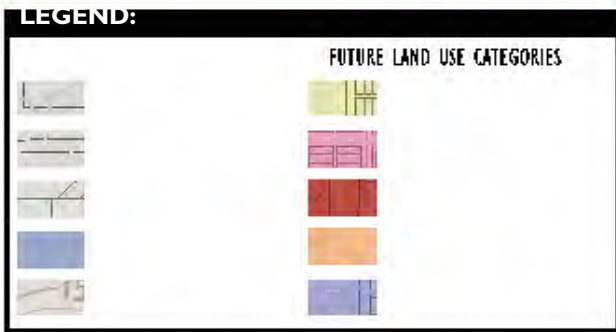
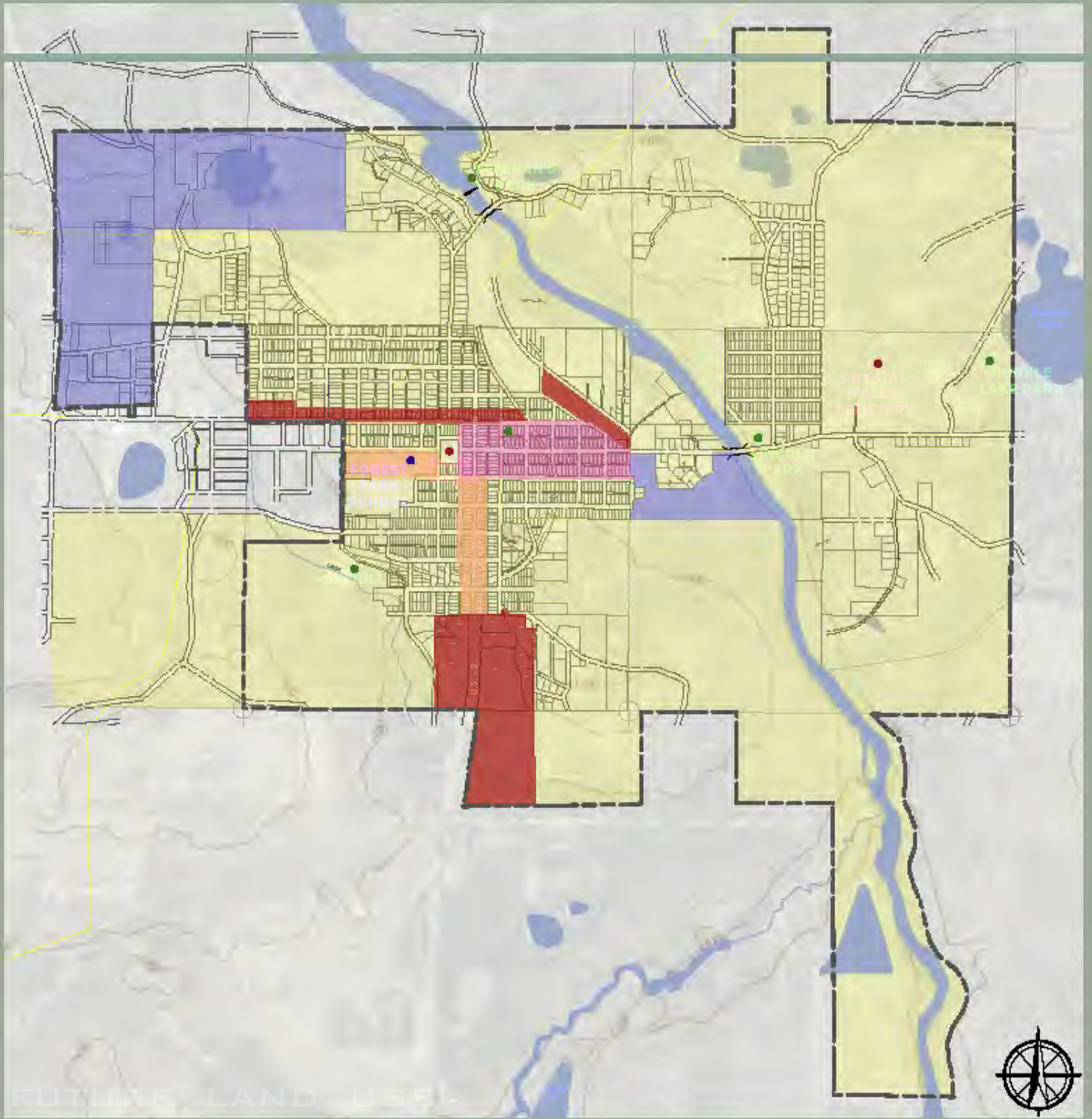
This plan satisfies the requirement of P.A. 33 of 2008 for a local unit of government that has adopted a zoning ordinance, to have a zoning plan within the master plan, including an explanation of how the land use categories on the future land use map relate to the districts on the zoning map.

<i>FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORY</i>	<i>ZONING CATEGORY</i>
Single-Family Residence Two Family Residence Multi-family Residence	R-1 - R4
Downtown Commercial	B-1
Commercial	B-2
Mixed-Use	M
Industrial	I-1 and I-2

**TABLE 7.1 - COMPARISON OF FUTURE LAND USE TO ZONING**

1. Changes in demographics, such as an aging population, and housing preferences, including a trend towards smaller homes, should be addressed in the Zoning Ordinance.
2. Consider allowing Accessory Dwelling Units for family members, as free-standing structures or a unit in the home, as a Special Use in Residential Districts.
3. Consider reducing minimum residential unit size requirements and allowing for micro units less than 500 square feet (tiny houses) as a Special Use in Residential Districts
4. Encourage non-motorized transportation by adding bicycle parking, pedestrian access and lighting to Site Plan Review standards
5. Strengthen existing site plan and development standards to allow for green roofs, preservation

- of existing trees, native non-invasive landscaping, rain gardens, bioswales and other low impact development techniques, pervious pavement, street trees and parking lot landscaping to mitigate the impacts of heat island effect.
6. Provide for local food production and alternative energy production in appropriate zoning districts.
7. Consider condensing the number of residential districts.
8. Carry out a complete update of the Zoning Ordinance to include a table of contents for easy navigation, more definitions, and updated standards for permitted and special land uses.
9. Consider rezoning city-owned property along U.S. 2 at the south gateway to the City for commercial development related to tourism development, such as a hotel.



**FIGURE 7.3 FUTURE LAND USE MAP**

# 8. DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT/ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/ REDEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

The City of Crystal Falls is well positioned for sustainable growth and development. The City offers a scenic location on major highways, in a region rich with lakes, outdoor recreation, and natural resources. The City itself is well positioned with good infrastructure, access to high speed broadband, walkable well-maintained neighborhoods, lower housing costs, and a traditional downtown.

The COVID-19 global pandemic has stimulated the movement of people to rural communities that offer quality of life assets like those found in Crystal Falls. The locational preferences of the “millennials” and recent college graduates has shown a trend that young people are choosing where to live based on lifestyle and quality of life considerations, rather than job opportunities or pay. Businesses, particularly those within the knowledge economy, have fewer requirements that dictate location within a particular city or region. Instead, they are looking for places that will provide a high quality of life for their employees and an appealing work environment. These trends have accelerated as the result of the pandemic.

Increasingly, research into economic trends and economic development strategy suggests that the traditional models of business attraction may not be suitable, successful, and sustainable for many communities, particularly in a time of constrained public resources. Instead, investment in public infrastructure improvements and amenities that will enhance the community’s image and attractiveness to prospective businesses, entrepreneurs, and employees.

This chapter of the Master Plan provides ideas and guidance for both downtown development and overall economic development.

## DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

In recent years, downtown Crystal Falls has rebounded with the rehabilitation of an historical hotel building into apartments, and recent purchases of several of the major buildings for gift shops.

