



**Policy:** Each goal is accompanied by a series of policy statements. Policies describe actions made toward achieving each of the goals in the specific plan elements.

The following are a list of goals and policies directly influenced by public comment, steering committee collaboration and SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunity and threat) analysis, and public input received at a community visioning session and online community survey.

The following lists of goals were reviewed and discussed at steering committee meetings three and four.

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## Housing |

**Goal 1: Develop a diverse and high quality housing stock that meets the needs of Nisswa residents at all stages of life and at various income levels**

**Policy:**

- Encourage new housing to fill the gaps in the housing market
- Expand housing options surrounding the downtown business district
- Support the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing properties
- Encourage high quality design and use of sustainable materials in home construction

**Goal 2: Strengthen and support Nisswa's existing neighborhoods**

**Policy:**

- Protect neighborhoods from incompatible land uses
- Improve transportation connections. Particularly bicycle paths and routes and pedestrian facilities
- Encourage and support the maintenance and rehabilitation of older housing stock

**Goal 3: Create high quality environments in all residential neighborhoods that preserves and protects existing natural resources**

**Policy:**

- Establish housing patterns and conservation design recommendations that respect the natural environment
- Encourage infill housing where appropriate
- Improve access and connection between housing, employment and retail areas in Nisswa
- Encourage connections to retail, park and open spaces, trail networks and lakes to create attractive and walkable neighborhoods as a means to attracting young families

**Goal 4: Cultivate vibrant and cohesive residential neighborhoods that support the image of Nisswa as a welcoming and connected community**

**Policy:**

- Encourage neighborhood and community gatherings and interaction
- Build capacity at the neighborhood level for improvement projects
- Reinforce neighborhood identity and sense of pride

**Goal 5: Balance local housing markets to address local housing needs**

**Policy:**

- Develop neighborhood strategies that account for the location of infrastructure
- Use zoning to encourage efficient and functional development
- Locate all public housing near amenities such as schools, shopping, recreation and jobs
- Use a range of tools to sustain affordable housing options
- Provide life cycle housing to meet the needs of Nisswa's diverse demographics and age cohorts

## **Park, Open Space, and Recreation |**

**Goal 1: Provide residents and visitors the opportunity to enjoy the natural environment throughout the City of Nisswa**

**Policy:**

- Maximize every effort and opportunity to preserve forested tracts and improve water quality
- Engage volunteers in the restoration, maintenance and preservation of open space and park network's natural resources
- Collaborate with area and state stakeholders to plan for and fund ongoing ecological management and restoration

**Goal 2: Serve the needs of all park and trail users and ensure equitable access to these facilities**

**Policy:**

- Provide parks with playgrounds or natural play areas that are within walking distance of residential neighborhoods
- Incorporate ADA into park designs when feasible
- Design parks to serve residents at all ages
- Respond to the desires and needs of residents with regards to developing park facilities

**Goal 3: Enhance public multi-seasonal access, connectivity, and inclusiveness of Nisswa's recreational and natural resources**

**Policy:**

- Continue to expand and improve on-street bicycle facilities and off-street trail networks

- Collaborate with the Public Works Department to promote active, multi-modal transportation as an alternative to automobile use
- Establish strong, safe, interconnected trail networks linking downtown, parks, community amenities to neighborhoods

**Goal 4: Facilitate partnerships and collaboration with area stakeholders to expand pedestrian trail networks**

**Policy:**

- Partner with adjacent local units of government and state agencies
- Develop and adopt a Complete Streets policy
- Encourage interconnected streets and patterns of development that create more convenient multimodal travel options
- Review opportunities for multimodal transportation investments that enhance access, walkability and community aesthetics along primary thoroughfares

## Natural Resources |

**Goal 1: Protect and preserve natural resources and water quality (air, water, land) for continued responsible use**

**Policy:**

- Identify and safeguard valuable natural resources and outdoor heritage through education, preservation and conservation efforts.
- Draw connections between historic land use and natural ecosystems, including eco-tourism, and flora/fauna tourism.

**Goal 2: Be a city that strives to lead by example for environmental stewardship and sustainability**

**Policy:**

- Review development to avoid areas of significant constraints, unique or fragile resources and areas that are critical to sustaining the ecosystem.
- Promote the use of renewable energy technologies in residential construction

**Goal 3: Protect and improve the health of the natural environment**

**Policy:**

- Preserve vegetation and specimen trees from development. Assure re-vegetation of disturbed land
- Create or protect buffers along streams and lakeshores
- Support and enhance the urban forest
- Educate residents, businesses, and visitors about the importance of protecting natural resources.

