

# A vision for Crystal Bay Township

Crystal Bay Township, as a rural north woods community seeks to remain small, vibrant, and friendly to those who live, work, and visit our community by maintaining our abundance and quality of natural resources. We acknowledge the resulting limitations to development but want to retain our unique residential and historical character and the desirability as a place to live, work, and play. We will promote a positive and identifiable community image.

Crystal Bay Township includes six township areas, each 36 square miles. Of these six, the Township wants to maintain low levels of development in the northern five townships, and encourage any development that happens to areas where there are already roads and other forms of infrastructure in the bottom sixth township block. The township acknowledges that there needs to be a range of housing choices, but aims to maintain a primarily low density residential community with only those economic activities that are compatible with existing conditions. In other words, what is special about Finland needs to remain Finland. The Township is not closed to change, but wants this plan to help guide change in ways the residents support. Furthermore, when we consider the future of the Township and its location in the north shore region, we recognize that certain land uses that require new investment in infrastructure by the County or the Township may be more suitably located outside the township.



**THE TOWN OF CRYSTAL BAY  
COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN**

**2005-2015**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Vision Statement	page 1
Overarching Goals and Strategies	page 3
Planning Process	page 5
Definition of Terms	page 7
Background Information	page 8
Comprehensive Plan: Goals, Policies, Strategies	
A. Community	page 11
B. Infrastructure	page 14
C. Natural Resources	page 21
D. Economy	page 26
Land Use Regulation and Authority	page 28
Friends of the Finland Community Strategic Plan	page 29
Maps	page 34

# THE TOWN OF CRYSTAL BAY COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

2005-2025

*Approved by the Town Board March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2005*

*Revision and Update Approved by the Town Board July 2015*

*(Pending final review and approval at the Crystal Bay Town Annual Meeting March 2016)*

## Overarching Goals

*Specifically, when thinking ahead to the next twenty years, the overarching goals are:*

- ◆ Crystal Bay Township, whose boundaries range from close to the North Shore to the heart of the Superior National Forest, recognizes the vastness of their Township and the unique ability to provide broad levels of wildness, ruralness, and community.
- ◆ Crystal Bay Township recognizes that these levels are all interrelated and provide for the rich mosaic of rural community life in the Township. Even though the northern part of the Township is sparsely populated, its wildness and resources are highly valued in the community. One cannot have the richness of “Finland” without all of its parts.
- ◆ Crystal Bay Township is divided into three areas:
  - The northern five township areas/blocks provide for many diverse natural resources and ways for the community to use them. Human development is still limited in these areas.
  - The “Finland” area (or bottom sixth township block) still remains rural although a few more people have moved into the area.
  - “Downtown Finland” has become the economic center of the Township providing a town center where the needs of local residents can be met as well as providing services for tourists.
- ◆ Crystal Bay Township continues to be a place where people value community, their local history, and their individual rights.

## Overarching Strategies

*In order to achieve the overall vision and its goals, the Town Board will begin with the following overarching sustainable strategies:*

- The Township will develop a “sustainability resolution” and a corresponding set of criteria to systematically evaluate all economic, environmental and social decisions made by Board Members. According to the *President’s Council on Sustainable Development (1997), Sustainable Communities Task Force Report*, “Communities that flourish do so because they build a mutually supportive, dynamic balance between social well being, economic opportunity, and environmental quality. In a sustainable community, decisions must consider and account for long-term impacts and consequences; interdependence of natural and social systems; participatory, inclusive, and transparent decision making processes; equity between different groups in society and equity between generations; and proactive prevention, or anticipating and preventing problems before they occur.”
- The Town Board will conduct a natural resource inventory to identify areas within the Township of particular historical, cultural and ecological value. They will use the inventory to identify, define, and prioritize viewsheds, environmentally sensitive areas, places with unique community or cultural identity and economic assets.
- The Town Board will also use the natural resources inventory to identify areas in which to proactively encourage development while discouraging development in those identified as critical to preserving the cultural, historical and environmental heritage of the Township.
- The Township will educate residents about areas of importance to the Township and alternative methods for preserving them, as well as relevant topics which affect community development, the local economy, and land and natural resources uses. In doing this, they will work with the County and other not-for-profits whose mission it is to help with these kinds of preservation such as the Minnesota Land Trust and the Nature Conservancy.
- The Township will establish relationships with relevant government and non-government entities, such as the Lake County Board of Commissioners, the Board of Adjustment, the Planning Commission, Coop Light and Power, and the Nature Conservancy, so that they respect the Crystal Bay Plan in all decisions affecting the Township.
- The Township will actively work with the County when the County is working on its comprehensive plan.

In addition to these overall vision and goals, the Township has created the following comprehensive plan which considers the goals, policies and strategies in terms of four general areas: community, infrastructure, natural resources, and the economy.

## Planning Process – 2005 Version

In 1995, the Town of Crystal Bay created a planning and zoning board so as to have some jurisdiction over platted roads. The Township also discussed a new community center/recreation building for many years. In the spring of 2003 these two efforts came together and the Township decided to do comprehensive planning to begin to think ahead for the future of the Township and also to decide where the new community center should be located.

In February and March of 2003, ten focus groups were organized with 110 participants to discuss visions of the future of Crystal Bay Township and a new community center. At the annual meeting in March 2003, the results from the focus groups were presented and a new committee for doing the comprehensive planning process was formed. Initially the Comprehensive Community Planning Steering Committee had 8 members including the Township Board of Supervisors. This grew to 16 members to better represent the diverse viewpoints in the community.

