

2030 Comprehensive Plan

THE CITY OF CRYSTAL LAKE



A GOOD PLACE TO LIVE

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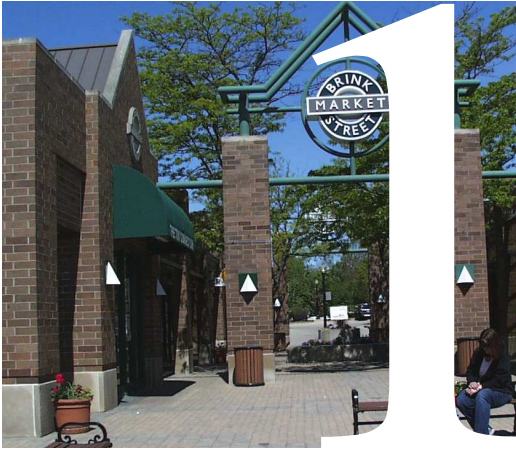
Prepared for:
The Citizens of Crystal Lake

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Chapter one

Introduction

Introduction

1.1 History of Crystal Lake

The Crystal Lake area's first European settlers, Beman and Polly Tuttle Crandall arrived in February 1836 with their six children, and discovered a sparkling clear lake, tall timber, and vast prairies. By August 1836, the U.S. government granted homestead rights to the Crandalls. At that time, an old trail, forged by the Sac and Fox tribes, extended from Fort Dearborn in Chicago to northwest Wisconsin, with the portion through Crystal Lake now known as Route 14. A log cabin inn, the Lyman-King House stood on Virginia Street near Pomeroy Avenue and served as a stage coach stop and trading post.

The Village of Crystal Lake was platted in 1840 by Beman Crandall, Christopher Walkup, and Abner Beardsley. At the time, the surveyors determined the boundaries to be Virginia Street to the north, Lake Avenue to the south; McHenry Avenue to the east; and Dole Avenue to the west.

The Village of Nunda, first known as Dearborn, then Brooklyn, was established in 1855, with the Chicago, St. Paul and Fond du Lac railroad (the track is now owned by Union Pacific), the first direct rail connection from Chicago. The train stop in the Village of Nunda established the town as the commercial hub of McHenry County. The street configuration of Crystal Lake's present downtown reflects the railroad's early influence. In 1856, a rail spur line (now Dole Avenue) was built from the Village of Nunda to Crystal Lake to transport ice cut from the lake to Chicago and to bring visitors from Chicago to the area.

Many public infrastructure improvements took place in the early years of the two villages. The Chicago Telephone Company received a right-of-way in 1883. In 1884, wooden sidewalks were constructed. The water system was built in the Village of Nunda in 1899 and in the Village of Crystal Lake in 1912. The Nunda Electric Company built a plant on Walkup Avenue, south of the Union Pacific track, in 1902. Western United Gas and Electric Company began operations in 1909. The city built the wastewater treatment system on McHenry Avenue, south of Barlina Road in 1919. Road paving became more prevalent in the community 1924 through 1929 with increasing use of the personal automobile.

Both villages incorporated in 1874. The Village of Nunda became North Crystal Lake in 1908. Consolidation of Crystal Lake and North Crystal Lake occurred on April 28, 1914. The City of Crystal Lake Charter was adopted on September 23, 1914.

Since World War II, the population and boundaries of the City of Crystal Lake have changed dramatically. Throughout the Chicago area, people have relocated farther from Chicago to places like Crystal Lake in search of more open space, less traffic, affordable land and safer neighborhoods. The very elements that attract people to Crystal Lake may be threatened if the future growth of the community is not well-planned. How and where certain land uses are located, availability to different means of transportation, recreational opportunities, preservation of open space and natural resources, are issues that the community will need to consider for the future and are key to the Crystal Lake continuing to be a “good place to live”.

1.2 Purpose of a Comprehensive Plan

The first *Crystal Lake Comprehensive Land Use Plan* was adopted in 1957, with revisions in 1973, 1988 and 2001. Due to the extent of changes in the City and our world, it is time to update the plan so it will remain an accurate reflection of where the community is today and the overall vision concerning future growth and land development. Land Use decisions should focus on the interrelationship of transportation, land use and housing. This document is a culmination of the efforts of Crystal Lake’s residents and businesses, the Planning and Zoning Commission, the City Council and City staff.

The Illinois Compiled State Statutes (65 ILCS 5/11-12-7) provides no criterion for communities on the specific content for comprehensive plans, however, most communities offer guidelines for general categories such as land use, transportation, natural resources, community facilities, housing, and economic development.

