



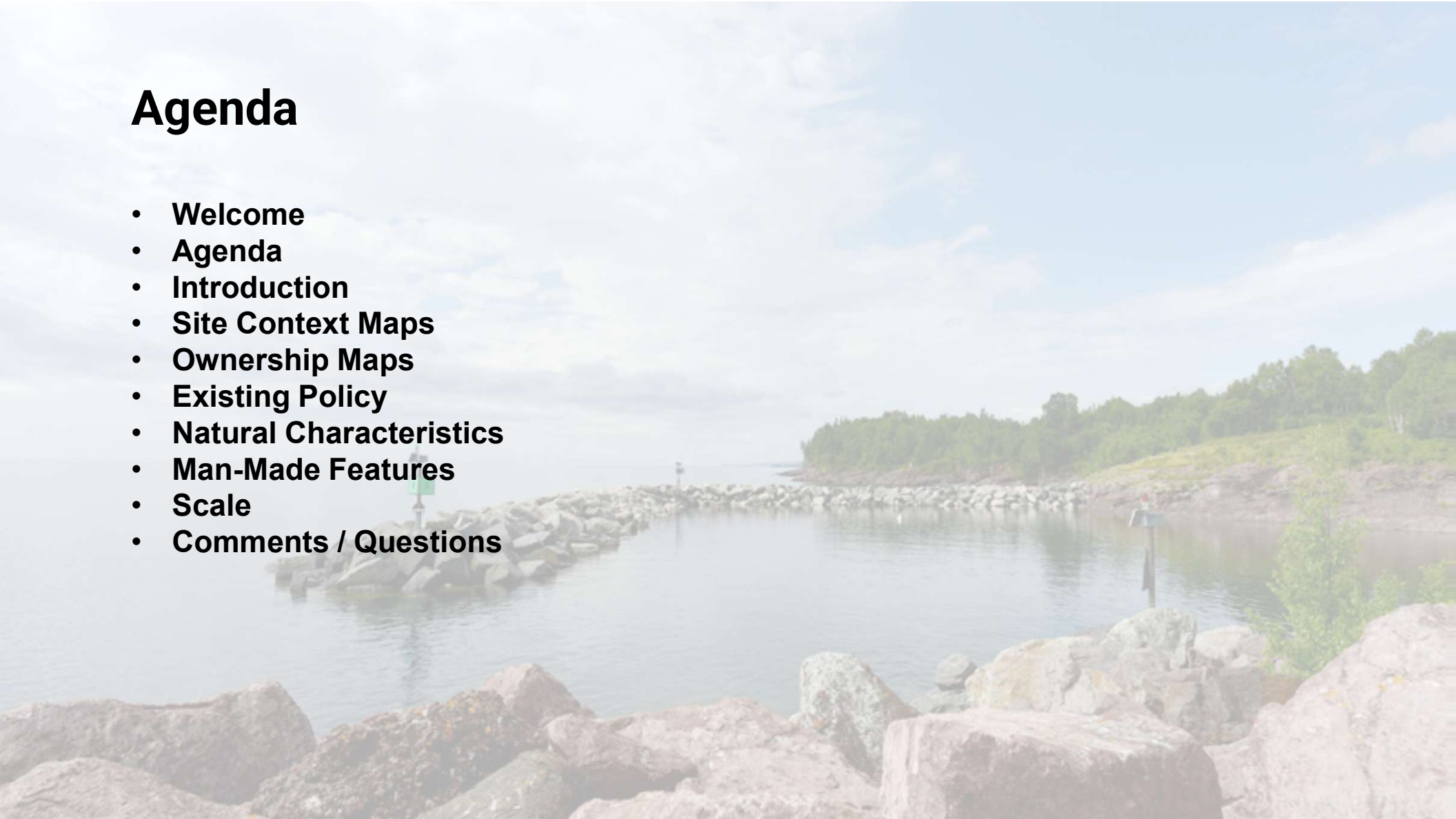
Taconite Harbor Advisory Committee Physical Conditions and Infrastructure



November 19, 2025

Agenda

- **Welcome**
- **Agenda**
- **Introduction**
- **Site Context Maps**
- **Ownership Maps**
- **Existing Policy**
- **Natural Characteristics**
- **Man-Made Features**
- **Scale**
- **Comments / Questions**



Introduction



Purpose and Objectives

Role

The role of this Advisory Panel is to become informed about relevant information, in order to provide advice to the Cook County EDA about the future use of the Taconite Harbor property.

Workshop Purpose

The suitability of any property for any use, is dependent on its intrinsic suitability (size, shape, topography, access, etc.) and the conditions associated with human activity (built environment). This workshop will provide information about both.

Site Context Maps

A scenic photograph of a coastal area. In the foreground, there are large, dark, jagged rocks. A body of water, likely a lake or bay, stretches across the middle ground. A long, low breakwater made of smaller rocks extends from the left side into the water. On the right side, a grassy hill with a dense forest of green trees rises from the shore. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds, and the overall lighting is diffused, suggesting an overcast day.

Locational Context

1. **Regional Context:** Where is the property located within the broader north shore/iron range region? What advantages and disadvantages does the location pose for reuse?
2. **Community Context:** What types of land uses are nearby? Do adjacent land uses/landowners present opportunities or threats to reuse?
3. **Site Context:** How is the property accessed? What is the ownership structure? What are the physical conditions of the property (both natural and manmade)?