The Superior Avenue streetscape presents an attractive appearance, and sidewalks along the street are in good condition. The Crystal Theater has been renovated by volunteers and provides a venue for entertainment. The Harbour House Museum is operated by the Crystal Falls Museum Society offers exhibits, archives and research opportunities. A small park located adjacent to the property is used as a community gathering space. Additional improvements would enhance this use.

Superior Avenue (Michigan Highway M-69) carries a lot of heavy truck traffic through downtown, including logging truck heading to and from a mill at Sagola. The trucks create a lot of noise that is detrimental to public enjoyment of downtown. Enforcement of the speed limit and discouraging “jake” braking can somewhat mitigate this problem.

The downtown has some vacant lots that offer potential for redevelopment. There are vacant or underutilized upper floors of existing buildings that have potential for development of office/shared workspaces or housing. Vacant lots should be cleaned up, and the City should consider allowing short term vendors and food trucks to set up on vacant sites. These kinds of activities attract people to downtown.

Crystal Falls did have a Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and tax increment financing plan,

as permitted under Michigan Public Act 197 of 1975, however, this was eliminated due to changes in the legislation and tax laws that made the tax increment financing tool ineffective for the City. A DDA is allowed to levy up to 2 mills to fund operations. This should be explored to determine if re-establishing a DDA makes sense and if the levy can raise enough meaningful funding to make improvements.

The Crystal Falls Business Association is a non-profit organization created to promote business activity. They host special events, conduct marketing promotional activities, and plant flowers throughout the downtown.

A significant volume of traffic skirts the western edge of downtown on US Highway 2. “Welcome to Downtown Crystal Falls” signs at the intersection of US 2 and M 69 could alert drivers to stop downtown. Signs as you are entering Crystal Falls from the east of west could encourage travelers to stop downtown by listing downtown attractions and the types of businesses found downtown, i.e.; retail stores, gift shops, hardware, restaurants, etc.

A unified wayfinding sign system would be beneficial for downtown. Signs could direct visitors to public facilities, including the historic Iron County Courthouse, the Harbour House Museum, City Hall, the Crystal Theater, and the Paint River Boardwalks.

Electric vehicle (EV) charging stations are becoming an important downtown asset, as more of these



**FIGURE 8.0 - DOWNTOWN BUSINESS**

vehicles are being sold and used. A location should be identified for installation of an EV charging station.

As discussed in the Recreation chapter, the Iron Belle Trail, a statewide non-motorized trail, runs through downtown Crystal Falls. Installation of a bicycle repair station and bicycle parking racks throughout downtown would encourage bicycle tourists to stop in Crystal Falls.

# 8. DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT/ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/ REDEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Crystal Falls and Iron County are home to a diverse group of major employers and small business. This diversity helps the County weather changes in the national, state and local economy. Listed below are major employers in the region:

EMPLOYER	LOCATION	PRODUCT	EMPLOYMENT
Iron County Medical Care Facility	Crystal Falls	Health Care	330
West Iron County School District	Iron River	Education	87
Aspirus Health Care System	Iron River	Health Care	285
Lake Shore, Inc.	Iron River	Naval Equipment, Cranes	149
Connor Sports Flooring	Amasa	Hardwood Sports Flooring	116
Angeli's Central Market	Iron River	Grocery Store	90-100
Iron River Care Center	Iron River	Health Care	82
Forest Park School District	Crystal Falls	Education	54

**TABLE 8.1 - MAJOR EMPLOYERS, IRON COUNTY**

As a small community with limited resources, the best thing the City of Crystal Falls can do to create economic development activity is to continue to improve the quality of life opportunities within the City, making it a great place to live and do business. Strengthening neighborhoods, eliminating blight, improving recreation opportunities, fostering the development of new housing, and supporting downtown revitalization are all important elements to this strategy.

The City of Crystal Falls is a major contributor to the Iron County Economic Chamber Alliance (The Alliance), which serves the communities of Iron County with professional Chamber of

Commerce & Economic Development services. The Alliance's mission is to develop and steward a spirit of economic vitality that results in Iron County becoming a center of collaboration, innovation, investment, and entrepreneurial opportunity. The Alliance works to create a fertile economic garden for regional enterprises to grow and thrive. Their goal is to be the first stop for economic development support, offering services for entrepreneurs, new businesses and existing businesses.

The Master Plan supports an "economic gardening" approach to growing jobs and businesses in the City of Crystal Falls. This proven approach grows

the local economy from within by promoting local entrepreneurship and small and local business development. The primary idea of economic gardening is to work with what is already present in the community to build new opportunities.

The City of Crystal Falls should provide support for existing businesses and particularly home-based businesses, persons who work from home as freelancers, consultants, or remote employees, and other individuals making or selling products from home. Removing any local zoning barriers to home-based business and redevelopment of downtown is one example of supporting economic development.

In general, economic gardening strategies should seek to connect existing businesses and entrepreneurs to resources that will help them grow and thrive, while removing the barriers to starting and operating a business. One such resource organization is the non-profit Northern Initiatives, based in Marquette, that serves northern Michigan and parts of northern Wisconsin with lending and business consulting. Another resource is the revolving loan funds offered by the Western UP Planning and Development Region (WUPPDR).

## **REDEVELOPMENT TOOLS**

### **Brownfield Redevelopment Authority**

A Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (BRA), established under

the Brownfield Redevelopment Act PA 381 of 1996, as amended, can provide a developer with access to both MDEQ and MEDC related Tax Increment Financing as well as MDEQ grant and loan funding for appropriate projects. Eligible work includes environmental assessment, due care, lead and asbestos assessment and abatement, and demolition, public infrastructure and site work.



**FIGURE 8.1 - COMMERCIAL USE/REDEVELOPMENT**

# 8. DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT/ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/ REDEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

## **Michigan Economic Development Corporation Community Assistance Program**

The City of Crystal Falls, working with Michigan Economic Development Corporation's (MEDC) Community Assistance Team can access Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for qualified redevelopment projects.

## **Redevelopment Ready Communities**

Redevelopment Ready Communities is an initiative through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) to help communities promote their developable sites and buildings. It involves gathering and maintaining data on developable sites and buildings to advertise locally and with the state. The program also requires cities to have available incentives, tools and programs to assist with redevelopment. If the City participates in the Redevelopment Ready Communities program, the City can advertise some of the developable land on a national basis with no cost to the City. Likewise, if the City puts together the information about empty lots and buildings, it will be much easier to work with developers and people interested in starting a business in Crystal Falls.

### **STRATEGY 1.2**

Create property information packages.

### **STRATEGY 1.3**

Create developers' packets and start actively recruiting businesses through directly mailing developers and by posting the information on our website and other websites such as costar and zoom prospector.

### **STRATEGY 1.4**

Work with WUPPDR and various state agencies on these packets.

### **STRATEGY 1.5**

Rezone city-owned land east of U.S. 2 at the south gateway to the City for business development, such as a hotel and tourism service.

## **Goal 2:**

Participate in and support area-wide economic development activities

### **STRATEGY 2.1**

Continue to support and be involved with the Iron County Economic Chamber Alliance.

### **STRATEGY 2.2**

Encourage Iron County and other municipalities to support the Alliance

## **Goal 3:**

Enhance quality of life opportunities within the City Crystal Falls

### **STRATEGY 3.1**

Continue work to strengthen neighborhoods, eliminate blight, improve recreation opportunities, foster the development of new housing, and

## **GOALS AND STRATEGIES**

### **Goal 1:**

Market vacant City owned and privately-owned land for developers.

#### **STRATEGY 1.1**

Prioritize sites for redevelopment efforts and determine which types of businesses are appropriate on these sites.

support downtown revitalization.

