



## East Range Communities' Comprehensive Plan Community Workshop

Biwabik, Aurora, Hoyt Lakes, Town of White

August 31, 2016; 9:00-10:30 AM and 11:30AM – 1:00PM Sessions

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Two community workshop sessions were facilitated by planning consultants on August 31<sup>st</sup> to engage East Range residents in the comprehensive planning process. Thirty people attended and provided planning consultants with a range insights and ideas. This input will be incorporated with 262 online survey responses to help identify key issues, inform the development of planning priorities, goals, policies and implementation recommendations.

### 1. Activity 1- Mapping Exercise

Participants identified community strengths, prevailing issues and areas for change. Participants brainstormed ideas by answering the following questions:

*What types of commercial or industrial development (jobs) do you feel is desirable for the East Range?*

- Wood Product Industries / Louisiana Pacific Plant **(5)**
- Manufacturing **(4)**
- Redevelopment
- Non-Mining
- Mining **(3)**
  - Copper
  - Steel
  - Ferrous
- Vo-Tech/Assembly
- Several small commercial/businesses ideas were generated:
  - Expand on the existing business community
  - New Grocery Store **(3)**
  - Quik-Trip
  - Veterinarian
  - Dentist
  - Hotel with a pool
  - Pharmacy/Drug Store **(2)**
  - 24 hour fitness center
    - Silver + Fit was used as an example. With this business membership is free if attended 10 times or more per month.

- Recreational Opportunities
  - Bike tours
  - ATV
  - Snow and ATV Trails
- Technology Campus
  - Hosting multiple businesses on one site
  - Similar to MN West Technology Campus in Willmar
- Restaurants
  - Bakery/Coffee
  - Subway

*What specific redevelopment or new development opportunities would you like to see in the East Range, and where?*

- Finish Townhomes
- Better control over cost of Living
- Closer proximity to a grocery store (re: closed Zups in Aurora)
- Cliquish/heritage/closed off to strangers
  - Class reunion excludes outsiders
  - “Welcome Wagon”
- The Lions Club want young/new participants
  - Intergenerational
- Housing **(6)**
  - Sewer/water utilities
  - Lots for river housing
  - Mainfloor/Single Level condos for retirees and seniors within existing neighborhoods.
  - Young families need updated single family homes
  - Great new assisted living
  - Sunset (quality)
- Restaurants

*What other types of uses and activities would make the east range a better place to live, work, and play?*

- ATV/Snowmobile/Small Engine Repair Shop
- Light Manufacturing Assembly
- More Retail **(2)**
  - Retail for Tourism
- Internet
- ID Problem
- Build small developments
- Arts/Culture **(2)**
  - East Range Arts Alliance
- Dorm/Hostel
- Restaurant establishments
- McKinley Passenger Buses
- Virginia and Duluth attracts younger generations
- EMT Services
- Community Events/Festivals
  - Pumpkin Fest
  - Laskaianen Water Carnival
  - A&W Car Show
  - Movies/Outdoor Movies
- Education
  - Open-enrollment backfired
  - 150 homeschool students
- Recreation
  - Campsites
  - Bicycling
  - Expand biking/skiing
  - Disc Golf
  - Rock Climbing
  - Bowling Alley
  - Indoor Mini-Golf
  - ATV Trails
  - Scuba Diving**(2)**
    - Lessons
    - Promotes the sport in the area
  - Chairlift rides at Giants Ridge in the summer
    - Ice-cream shop at the top
    - Link to walking trails

## 2. Activity 2- Sticky Note Activity Results

For this community workshop activity, participants were asked to think of ideas, needs, strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for the community as they applied to eight comprehensive plan elements. Ideas were written onto post it notes and then placed on large sheets of paper titled for the eight plan elements.

### Housing:

- Building lots for larger homes
- Smaller houses/apartments **(4)**
  - Tiny houses
- Affordable housing options **(3)**
- Single level condos for retirees/elderly
- Apartment buildings
  - High quality/well maintained
- Pocket neighborhood with smaller homes with defined floor plans and landscape design
- Adult Living Facility (not assisted living)

### Land Use and Zoning:

- Continue with established zoning districts
  - Residential
  - Commercial
  - Industrial

### Parks, Public Space and Active Living:

- Concert Venue
- Full scale basketball court
- Recreation Activities
- Rock climbing
- Full basketball court
- Arcade
- Movie Theater**(2)**
- Bicycle rentals
- Campsite at St. James RCC area. Along with walking/biking/rollerblade trails connecting the area to Giants Ridge.
- Parks with updated equipment
- Expand Giants Ridge recreation opportunities
  - Keep quality high
  - Gondola/Chairlift rides in the summer
    - Ice-cream shop at top
- Museum
- More libraries for arts and crafts

### Utilities and Community Facilities:

- Broadband
- 24/7 Emergency Services

**Mining, Timber, Natural Resources:**

- Logging

**Economic Development and Downtown:**

- 10 year plan for commercial expansion within City of Biwabik
- Business park designation in Biwabik
- New era job growth
- Increase small job growth
- Retail Shopping Franchises
- Restaurant
  - Bakery/Coffee Shop
- Grocery Store
- Marketing Firm
- Small engine repair shop **(2)**
- Hotel with pool (reasonably priced)
- Grocery Stores **(2)**
- Drug Store
- Dentist Office
- Movie Theater
- Car rental business

**Government Partnerships:**

- Access to funding for projects in the cities/Red tape
- The four communities, including the shared school, need to continue moving towards more shared services/staff **(3)**
  - Fire/Rescue/Police
  - Recreation
  - Administrative Services
- More East Range political interaction with IRRB to help determine goals
- East Range Annual Events
  - Four-city wide garage sale

**Transportation:**

- Clearly sign for bike/ATV/cross country crossings
- Rail/ Light Rail that connects to Duluth **(2)**
- Expand ATV trails between towns
- Better transit/transit circulator at Giants Ridge
- Sidewalks
- Established bus routes that run between East Range and West Range a few times per day