REGIONAL CONTEXT MAP



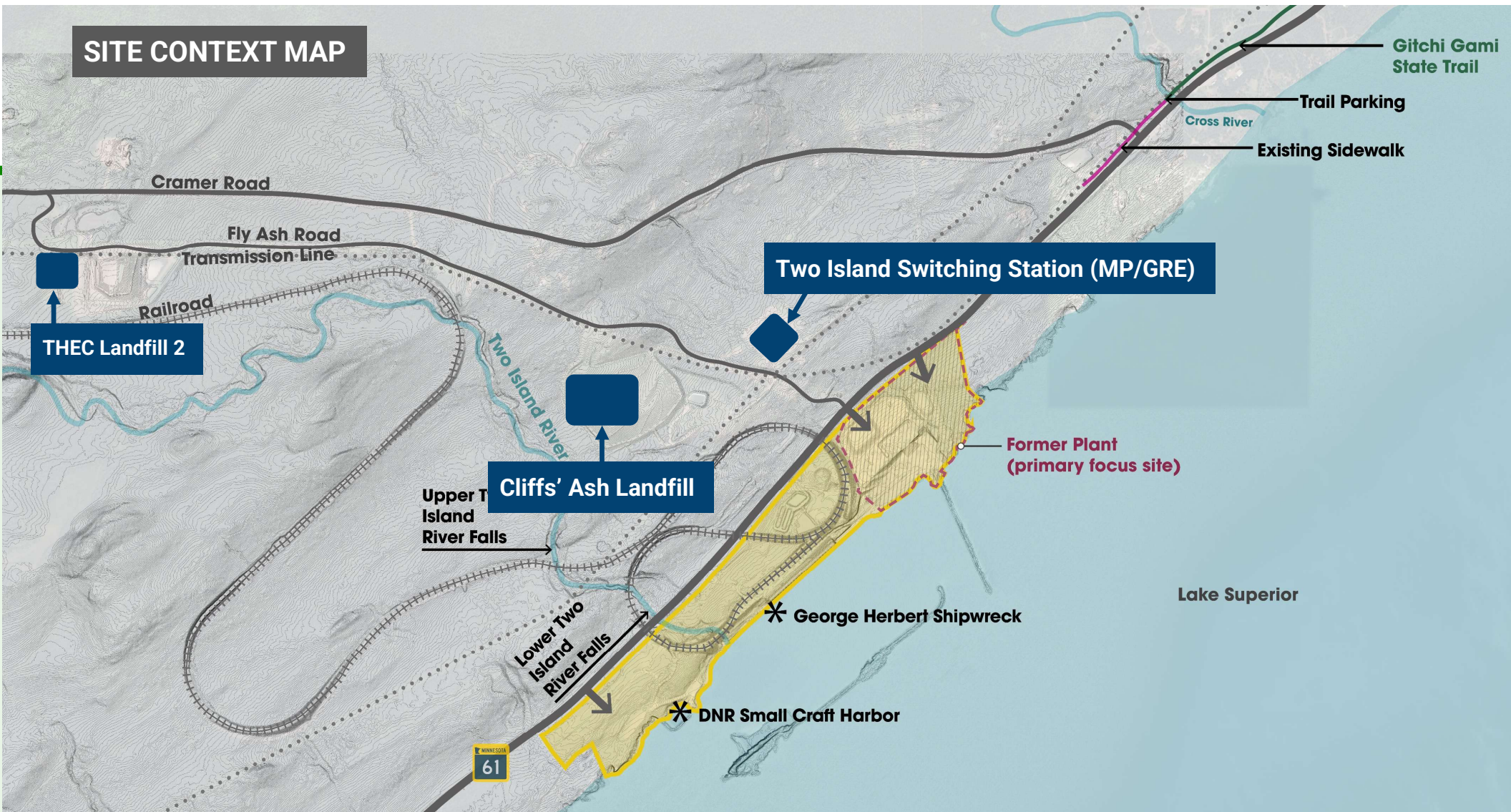
REGIONAL CONTEXT MAP



COMMUNITY CONTEXT MAP



SITE CONTEXT MAP

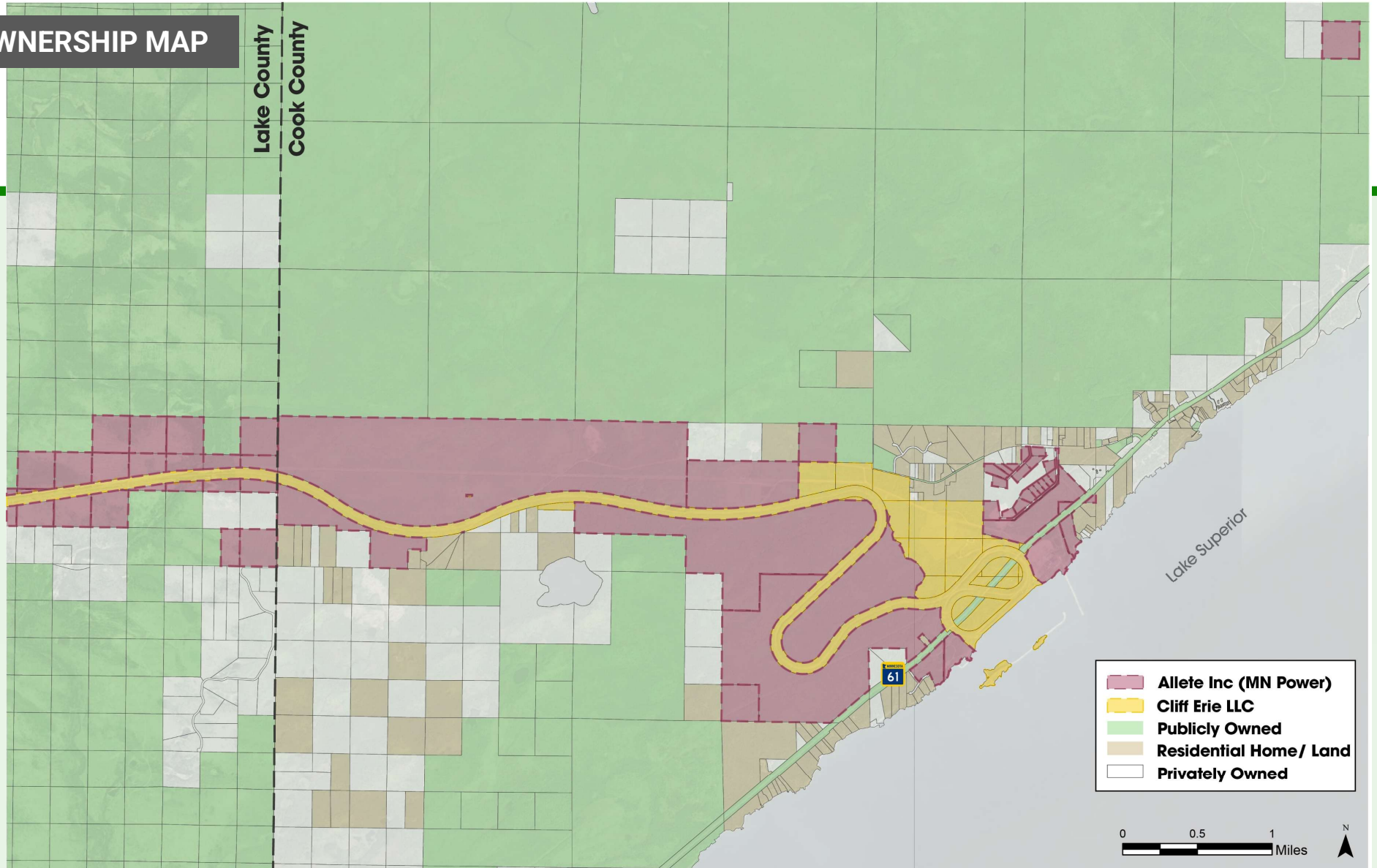


Ownership Maps

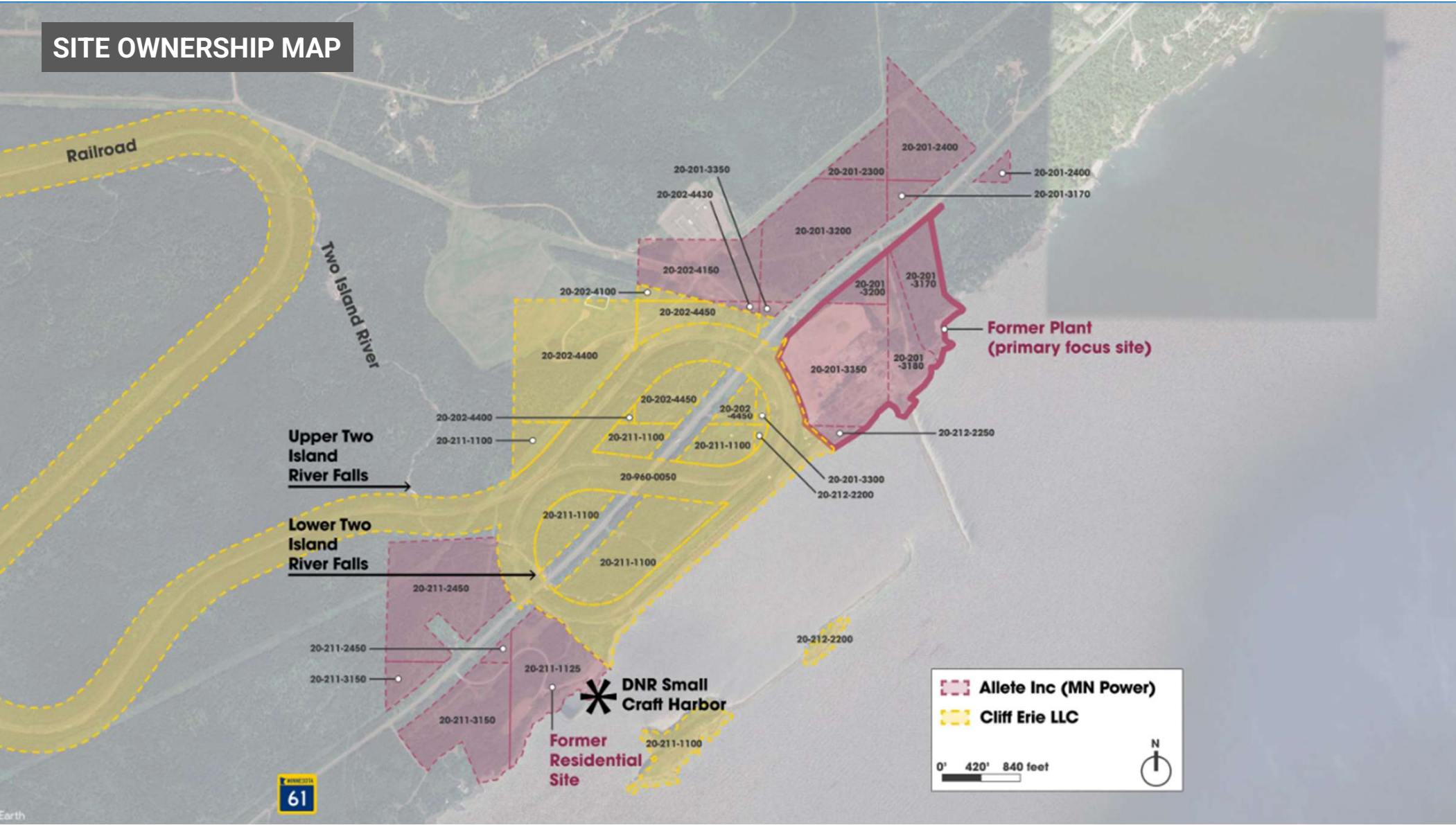
The background image is a landscape photograph. In the foreground, there are large, dark, jagged rocks. A body of water, likely a lake or bay, stretches across the middle ground. A long, low breakwater made of smaller rocks extends from the left side into the water. On the right side, a grassy and rocky shoreline leads up to a dense forest of green trees. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds, and the overall lighting is diffused, suggesting an overcast day.

OWNERSHIP MAP

Lake County
Cook County



SITE OWNERSHIP MAP



A scenic photograph of a coastal area. In the foreground, there are large, dark, jagged rocks. A body of water, likely a lake or bay, stretches across the middle ground. A long, low breakwater made of smaller rocks extends from the left side into the water. On the right side, a grassy hill with a dense line of green trees rises from the shore. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds, and the overall lighting is diffused, suggesting an overcast day.

Existing Policy

PHYSICAL CONDITIONS | EXISTING POLICY

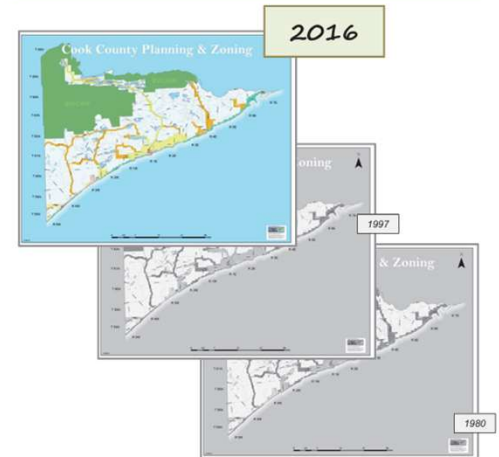
Cook County Land Use Guide Plan

- **Cook County is the land use and zoning authority. Any land use or zoning change will need their approval.**
- The Cook County Land Use Guide Plan provides goals and policies for Taconite Harbor.

