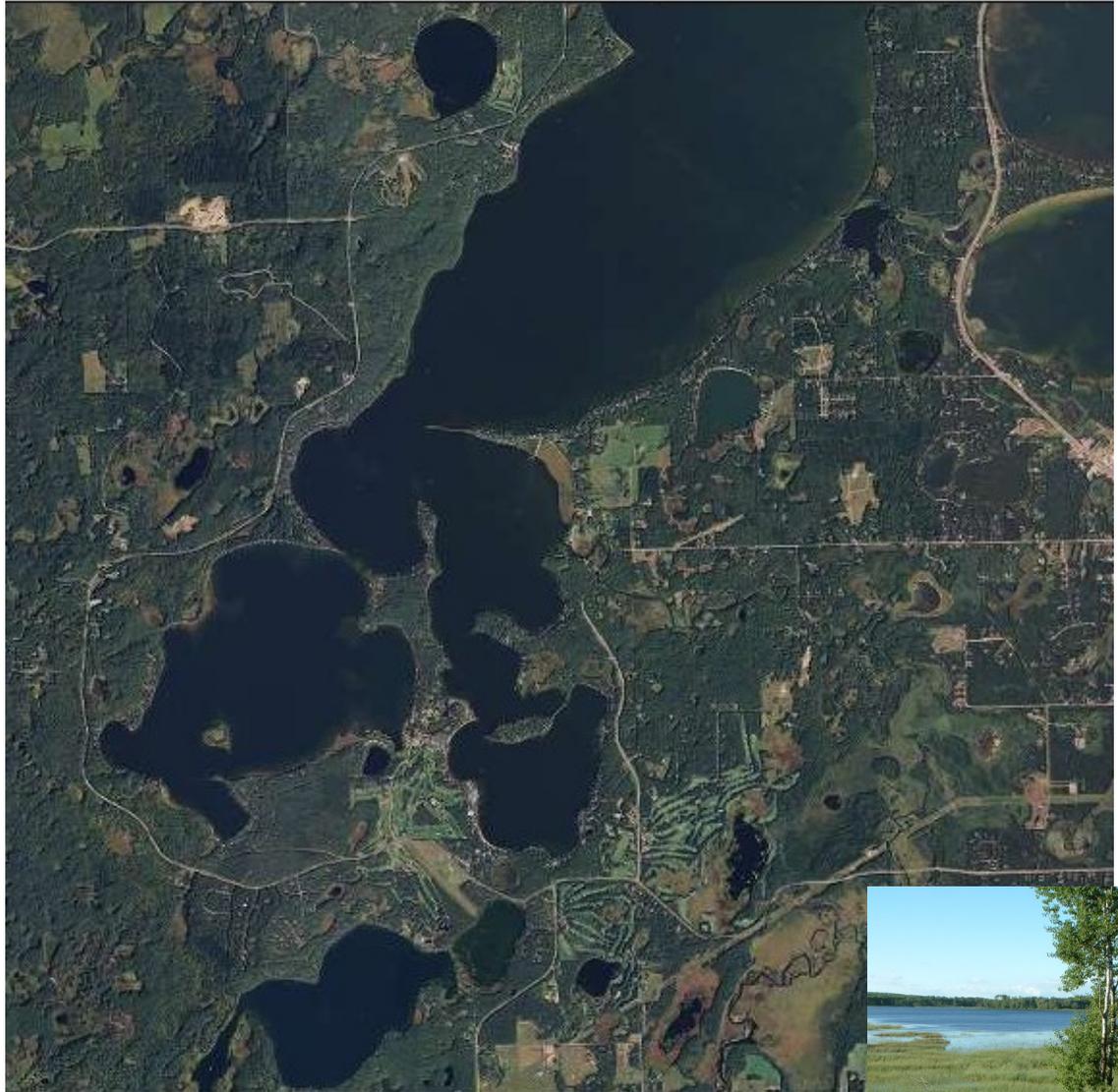


CITY OF EAST GULL LAKE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



City of East Gull Lake
10790 Squaw Point Rd
East Gull Lake, MN 56401

CITY OF EAST GULL LAKE

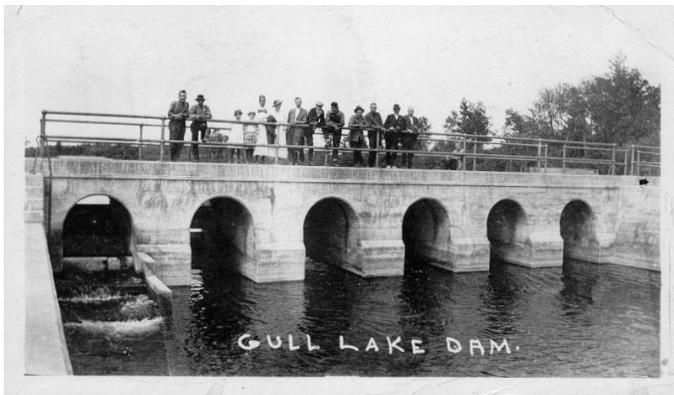
I. History

Located in the heart of the Brainerd Lakes region of Cass County in Central Minnesota, the City of East Gull Lake was incorporated in 1924. With numerous lakes, over 38 miles of shoreline, woods, and wetlands, the City has long been a favorite tourist destination and a wonderful place to raise our families. Its close proximity to the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St Paul makes it an ideal location for both year-round and seasonal residents, vacationers, and tourists.