**Goal 4: Integrate the green infrastructure within the urban core and rural areas throughout the City of Nisswa**

**Policy:**

- Provide buffers along waterways and wetlands
- Define green infrastructure within future development and redevelopment areas
- Support re-forestation and other ecosystem restoration practices

**Goal 5: Educate visitors, residents, and businesses on the importance of protecting natural resources and enhancing water quality**

**Policy:**

- Develop programming and education awareness around invasive species, protecting water quality and best management practices
- Define green infrastructure within future development and redevelopment areas

## **Nisswa Character/Community Vision |**

**Goal 1: Ensure that people can live, work, and play in the City of Nisswa**

**Policy:**

- Develop intentional “efficiencies and effectiveness” programs and projects with multi-jurisdictional, multi-theme, multi-forms of wealth, multi- sectors, agencies, and department involvement
- Ensure continued community outreach to ensure all population’s needs are being heard

**Goal 2: Protect and enhance the sense of place and character of Nisswa**

**Policy:**

- Develop collaborations that use and enhance local culture, such as collaboration between mental health care professionals, artists, and local food producers
- Utilized arts-based placemaking to improve downtown and public spaces
- Maintain community character and distinctive community assets
- Identify gateway corridors for signage and placemaking features

**Goal 3: Support and enhance the health and integrity of the natural environment that sustains the spirit of the community**

**Policy:**

- Integrate green infrastructure and appropriate practices to aid community-wide water quality maintenance efforts
- Identify highly vulnerable natural resource areas
- Protect and restore wildlife corridors, ecosystems, water quality and recreational opportunities
- Protect buffers and implement best management practices along lakeshore property

**Goal 4: Improve the stock of trust, relationships, and networks that support community collaboration**

**Policy:**

- Actively recruit and nurture emerging community leaders through community leadership, learning and development opportunities, and network groups
- Formalize community leadership networking groups

## Land Use

**Goal 1: Provide for orderly development by establishing suitable relationships among natural resources, commercial, residential, and other land uses.**

**Policy:**

- Ensure that development is orderly; following the patterns established in the Future Land Use Map
- Stage new development or expansion of the city's urban service area
- Encourage redevelopment and infill development to have preference over development on green field sites

**Goal 2: Maintain and adopt a Land Use Plan that designates land use areas and guides development to appropriate areas; ensuring desirable land use patterns and minimizing conflicts**

**Policy:**

- Coordinate community growth with [Nisswa Public Works/Utilities/Stakeholders] to systematically plan for the efficient expansion of municipal services
- Identify areas of significant natural resource important, sensitive environmental areas, and protect these areas from incompatible development

**Goal 3: Enhance Nisswa's image as a community of vibrant, thriving, and desirable neighborhoods; a regional hub for commerce, recreation, arts, and tourism**

**Policy:**

- Adopt, communicate, and implement clear standards for structures, site design, materials, and landscaping requirement for future development and redevelopment projects
- Collaborate with developers on future development and redevelopment proposals to ensure high quality design components that enhances the community image
- Encourage design elements that create safer circulation routes, facilitate social interaction, and enhance neighborhood character
- Promote commercial and industrial development that services local and regional markets

**Goal 4: Enhance the diversity and livability of residential areas**

**Policy:**

- Integrate different types of residential housing while retaining the character of distinct neighborhoods
- Promote infill development and retention of traditional neighborhoods adjacent to the Central Business District
- Ensure a variety of house types to meet the needs of all residents, no matter their stage in life

- Strive to achieve a better balance of the ratio of permanent vs. second homeowners in the community by providing more opportunities for housing affordable to locals

**Goal 5: Support development that enhances community character; preserving the small town character and protecting natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas**

**Policy:**

- Ensure that new developments and infill redevelopment projects are designed in a manner that preserves the small town character, and protects the natural environment
- Reform existing policies to make it easy for developers to build compact, walkable places
- Encourage higher density residential development near the central business district, and where public sewer is available

**Goal 6: Encourage mixed-use development that is focused on the integration of land uses**

**Policy:**

- Encourage planned mixed-use developments, in which traditional residential subdivision aspects and small commercial are merged
- Encourage development efforts to take advantage of the Paul Bunyan Trail to provide creative identity for new construction and renovation
- Encourage residential components be included in mixed use areas to provide opportunities to live closer to recreation, job clusters, and retail centers
- Recognize and reward developers that build great places using smart growth and green building approaches

**Goal 7: Improve accessibility throughout Nisswa**

**Policy:**

- Encourage development of pedestrian and bicycle networks that link the community together
- Connect rural residential land uses with the downtown core and recreational amenities
- Ensure the provision of accessibility to residents and visitors with disabilities
- Adopt a complete green streets policy that also addresses street trees and stormwater