During May and June of 2003, the Comprehensive Community Planning Steering Committee met every two weeks to draft a vision. All of the steering committee meetings were open to the public and many were well attended (up to 50 individuals). In the planning process, the steering committee began by focusing on a vision. Out of this initial work, they found enough consensus to identify goals and preliminary steps to achieving these goals.

The goals are divided into four sections, Community, Infrastructure, Natural Resources, and Economy. These were developed out of information gathered through focus groups and from information gathered in visioning sessions at two steering committee meetings which were widely attended and data presented on demographics and various land use issues. A vision and preliminary goals were presented to the Township on June 30, 2003. Comments on the draft were accepted through July 15<sup>th</sup>. Comments received were incorporated into this plan.

In the fall of 2004, the Comprehensive Community Planning Steering Committee regrouped with the support a second STAR grant from the Minnesota Coastal Program to work through developing strategies to complete the Comprehensive Community Plan. The new committee of 13 people (which had 12 original members and one new one) met approximately every two weeks during the fall of 2004. By the end of the year, they had developed draft strategies which were reviewed at a meeting in January 2005 before going to the public for a hearing in February.

On February 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> 2005, the Town Board held hearings on the Comprehensive Community Plan to hear feedback from the community. They made copies of the plan available to the community and asked for written feedback as well. In general, positive comments were received and the main questions raised were about how the plan would be implemented. On March 7, 2005 the Town Board approved the plan.

## 2015 Process to Review and Update the Plan

The 501(c)3 nonprofit organization Friends of the Finland Community (FFC) was formed after the creation of the 2005 Crystal Bay Comprehensive Community Plan. A group of citizens realized that the formation of a nonprofit such as the Friends could help carry on the momentum started by the Comprehensive planning process and work with the Township Board towards making the community's vision a reality.

Fast forward to 2015. Friends of the Finland Community now manages the Clair Nelson Center (the new community center/recreation building) in partnership with Crystal Bay Township. FFC runs social and recreational programs out of the facility. In addition, the FFC organizes Finland's annual St Urho's Day Celebration in March and the Harvest Booya in September, as well as managing the Clair Nelson Vocational Scholarship Fund.

In 2014, Friends of the Finland Community applied to the Lloyd K. Johnson Foundation for funds to do strategic planning with an economic focus, both as an organization and within the broader community. This strategic planning process was facilitated by Mary Mathews, Mathews and Co. With public meetings planned and community input requested, the time also seemed right to update the Crystal Bay Township Comprehensive Plan. Friends of the Finland also applied to the MN DNR Lake Superior Coastal Program for funds to be certain that those updates were made.

As part of the overall strategic planning process, many opportunities for feedback and suggestions were offered to the public. A large community feedback event was held in early 2015 and was attended by about 55 people. Many ideas and suggestions came out of that event. Comp Plan revisions were publicized at the Town Annual Meeting in 2015 and discussed afterwards. Comp Plan revisions were discussed at most of the regular Township meetings in the first half of 2015, with feedback from citizens and Crystal Bay Town Board. Members of the original Comp Plan Steering Committee were asked for feedback and suggestions. The Friends of Finland Board gave edits and suggestions.

The final draft was posted on the Friends of Finland's website, [www.friendsoffinland.org](http://www.friendsoffinland.org) and comments and feedback were requested. Paper copies were made available at area businesses and final approval is expected at the 2016 Town Annual Meeting.

## Definition of Terms

Throughout the process, the Steering Committee has used the following definitions (from Superior Design & Planning, Inc. 2002):

A **comprehensive plan** is the framework that the Township will use to guide its land use over the next ten to twenty years. The Comprehensive Plan contains a vision, goals, policies, and strategies that will be used to achieve that vision.

The **vision** is the desired future, what we want the Township to look like and be in the next ten to twenty years. It is the big picture.

The **goals** are long term ends, statements that set the direction to reach the vision.

The **policies** are more specific statements which offer guidance on achieving the goals.

The **strategies** include the tools or the steps to achieve the policies, goals and vision.

## Background Information

The Town of Crystal Bay is located in Lake County, in Northeastern Minnesota. The urban center for this township is Finland, which has been built around the Baptism River Valley. Finland lies in the southernmost township block of the six which comprise Crystal Bay Township. The Baptism River flows into Lake Superior. Rather than directly bordering Lake Superior, the Township lies mostly behind first ridge of the Sawtooth Mountains and continues northward to the Boundary Waters. Indeed almost one and a half of the Township blocks lie within the Boundary Waters Canoe Area. In general, within the Township's 216 square miles, there are many acres of wetlands and mountain ridges most of it covered with forests as well as variety of inland lakes.

Ecologically, Crystal Bay Township is located in the Laurentian Mixed Forest Province of Minnesota which covers approximately 94,000 square kilometers (Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, 1999). "A glacial landscape dominated by Wisconsin-age glacial drift and landforms, lacustrine features such as glacial lakes Agassiz, Upham and Aitkin, and morainal features cover large land areas in this region. Sandy outwash plains and channels are also common (Albert, 1995). The climate is characterized by long, cool winters and short, mild summers. Annual precipitation ranges from approximately 530 to 780 mm (McNab and Avers 1994). At the time of settlement, conifers dominated both upland and lowland forests. On upland areas, jack pine (*Pinus banksiana* Lamb.) dominated dry, fire prone sites such as outwash plans and thin soils over bedrock. White and red pine (*Pinus resinosa* Ait.) occurred on sandy moraines. Post-disturbance aspen-birch forests were present on a wide variety of upland soil types. Wetland types included large areas of lowland conifer forest dominated by black spruce (*Picea mariana* (Moench) Voss) and tamarack (*Larix laricina* (Duroi) Koch) as well as open bogs and patterned peatlands (Albert 1995)."<sup>1</sup>