The City incorporates 14.82 square miles, of which 7.86 are land and 6.96 are water. It is bordered by Crow Wing County to the east, Fairview Township to the west, Sylvan Township to the south, and the City of Lake Shore to the north.

City Hall is located on the corner of Gull Dam and Squaw Point roads. It served as the East Gull Lake School until consolidation to the Brainerd School District in 1962.



The Gull Lake Dam was built by the United States Army Corps of Engineers in 1912 to aid in logging, the primary industry in the area.

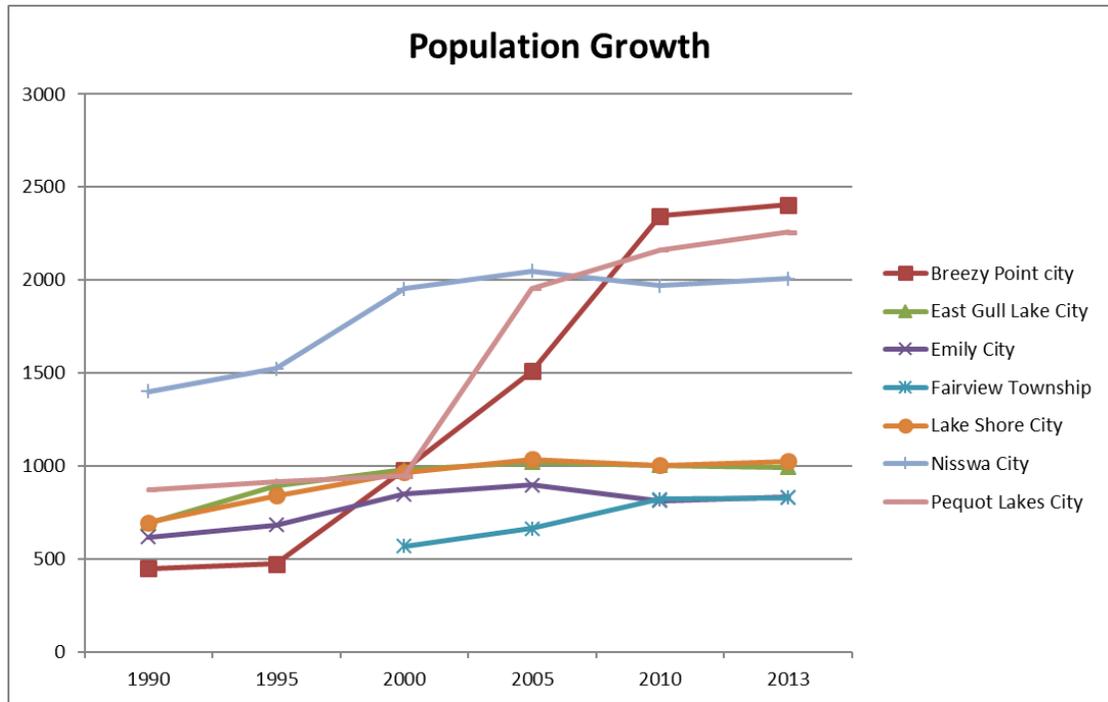
It created a reservoir system that served as water storage and runoff control feeding the Mississippi River. This set the stage for creating recreational opportunities that

made East Gull Lake a statewide and nationwide destination. Development of land and lakeshore began in earnest in the 1930s with construction of resorts and many seasonal cabins.