**Downtown |**

**Goal 1: Support the social and economic viability of Nisswa's downtown**

**Policy:**

- Retain and attract the appropriate mix of retail and service business activity
- Provide signage and wayfinding throughout the downtown core to identify businesses, parking opportunities, and Paul Bunyan Trail connections and access points
- Evaluate and recommend improvements to enhance the downtown pedestrian environment
- Promote adequate customer parking for the downtown, with concentration on downtown signage and wayfinding to identify public parking areas
- Encourage the use of Federal, State, local, and other financial resources to fund and incentivize Downtown reinvestment and maintenance of projected Downtown enhancements
- Utilize arts based placemaking to improve downtowns and public spaces

## Goal 2: Support development that enhances the character and identity of the Downtown core

### Policy:

- Support the redevelopment of vacant and sub-standard sites within the central business district
- Encourage and support innovative housing opportunities
- Create linkage between trail segments. New city trail systems connect to other walkable community options (trails, sidewalks etc.)
- Develop new design guidelines that maintain downtown's character and identity

## Transportation and Infrastructure

### Transportation |

#### Goal 1: Trail systems are interconnected throughout the Nisswa community and to regional systems

### Policy:

- Promote a trail system with new development proposals and residential neighborhoods
- Promote traffic calming strategies on collector and local streets (plantings, signage, pavement striping, etc) to encourage slower travel speeds
- Where possible, the city will utilize a Complete Streets methodology in the design and reconstruction of streets (adjacent land uses, travel speeds, width and number of lanes, on-street parking, vertical/horizontal road alignment, pedestrian and bicycle features, intersection curb radii and crossing facilities, signage, lighting, landscaping, etc.)
- The city will continue to support trail connectivity among local, regional, and state trail systems

#### Goal 2: Plan and develop an interconnected, accessible multimodal transportation system

### Policy:

- Encourage development of pedestrian and bicycle pathways that link the community together in a cohesive manner
- Connect businesses with surrounding land uses to increase access
- Incorporate bike lanes and bike racks in downtown corridors to promote biking and increase signage
- Work closely with MnDOT on any new development request along Highway 371
- The city will support local and regional transit providers and programs that benefit residents and visitors to the area

### Infrastructure |

#### Goal 1: Provide cost effective, quality city services

### Policy:

- Sustainably operate and maintain wastewater collection and treatment facilities
- Integrate waste reduction, composting and recycling programs throughout the City of Nisswa
- Identify and prioritize all city utility and infrastructure improvement and secure funding for implementation

- Explore opportunities for improved internet and Wi-Fi connection
- Develop civic infrastructure (communities facilities and utilities), recreational programs, and other quality of life services that are important for sustaining the community

**Goal 2: Plan for the expansion of public utilities to facilitate healthy and sustainable community growth**

**Policy:**

- Monitor infrastructure capacity on an ongoing basis to understand capacity limitation on accommodating new development
- Reform policies to make it easy for developers to build compact, walkable, mixed-use places; policy alignment, context sensitive design, green and complete street design, low-impact development.
- Design infrastructure and facilities that sustain or restore natural systems
- Cooperate with other government, private-sector utilities, and community organizations
- Establish criteria for prioritizing projects in the city's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)
- Work with local units of governments to work across political boundaries to share equipment costs/facilities for more efficient delivery of high-speed internet. Example: Lay conduit for fiber optics when upgrading sewer and water or digging trench
- Promote, support private/public partnerships that fund improved high-speed internet access throughout region for telecommuting & business activities, educational benefits and tele-health. Ensure the collection of accurate data around served, underserved and unserved communities

**Goal 3: Prioritize infill development on vacant lands and redevelopment of blighted, neglected properties**

**Policy:**

- Promote development in areas that are contiguous to existing public infrastructure
- Study the costs and benefits on new industries that place high demands on the existing municipal system
- Focus on the development of existing platted neighborhoods to best utilize already present infrastructure

**Goal 4: Where practical, minimize impact to environmentally sensitive areas when extending and constructing utilities**

**Policy:**

- Establish buffer zones between overhead utilities, substations, treatment facilities and commercial and residential areas
- Place overhead utilities underground when feasible

**Goal 5: Coordinate infrastructure improvements to maximize the economic benefits of street reconstructions that include sewer, water, dry utilities, and streetscaping**

**Policy:**

- Facilitate dialog around right-sized wastewater infrastructure projects. Start with education of existing infrastructure status.