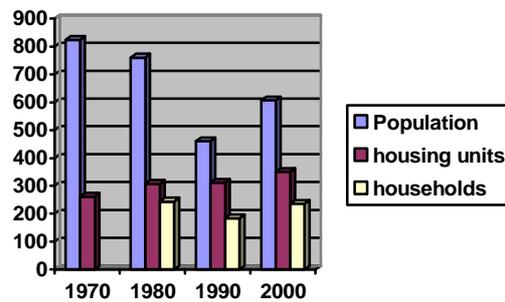
Socially, Finland, was one of the last areas of Minnesota to be settled. "It wasn't until the late 1890's that the first Finns and other Scandinavians began to file for homesteads in this remote section of Lake County. . . . In 1907 the Alger Smith Company built a railroad to the community in order to facilitate its logging operations there." (How We Remember, Stories and Recollections of Finland, Minnesota's First Century, 1895-1995, p.4) The first industry in the area was logging. In 1913 the Finland Co-op was organized and "a truck was purchased to bring groceries from Duluth once a week. Electricity came in 1939. By 1935 there were 179 Finnish families with about 500 acres of cleared land." (Ibid) Over the years the population of the Township has grown with the arrival of the Reserve Mining Plant and an airbase in the 1950s and shrunk with the closing of the airbase and the Mining Plant in the 70s. In recent years, the population has again been on the rise with the building of Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center and other people choosing to live here.

---

<sup>1</sup> This text is drawn from "Changes in Forest Disturbance Frequency and Patch Structure from Pre-Euro-American Settlement to Present in the Mixed Forest Province of Minnesota by Mark A. White (currently at the Nature Conservancy in Duluth) and George Host (at the Natural Resources Research Institute at the University of Minnesota Duluth)

In 2000 the population of Crystal Bay Township was 607 (according to the 2000 census). From 1990 to 2000, the population grew by 32%. At the same time, the number of housing units steadily increased. From 1990 to 2000, the increase was 12%. From 2000 to 2010, the population dropped again. Since 2000 to 2010, the number of housing units has also decreased somewhat.

	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>
<b>Population</b>	824	760	460	607	472
<b>Housing Units</b>	261	307	312	350	329
<b>Households</b>	--	244	184	235	215



	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
<b>Population</b>	621	472	469	465	451
<b>Households</b>	246	215	216	214	208

Individual land ownership is concentrated in the lowest sixth township block. In the northern five blocks, much of the land is in government ownership including state, county, and federal ownership. The northern-most section and a half of the Township is in the Federal Boundary Waters Canoe Area. See the maps at the end of the plan which provide additional information.

## 2015 Update – Clair Nelson Community Center

Crystal Bay Township was assisted by Friends of the Finland Community with the planning, fundraising, and construction of the Finland Community Center/Clair Nelson Intermodal Transportation Center.

The former Finland recreation hall had fallen into disrepair and in the fall of 2007, with the help of Lake County, it was demolished. The Township’s goal was to build a new community center that would be the model rural, affordable, sustainable community center to serve area residents of Northern Lake County and visitors to the region.

Planning for the new center began during the 2005 Comprehensive Plan process. In addition to the question “What would you like the community of Finland to be like in 20 years?” focus

groups were also asked what they would like to see in a new community center. This information was incorporated into the Comp Plan. The Northeast Minnesota Sustainable Development Partnership provided a \$9,000 start-up and design grant. The Township worked with Paul Anderson of Partners and Sirny Architecture Firm and the University of Minnesota Center for Sustainable Building Research to obtain schematic designs for the building and to develop methods for incorporating sustainable elements into the new facility.

In June of 2006, with drawings and a plan for the center, the Township voted to bond for up to \$750,000 to build the new building. That same month, the Township moved to officially create two Community Center Committees, a fund-raising and a building committee, which met bi-weekly to plan for and coordinate the next steps for the building. In August of 2006, Congressman Jim Oberstar visited Finland and the old Finland Recreation Hall to learn about the hopes and plans for the new Community Center.

On March 16th, 2007, Finland's St Urho's Day Celebration highlighted the History of the old Finland Recreation Hall, which would soon be torn down. The highlight of the day was a visit from Congressman Oberstar who announced an \$800,000 Federal grant to help build the new Community Center, in recognition and memorial of the efforts of Clair Nelson, a recently deceased community leader.

A \$97,300 grant from Minnesota's Lake Superior Coastal Program soon followed and enables the Community Center to provide information and access to individuals about the natural world in inner Lake County along the Baptism River, a protected trout stream.

Additional funding was received from Iron Range Resources, The Wilder Foundation, NE MN Sustainable Development Partnership, the Lloyd K. Johnson Foundation, Clean Energy Resource Teams, the Katherine B Andersen Fund of the St Paul Foundation, and many donations from individuals and businesses.

The new facility opened for the John Beargrease Sled Dog Marathon January 30 – February 2, 2011. The Grand Opening occurred during the 2011 St Urho's Celebration on March 12th, 2011.

After the Center was finished, a construction debt of \$250,000 remained. Thanks to the efforts of Town Clerk Deb Johansen, and County Commissioner Pete Walsh, the late State Representative Dave Dill secured Taconite Production Tax funds to pay off the debt.

## Comprehensive Plan: Goals, Policies, Strategies

### A. COMMUNITY

#### *History, culture, values*

---

**GOAL:** Development shall take place such that community spirit and the small town or rural feel is maintained and so that the natural environment is impacted as little as possible.