Communities in the central region of Minnesota have been in the forefront of growth and business development. Between the years of 2000 and 2013, Cass and Crow Wing were among the fastest growing counties in the state, second only to those in the outer ring of the metropolitan Twin City area.



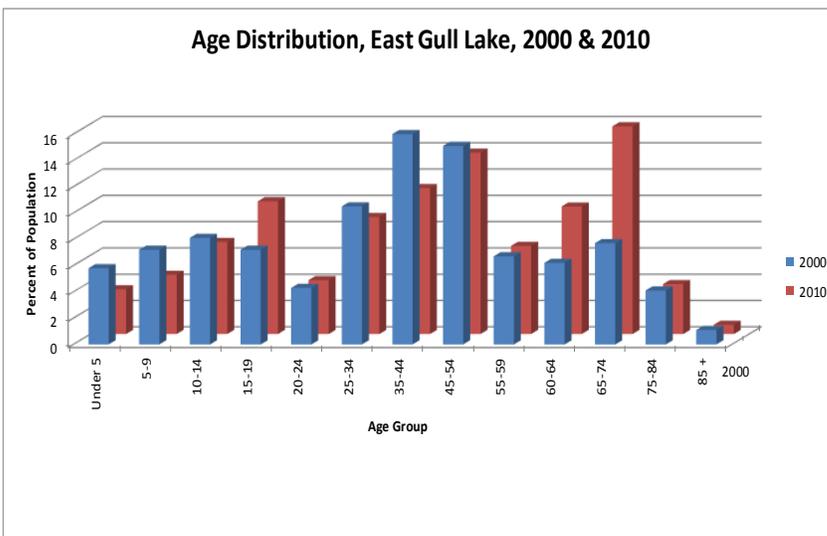
CITY OF EAST GULL LAKE



Population within the City grew over 700% from 1940 to 2010. In the 2000s, growth leveled off to around 1,000 residents. According to the census bureau, the number of housing units in East Gull Lake increased from 709 in 2000 to 792 in 2010. Outside of the growth in the number of homes within the City, the number of seasonal homes in comparison to year-round homes has increased from 339 in 2000 to 385 in 2010. In 2000, the average home value was \$194,400 compared to \$341,568 in 2015.

Historical Population		
Census	Population	% Increase
1940	125	---
1950	238	90.4%
1960	311	30.7%
1970	440	41.5%
1980	586	33.2%
1990	687	17.2%
2000	978	42.4%
2010	1004	2.7%
2016	1008	0.4%

U.S. Decennial Census



The median age of East Gull Lake residents was 34 in 1990, to 39 in 2000, and 47 in 2010. Census data shows the most significant portion of growth has been within the 65 to 74 age group. By contrast, age groups below 35 declined 43% by 2000, and another 38% by 2010.



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By the mid-1970s, most of the lakeshore surrounding Gull Lake was subdivided for high-density seasonal cabins and year-round homes.

Many of the on-site systems in place at that time were failing or improperly sited. In 1981, a report from the Swanson Environmental Corporation titled 'Findings and Summary of Septic Leachate Scanning in the Gull Lake Area' verified that onsite septic systems were contributing to poor water quality in Gull Lake. Development of the wastewater system was the result of these concerns.



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II. Community Profile

While development pressure is growing within the City, we retain significant tracts of wetlands and forests, scenic vistas, and natural lakeshore. Preserving the natural qualities of these areas will allow the continued enjoyment of clean air and water. It will naturally perpetuate the character that makes our community a special place to live, work, and recreate.



Open spaces provide scenic views and wildlife habitat while adding to the rural character of the community. Several of the lakes within the City have stretches of undeveloped shoreline that add to the natural beauty and enhance the recreational experience.