### **Goal 4:**

Support continued downtown revitalization efforts

#### **STRATEGY 4.1**

Design and implement a downtown and city-wide wayfinding system

#### **STRATEGY 4.2**

Design and implement “Welcome to Downtown” signs at key locations.

#### **STRATEGY 4.3**

Locate an Electric Vehicle (EV) charging station downtown.

#### **STRATEGY 4.4**

Plan and install a bicycle repair station and bicycle parking racks throughout downtown.

#### **STRATEGY 4.5**

In conjunction with the Crystal Falls Business Association, initiate efforts to recruit volunteers to help clean up vacant sites on Superior Avenue.

#### **STRATEGY 4.6**

Enhance/improve the Museum Park for use as a community gathering space. This would also be a great location for food trucks and vendors during special events held at the site.



**FIGURE 8.2 - IMAGES OF DOWNTOWN**

# 9. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY —

The definition of sustainability can have many broad interpretations and delve into area such as the human and environmental world, business and technology disciplines, or even educational systems. This chapter will focus on environmental sustainability and specifically why it is important to consider for the City of Crystal Falls.

A hike along the river boardwalk, skiing in the winter, or even parking your car and walking to the grocery in the hot sun reminds us everyday that the environment around us is a living moving system dependent on many pieces. When we look at environmental sustainability, a

typical definition says that it means acting in a way that ensures future generations have the natural resources available to live in the same way or better than current generations.

A good way to introduce positive changes over time into everyday living is to incorporate sustainable improvements gradually. For a smaller City like Crystal Falls, making these small incremental changes towards better environmental sustainability can very well end up making a big impact for future generations. Some ways to do that are in regulatory improvements by the way of Ordinance or Policy changes.



**FIGURE 9.0 - PAINT RIVER**

## SUSTAINABILITY GUIDE

The following is a **GENERAL** guide for sustainable considerations. These best practices should be referenced and/or required where applicable in any future zoning ordinance revisions or in the creation of any future design standards or operating policies for the City.

Regulations based on these general principles would seek to provide a strong foundation for future growth, conserve limited resources, and protect our natural environment for the long-term health of our planet and future generations.

### Protect and Enhance the Site

- protect ecologically sensitive sites
- minimize the development footprint (refer to low impact development section)
- integrate buildings with site topography
- site homes and developments in a way that celebrates natural habitats

### Improve Energy Efficiency

- Incorporate passive solar design strategies (proper orientation of structures, placement of windows, etc.)
- Use proper insulating techniques for the building envelope
- Design for efficient use of space (i.e. bigger isn't always better)
- Install high-performance windows and place to take advantage of natural light and cross ventilation
- Consider active solar or wind systems for energy or water heating

### Use Environmentally Responsible Building Materials

- Select materials that are appropriate and

- durable for harsh winter climates
- Select products that support local manufactures and local economies
- Select materials with recycled content or that are recyclable
- Avoid materials that unduly deplete natural resources
- Avoid materials that generate excess pollution during manufacturing

### Create A Safe Indoor Environment

- Avoid materials with high VOC (volatile organic compounds) such as some carpets, adhesives, paints, etc.
- Provide for proper ventilation in all buildings
- Maximize the control of indoor environments with proper window placement, lighting, and temperature controls

### Provide Water Efficient Water Usage

- Use low-flow plumbing fixtures
- Incorporate efficient hot-water delivery systems
- Consider gray water usage, provide for water



**FIGURE 9.1 - BUILDING INCORPORATES PASSIVE SOLAR DESIGN STRATEGIES**

# 9 • ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

storage for landscape use

- Incorporate water efficient landscaping

## Reduce Generation of Solid Waste

- Provide for both construction and home waste recycling
- Purchase building materials so as to minimize waste
- Utilize recycled materials in new construction

## Create a Healthy Living Environment

- Encourage home or community gardening
- Incorporate walking trails, especially nature trails with educational opportunities.
- Incorporate alternative forms of transportation (walking, biking, bus, etc.)

## LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT

In order to protect our vital and important natural water resources (including drinking water) in the region it should be required for all new developments to incorporate low impact development practices in the construction of any projects. These are also known as GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE or STORMWATER BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (BMPs). The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments created a “Low Impact Development Manual for Michigan” in 2008. This is a tremendous resource for Michigan communities

The following are just some of the BMPs and techniques that would be suitable to incorporate into development projects in the City, however creativity and ingenuity should be encouraged as the stormwater solutions can be incredible varied across different sites.

## Some Nonstructural BMPs are:

- Cluster development
- Minimize soil compaction
- Minimize total disturbed area
- Protect natural flow pathways
- Protect sensitive areas
- Reduce impervious surfaces
- Stormwater disconnection.

## Some Structural BMPs are:

- Bioretention (similar to rain gardens)
- Planter boxes or Tree Wells.
- Depressed Tree/Planter Islands in parking lots
- Vegetated Swales
- Infiltration Trenches



FIGURE 9.2 - STRUCTURAL BMP - DEPRESSED PLANTER COLLECTING STORMWATER FROM THE STREET

- Pervious Pavements
- Green Roofs
- Rainwater Collection/Reuse
- Native Vegetation Requirements

## SUSTAINABLE DESIGN RATING PROGRAMS

There are several well known and accepted sustainable design rating programs for the development of building and site plans. Developers should be encouraged to utilize these programs (or at least follow their criteria even if they don't become fully certified) for all new projects. An incentive program or reduced permitting fees or time lines for projects that use one of these metrics and become certified projects could also be considered. Projects that use these rating systems bring an additional level of recognition and marketing power to the community.

### LEED or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design

This program is administered by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC). It is the most widely used green building rating system in the world. Developers can use this rating system when designing and constructing virtually all building, community and home project types. LEED provides a framework to create healthy, highly efficient and cost-saving green buildings. Refer to [www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org) for more detail.

**Sustainable SITES Initiative** This system is administered by Green Business Certification Inc. (GBCI), **SITES** offers a comprehensive rating system designed to distinguish sustainable landscapes, measure their performance

### The National Green Building Standard™

The National Green Building Standard™ provides independent, third-party verification that a home, apartment building, or land development is



**FIGURE 9.3 - BUS STOP IN MUNISING CONVERTED TO UTILIZE POROUS PAVEMENT WITH A RAIN GARDEN**

and elevate their value. **SITES** certification is available for a wide range of development projects, with or without buildings. Refer to [www.sustainable-sites.org](http://www.sustainable-sites.org) for more detail.

# 9. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

designed and built to achieve high performance in six key areas: Site Design, Resource Efficiency, Water Efficiency, Energy Efficiency, Indoor Environmental Quality, and Building Operation & Maintenance. Refer to [www.nahb.org](http://www.nahb.org) for more detail.

**ENERGY STAR** Energy Certified certified homes are designed and constructed to be significantly more energy efficient than those built to code while lowering homeowner utility bills and providing superior comfort, quality, and durability. Refer to [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov) for more detail.

**The Living Building Challenge,™** This is a building certification program, advocacy tool and philosophy that defines the most advanced measure of sustainability in the built environment possible today. This is just one program that is a part of the International

Living Future Institute, there are also additional programs that may be of interest including **The Living Community Challenge**. Refer to <http://living-future.org> for more detail.

**Michigan Municipal League** The League will provide guidelines for creating sustainable communities through the **Michigan Green Communities Challenge**, a program designed in collaboration with the state energy office, the Bureau of Energy Systems, to ensure that Michigan has the tools needed to implement short-term and long-lasting actions. The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant program, through the stimulus recovery act, requires that all communities who wish to receive funds prepare a strategy for energy efficiency and conservation.

## Sustainable development is a key component in Placemaking!

The Michigan Municipal League (MML) has identified the **EIGHT ASSETS** that Michigan's communities need to grow and strengthen. Research shows that these eight assets are essential to a community's livelihood. The following deals only with the "green initiatives" asset and is a good reference to help understand the basics of how sustainable design can better shape communities.