2035 Goals and Policies Related to Taconite Harbor:

- The Taconite Harbor facility and surrounding lands have been productively repurposed.
- Heavy industry shall be generally limited to the immediate area of Taconite Harbor and to the City of Grand Marais and its immediately surrounding areas.
- Work with the current owners to repurpose the Taconite Harbor facility for economic use and encourage development for the roughly 2,000 acres owned by the companies in the area.

Land Use Guide Plan for Cook County, Minnesota



PHYSICAL CONDITIONS | EXISTING POLICY

Schroeder Sub-Area Plan

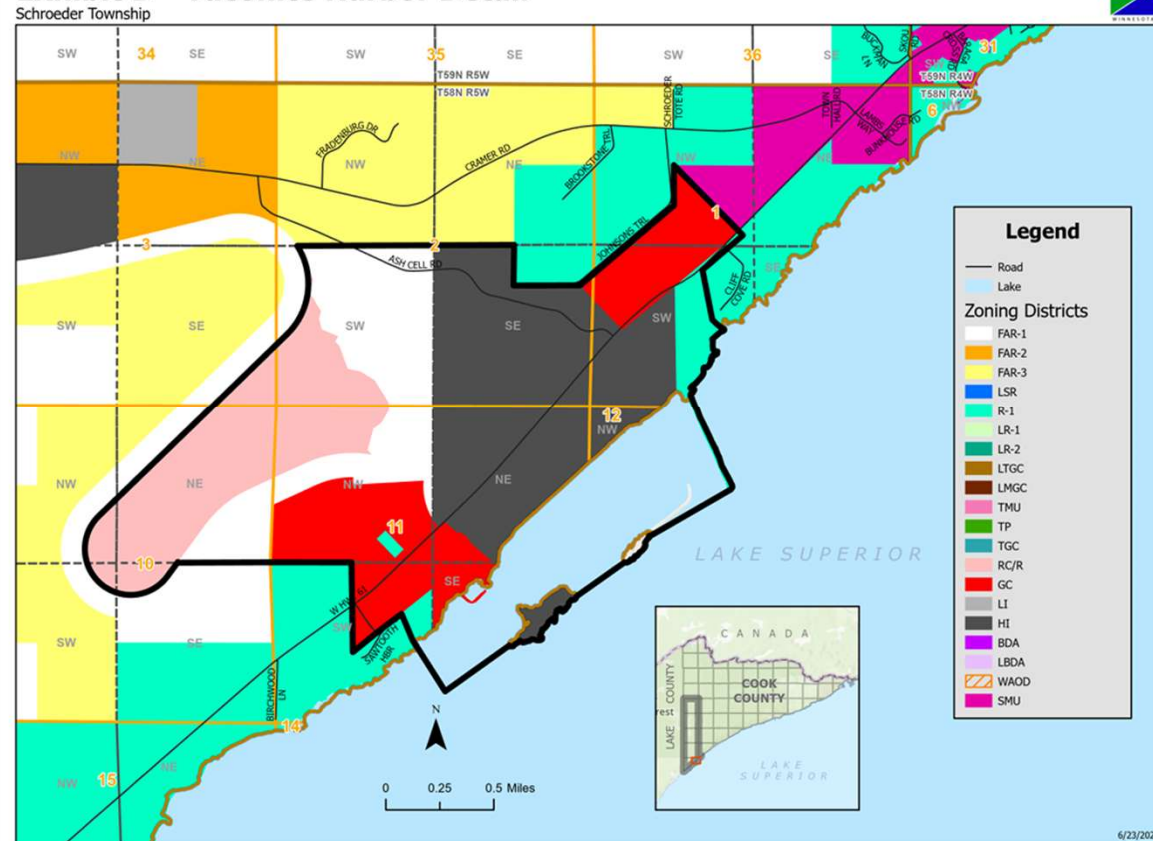
- The Schroder Sub-Area Plan will be adopted by Cook County as a supplement to the Cook County Land Use Guide Plan. It presents current and 2035 conditions for Taconite Harbor.

Current Conditions*

- Once a site of heavy industrial use, the area includes a closed Minnesota Power (ALLETE, Inc.) plant, a Cliffs Erie, LLC. taconite loading facility, a former town site, and existing railroad tracks.
- The Taconite Harbor area has mixed zoning conditions, including residential, general commercial, and heavy industrial.
- Public water access to Lake Superior exists via the Taconite Safe Harbor.

* Description from Schroeder Sub-Area Plan

Exhibit D - Taconite Harbor Detail



PHYSICAL CONDITIONS | EXISTING POLICY

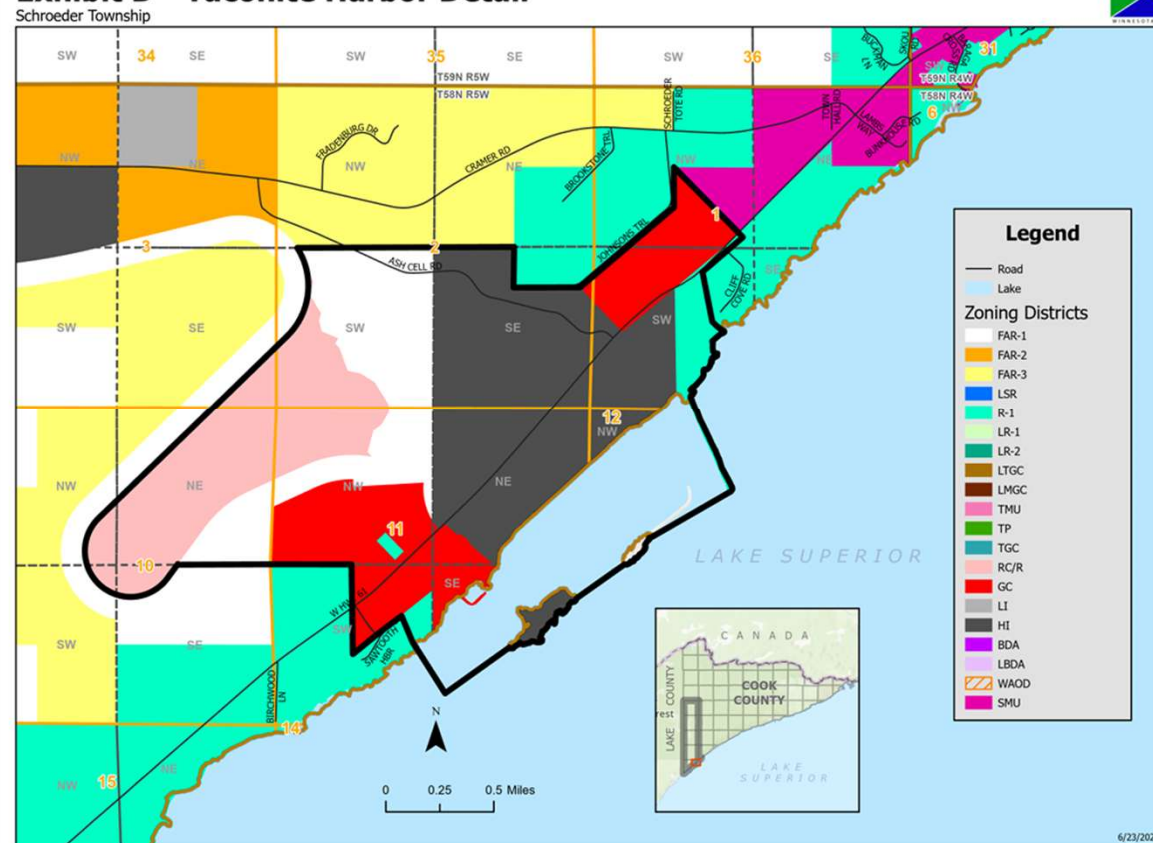
Schroeder Sub-Area Plan

2035 Conditions*

- Taconite Harbor contains areas of commercial, residential, and possibly industrial development. Schroeder Township is open to review and supporting other creative uses beyond those currently allowed, if appropriate.
- The future of Taconite Harbor is determined by the property owners, ALLETE, Inc. and Cliffs Erie LLC. Schroeder Township, in partnership with the Cook County Economic Development Authority, works with ALLETE and Cliffs Erie—if they choose—to advance a strategic plan for the site's development.
- Use of Taconite Safe Harbor public water access and adjoining paved parking lot continues.