There are 38.43 miles of shoreline in the City, with a small portion remaining undeveloped. Currently, there is a growing trend of redevelopment of lakeshore properties which could have a significant cumulative impact on natural resources and water quality. The City uses existing regulations to manage redevelopment of shoreline property — not only in a manner that preserves green space, forested areas, and shoreline vegetation, but also protects overall water quality.

In addition to open space and scenic vistas on the lakes, there are large tracts of undeveloped property off the lakes and river consisting of wetlands and wooded areas. A few local companies and government entities own properties that total more than 40 acres in size. Publicly owned lands add to the available forested and open space, providing opportunities for recreation.



Natural resources in and around East Gull Lake form a foundation for the quality of life and recreation. Identification and realization of these components is very significant. These qualities epitomize the very reasons we have been drawn to live and play within our community.

Nearly half of the land within the City is covered with lakes, ponds, and wetlands, totaling over 5,000 acres. Lakes, along with the many wetlands, provide residents and visitors with many opportunities. The majority of residents in the City live within the shoreland management area, which is within the first 1000 feet from a lake.

Lakes within the City limits include Stephens, Ruth, Dade, and Bass, as well as parts of Gull, Upper Sylvan, and Lynch — all with good water quality. In addition to obviously enhancing the natural beauty of the area, our lakes also provide an abundance of water-related recreational activities.

Forests, consisting of broadleaf hardwoods and a variety of pines, cover more than a quarter of the area within the City limits. They continue to provide a significant, thriving habitat for many species of wildlife.



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Residents and visitors to our community not only appreciate the natural scenic landscapes of wooded areas, lakes, wetlands, and rolling hills, but also the solitude of a peaceful life. Away from the hustle and bustle, we are reminded every day to slow down, look around, and appreciate how fortunate we are to live and play in a vacation-like atmosphere within the City limits.

Due to the increase in reconstruction of the lakeshore properties, the City has implemented requirements concerning impervious surface coverage, stormwater run-off, and maintenance of natural vegetative shoreline to prevent erosion.

Since the 1970s (and particularly in the last 25 years), the entire country has experienced monumental changes in transportation, communication and technologies – reshaping how and where people live and work. East Gull Lake is no exception. People and businesses are more mobile than ever. While metropolitan employment centers still dominate, our area provides competitive amenities such as good highways, a first-class airport, faster and more reliable internet access, and a growing mobile business atmosphere.



East Gull Lake is home to many start-up and small commercial enterprises operated from residents' homes that are unobtrusive to the neighborhoods. This type of commerce has increased due to high speed internet capabilities, the ready accessibility to all points of the state and the ever-changing economy. We expect this style of commerce will continue to increase as more cabins are converted to year-round homes. In addition, business owners understand they can easily manage their business from a more attractive area and avoid the traffic congestion of commuting weekly to the metro areas. The hospitality industry constitutes a large percentage of the people working in East Gull Lake; however, the vast majority of residents work in their homes or outside the City. Travel time to the commercial and office developments in Baxter and Brainerd is 15 to 25 minutes.



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Residential growth and the tourism industry in East Gull Lake are built on the natural amenities of the area. Balancing the need for services and preservation of natural resources becomes increasingly complex as the area population grows. Successful tourism destinations are built upon the unique characteristics of the area and provide an appealing atmosphere. Residents and visitors alike are attracted to the area for the sense of seclusion, scenic vistas, and quality of the natural resources.

Many residents were first introduced to the community through resort visits. The City's location is central to all major population areas of the state and is a prime tourism destination. The Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport has daily commercial service through Minneapolis to all areas of the country which brings tourists and business opportunities to the East Gull Lake area. Because the City does not have the presence of a downtown, local services are provided by resorts, individual businesses, and restaurants. Commercial areas of Brainerd and Baxter provide major shopping, medical and governmental services.

Madden's Resort



Cragun's Resort



There is an increased interest in short term rental of private properties to visitors in the area. They are, or should be, managed by organizations with staff and capability to coordinate all the needed services including maintenance, check-in and check-out, cleaning, lawn care, etc. The hospitality industry has begun to migrate to this system as well, allowing them to upgrade their facilities and enhance their capabilities to manage while not requiring further capital investment.