#### **POLICIES:**

- ◆ Crystal Bay Township will protect and built on the positive things it has: the variety of people and viewpoints, the sense of community, the Baptism River, and the Finnish heritage.
- ◆ Crystal Bay Township, recognizing its heritage and culture, will continue its customs of melding individuality with the best interests of the community
- ◆ The small town friendliness will continue to be an integral part of Crystal Bay Township as it grows. It is a place where people with diverse values and interests can gather and socialize.
- ◆ Community life in Crystal Bay Township is active. The Township will value citizen participation in planning for its future. The Township form of government will embrace its ability of self-determination for individual residents and the community.
- ◆ Crystal Bay Township is a place where diverse groups and individuals can co-exist and flourish as shown by the continued operations of the logging, tourism, home businesses, and environmental education sectors of the economy.
- ◆ Developments, be they housing, commercial, or industrial in Crystal Bay Township will be looked at in terms of how they fit into the heritage and culture. As the Town Board makes its recommendations, they will take into account both the needs of the community and an individual's rights for development, and the costs and benefits to the community.
- ◆ Crystal Bay Township recognizes the opportunity to provide a cross section of rural life - ranging from the wilds of the northern part of the township to the rural areas around downtown Finland and to the small town developments in "Downtown Finland." Having recognized this opportunity, Crystal Bay Township will encourage development in areas that have existing infrastructure, maintain its ruralness in the southern part of Crystal Bay Township as well as support the development of a small commercial center around "Downtown Finland".

#### **STRATEGIES:**

To sustain the cultural and historic traditions of Crystal Bay Township:

- \* The Township will continue to support the Finland Minnesota Historical Society, the Finland Co-op, St. Urho's Day celebrations, and other traditional community projects and institutions.

- \* The Township working with the Finland Minnesota Historical Society will develop a map of historically significant sites.
- \* The Township will include information about the history and culture of the Township in the entranceway of the new community center.
- \* The Township will place historical, cultural, and natural interpretive markers around the community to inform and educate locals and tourists.

To promote active citizenship:

- \* The Township board meetings will include more food and fun so people will want to attend and will have local educational opportunities. Some may be targeted specifically for youth to educate them about the township process.
- \* The Township will host meet-your-neighbors potluck events around the community.
- \* The Town Board will take into account the history, culture and values of the community as they consider land use and other proposals which come to them.

To keep the community informed:

- \* The Town will share local news with residents through the Friends of the Finland Community's electronic and printed newsletter to keep residents abreast of the current happenings in the Township. The Town Board will also continue to develop their website about the Township.
- \* The County will be asked to make local issues more accessible by publishing their comprehensive plan, ordinances and legal notices on the web so that the Township could include pertinent notices in their newsletter.
- \* The Finland Coop and the Community Center will be asked to maintain separate information boards one for township information and news and the other for residents' and local organizations' postings.

To increase community pride:

- \* The Township will support the creation of a committee to work on beautifying the community as a means of building community pride.

*Community Gathering Spaces*

---

**GOAL: Crystal Bay Township has supported and developed a broad range of community gathering spaces where people can come together formally and informally to interact including the Finland Coop, the community center, and a community sauna/hot tub.**

## **POLICIES:**

- ◆ The community gathering spaces will include a mix of old hang-outs and new projects which will remain in the lower sixth of the Township.
- ◆ The Township will support and improve existing informal gathering places in the commercial area downtown (such as the Baptism Bridge, and the future open space between the Fire Hall and the Coop) to provide safe places for people to interact.
- ◆ The Township and the Friends of the Finland Community will cooperate to ensure Clair Nelson Community Center<sup>2</sup> is well used and maintained for the community.

## **STRATEGIES:**

- \* “Downtown Finland” along Highway 1 remains the center of the community’s commercial district and is an active hub for goods and services and gathering place for people
- \* The Township will develop a new community gathering square at the site of the old school house. A new community square could include a picnic area and a play space. It could also include an information board for local postings and various tourist attractions including old equipment from the area and an outhouse.
- \* The Town Board will assist the Finland Co-op as it continues the tradition of providing goods and services, etc.
- \* The Finland Historical Site will continue to host events and be a gathering place for the history of the Township.
- \* Crystal Bay Township will work with the MNDNR in promoting the State Forest Campground for use as part of the local tourism economy.
- \* The Clair Nelson Community Center will continue to be an active, sustainably built space that fits in the natural environment and reflects the local heritage and culture and natural environment. The new center will continue to meet the community needs by providing:
  - Indoor and outdoor recreational space
  - Trail hub
  - Gathering space for community festivals, celebrations, and meetings
  - Space for public meetings and other public and civic events.
  - Space for the Crystal Bay Township town hall, public records
  - Child/Youth/Senior citizen center
  - Community shop for use by residents
  - Facility for use by public health nurses etc. –
  - Ease of use, accessibility
  - Stage for productions
  - Gym
  - Commercial kitchen

---

<sup>2</sup> The Clair Nelson Community Center, proposed in the 2005 Comprehensive Plan, was built by the Township and the Friends of the Finland Community and opened in March 2011.

## **B. INFRASTRUCTURE**

**GOAL: Investment in public facilities and services will aim to enhance the health of the community and its citizens.**

### **POLICIES:**

- ◆ The Township will invest in facilities and services that bring people and functions of a community together to make it a more efficient, safe, and desirable place to live.
- ◆ The Township will consider the public services needed to support specific developments before they are approved. Ask developers and users to pay for the share of public services they require.

### **STRATEGIES:**

- \* The Township will educate developers and home owners on the difficulty of providing public services (e.g. emergency services, transportation infrastructure, and school access to isolated rural areas). They will work with other entities in this effort.
- \* The Township will define a downtown area to encourage development where services can be provided most cost effectively.
- \* The Township will encourage Lake County to look into a no service zone for parts of the northern five township blocks.