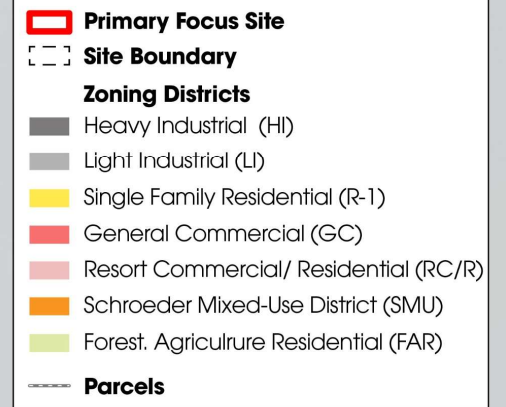
* Description from Schroeder Sub-Area Plan

Exhibit D - Taconite Harbor Detail



Primary Focus Site Zoning

Primary focus site is zoned mostly heavy industrial with a small portion of single-family residential



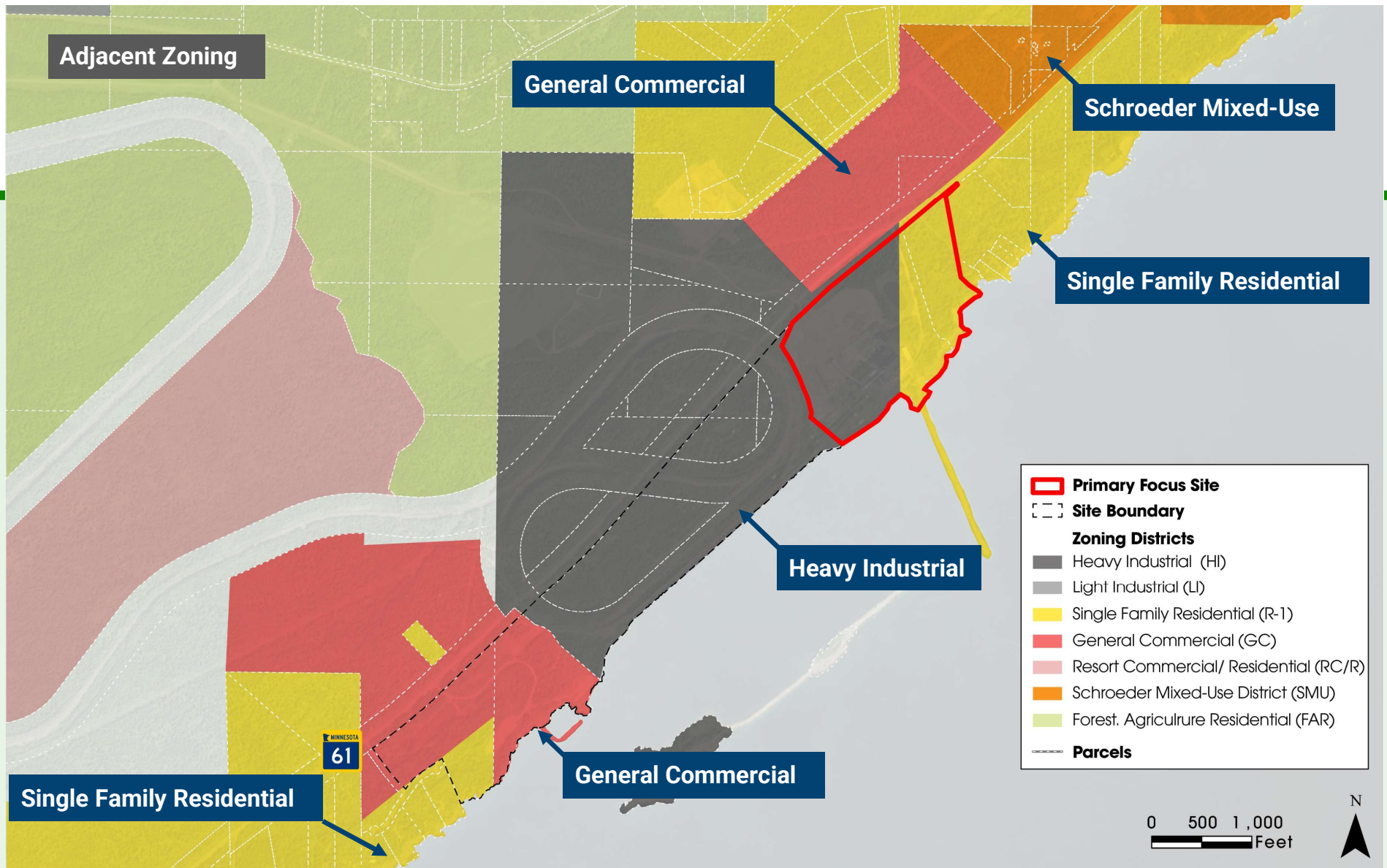
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Feet



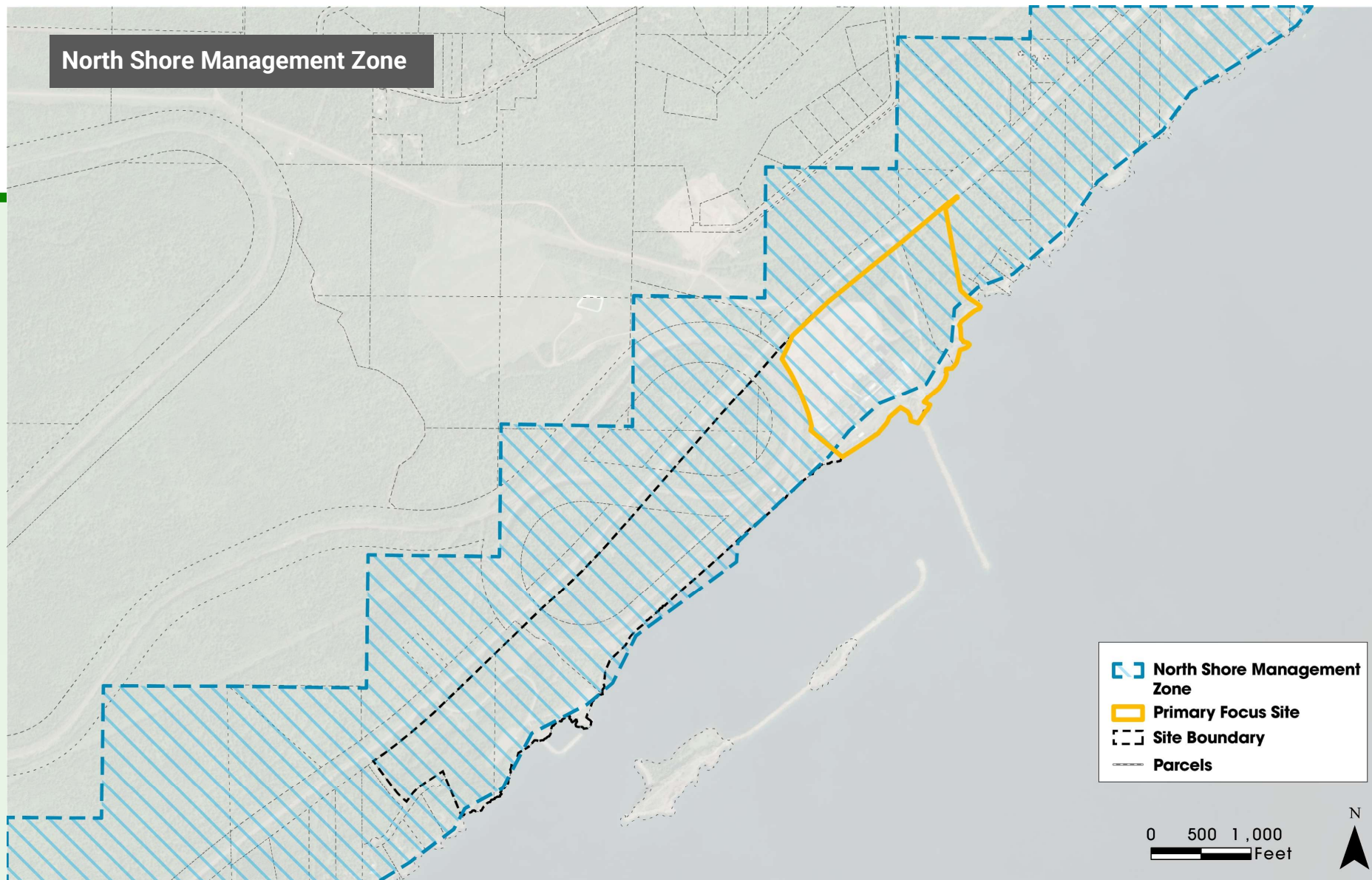
PHYSICAL CONDITIONS | EXISTING POLICY

Zoning

- **Primary focus site is mostly zoned Heavy Industrial (HI)**
- Requirements for this district are found in the Cook County Zoning Code – Article 4.20
- Any new use will require a Conditional Use Permit
 - Conditional uses include:
 - Mineral processing
 - Power generation
 - Mining
 - All other heavy industrial uses
- Setbacks, building height and lot coverage are all determined during the Conditional Use Permit process
- Other uses will likely require rezoning the property



North Shore Management Zone



North Shore Management Plan

- Minnesota's Statewide Shoreland Management Program was conceived by the legislature 1969 as a cooperative effort of the MN DNR and local units of government.
- In 1981, the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCMR) funded a program evaluation that identified Lake Superior as a distinctive management unit, not adequately addressed by the existing Statewide Shoreland Management Program.
- Recommendations from this evaluation called for the initiation and support of a local government effort to develop a shoreland management plan for the North Shore of Lake Superior.
- The original North Shore Management Plan was adopted in 1988 and specifies minimum standards and criteria for development along Lake Superior.
- Plan is implemented by North Shore Management Board which includes representatives from all local governments. Board reviews all developments along the North Shore.
- The Plan has subsequently been updated in 2004 and 2016. An update to this plan is currently underway (2025).