The City is home to some of the largest and most successful resort complexes in the nation, covering approximately 23% of the total land. In addition to providing over 600 lodging units, many of which are along beautiful shoreline, they collectively maintain over 100 holes of golf and employ over 1,000 people.

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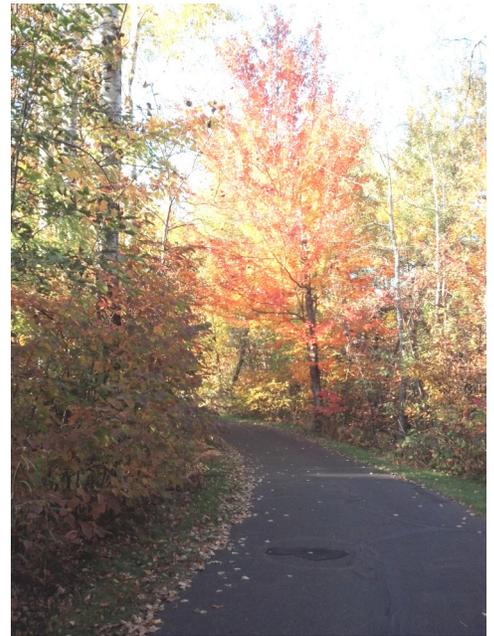
Kavanaugh's Resort

Since its inception in the mid-1920s, the resort industry has evolved from a selection of seasonal cabins to sophisticated organizations with luxury lodging facilities. Year-round services are now available for conferences, corporate retreats, golf, dining, spas, and family activities. Resorts more than triple the census of East Gull Lake's current population when at capacity with guests and employees.

Resorts are part of a community that attracts tourists, commercial services, and new residents to

the Brainerd Lakes Region. While the lakes are often the primary draw to visitors and residents, the expanding multi-use trail systems, both inside and outside of the City, are drawing hikers, bikers, and recreational vehicle enthusiasts.

Currently there are more than nine miles of multi-use trails primarily in the southern portion of the City. When developments are approved within the City, they follow an ordinance requiring park and trail dedication fees or comparable land donation. These monies, along with Cass County Fund 73, DNR grant, and city taxpayer dollars, have built the trails to this point. Cooperation with neighboring communities has resulted in regional trail status that will eventually complete a trail around the west side of Gull Lake, connecting with the Paul Bunyan Trail. East Gull Lake has completed phase one. Phase two within Lake Shore is under construction. Trails within Fairview Township and Nisswa are planned for the future. Achieving the regional trail designation was very important for funding eligibility through state Legacy dollars.



There are many recreational opportunities within the City, including boating, fishing, golfing, hiking, biking, and camping. Tennis courts are available to the public at City Hall. The Gull Lake Recreation Area, located at the Gull Lake Dam, offers wooded campsites, beach and playground. It is also home to several Native American burial grounds dating back as early as 800 BC. The mounds are listed on the National Register of Historic Places and are believed to have originated from the Woodland American Indians. Public boat accesses are located at the Gull Lake Recreation Area, Gull River, Dade Lake and Sylvan Lake.

CITY OF EAST GULL LAKE

General government expenditures are the costs of the mayor, city council, city staff, elections, legal costs, publishing costs, planning and zoning, and the costs associated with utilities and maintenance of buildings. City staff provides planning and zoning services and assists residents with interpretation of the current City Ordinances. Staff is available to follow up, inspect and photograph projects to document and enforce those ordinances.



Property taxes are levied to support state, county, city and local school districts. The City portion of these taxes are the primary funding source for East Gull Lake. Other

funding sources include intergovernmental aid, special assessments, wastewater user fees and connection charges, licenses and permits. The City of East Gull Lake has a relatively low tax rate as a result of the low tax levy and high tax capacity.

The City of East Gull Lake currently contains 36 miles of roadways consisting of 23 miles of public municipal streets, 7 miles of County State Aid Highways, and 6 miles of privately owned roads. Municipal roads have sufficient capacity to handle the traffic generated within the City.