- Maintain a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that annually reviews and implements priorities in an efforts to provide adequate infrastructure

*No water distribution supply system. Fire protection and applicable regulations should be addressed. Discussion occurred around the city's need for a water distribution supply system – not existence to date – and related fire protection concerns. There is a possibility that businesses have been deterred from possible development in the City of Nisswa because of the lack of city water service and fire protection.*

### **Goal 6: Invest in broadband infrastructure to increase the number of household that are served by high-speed internet services**

#### **Policy:**

- Ensure that households and businesses throughout the City of Nisswa have service that meets common state standards.
- Collaborate with area units of government to share equipment costs/facilities for a more efficient delivery of high-speed internet
- Create and leverage public and private partnerships to fund improved broadband access.
- Promote an understanding of the importance of broadband to a community's infrastructure.

## **Economic Development |**

### **Goal 1: Promote Nisswa as a great place for business and commerce**

#### **Policy:**

- Provide assistance for businesses looking to grow, start up, or relocate in Nisswa
- Provide a variety of financial and technical assistance programs to downtown businesses owners for rehabilitating and renovating downtown buildings, storefronts, and signage
- Invest in quality of life amenities; housing, parks, trails, open space and community programs and events
- Establish partnerships and coordination with local, regional, and state organizations that support economic development activities
- Increase number of small and medium enterprises
- Utilize private/public partnerships to facilitate increased small, medium enterprise (SME) business lending

### **Goal 2: Develop cohesive, interconnected residential neighborhoods that meet the diverse needs of Nisswa residents**

#### **Policy:**

- Encourage development of new housing to fill gaps in the housing market
- Collaborate with community partners to support housing development and rehabilitation
- Support the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing properties

- Build capacity at the neighborhood level for community improvement projects
- Prioritize infill and redevelopment of existing neighborhoods
- Plan for lifecycle housing, rather than responding only to current market conditions

**Goal 3: Support tourist-related commercial enterprises that strengthens Nisswa’s position as a tourist destination**

**Policy:**

- Coordinate with Downtown businesses, non-profit arts, culture groups, and service clubs to support and expand activities and special events
- Leverage the Paul Bunyan Trail and utilizing the “trail town” model of economic revitalization
- Focus entrepreneurship programs in arts and culture sectors.
- Develop career paths in the tourism industry that have competitive salaries and benefits to attract and retain employees.
- Proactively address the need for extracurricular activities within the community that meet area needs and attract visitors
- Development programming and funding mechanisms to assist the downtown business district and rehabilitation efforts.

**Sustainability |**

**Goal 1: Ensure that elements of the built environment work together to provide highly functional places for residents and commerce**

**Policy:**

- Provide for complete streets servicing multiple functions as well as multi-modal transportation options
- Conserve and reuse historic resources
- Provide accessible public facilities and spaces
- Provide incentives to private parties who build new green buildings that utilize a green building framework.
- Pursue solutions to building local renewable energy infrastructure
- Ensure access to solar energy for all residential and commercial uses
- Support programs to integrate waste reduction, composting and recycling programs throughout the City of Nisswa

**Goal 2: Maintaining natural resources and sensitive environmental areas are a priority**

**Policy:**

- Restore, connect, and protect natural habitats and sensitive lands
- Provide for renewable energy use
- Adopt and implement guidelines for storm water filtration/re-use techniques
- Adopt an ordinance with erosion and sediment control provisions as well as requirement for permanent storm water treatment

**Goal 3: Ensure that public health needs are recognized and addressed through various methods**

**Policy:**

- Plan for physical activity and healthy lifestyles
- Provide accessible parks, recreation facilities, greenways, and open spaces near neighborhoods
- Plan for access to healthy, locally grown foods for all neighborhoods.

## **Tourism |**

### **Goal 1: Retain and increase number of visitors that come to Nisswa**

**Policy:**

- Keep Nisswa travel experiences fresh and current by marketing existing and new outdoor recreation, arts and cultural heritage experiences and amenities
- Identify and safeguard valuable natural resources and outdoor heritage through education, preservation and conservation efforts. Draw connections between historic land uses and natural ecosystems including agri-tourism, mining/timber, transportation (land, water, air) and flora/fauna tourism
- Leverage the Paul Bunyan Trail and work with downtown businesses owners to advertising and marketing opportunities

### **Goal 2: To have a sustainable, year-round economy through partnerships with local businesses, resort operators, and other agencies that creates opportunities for all**

**Policy:**

- Encourage development of diverse retails and services that support local and regional needs
- Promote a high standard of service and hospitality for local business
- promote and preserve unique local amenities and drivers for regional tourism; outdoor recreation and historic assets
- Collaborate with educational institutions, economic development entities, and local businesses to address workforce needs, and develop career pathways for residents of all ages

### **Goal 3: Establish partnerships with resort owners and operators to expand recreational facilities and programs**

**Policy:**

- Provide a range of recreational opportunities for a diversity of activities throughout the year
- Promote shoulder season opportunities, and provide a variety of winter and summer recreational amenities
- Strategically identify and plan for new recreation resource opportunities