### GREEN INITIATIVES

- **Sustainable development can enhance the economic well-being of communities.**
- **Environmental health improves in neighborhoods that focus on green development.**
- **Green infrastructure can reduce energy costs and overall infrastructure costs.**

More information and case studies can be found on the Placemaking MML website. <http://placemaking.mml.org/how-to/green-initiatives/>

## GOALS AND STRATEGIES

### Goal 1:

Protect and enhance the existing natural resources.

#### STRATEGY 1.1

Improve the existing ordinance by adding a Tree Protection and other Landscape Requirements to require native vegetation and restrict invasive species.

#### STRATEGY 1.2

Improve the existing ordinance by improving the language for steep slope protection (consider restricting development on slopes over 18%) and removal of existing vegetation.

#### STRATEGY 1.3

Include a tree replacement requirement in the Zoning Ordinance.

#### STRATEGY 1.4

Create a policy for annual street tree plantings to start replacing street trees every year. Consider neighborhood outreach to help residents properly maintain existing street trees.

### Goal 2:

Promote sustainable design and management efforts.

#### STRATEGY 2.1

1. Include a requirement for sustainable design and low impact development (LID) practices in the zoning ordinance and/or design standards. Include but not limited to; innovate stormwater techniques, recyclable materials, green roofs, pervious pavements, energy efficient lighting, native landscaping and preservation of existing trees.



**FIGURE 9.4 - INCREASING STREET TREES PROVIDES A WEALTH OF ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS**

#### STRATEGY 2.2

Seek and promote funding opportunities (grants) for sustainable development practices.

#### STRATEGY 2.3

Encourage or consider tax incentives for development that follows various current industry benchmarks such as LEED or Sustainable Sites.

#### STRATEGY 2.4

Consider being involved in the Michigan Green Communities program through the Michigan Municipal League

### GOAL 3:

Utilize public projects to implement and promote sustainable design and raise awareness within the community.

# 9. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

## **STRATEGY 3.1**

Create an RFQ process for qualified architects and contractors in sustainable design.

## **STRATEGY 3.2**

Create baseline standards for building upgrades and new construction.

## **STRATEGY 3.3**

Create baseline standards for incorporating green infrastructure into improvement projects of public right-of-ways, alleys, and parking facilities.

**STRATEGY 3.4** Be a model of sustainable design for the community with a visible public project.

**STRATEGY 3.5** Create promotional materials for residents and businesses describing the various sustainable practices that can be deployed in the city.

## **GOAL 4:**

Increase recycling options.

## **STRATEGY 4.1**

Add recycling to public trash receptacles Downtown, at public facilities, at public events, and in parks.

## **STRATEGY 4.2**

Increase business recycling through code requirements and/or incentive programs.

## **STRATEGY 4.3**

Create a coalition of communities to work with regional authorities to increase access to recycling.

## **STRATEGY 4.4**

Create a drop-off program at the DPW Yard for less common recycling items.

## **STRATEGY 4.5**

Create a Zero Waste Event planning guide with a variety of tools and best practices.

## **GOAL 5:**

Conserve energy resources.

## **STRATEGY 5.1**

Assure all street and other public lighting is converted to LED, where possible.

## **STRATEGY 5.2**

Utilize stronger architectural standards for new construction and renovations to include building features that save energy.

## **STRATEGY 5.2**

Use savings from energy efficiency upgrades to create a revolving fund for future energy reduction upgrades.

## **GOAL 6:**

Expand the use of green stormwater infrastructure.

## **STRATEGY 6.1**

Develop zoning incentives for integrating green stormwater infrastructure into private development projects.

## **STRATEGY 6.2**

Integrate green stormwater infrastructure into parks or other public projects.

## **STRATEGY 6.3**

Promote the use of permeable pavement and other options for limiting the amount of stormwater runoff.

## **STRATEGY 6.4**

Consider implementing a “green alley” program to reduce paving and increase infiltration in alleys.



**FIGURE 9.5 - EXAMPLE OF A GREEN ALLEY CONVERSION SHOWING BOTH REDUCED PAVEMENT AREAS AND INCLUDING POROUS PAVEMENT**

# 10. WINTER CITY STRATEGIES

Crystal Falls and Iron County are noted for winter recreation opportunities. The Crystella Ski Hill, located in the City, has been around for about 80 years. The ski area operated by volunteers offers downhill skiing, sledding and ice skating. Iron County is home to the major destination downhill ski resort Ski Brule. There are numerous snowmobile trails in the area, and there are a number of groomed trails for cross country skiing in the area. Ice fishing is very popular on the many lakes in the area.

Despite these recreation opportunities, winter can be a difficult time for some Crystal Falls residents. Winter problems include seasonal affective disorder, social isolation, and the challenges of dealing with snow and mobility.

A growing number of communities across the northern tier of the United States and in Canada are embracing the winter season and finding the opportunities it offers: economically, socially and culturally. Following “best practices” for winter cities, many communities are transforming themselves with things like year-round bicycling lanes, snow management innovations, winter festivals, skating plazas, all-season town squares, winter markets and other business opportunities. People want to walk, bike and socialize outside year-round, as long as they can do so with relative ease and comfort. It only makes sense to plan and design the city for winter as much as we do for summer.

This chapter of the Master Plan provides ideas to make the most of winter’s opportunities and to create a culture shift so that Crystal Falls is considered one of best places to live, work and play in winter and year-round. The best winter city practices presented here, when implemented, will minimize winter’s negatives and create a more livable city.

## Winter in Crystal Falls

**Average Annual Snowfall: 69”**

**Average January High Temperature: 19 degrees**

## WINTER CITY BEST PRACTICES

### PROVIDE OR ENHANCE OPPORTUNITIES FOR WINTER OUTDOOR ACTIVITY

- \* Consider ways to use existing city parks and open space for additional winter activities, such as a sledding hill, an ice skating rink or pathway, outdoor gathering area with a fire pit and creative warming hut.
- \* Create winter trails within the city on old rail grades. Where possible, connect existing trails and walkways.
  - Maintaining/grooming the snow for a multi-purpose skiing, running and walking path is possible where below freezing temperatures predominate.
  - Communities that experience extended above freezing temperatures may find it better to plow the trail for walking/running/ biking.

## IMPROVE WINTER TRANSPORTATION FOR PEDESTRIANS, CYCLISTS AND PUBLIC TRANSIT USERS

- ✳ Designate critical pedestrian areas that should receive priority when clearing sidewalks and walkways.
- ✳ Consider recruiting the assistance of local residents, such as business owners, neighborhood groups, or other organizations to maintain critical areas.
- ✳ Ensure that transition areas such as curb-cuts and bus stop platforms are properly plowed to ensure pedestrian safety, as these areas are often a collecting point for large mounds of icy snow due to street plowing.