Currently, approximately 90% of developed lakeshore, including the US Corps of Engineer's campground facility, are serviced by the City's wastewater system. The system has a great deal of capacity available for expansion.

Since 2015, emergency and fire protection services have been provided by the Pillager Fire Department. Cass County Sheriff's Department provides law enforcement services. Response time for incidents varies from 4 to 26 minutes, with an average of approximately 16 minutes. Two of the local resorts also have private security forces to handle issues on their property.



CITY OF EAST GULL LAKE

III. A Look to the Future

The City intends to help guide future growth and development.

A. Environment/Planning and Zoning

While development pressure is growing within the City, we retain significant tracts of wetlands and forests, scenic vistas, and natural lakeshore. Preserving the qualities of these areas will allow the continued enjoyment of clean air and water. It will naturally perpetuate the rural “northwoods” character that makes our community a special place to live, work, and recreate.



The area lakes serve as the centerpiece of the community. To ensure that the health and quality of the lakes continues well into the future, the City is committed to maintaining the high-water clarity, ecological balance, and natural beauty of the shoreline. Residents of the area recognize the importance and benefits of wetlands for both wildlife and storm water management.



The City will amend the zoning ordinance to steer development patterns and address future needs. As with most communities in Minnesota, current zoning regulations in East Gull Lake are based primarily on a traditional model of zoning which lists requirements for minimum lot sizes, lot widths, and setbacks. The City’s ordinances permit Planned Unit Developments (PUD) on parcels larger than 10 acres, which allow

for creative subdivision designs that preserve open space and unique features. By using a PUD, the City may encourage a broader mix of developments supportive of different life stages.

For East Gull Lake to remain a distinct and prosperous community, the City will be attentive to the character of off-lake development, thereby creating its own unique environment. The City hosts an abundance of natural resources that draw people to our community. Subdivision of land should be done in a manner that considers the features of the property, fits with the surrounding neighborhood, and preserves the natural resources.

Because lakeshore property values are rising, the redevelopment of existing seasonal cabins into year-round residences is expected to continue. Such changes will alter the character of the City’s lakeshore. This has the potential to impact water quality.

With this challenge in mind, the City has amended the zoning ordinance to require new home construction or redevelopment to limit impervious coverage to 20%. If a stormwater design retains runoff in accordance with the requirements, the impervious surface coverage can be increased to a maximum of 25%.



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The Planning and Zoning Commission, in coordination with the City staff, is tasked with the important responsibility of monitoring new construction/remodeling projects. Property owners are encouraged to visit City Hall to discuss their projects and are required to submit the necessary permit requests before actual construction begins.

East Gull Lake is responsible for land use regulations. While land use affects surface water, it is not the only factor. Surface water use continues to expand regardless of land use. Lakes are publicly owned with public accesses and their management is the responsibility of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MnDNR) and the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).

City ordinances cover protection of our environment and the maintenance and enhancement of healthy amenities. As an example, our expanded and extensive system of trails provides opportunities to appreciate the beautiful surroundings by hiking, biking, and golf cart usage. Trails also serve the added benefit of getting people outside to exercise, and encourages interaction among neighborhoods and fellow residents.

The City maintains guidelines, including a zoning ordinance and map for making decisions on land use permit applications.



Goals and Strategies:

1. Review the City's code regularly.
2. Maintain a balance between development and our valued natural resources.
3. Encourage cooperation and communication with governmental agencies to protect and maintain the quality of the community.
4. Assure zoning land use and subdivision ordinances are amended to be in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan.
 - a. Encourage property owners to use best management practices as part of storm water management, protection of the shore impact zone (especially during construction) and preservation of green spaces.
 - b. Evaluate the need to rezone properties for alternative uses that provide services to residents and visitors.
 - c. Encourage the use of conservation easements and Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) to protect environmentally sensitive and/or unique areas.
 - d. Encourage preservation of forested land.
 - e. Encourage residents and resorts to educate their visitors about appropriate surface water usage for protection of natural resources.