### ***Roads / Transportation***

---

**GOAL: The Crystal Bay Township infrastructure is designed, built and maintained to: enable people to move around on safe roads and trails; to be in contact with each other; and to enhance the local commerce while respecting/protecting the natural resources and the rural feeling of the area.**

### **POLICIES:**

- ◆ Roads in Crystal Bay Township are designed, built, and maintained to reflect the rural qualities associated with the Township.
- ◆ The few new roads that are built in Crystal Bay Township are built to standards that reflect the use that they receive, as well as to standards that best protect the natural resources and provide safe travel.
- ◆ In the future, “Downtown Finland” will be connected with the Shore by a cost-efficient public transportation system.
- ◆ The township will continue to work with the county regarding maintenance of the airbase road.

## **STRATEGIES:**

- \* The Township will explore ways to decrease right of ways to keep the rural feel of the community while still maintaining them as safe roads. This will keep the shoulders adequate to the needs of drivers but also minimize the spreading out of the clear cut area.
- \* For new and existing roads, the Township will look for ways to build them so that they do not need to be as wide.
- \* The Town Board will develop paths of communication about roads with homeowners.
- \* The Town Board will work with home owners to plant trees to minimize the dust from the roads.

## ***Trails/ Recreation***

---

**GOAL: Crystal Bay is a place for motorized and non-motorized travel to co-exist in peace where people can step outside their doors to a comprehensive trail system linking key community places as well as local area businesses with each other.**

## **POLICIES:**

- ◆ Through active participation with State, County and Federal resource managers, Crystal Bay Township will maintain and enhance its recreational trail system for all users continuing the broad base of activities for residents as well as tourists.
- ◆ As has been the history for Crystal Bay Township, the rural heritage of leaving your doorstep and connecting with trails will still be possible through citizens actively engaged in planning, and maintaining a trail system.
- ◆ The residents and visitors in the southern part of Crystal Bay Township will have a well-connected trails system that connects Finland and its residents to the trails near Lax Lake, Tettegouche Park, Beaver Bay, Little Marais and points on the North Shore. This trail system will be used for commuting amongst communities as well as a trail for tourists to come and enjoy.
- ◆ There will also be a network of trails within the township which connects the various community gathering places such as the new Community Center, the Finland Historic Site, and the “downtown area”.
- ◆ The new recreation/community/trail center in Finland will be a trail hub and will provide the opportunity for many recreational pursuits with both indoor and outdoor activities.

## **STRATEGIES:**

- \* The Township will explore ways to build walking and bike trails linking the Finland Business district to the various community gathering places such as the community center, the parks, the historical site and the Gitchee Gamee trail. This trail system will be

an inviting one with directional and interpretive signage located in the southernmost township block around the “downtown Finland” area.

- \* The Town Board will encourage the Department of Transportation to put in a wide shoulder up State Hwy. 1 and down County 6 so that the roads will be bike-friendly and riders on the Gitchee Gamee trail can come up into Finland.
- \* The Township ensures that local trail system maps will be available at the Community Center, the community trail hub..
- \*The Township will partner with state, county, local government jurisdictions and private interests in comprehensive trail planning.
- \* The Township will promote and encourage the construction of multiple use trails when practical while recognizing the need to separate certain activities and user groups.
- \* The Township will support the construction and maintenance of a trail system using best management practices and current erosion control and vegetation management techniques.

### ***Communications***

---

**GOAL: A communication system is developed so that all forms are available for individuals and local businesses while protecting natural resources and taking into account efficiency and economics.**

### **POLICIES:**

- ◆ The telecommunication system in Crystal Bay Township will provide for public safety while maintaining the quality of its view corridors and other aesthetic considerations.
- ◆ “Downtown Finland” will have high speed internet connections and will be a vibrant participant in internet business and commerce.
- ◆ The telecommunications system is efficient in that it, as a first priority, uses already existing sites suitable for communication towers and space is fully utilized on towers.

### **STRATEGIES:**

- \* The Township will support the Lake County Broadband Project to ensure high-speed connectivity for the Township. .
- \* The Township will work with Wolf Ridge and the air base to see if antennas can be placed on existing towers.
- \* The Township will review the County Tower ordinance and if necessary, work with Lake County to adopt a model telecommunications tower ordinance.

## *Energy*

---

**GOAL: The Township, recognizing the importance of self-sufficiency, will explore ways to reduce their energy consumption and to promote alternative energy production in ways which respect the local natural environment while taking into account efficiency and economics.**

### **POLICIES:**

- ◆ Crystal Bay Township, recognizing the vastness of their township and the need to maintain economic sources of energy production, will emphasize alternative energy sources for areas that are off the grid and will be a model of energy efficiency for sparsely populated rural areas.
- ◆ “Downtown Finland”, in southern Crystal Bay Township, will be a model for sustainable energy production based on its energy cooperative and is self sufficient in electric energy production.
- ◆ Utility lines in Crystal Bay Township will be buried underground and non-obtrusive wherever possible.

### **STRATEGIES:**

- \* The Township will encourage the development and use of renewable energy resources including, but not limited to, solar, wind, biomass, methane (landfill gas), micro-hydro, and other similar sources. The energy-efficient Community Center and fire hall solar panels are community role models.
- \* The Township will provide education on renewable energy methods and tools to local residents to encourage their adoption.
- \* The Township will develop incentives to promote home owners and builders to include renewable energy generation in their projects.
- \* As wind technology advances, the Township will look into ways to take advantage of the possibilities for community wind projects, especially up at the Air Base which is an area where there are already towers.
- \* The Township will address conservation issues within their purview, such as installing energy efficient bulbs in their own structures which can help to cut long-term costs.
- \* The Township will work with Coop Light and Power to encourage the burying of lines wherever feasible.
- \* In all of these efforts, the Township will work with other government entities, including Lake County, Community Center and the new relevant programs to provide education and opportunities to promote renewable energy.