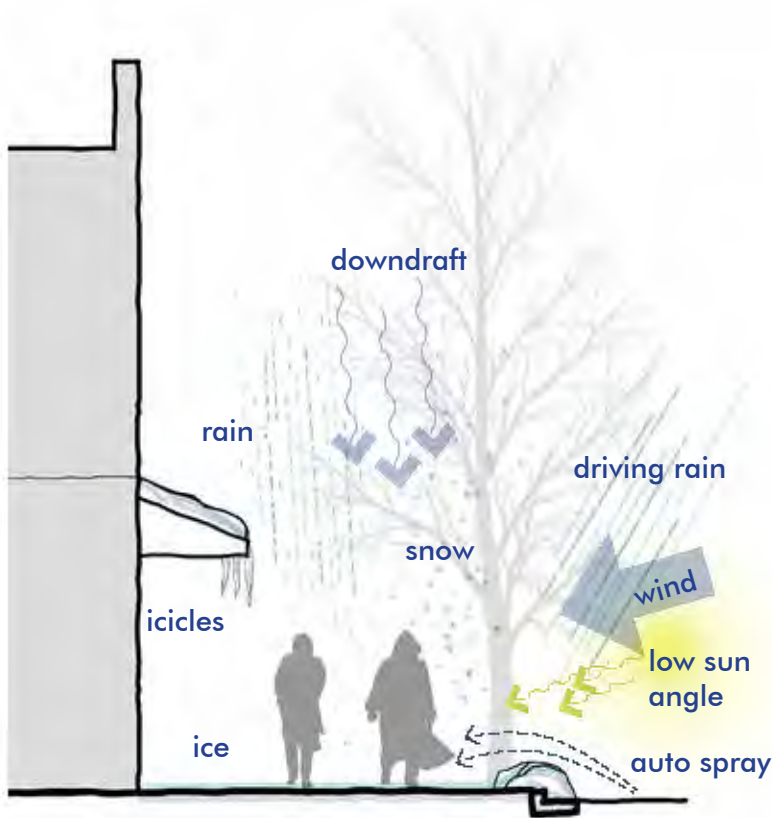


FIGURE 10.0 - PROVIDE FOR WINTER OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

## DESIGN FOR WINTER SAFETY AND COMFORT

- ✳ Take advantage of solar radiation in the orientation of buildings and outdoor spaces to provide a southern exposure to heat and sunlight.
- ✳ Use buildings and vegetation to protect outdoor spaces, such as vest pocket parks, from prevailing winter winds.
- ✳ Avoid building orientations which will create a wind tunneling effect.
- ✳ Avoid creating public spaces for winter use in areas that are shaded from the sun.
- ✳ Provide shelters or wind blocks in areas that serve as outdoor gathering spaces.
- ✳ Use technology and materials appropriate for a “winter city”. Outdoor furniture should be constructed using appropriate materials such as wood, polyethylene, or vinyl-coated metal.

# 10. WINTER CITY STRATEGIES



**FIGURE 10.1 - ELEMENTS OF PEDESTRIAN DISCOMFORTS IN WINTER CITIES**

- \* Cover ramps or stairs to protect them from snow and ice.
- \* Provide handrails for all public and private walkways that exist on slopes. Particularly hazardous areas, such as steps and ramps, may need to be heated to prevent snow and ice from accumulating.
- \* Design roofs to account for snow and ice accumulation, and also prevent snow and ice from shedding onto parking areas or pedestrian walkways.
- \* Create transition areas at building entrances to provide patrons with an area to shed snow prior to entering the building.

## SNOW MANAGEMENT

- \* Consider snow plowing and removal in the design of road improvements such as curb extensions/bump outs, to allow for easy maneuverability of equipment around such areas.
- \* Design road cross-sections to provide an area for snow storage to prevent snow from being plowed onto the sidewalks when the street is cleared of snow.
- \* Bike lanes should not be used for snow storage, as more people are using bicycles for transportation year-round.
- \* Bike lanes should be maintained to the same standard as streets in order to encourage more people to commute by bicycle.
- \* Bike parking racks should not be put away for the winter season.
- \* Map out snow management problem areas and issues to evaluate the impacts of winter winds and drifting snow on city streets and walking paths.
- \* Redesign areas where wind is problematic to use earth forms and vegetation to reduce wind and drifting snow.
- \* Investigate the use of new equipment or innovative technology for snow removal.
- \* Locate snow storage areas where they will receive sufficient solar radiation to encourage melt-off and provide adequate drainage.
- \* Store snow in a number of smaller sites, rather than one large area in order to speed up the melting process.
- \* Balance the need for efficient snow removal

with other considerations such as walkability, aesthetics, and parking.

- \* Explore and implement appropriate “best practices” for snow management that will improve service, reduce inconvenience and increase citizen satisfaction.

## VEGETATION AND LANDSCAPING

- \* Plant deciduous trees on the southern face of a building or outdoor area to provide cooling in the summer (when leaves are present), while still allowing sunlight to filter in during the winter (when leaves have fallen).
- \* Coniferous vegetation should be used on the north and west sides to protect the area from prevailing winter winds.
- \* Use berms and vegetation to direct snow drifts away from building entrances.
- \* Select appropriate landscaping for snow storage areas to minimize damage and poor growth due to compaction, pollutants, and poor drainage.
- \* Consider using vegetation as snow fences to protect open roadways and other areas from prevailing winter winds.
- \* Create “outdoor rooms” using trees and vegetation to shelter exposed