PHYSICAL CONDITIONS | EXISTING POLICY

North Shore Management Zone

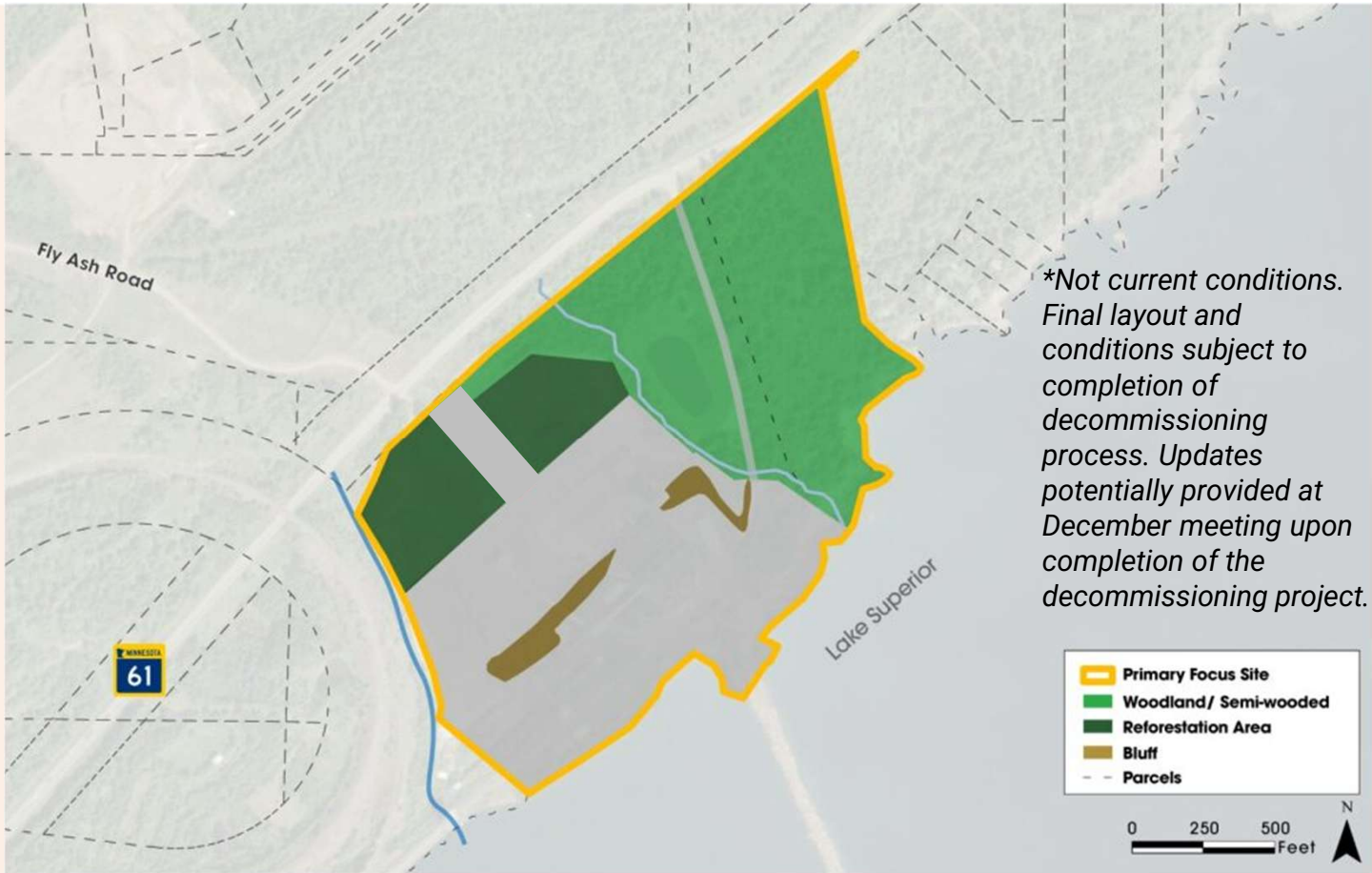
- **North Shore Management Plan is implemented in Cook County through the North Shore Management Zone**
- Requirements for this district are found in the Cook County Zoning Code – Article 8
 - Structure setback from Lake Superior is 40' from the vegetation line* or 75' from the OHWL
 - Structure setback from public road right-of-way (ROW) is 35.'
 - Plan acknowledges that Highway 61 is designated a national "All-American Road" and a Scenic Byway.
 - Maximum building height is 35'
 - Bluff setback requirements apply
- Requirements may be adjusted with update to North Shore Management Plan

**Vegetation Line – The line along Lake Superior at which high water or high wave action prevents the growth of permanent or woody vegetation. On solid rock where no vegetation grows or where there are undulations of the vegetation line, the Zoning Administrator may determine an average vegetation line for setback purposes.*

A photograph of a coastal scene. In the foreground, there are large, dark, jagged rocks. A breakwater made of smaller rocks extends from the left side into the water. On the right, a grassy hill with a dense forest of green trees rises from the shore. The water is calm and reflects the sky. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds. The word "Land" is written in a large, bold, black font in the center of the image.

Land

Land Cover



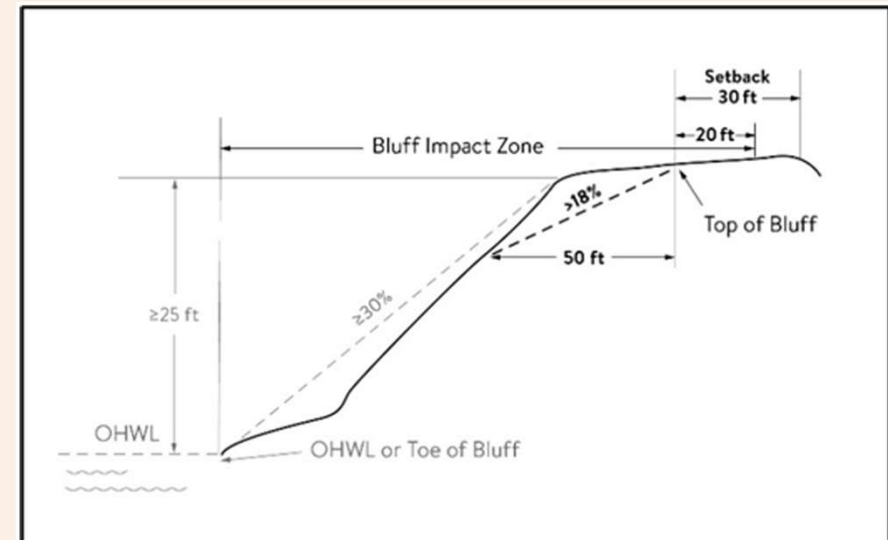
PHYSICAL CONDITIONS | LAND

Bluff Setback

- All property along the North Shore in this area is within the North Shore Management Zone
- Requirements for this district are found in the Cook County Zoning Code – Article 8
- These requirements are subject to changes/updates in the [North Shore Management Plan](#)
 - Structure setback from the top of the bluff is 30'

**Bluff: A topographical feature having all of the following characteristics:*

1. Located in a shoreland area
2. The slope rises at least 25 feet above the ordinary high water level of the water body
3. The grade of the slope averages 30% or greater
4. The slope must drain towards the water body.



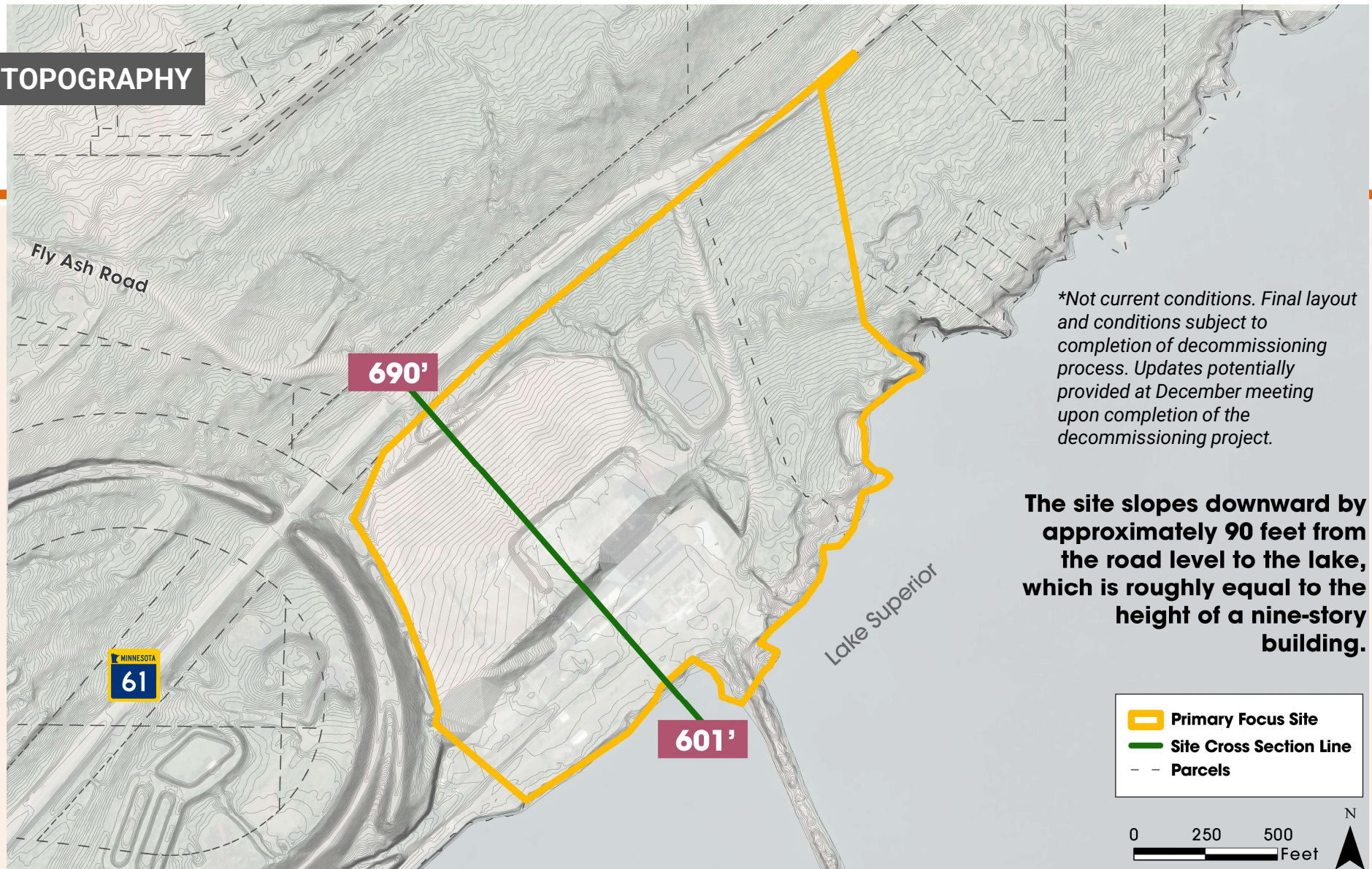
PHYSICAL CONDITIONS | LAND

Natural Characteristics



**Not current conditions. Final layout and conditions subject to completion of decommissioning process. Updates potentially provided at December meeting upon completion of the decommissioning project.*