## *Housing*

---

**GOAL: A range of housing forms will be available to meet the needs of the diverse population including the elderly and young families. Housing forms will respect the rural feel and character of the area.**

### **POLICIES:**

- ◆ New housing that has occurred in the southern part of the township, will be located close to existing infrastructure and services. There has been less of an increase in housing in the north and central portions of the Township.
- ◆ Residential housing will include a broad mix of homes from single unit homes to duplexes. In “Downtown Finland” there will be a range of well managed, affordable houses for seniors and young families ranging from town homes to assisted living space exists which is connected by trails to the commercial area.
- ◆ There may be a few clustered housing developments (Planned unit developments / subdivisions) in Crystal Bay Township, which provide for a range of housing options while maintaining ruralness through clustering houses thereby conserving undeveloped land (open space).
- ◆ All the new housing in Crystal Bay Township will contribute to the community’s strong sense of rural feel through its close attention to the maintenance of view corridors and front yard setbacks through the use of distance and/or natural screening.
- ◆ The housing in Crystal Bay Township will reflect the diversity of housing as well as the housing styles that are part of the unique heritage of Crystal Bay Township.

### **STRATEGIES:**

- \*The Township will define appropriate density and intensity goals and generalized land use priorities including creating development priorities that recognize appropriate location, building, and design site, and limit land and watershed environmental impacts.
- \* The Township will work with Lake County to identify density levels that can be allowed as conditional uses, and set clear, well-defined standards for granting conditional uses.
- \* The Township will work with Lake County to implement the density, intensity, and conditional use goals and standards.
- \* The Township will look into incentives such as Transfer of Development Rights, Purchase of Development Rights, a community land trust model, residential cluster developments, and conservation subdivisions and easements to encourage development in the “Downtown” Finland area and discourage development in the northern five township blocks.
- \* The Township will identify and define affordability based upon local community incomes.

- \* The Township will promote a mix of housing development that provides for a broad range of income levels and household types. The Township will work to include affordable housing in any large development project.
- \* The Township will participate in regional planning efforts for senior citizens so that regional planning efforts will include opportunities for seniors who wish to remain in Crystal Bay Township. The Township may survey senior residents in terms of housing needs.
- \* The Township will work with Lake County to adopt and use well-defined rules and standards for enforcement of land use regulation. They will encourage the County to educate the board, other officials and landowners on the legal standards for granting variances and adhering to the community's adopted rules.
- \* The Township will work with Lake County to modify zoning ordinances to clearly link conditional use permits to specific conditions. This includes working with Lake County to modify the ordinances to prohibit undesirable land uses that might be considered as falling within a conditional use category.
- \* The Township, appreciating the current diversity in the housing stock does not want to make everything uniform and instead wants to encourage the creativity. Yet at the same time, the Township appreciates the traditional building materials used in the area including wood, rock and a natural feel. Therefore, the Township will seek to nurture individual creativity yet in a way which fits into the natural landscape as a way to build pride.
- \* The Township will maintain open communication lines with other units of government and work with the County on the situation at the former airbase.

### *Wastewater*

---

**GOAL: The Town Board will plan thoughtfully to meet the wastewater needs of local residents while minimizing impact on the natural water resources.**

**POLICIES:**

- ◆ The Township will work on addressing household and business use and waste water concerns in as sustainable and affordable a way as possible.

**STRATEGIES:**

- \*The Town Board will consider a variety of residential and municipal wastewater treatment options such as constructed wetlands, living machines, greywater separation, holding tanks, and composting toilets as a means of reducing public infrastructure costs, groundwater consumption, and surface and subsurface discharge of wastewater in an effort to protect existing water quality.

- \* The Town Board will work to identify high density wastewater concentration areas, such as Riverside Dr., and look for alternative affordable solutions, including but not limited to a community system. They will work with Lake County to identify land that could be set aside for a sewage system.
- \* The Town Board will work with regional planning efforts on wastewater issues.

## **C. NATURAL RESOURCES:**

**GOAL: Crystal Bay Township will manage its resources in a balanced way so as to protect them.**

### **POLICIES:**

- ◆ Recognizing the vast area of large ownership of public and wild land in the north and central part of the Township (180 square miles) and recognizing that land as a vital part of the ruralness of Crystal Bay Township, Crystal Bay Township will support and emphasize management, development, and activities that protect resources and keep the area wild so as to achieve the following:
  - It is a major contributor to the sustainable forest resources in the Township.
  - It provides an area for trails, hunting, bird watching, camping, and canoeing in areas that still remain undeveloped/wild.
  - A small amount of housing has been developed in the area, most of which is self supporting in terms of infrastructure requirements.
  - Wetlands are an integral part of the ecosystem and remain intact for future generations.
- ◆ The most prominent features of Crystal Bay Township, its streams, lakes, forests, wildlife, and hills and valleys will be managed in a balanced way and continue to flourish and represent Crystal Bay Township's sense of place so as to achieve the following:
  - Views are still unobstructed and uninterrupted by humans.
  - Water quality in streams, lakes, and drinking water is of the highest quality
  - Housing, roads, and trails in Crystal Bay Township has been done in a manner that minimizes run-off and reduces the amount of impervious surfaces.
  - Habitat endures for wildlife species that have been natural inhabitants of Crystal Bay Township.
  - The stars and the Aurora Borealis are still vibrantly visible throughout Crystal Bay Township as a result of maintaining guidelines for lighting and minimizing light pollution.
  - Crystal Bay Township has wisely used and sustained its natural resources including lakes and streams, forests, and gravel resources.
  - Crystal Bay Township has protected its water resources through assuring that the sewage treatment systems are well designed and complying while meeting user needs -- from individual onsite systems to alternative sewage systems and sewer districts where warranted.