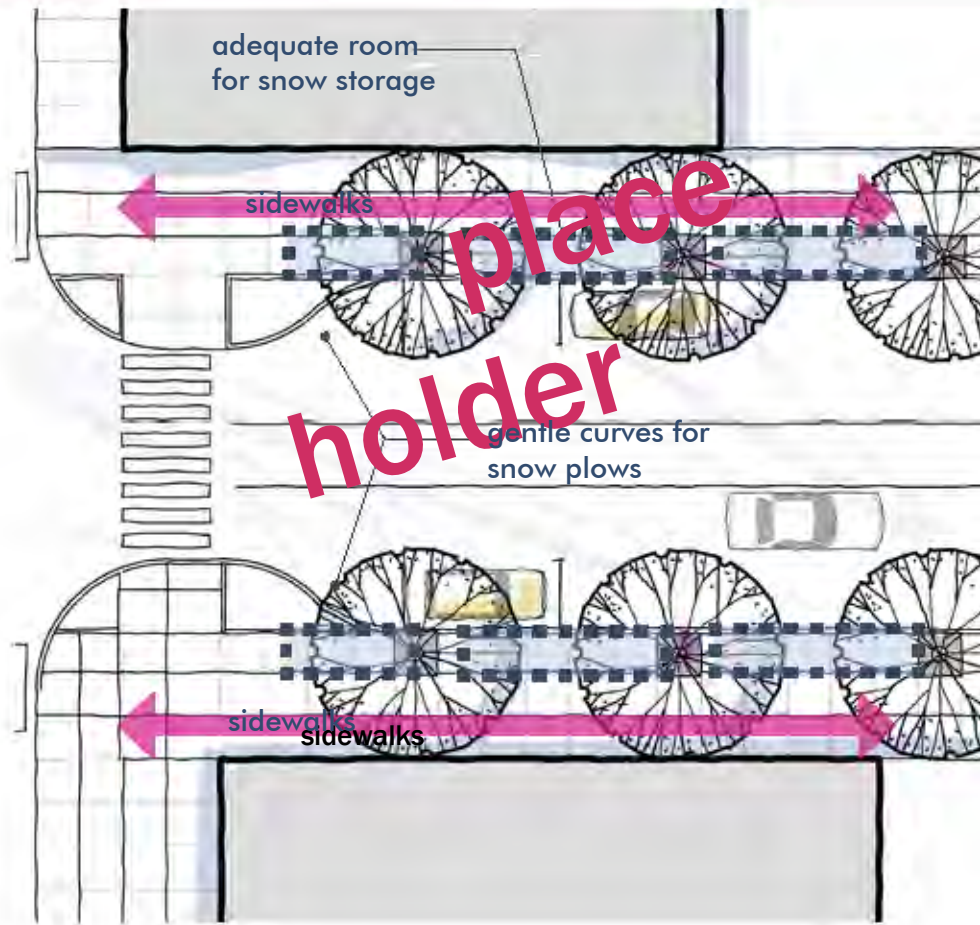


FIGURE 10.2 - SNOW PLOWING AND STORAGE

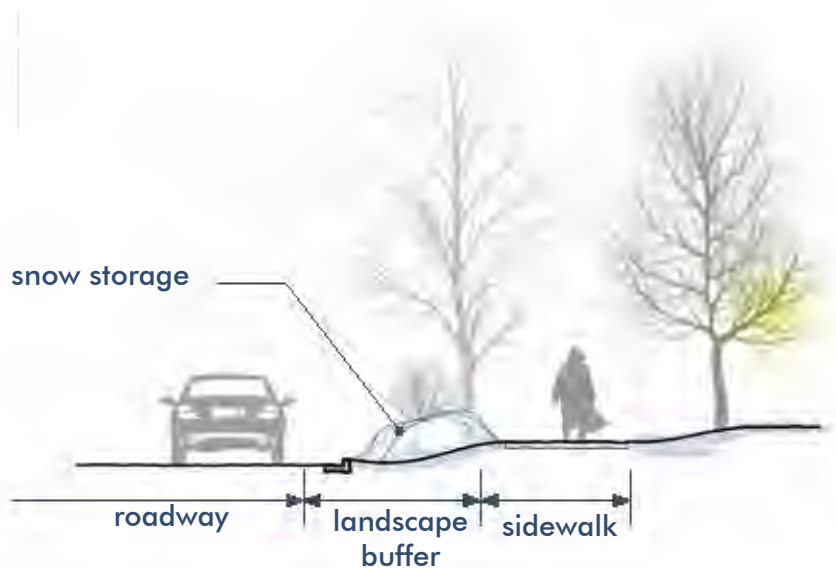


FIGURE 10.3 - LANDSCAPE BUFFERS & SETBACK

# 10 • WINTER CITY STRATEGIES

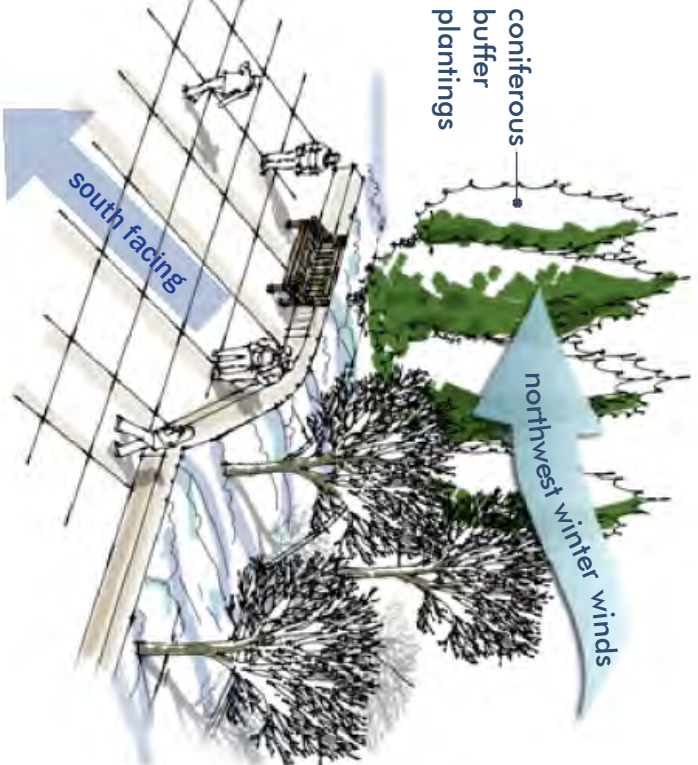


FIGURE 10.4 - OUTDOOR ROOMS

areas from prevailing winds.

- ❄️ Use landscaping plant species that offer attractive or useful winter characteristics such as twig color, fruit, and salt-tolerance.

## LIGHTING AND COLOR

- ❄️ Consider color and lighting treatments for public spaces and buildings, in order to offset the darkness and monotony of the winter season.

## MAKE WINTER A POSITIVE ASSET TO ATTRACT BUSINESS, TOURISM AND NEW RESIDENTS

- ❄️ Collaborate with other area organizations to create a sustainable annual winter festival featuring family outdoor activities, snow/ice sculptures, winter market, food and music.
- ❄️ Consider implementing a “winter market” to capture a greater share of winter tourism.
- ❄️ Dress up downtown with lighting, public art, and snow/ice sculptures for the entire winter season, not just the holidays.



FIGURE 10.5 - LIGHT UP THE DARK

## GOALS AND STRATEGIES

### Goal 1:

Provide or enhance opportunities for winter outdoor activity

#### STRATEGY 1.1

Support efforts to collaborate with the Crystella Ski Hill to improve the facility.

#### STRATEGY 1.2

Consider ways to use existing city parks and open space for additional winter activities, such as an outdoor gathering area with a fire pit and creative warming hut.

#### STRATEGY 1.3

Create winter trails within the city connecting existing trails and walkways, and by maintaining the snow for a multi-purpose skiing and walking path.

### Goal 2:

Provide the best possible snow management practices and service

#### STRATEGY 2.1

Map out snow management problem areas and issues, and evaluate the impacts of winter winds and drifting snow on city streets and walking paths. Redesign areas where wind is problematic to use earth forms and vegetation to reduce wind and drifting snow.

#### STRATEGY 2.2

Investigate the use of new equipment or

innovative technology for snow removal. This is particularly important when existing snow removal practices potentially interfere with walkability.

#### STRATEGY 2.3

Locate snow storage areas where they will receive sufficient solar radiation to encourage melt-off. Adequate drainage must also be provided. Store snow in a number of smaller sites, rather than one large area in order to speed up the melting process.

#### STRATEGY 2.4

Balance the need for efficient snow removal with other considerations such as walkability, aesthetics, and parking.



FIGURE 10.6 - WAYS TO USE EXISTING SPACES IN THE WINTER

# 10. WINTER CITY STRATEGIES

## **Goal 3:**

Make winter a positive asset to attract business, tourism and new residents

### **STRATEGY 3.1**

Collaborate with other area organizations to create a sustainable annual winter festival featuring family outdoor activities, snow/ice sculptures, winter market, food and music.

### **STRATEGY 3.2**

Explore and implement appropriate “best practices” for snow management that will improve service, reduce inconvenience and increase citizen satisfaction.

### **STRATEGY 3.3**

Consider implementing a “winter market” to capture a greater share of winter tourism.

### **STRATEGY 3.4**

Dress up downtown for the entire winter season to create a “ski town” image.

## **How To Get Started**

- 1. Establish a local Winter Strategies Task Force***
- 2. Discuss snow removal, recreation, and other initiatives.***
- 3. This task force should include a DPW representative, Planning Commission Chair, City Manager, and business owner.***
- 4. Take an inventory of winter assets***
  - Attractions***
  - Partnerships***
  - Opportunities***



FIGURE 10.7 - MAKE WINTER A POSITIVE ASSET & ATTRACTION

# 1 1 . IMPLEMENTATION

The Master Plan is a guide for the City of Crystal Falls elected and appointed officials to follow. The Plan presents many Goals and Strategies to implement for the improvement and revitalization of the City. While some strategies require funding, others are policy-related and low cost. Implementation will require time, patience and perseverance. The Master Plan should be referred to for all decisions, and reviewed and updated as required every five (5) years by the Planning Commission.

The tables below summarize Master Plan strategies.