TOPOGRAPHY

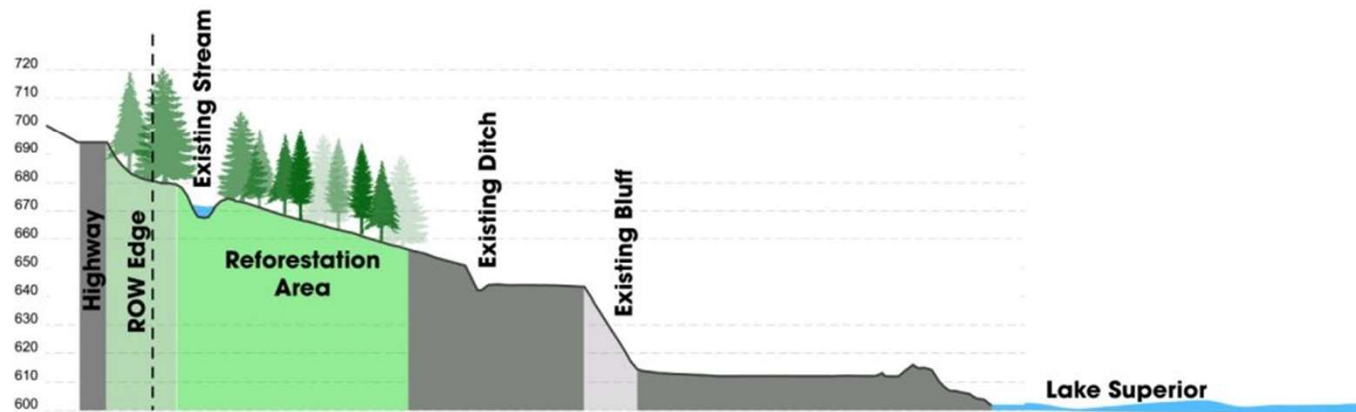


PHYSICAL CONDITIONS | LAND

Land Cover – Cross Section



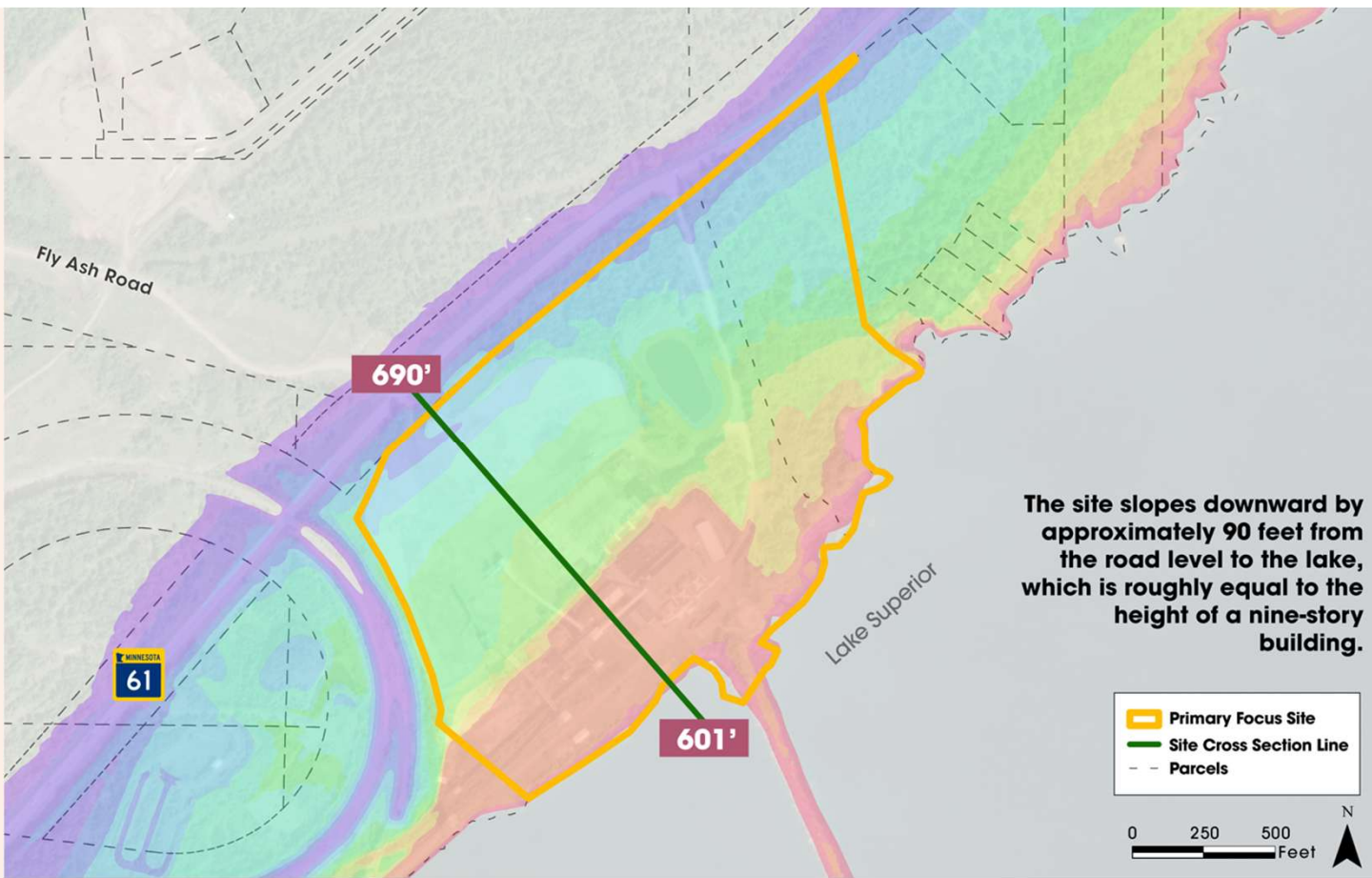
Key Map



**Not current conditions. Final layout and conditions subject to completion of decommissioning process. Updates potentially provided at December meeting upon completion of the decommissioning project.*