## **STRATEGIES:**

### ***Development***

---

- \* The Township will conduct a natural resources inventory in partnership with other groups (ex: DNR data, the Superior National Forest EIS) to help the Board identify sensitive areas.
  
- \* The Township will partner with other government and non-profit entities to gather information such as data collected by the State and Federal fish and wildlife managers, the Minnesota County Biological Survey, regional educational institutions and others to establish a biological inventory to compliment previous and concurrent GIS efforts as a means to protect sensitive, vulnerable, protected, endangered, or threatened species and their habitat.
  
- \* Once the Township has conducted the inventory, they will use it to:
  - identify and prioritize important habitat, natural areas, and viewsheds in the Township.
  - develop sensitive areas overlays,
  - inform their recommendations to other decision makers such as the Lake County Planning and Zoning
  - to educate community residents about resources in the Township.
  
- \* The Township will work with the County to rezone the Township in ways which match the Crystal Bay comprehensive plan. At present there are three main zoning issues: 1) to rezone areas around inner lakes to make the zoning there consistent with the surrounding areas; 2) to work with local business owners and residents to identify a downtown commercial district; and 3) to explore the creation of a 40 acre minimum lot size for use in identified areas of the five northern township blocks to help preserve the area for forestry and other natural environment uses and access.
  
- \* The Township will work with Lake County to urge them to work on developing ridgeline ordinances and to provide education to the public about this. (For example: to have construction projects to fit into or be below the tree line to blend into the mountain.)
  
- \* The Town Board will encourage the use of sustainable practices and planning in any developments in the Township. (The University of Wisconsin's Siting Rural Development handout includes a series of recommendations including thoughtful planning, using tools to protect lakes and streams, and minimizing pollutant sources and pollutant delivery.
  
- \* The Township, working with others, will create an education program/process to promote conservation easements and educate residents about development pressures, their consequences, and alternatives, to help promote open space design and best management practices, to explain the issues of impervious surfaces and stormwater run-off, to teach about sensitive areas, and the consequences of introducing exotic species and the benefits of using native Lake Superior Highland species.

- \* The Township will encourage the preservation or protection of areas unsuitable for development due to environmental, economic, or community restraints. Work with Lake County, the Nature Conservancy, and other government and non-governmental agencies in these efforts. One way to do this could be to support legislation that provides local governments with tax incentives (payments in lieu of taxes) from the state for protection of sensitive areas with conservation easements.
- \* The Township will seek to limit impervious surfaces and encourage the management of stormwater from new developments.
- \* The Township will work with Lake County to adopt a stormwater or hydrology ordinance that inclusively addresses stormwater erosion, sedimentation, wetlands, and vegetative management.
- \* The Township will partner with a land trust to hold and manage conservation easements and property titles.

### **Forest Resources**

---

- \* The Township will work closely with County, State, and Federal land managers to ensure that forests under their jurisdiction found within the Township are managed using an appropriate forestry certification program.
- \* The Township will encourage private landowners managing forests for timber harvest to adopt sound forest stewardship practices such as those found in the Minnesota Forest Resource Council guidelines for private woodlot owners or other sustainable forestry certification program.
- \* The Township will work with the County to consider enrolling property administered by the County and the Township that is designated for timber harvest into sustainable forestry certification programs.
- \* The Township will encourage home owners to do forest stewardship plans (partner with other government and not-for-profits to provide education and incentives for this)
- \*The Township will partner with other organizations and loggers to offer trainings on safe and sustainable logging practices.
- \*The Township will continue to offer trees to residents to help replant forests with native species.

### ***Aggregate mining***

---

- \* The Township will encourage efforts which seek to build roads in such a way as to minimize the need for new gravel pits (for example by using recyclables and local waste products such as tailings (if they are safe) in road beds.)
- \* The Township will review and enforce existing State laws regulating aggregate mining while using resources such as the Minnesota Aggregate Mining Task Force Final Report and the State of Wisconsin model reclamation ordinance to draft and adopt additional Township provisions protecting the environment and residents from the adverse impacts of this activity.
- \* Working with Lake County, require restoration of aggregate pits and putting into place systems to ensure the reclamation. The Township will also encourage maintaining the sites as they are mined to keep them as kept up as possible.
- \* The Town Board will monitor aggregate pits, as part of their annual road tour, so that they do not become dumping grounds and so that they are restored.

### ***Enforcement***

---

- \* The Township will work with Lake County to promote better enforcement in all areas of development including setbacks, enforcement of future ridgeline ordinances, wetland preservation, and angles of driveway limits.
- \* The Township will encourage and work towards the use clear obvious signage (for example: big pink signs with project and contact and government contact information on it) to let the public know projects which are being proposed and worked on.
- \* The Township will work with Lake County to develop small handouts/business cards with contact numbers to make it easier for people to know who to call and when.
- \*To ensure that existing laws are followed by all private and public landowners, Town Board members will perform site visits in all planned construction areas before and after completion and notify appropriate enforcement personnel of violations.

### ***Other***

---

- \* The Township will work with Lake County and Coop Light and Power to implement the County's lighting ordinances. If this is not sufficient, the Township will consider the International Dark Skies Association model lighting ordinance to protect Crystal Bay Township residents from nuisance glare and stray lighting ensuring continued access to dark skies.
- \*Town Board members will work with Lake County to develop and promote a noise ordinance to protect Crystal Bay Township residents and sensitive wildlife from industrial noise sources such as gravel mining operations, timber harvest and motorized trail use.