**FIGURE 11.0 CRYSTAL FALLS NEIGHBORHOOD**

<b>HOUSING</b>		
<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>SUGGESTED TIME FRAME</b>
1.1 Enforce the City’s Property Maintenance Code	City Administration	On-going
1.2 Determine if a vacant property registry would be beneficial	Planning Commission	1-2 years
1.3 Work with local citizens interested in keeping empty lots clean and maintained with the Adopt-a-lot program	Planning Commission	On-going
1.4 Inform residents about the USDA-RD grant and low interest loan program designed to assist homeowners with repairs.	City Administration	On-going
1.5 Inform property owners and potential property owners of opportunities to address blight through MEDC’s Brownfields program.	City Administration	On-going
1.6 Explore enacting a City-wide clean-up day to encourage citizens to dispose of junk materials in their yard.	Planning Commission	1-2 years
2.1 Actively recruit investors to build single family homes, renovate existing unused apartments, and encourage infill development to provide more housing.	City Administration/Planning Commission/City Council	On-going
2.2 Actively explore alternatives to develop vacant City-owned sites.	Planning Commission	On-going

**TABLE 11.1 - HOUSING STRATEGIES**

<b>NATURAL FEATURES/PARKS &amp; RECREATION FACILITIES/PUBLIC LANDS</b>		
<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>SUGGESTED TIME FRAME</b>
1.1 Create a process to evaluate opportunities to resolve the annual operating deficit at the Runkle Park campground	Recreation Committee, City Administration and City Council	1-2 years
2.1 Locate a bike repair station in downtown	City Administration, Public Works	1-2 years
2.2 Identify and implement trail connections within the City to improve access to the Iron Belle Trail.	Planning Commission	1-10 years
2.3 Design and implement a wayfinding sign system.	Planning Commission	1-2 years
3.1 Continue to work with the Forest Park School District in support of providing needed recreation facilities and opportunities.	Recreation Committee/City Council	On-going
4.1 Consider adding winter uses to the Runkle Lake Park and the Paint River Boardwalk/Trail.	Recreation Committee	1-5 years
4.2 Work with the Crystella Recreation Authority to continue improvements to the ski area.	Recreation Committee/City Council	1-5 years
5.2 Prepare a Master Plan for the Museum Park area.	Planning Commission	1-2 years

**TABLE 1 1.2 - NATURAL FEATURES/PARKS & RECREATION FACILITIES/PUBLIC LANDS**

<b>CITY INFRASTRUCTURE, PUBLIC FACILITIES, SAFETY &amp; EMERGENCY SERVICES</b>		
<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>SUGGESTED TIME FRAME</b>
1.1 Implement the sewer lift station, force main and lagoon upgrade project.	City Administration	1-5 years
1.2 Implement the Wagner-Fairbanks water main replacement project	City Administration	1-5 years

**TABLE 1 1.3 - CITY INFRASTRUCTURE, PUBLIC FACILITIES, SAFETY & EMERGENCY SERVICES STRATEGIES**

# 1 1 . IMPLEMENTATION

<b>TRANSPORTATION: VEHICULAR, PEDESTRIAN &amp; BICYCLE</b>		
<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>SUGGESTED TIME FRAME</b>
1.1 Inventory the condition of City streets using the Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (Paser) system	Public Works	1-2 years
1.2 Develop a Capital Improvements Plan to prioritize and project street improvements.	Planning Commission	2-4 years
2.1 Inventory the condition of existing sidewalks and prioritize replacement	Public Works	On-going
2.2 When street corners are reconstructed, the corner curbing should be made ADA compliant.	Public Works	On-going
2.3 Work with MDOT to identify and implement appropriate crosswalk locations on U.S. 2/141 and M-69, especially in downtown, near the Forest Park School, and near Lincoln Park/Paint River Boardwalk.	City Administration	1-2 years

**TABLE 11.4 - TRANSPORTATION: VEHICULAR, PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE STRATEGIES**



**FIGURE 11.1 NEIGHBORHOOD SIDEWALK**

## FUTURE LAND USE AND ZONING PLAN

<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>SUGGESTED TIME FRAME</b>
1.1 Identify City-owned properties suitable for residential development and explore opportunities for developing a variety of housing options	Planning Commission	1-5 years
1.2 Consider extending municipal infrastructure to areas unserved by infrastructure but suitable for development. Costs for such infrastructure would preferably be covered by the developer	City Administration and City Council	On-going
1.3: Review the Zoning Ordinance and other City ordinances, and amend if necessary to encourage maintenance of existing residential neighborhoods, eliminate blight, and rehabilitation/removal of deteriorated structures	Planning Commission	1 year
1.4: Utilize the Zoning Ordinance and other local regulations to encourage consistency and connectivity between old and new neighborhoods, e.g. by discouraging lengthy cul-de-sac streets and encouraging the extension of the grid street system into new development.	Planning Commission	On-going
1.5 Adopt and enforce appropriate blight and rental inspection ordinances and utilize Municipal Civil Infractions methodology for enforcement.	City Council	On-going
1.6 Encourage maintenance/upkeep of properties with incentives and volunteer efforts	Recreation Committee	On-going
1.7 Improve maintenance and reconstruction of infrastructure/roads in the neighborhoods to encourage private investment.	City Council	On-going
1.8 Add small neighborhood parks, gathering areas, trails/trail connections, and community gardens as needed or desired within neighborhoods	Recreation Committee, Planning Commission, and City Council	3-10 years

**TABLE 11.5 - FUTURE LAND USE AND ZONING STRATEGIES**

# 1 1 . IMPLEMENTATION

<b>FUTURE LAND USE AND ZONING PLAN (continued.)</b>		
<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>SUGGESTED TIME FRAME</b>
2.1 Provide incentives for ground-floor retail combined with upper-level residential uses, including the use of tax increment financing, low-income tax credits (affordable housing), and façade improvement funds, and reduced land cost.	Planning Commission and City Council	3-10 years
2.2 Prioritize the rehabilitation or reuse of vacant and underutilized properties or the conversion of single-uses into mixed-use developments as a preferred strategy over new development.	Planning Commission	On-going
3.1 Encourage new development or redevelopment that is compatible with the scale and architecture of existing properties (especially in the traditional, historic neighborhoods and Downtown) while preserving existing natural features as much as possible.	Planning Commission	On-going
3.2 Require landscaping or public art or other such aesthetic treatment along long, blank walls to improve community aesthetics, and encourage pedestrian activity.	Planning Commission	On-going
3.3 Pursue streetscaping and aesthetic enhancements for the U.S.2/141 corridor through the City, including pedestrian scale lighting, street trees, bicycle amenities such as parking facilities, bicycle lanes, and wayfinding and gateway signage.	Planning Commission, City Council, and City Administration	1-5 years
3.4 Implement access management principles to create a safer, more aesthetic highway corridor while preserving function and capacity of the highway system while supporting non-motorized transportation elements.	Planning Commission	On-going
3.5 Follow smart growth and access management principles when considering commercial development at the south gateway to the City on U.S.2.	Planning Commission	On-going

**TABLE 11.5 - FUTURE LAND USE AND ZONING STRATEGIES (CONTINUED.)**

## DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/ REDEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

STRATEGY	PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY	SUGGESTED TIME FRAME
1.1 Prioritize sites for redevelopment efforts and determine which types of businesses are appropriate on these sites.	Planning Commission	1 year
1.2 Create property information packages	Planning Commission and City Administration	2 years
1.3 Create developers' packets and start actively recruiting businesses through directly mailing developers and by posting the information on the City website.	City Administration	2 years
1.3 Create developers' packets and start actively recruiting businesses through directly mailing developers and by posting the information on the City website.	City Administration	2 years
1.4 Work with WUPPDR and various state agencies on these packets.	City Administration	2 years
Strategy 1.5 Rezone city-owned land east of U.S. 2 at the south gateway to the City for business development, such as a hotel and tourism service.		
2.1 Continue to support and be involved with the Iron County Economic Chamber Alliance.	City Council	On-going
2.2 Encourage Iron County and other municipalities to support the Alliance	City Council	On-going