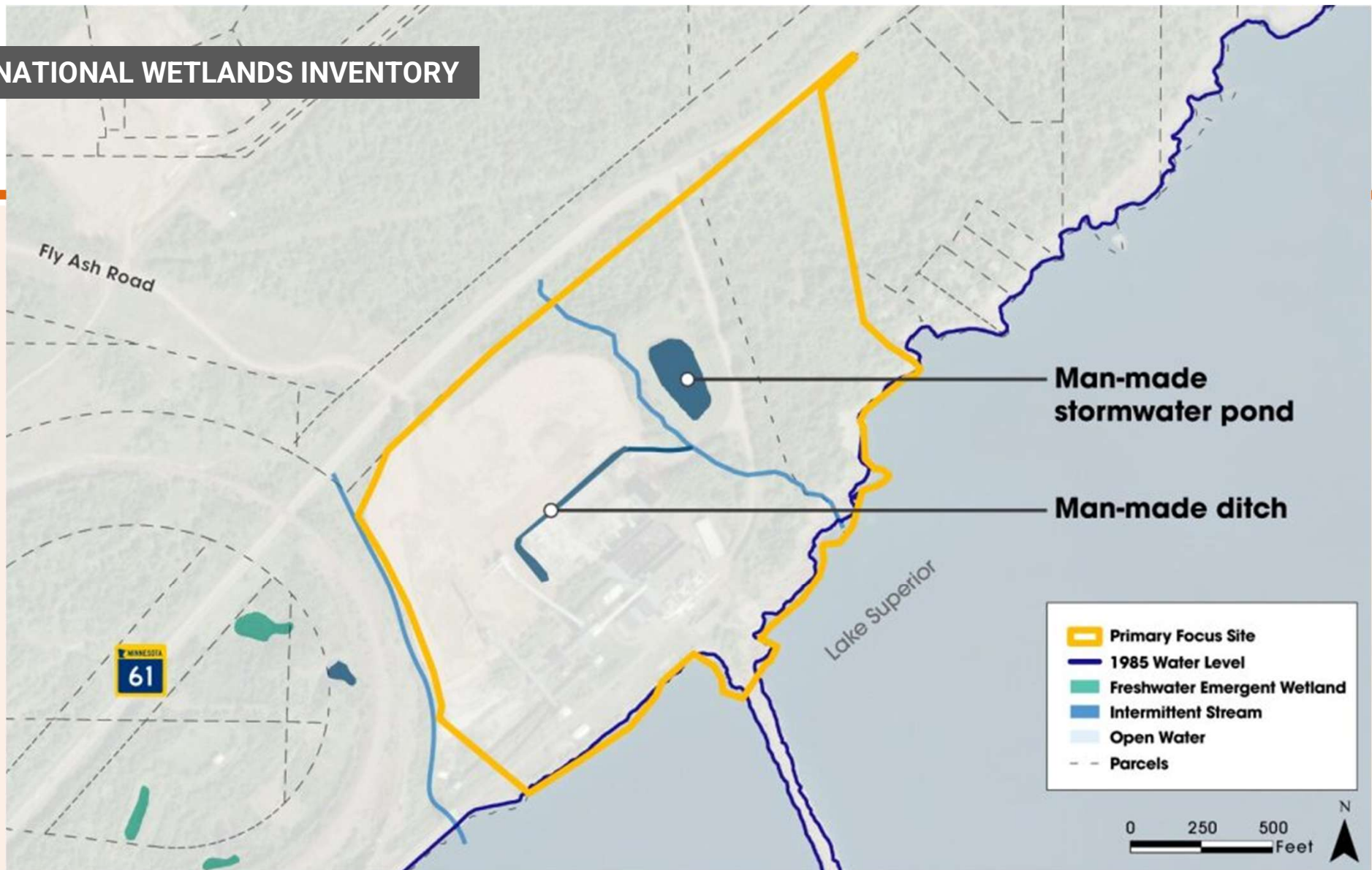


Site Topography



**Not current conditions. Final layout and conditions subject to completion of decommissioning process. Updates potentially provided at December meeting upon completion of the decommissioning project.*

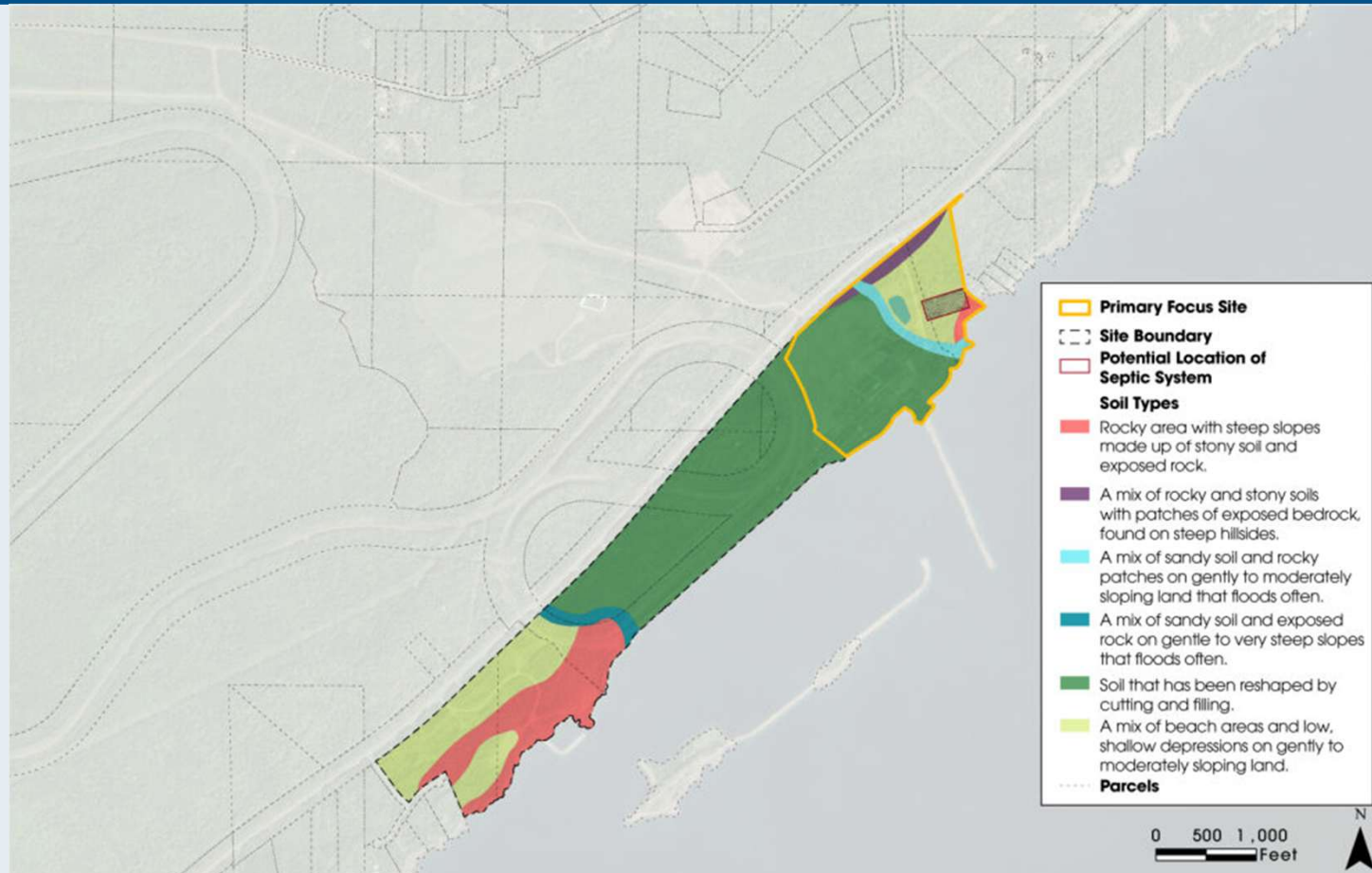
NATIONAL WETLANDS INVENTORY



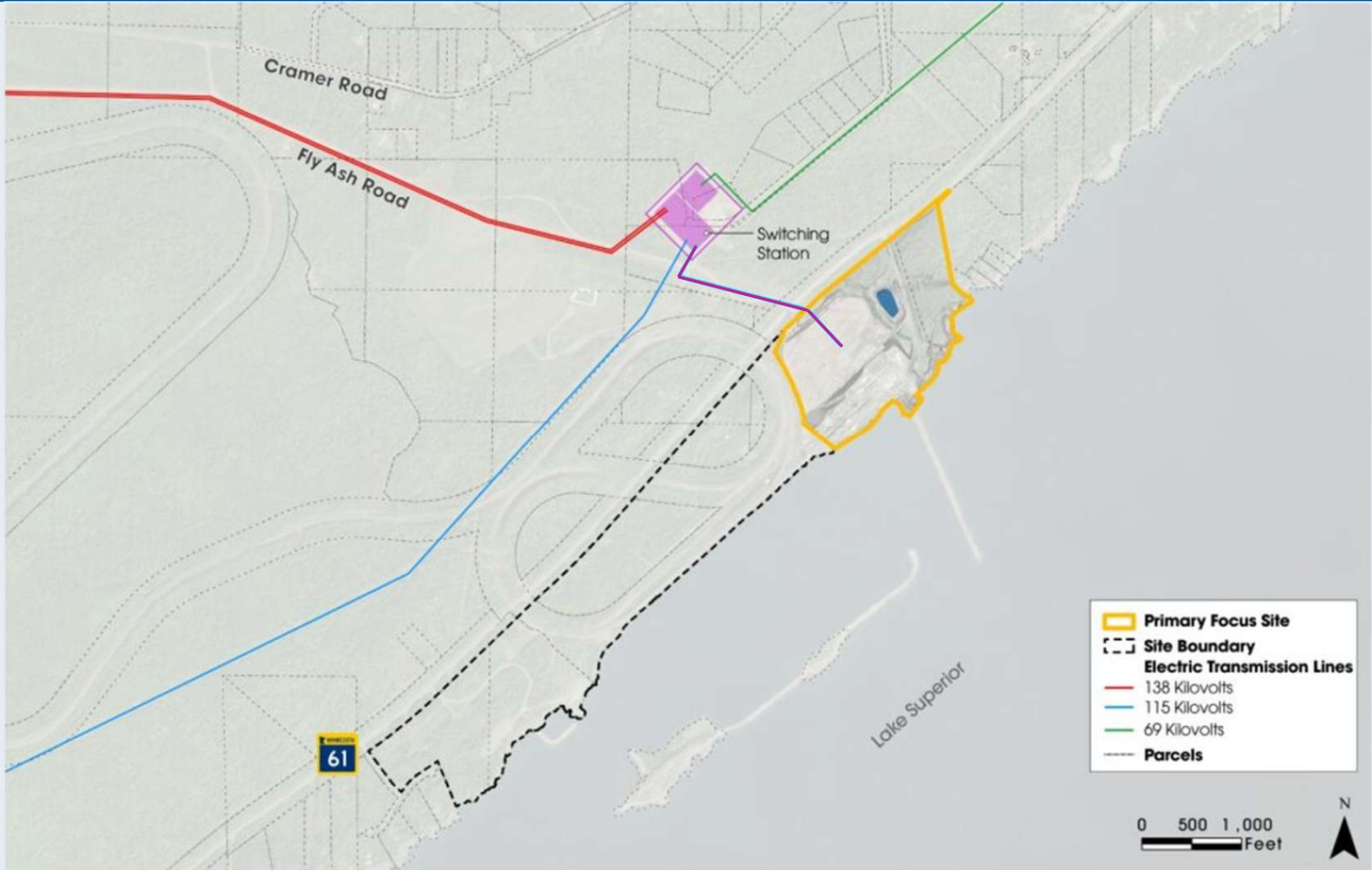
PHYSICAL CONDITIONS | INFRASTRUCTURE

Utilities

- Soils play a factor in influencing future use
- Primary site mostly consists of soil that has been reshaped by cutting and filling and a mix of beach areas and low shallow depressions.
- Site soils influence the feasibility of sanitary septic system on site