- \* The Town Board will adopt and promote landscaping approaches that rely on native plants and enhance watershed functions.
- \* The Town Board will support the County's existing signage ordinances so that there are no bill boards in Crystal Bay Township. Further, the Town Board will promote the use of beautiful locally made signage that fits into the cultural and historic feel of the Township.

.

## **C. ECONOMY**

**GOAL: Crystal Bay Township will balance economic diversity and a strong local job base. Specifically, it will have a diversified economy where residents continue to work in traditional sectors that have been established such as logging, tourism and environmental education. The diverse economy will also be bolstered by good paying jobs in high tech enterprises and the Lake County Broadband Project. Because of this diverse and prospering economy, there are jobs available making it viable for younger people to remain in the community. The Town Board will support efforts that balance the importance of tourism and other economic development with the needs and values of local residents.**

### **POLICIES:**

- ◆ Once the Township designates the area along Highway 1 in downtown Finland district as a commercial district, it may slowly expand and meet the needs of local residents as well as provides goods and services for tourists who recreate in and around Crystal Bay Township so as to achieve the following:
  - Most of the new developments are locally based and benefit the local economy.
  - All the commercial developments are well integrated into the community's natural resource based environment and blend into the scale associated with the town.
  - Since space is limited along its commercial district, the commercial developments have focused on utilizing space efficiently and densely. The downtown area has developed in a manner consistent with its small town beginnings.
- ◆ Crystal Bay Township's home based businesses and occupations will grow; a long standing tradition in the community.
- ◆ The environmental education sector in Crystal Bay Township will increase and continue to provide jobs.
- ◆ Tourism in the Township will remain in keeping with Crystal Bay's ruralness and its natural resources. It has not expanded to where it overrides the rural, small community feeling that has abounded in the Township.
- ◆ A diverse tourism trade in Crystal Bay Township will be maintained:
  - Motorized and quiet activities continue to be supported by local businesses catering to them such as the hospitality industry as well as sales and services.
  - Once Crystal Bay Township has developed a connected trail system with "Downtown Finland", Lax Lake, Silver Bay, Beaver Bay and the North Shore, "Downtown Finland" will become the heart of a loop trail off the Superior Hiking Trail and the North Shore Biking trail. Hiking / biking in Crystal Bay Township will give new meaning to the "Sawtooth Mountains".
  - As part of the home-based business / occupations, there will be a segment in tourism which provides for educational opportunities as well as opportunities to

stay in B&B's—connecting with residents and sharing in a rural living experience.

### **STRATEGIES:**

- \* The Township will center commercial development in existing commercial areas and identify prohibited commercial uses that would be in opposition to the traditional quality of life.
- \* The Township will work with local businesses and residents to identify the area of a downtown commercial district and, if advantageous, partner with Lake County to make the required zoning changes.
- \* The Township will use and encourage the use of local goods and services as a way of supporting the local business economy and resources which promotes the community's sustainability. As a part of this, the Town Board will help to maintain the prominence of the Finland Co-op as they continue its tradition of providing for the needs of its residents.
- \* The Township will explore ways of encouraging the development of value added products, those which are based upon local natural resources from the area, but are processed in some way so as to add to their value before selling them elsewhere.
- \*The Township should look into the needs of local businesses and see how they can support them. The Township could have a Local Business Award to a home business or corporate business that meets certain criteria, for instance, serving local needs, recycling nature both in terms of resources and financial dealings, enhances the quality of life of the family or the community, achieves the “northwoods” feel in their operation, etc... The award could be given out by the town through a small group, including past recipients.
- \*The Town board will set clear and specific conditions for commercial development, limiting “theme” franchises (buffering the road and residential land uses). The Township or a design review committee will recommend design standards for commercial development while still allowing individual expression. The Township shall establish a Corporate Personhood Elimination and Democratic Self-Government Ordinance to eliminate corporate claims to civil and constitutional privileges.
- \* The Township will establish a living wage ordinance for its laborers and contracts to promote social equality. In addition to establishing minimum wage standards, this model ordinance also requires that local expertise and labor sources be used whenever possible.
- \*Town board members will promote sustainable tourism which recognizes that tourism decisions be ecosystem based, recognizing the cumulative and synergistic effects of all actions on the ecological integrity of a community and region. Impacts of tourism related decisions should be assessed on other sectors, regions and communities.
- \*Town board members will look into the commercial needs of the Township and try to design an economic plan accordingly. They will begin by surveying existing local

businesses on their needs and goals. They will also provide education on sustainable economic choices on an individual, business, and community level.

## **Land Use Regulation and Authority**

This is the first comprehensive Community Plan that Crystal Bay has developed. Until now, the Township has been under the Lake County Comprehensive Plan. Lake County adopted their first plan in 1978 and updated it in 1998. The most recent version of the Lake County Comprehensive Plan was adopted in October 2001. At the same time, the Township is also under the County's Water Plan which was adopted in 1992, updated in 1998 and is currently being worked on again.

At present, the Town of Crystal Bay has not been engaged in the activity of doing its own zoning. This has been done through Lake County with the Township being informed of variances, conditional uses, platting, rezones, and other proposed land use changes. Land use permits that are sought in the Township can be reviewed by the Board but the ultimate decisions have been made at the County level.

State Agencies who play a role in the Township include: the MN Pollution Control Agency, and the MN Department of Transportation and the Department of Natural Resources and the Board of Water and Soil Resources (wetlands, water plan).

As the Town of Crystal Bay adopts and implements its comprehensive plan, it looks forward to working with the other levels of government both in the implementation of the vision and in the enforcement.