This document, the *2030 Comprehensive Plan (Plan)*, is a broad-based document which describes how and at what pace the community desires to develop physically, economically and socially over the long-range. It serves as a guide for citizens, developers and the city, in managing the evolution and growth of the community, and as a basis for policy decisions, for approximately the next 20 years.

In brief, a comprehensive land use plan is:

Physical. It is a guide to physical development of the community.

Long Range. It defines current policy to help shape the future in the shared vision.

Comprehensive. It covers the entire community including transportation, housing, land use, utilities and facilities, environment, and recreation.

Statement of Policy. It lists policies about the community's desire as to quantity, quality, character, location and rate of growth and how to achieve this.

Guide to Decision Making. As a policy guide, it should not be updated too casually or too frequently or it may lose its focus and long-range vision.

Fiscally Feasible. The projected costs to implement the plan are reasonable.

Legally Sound. The policies, goals and objectives must have a rational foundation with accurate inventories, historical trends and future projections.

Dynamic. The plan should reflect identifiable changes as they occur in the community.

The Plan provides a number of features that distinguishes it from other comprehensive plans:

- The Plan provides interconnected strategies to keep solutions linked together to create the most powerful outcomes.
- The Plan provides a unified strategic direction to guide decisions, investments and community action for the long term.
- The Plan provides criteria for making decisions when future opportunities or crises present themselves, enabling all decision-makers to stay on this strategic course and solve problems in context rather than in isolation.
- The Plan also contains a Plan Evaluation and Monitoring section. The intent of this section is to ensure that the goals and objectives are still relevant, are being accomplished and that the community is addressing changes occurring from shifts in established priorities for the city if certain objectives are no longer appropriate.

The Plan is divided into elements which are areas of interest to be considered in planning for the future growth of Crystal Lake. Each element is described based on the current state of the city and then explored for the future of the element. At the end of each section goals, objectives and policy is listed in order to have a process on how to work to achieve the planned future of that element.

Definitions of the various components of the Plan elements are as follows:

A goal is the purpose towards which an endeavor is directed; the expression of values.

A supporting action is a specific target established to achieve a goal.

A success indicator is a specific item that can be measured to determine if the action has been achieved to assist in implementing the Plan.

The policies are to be enacted by a participant, which is a public (government or quasi-government) or private (business or non-profit) entity involved with the implementation of the Plan. The way

the policies would be enforced is through project reviews. A project is an undertaking requiring participant action to implement the Plan. Final actions on properties are adopted by Ordinance. An ordinance is a regulation enacted by the City Council or other governmental authority to enforce a specific action concerning the implementation of the Plan.

1.3 Comprehensive Plan Adoption and Amendment Process

Adoption

The Comprehensive Plan is adopted with input from all stakeholders, including, elected or appointed officials, business and environmental groups and citizens of Crystal Lake. The plan is adopted after several public meetings, an open house, and an official public hearing. Public input is a major contributing factor in the final quality and usefulness of the adopted Plan. The benefit of public participation is to help the two decision-making bodies involved, the Planning and Zoning Commission and the City Council, make the best plan to shape the future of the community. Decisions that reflect the understanding of public attitudes and needs make it more likely that future development proposals are planned with the interests of the community in mind.

The Planning and Zoning Commission is a nine-member board, consisting of volunteers that make recommendations on land use and development proposals. They are also charged with the responsibility to make recommendations on any changes or updates to the Comprehensive Plan. Typically, one meeting a year is dedicated to the monitoring and evaluation of the Plan. The monitoring and evaluation process is meant to assess and respond to the changes that can occur from the shifts in the community's priorities, the changes in the business climate and future opportunities that present themselves.

The City Council is comprised of seven elected officials who consider the Planning and Zoning Commission's recommendations and community input, before formally adopting the Plan. Both bodies carefully weigh public input and information from city staff in the decision-making process.

As a way to better garner public input for the Plan, a public survey option was placed on the City's website. The website also listed all the draft chapters as they were completed and a timeline of the process. Five display boards for the proposed map amendment areas were located throughout the City at the Library, Downtown Metra Station, Three Oaks Recreation Area, Crystal Lake Park District Offices and City Hall. Accompanying these boards were public input surveys, which asked questions about land uses.

1.4 Vision Statement

The 2030 Comprehensive Plan's vision is to sustain a prosperous and economically balanced community through the combination of all the plan elements including land use decisions, economic development, housing, transportation options, developing and preserving the unique areas, parks and recreation, environmental resources, historic preservation and community facilities. The combination of these elements through the decision making processes will allow the city to remain a good place to live.