Utilities - Power



PHYSICAL CONDITIONS | INFRASTRUCTURE

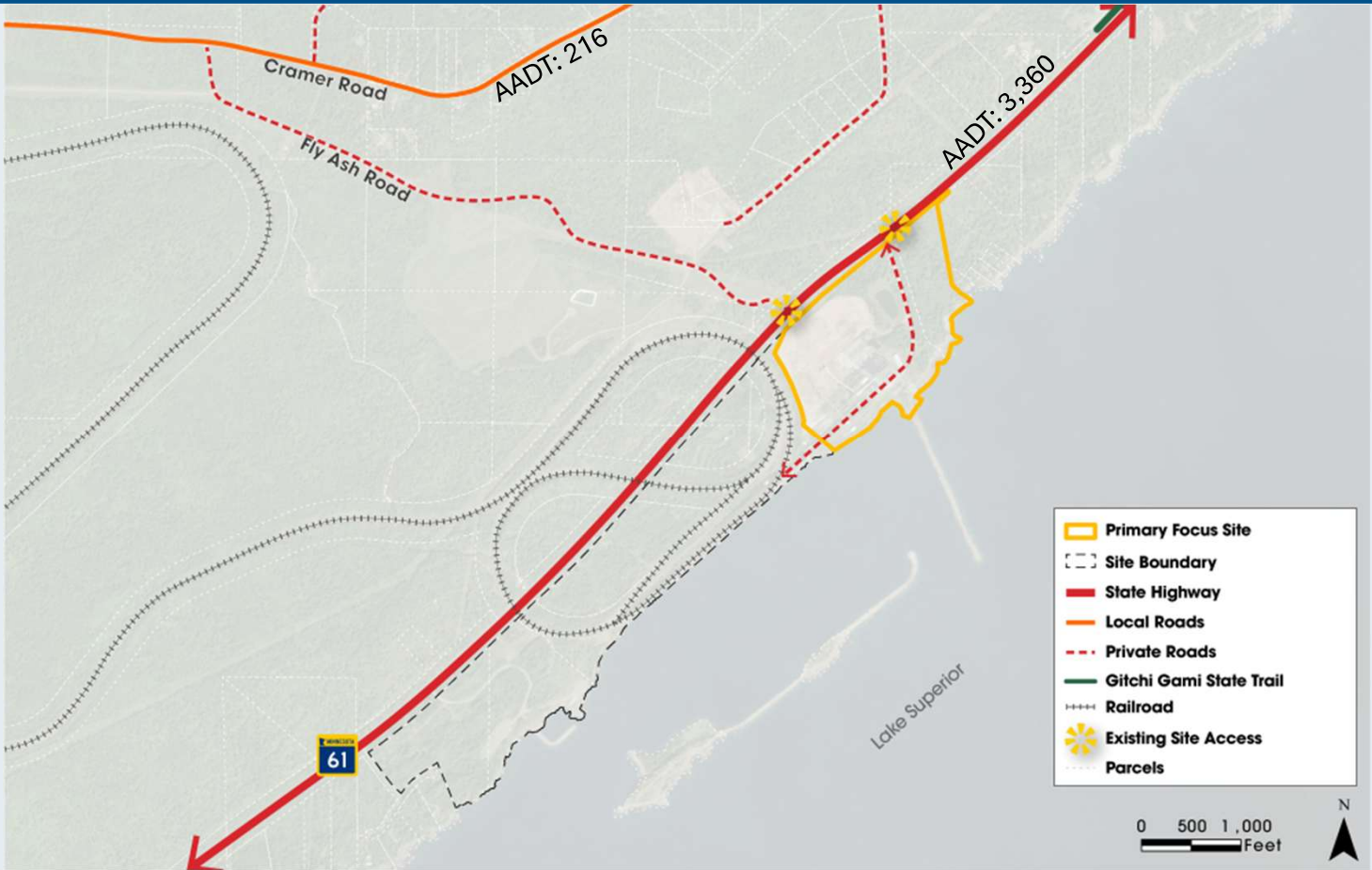
Utilities – Natural Gas

- *Nearest natural gas line is in Silver Bay*
- *Approximately 22 miles from natural gas line to Taconite Harbor.*



PHYSICAL CONDITIONS | **INFRASTRUCTURE**

Site Access



Intersection Improvements

- Anticipate turn lane improvements on MN-61 for access into site
- MN-61 2024 AADT: 3,360
- Anticipated improvement lengths based on nearby turn lanes
 - Turn lane width: 260 ft.
 - Pavement widening: 1,400 ft.



PHYSICAL CONDITIONS | INFRASTRUCTURE

Gitchi Gami State Trail



A scenic photograph of a coastal landscape. In the foreground, large, dark, jagged rocks are scattered across the bottom. A body of water, likely a lake or bay, occupies the middle ground. A long, low breakwater made of smaller rocks extends from the left side into the water. At the end of this breakwater, there is a small structure with a green sign. To the right, a forested hill rises from the shoreline, covered in green trees and shrubs. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds, and the overall lighting is diffused, suggesting an overcast day.

Scale

BUILDABLE AREA

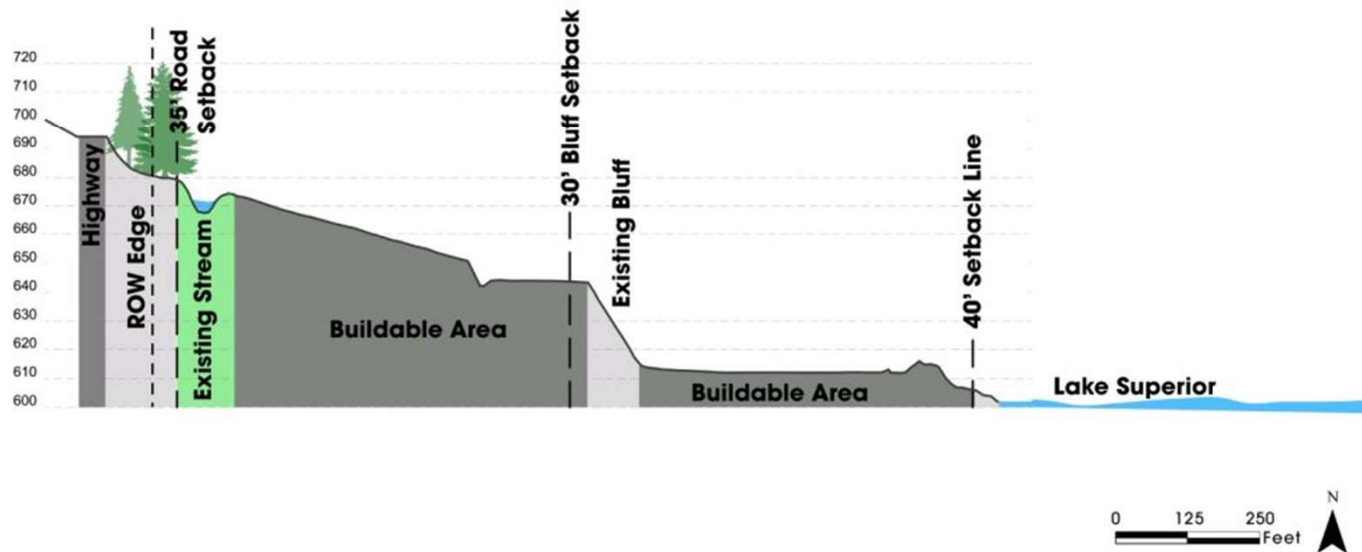


PHYSICAL CONDITIONS | INFRASTRUCTURE

Site Cross Section



Key Map



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PHYSICAL CONDITIONS | SCALE

Scale – Football Fields



Scale – Industrial Buildings



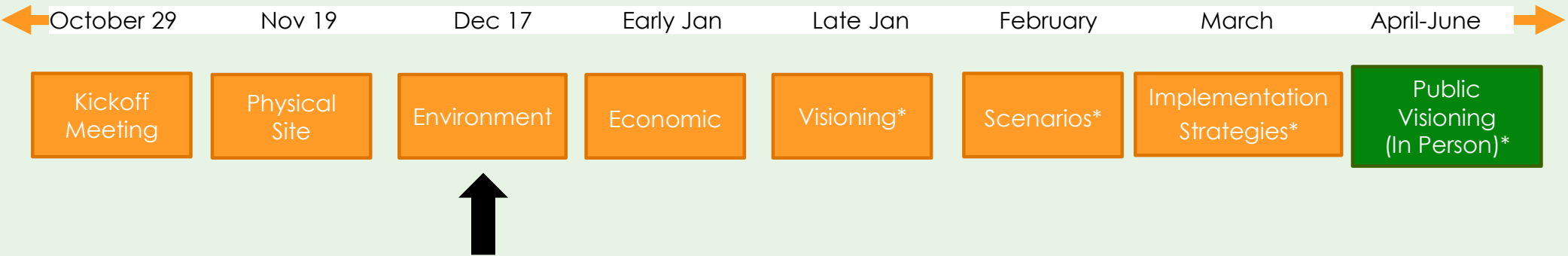
PHYSICAL CONDITIONS | SCALE

Scale – Grand Superior Lodge



PHYSICAL CONDITIONS | **EXISTING POLICY**

Comments/Questions?



THANK YOU!!!

Special thanks to Minnesota Power and Cook County for presentation content