**TABLE 11.6 - DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/  
REDEVELOPMENT PRIORITY STRATEGIES**



**FIGURE 11.2 - DOWNTOWN CRYSTAL FALLS**

<b>DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/ REDEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES(continued.)</b>		
<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>SUGGESTED TIME FRAME</b>
3.1 Continue work to strengthen neighborhoods, eliminate blight, improve recreation opportunities, foster the development of new housing, and support downtown revitalization	Planning Commission and City Council	On-going
4.1 Design and implement a downtown and city-wide wayfinding system	Planning Commission and City Administration	1-2 years
4.2 Design and implement “Welcome to Downtown” signs at key locations.	Planning Commission and City Administration	1-2 years
4.3 Locate an Electric Vehicle (EV) charging station downtown	Planning Commission and City Administration	2 years
4.4 Plan and install a bicycle repair station and bicycle parking racks throughout downtown.	Planning Commission and City Administration, Public Works	2 years
4.5 In conjunction with the Crystal Falls Business Association, initiate efforts to recruit volunteers to help clean up vacant sites on Superior Avenue.	Planning Commission and City Council	2 years
4.6 Enhance/improve the Museum Park for use as a community gathering space. This would also be a great location for food trucks and vendors during special events held at the site.	Recreation Committee, Planning Commission, City Council	3-5 years

**TABLE 11.6 - DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/  
REDEVELOPMENT PRIORITY STRATEGIES (CONTINUED.)**



PHOTO SOURCE: PLUGSHARE via The Driven, JUNE 24, 2021, BRIDIE SCHMIDT (<https://thedriven.io/2021/06/24/victoria-to-add-100-destination-ev-chargers-with-5-million-state-funding/>)

**FIGURE 1 1.3 - SIMPLE EV CHARGING STATION**

<b>ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY</b>		
<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>SUGGESTED TIME FRAME</b>
1.1 Improve the existing zoning ordinance by adding a Tree Protection and other Landscape Requirements to require native vegetation and restrict invasive species.	Planning Commission	2-4 years
1.2 Improve the existing ordinance by improving the language for steep slope protection (consider restricting development on slopes over 18%) and removal of existing vegetation.	Planning Commission	2-4 years
1.3 Include a tree replacement requirement in the Zoning Ordinance.	Planning Commission	2-4 years
1.4 Create a policy for annual street tree plantings to start replacing street trees every year. Consider neighborhood outreach to help residents properly maintain existing street trees.	City Council and Public Works	1-2 years

**TABLE 1 1.7 - ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES**

# 1 1 . IMPLEMENTATION

<b>ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY (continued.)</b>		
<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>SUGGESTED TIME FRAME</b>
2.1 Include a requirement for sustainable design and low impact development (LID) practices in the zoning ordinance and/or design standards. Include but not limited to; innovate storm-water techniques, recyclable materials, green roofs, pervious pavements, energy efficient lighting, native landscaping and preservation of existing trees.	Planning Commission	2-4 years
2.2 Seek and promote funding opportunities (grants) for sustainable development practices.	City Administration	On-going
2.3 Encourage or consider tax incentives for development that follows various current industry benchmarks such as LEED or Sustainable Sites.	Planning Commission and City Council	On-going
2.4 Consider being involved in the Michigan Green Communities program through the Michigan Municipal League	City Council	1-2 years
3.1 Create an RFQ process for qualified architects and contractors in sustainable design.	City Administration	1-5 years
3.2 Create baseline standards for building upgrades and new construction	City Administration	1-5 years
3.3 Create baseline standards for incorporating green infrastructure into improvement projects of public right-of-ways, alleys, and parking facilities.	Planning Commission	2-4 years
3.4 Be a model of sustainable design for the community with a visible public project	Planning Commission	2-4 years
3.5 Create promotional materials for residents and businesses describing the various sustainable practices that can be deployed in the city.	Planning Commission	2-4 years
4.1 Add recycling to public trash receptacles Downtown, at public facilities, at public events, and in parks.	City Administration and Public Works	2 years
4.2 Increase business recycling through code requirements and/or incentive programs	City Administration	2 years
4.3 Create a coalition of communities to work with regional authorities to increase access to recycling	City Administration	2 years
4.4 Create a drop-off program at the DPW Yard for less common recycling items.	Public Works	2 years
4.5 Create a Zero Waste Event planning guide with a variety of tools and best practices	City Administration	2 years

**TABLE 11.7 - ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES (CONTINUED.)**

<b>ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY (continued.)</b>		
<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>SUGGESTED TIME FRAME</b>
5.1 Assure all street land other public lighting is converted to LED, where possible.	City Administration and Public Works	5 years
5.2 Utilize stronger architectural standards for new construction and renovations to include building features that save energy.	Planning Commission	5 years
5.3 Use savings from energy efficiency upgrades to create a revolving fund for future energy reduction upgrades.	City Council/City Administration	5 years
6.1 Develop zoning incentives for integrating green storm-water infrastructure into private development projects.	Planning Commission	2 years
6.2 Integrate green storm-water infrastructure into parks or other public projects	City Administration and Public Works	3-5 years
6.3 Promote the use of permeable pavement and other options for limiting the amount of storm-water runoff.	Planning Commission	On-going
6.4 Consider implementing a “green alley” program to reduce paving and increase infiltration in alleys	Planning Commission and City Council	3-5 years

**TABLE 11.7 - ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES (CONTINUED.)**



**FIGURE 11.4 - GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE IN A PARKING LOT**

# 1 1 . IMPLEMENTATION

<b>WINTER CITY</b>		
<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>SUGGESTED TIME FRAME</b>
1.1 Support efforts to collaborate with the Crystella Ski Hill to improve the facility	Recreation Committee, Planning Commission and City Council	On-going
1.2 Consider ways to use existing city parks and open space for additional winter activities, such as an outdoor gathering area with a fire pit and creative warming hut.	Recreation Committee, Planning Commission	1-2 years
1.3 Create winter trails within the city connecting existing trails and walkways, and by maintaining the snow for a multi-purpose skiing and walking path.	Planning Commission, Public Works	1-5 years
2.1 Map out snow management problem areas and issues, and evaluate the impacts of winter winds and drifting snow on city streets and walking paths. Redesign areas where wind is problematic to use earth forms and vegetation to reduce wind and drifting snow	Public Works	On-going
2.2 Investigate the use of new equipment or innovative technology for snow removal. This is particularly important when existing snow removal practices potentially interfere with walkability.	City Administration and Public Works	On-going
2.3 Locate smaller snow storage areas where they will receive sufficient solar radiation to encourage melt-off. Adequate drainage must also be provided.	Public Works	On-going
2.4 Balance the need for efficient snow removal with other considerations such as walkability, aesthetics, and parking.	Public Works	On-going
3.1 Collaborate with other area organizations to create a sustainable annual winter festival featuring family outdoor activities, snow/ice sculptures, winter market, food and music.	City Council	1-2 years
3.2 Explore and implement appropriate “best practices” for snow management that will improve service, reduce inconvenience and increase citizen satisfaction	Public Works	On-going
3.3 Consider implementing a “winter market” to capture a greater share of winter tourism.	Planning Commission	3-5 years
3.4 Dress up downtown for the entire winter season to create a “ski town” image	City Administration	On-going

**TABLE 1 1.8 - WINTER CITY STRATEGIES**



FIGURE 11.5 - WINTER FUN AT CRYSTELLA SKI HILL

# APPENDIX

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1. Community Parks and Recreation Checklist  
Form PR1924
2. Post Completion Self-Certification Reports Form  
PR1944 and Park Funding Sign Photo
3. Summary of Open House Public Comments
4. Notice of Public Review Draft Availability and  
Public Hearing (copy of ad/affidavit)
5. Plan Adoption Documents
  - Official City Council Resolution
  - Planning Commission Resolution
  - Minutes of the Public Hearing
  - Letter of Transmittal to WUPPDR
  - Letter of Transmittal to Iron County