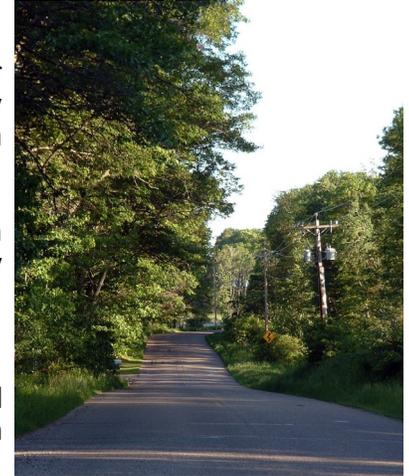
CITY OF EAST GULL LAKE

B. Infrastructure

1. Roads

The City continues to preserve the City roads through proper maintenance and reconstruction on a regular basis. Local taxes pay for maintenance of roads while improvements are paid through a combination of assessments and taxes.

The City requires developers to build or improve roads within developments to standards set forth by the City before the City will take over maintenance.



2. Wastewater System

Approximately 90% of all lakeshore properties are on the City wastewater system.

Municipal infrastructure is funded by the residential properties, major hospitality facilities and other businesses directly through user fees, connection charges and assessments, and through property taxes. It is essential that these infrastructure systems are properly managed over the long term. Flexibility for future growth and development has been provided in the system to protect the amenities of our area.

Many residents within the City have on-site septic systems that must be individually maintained on a regular basis.

3. Park and Trails

All trails within the City were or will be paid for by a combination of grants, taxes, and contributions through new developments. Local taxes pay for maintenance of existing trails. All new developments within the City contribute to the parks and trails system.



Goals and Strategies:

1. Have information available to the public for any major City improvement or project.
2. Encourage development concepts that cluster homes and include amenities and connections to existing public infrastructure.
3. Encourage maintenance of on-site septic systems.
4. Continue development of the multi-use trail system with other area communities.



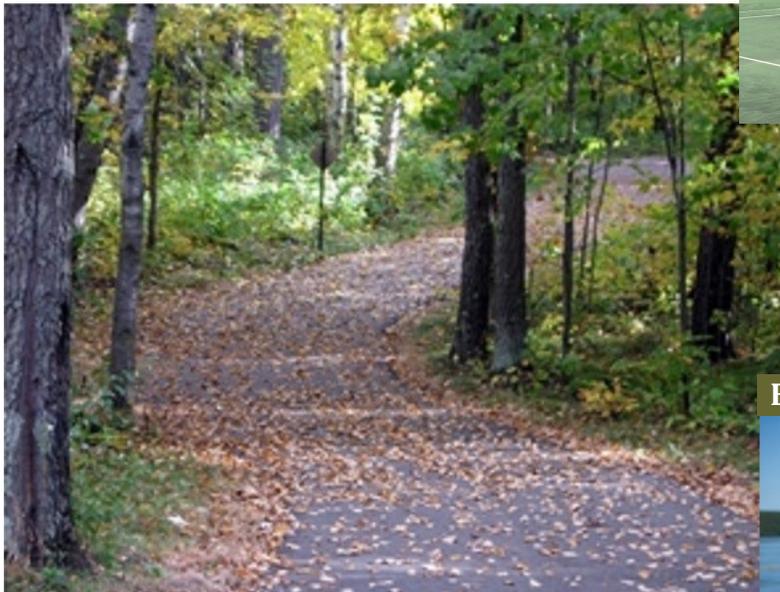
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C. Commerce & Technology

As cabins are converted to year-round homes and short-term rental operations become more prevalent, infrastructure and service industries to support those operations continue to grow. Property management and maintenance, as well as routine infrastructure services will all be a part of the East Gull Lake business community. Most services will continue to exist in the major commercial areas of Brainerd and Baxter while others may be located in closer proximity. Consideration should be given to a variety of commerce that will address the current and future needs of East Gull Lake residents and tourists while preserving the character of the City.

Goals and Strategies:

1. Encourage the use of new technologies (i.e. solar, wind, cell towers, geothermal, etc.) that are of benefit.
2. Encourage enhancements to the hospitality industry and associated services.
3. Encourage housing and services which would enhance the quality of life for our residents.
4. Encourage technology providers, insuring up to date standards.
5. Review ordinances and rules to insure standards that don't create barriers.



Ernie's On Gull Lake

