



Taconite Harbor Advisory Committee Development Implementation Planning



April 22, 2026

AGENDA

1. Introduction and Opening Comments

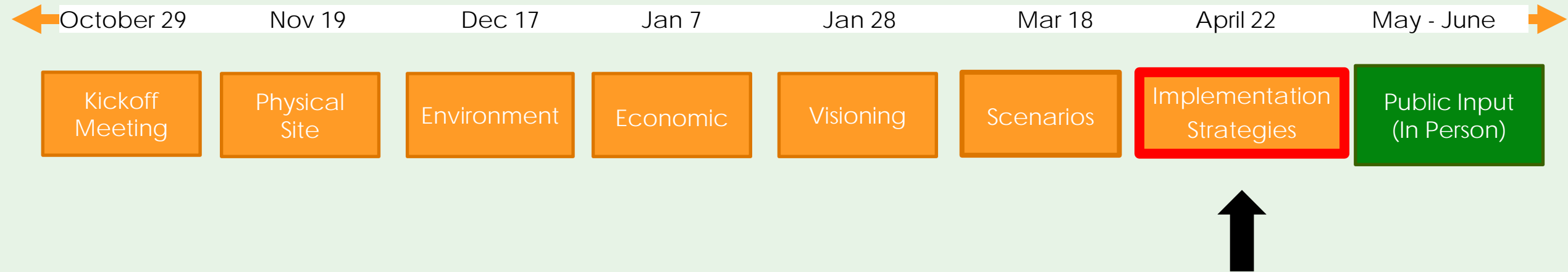
2. Revised Vision Scenarios A and B

3. Implementation Roadmap

- Policy
- Environmental
- Development
- Funding

4. Next Steps

Schedule



Introduction & Opening Comments

- **Minnesota Power** owns this land. Nothing will happen here without their participation.
- These vision scenarios are very general. It is not possible to do a full implementation roadmap until a **specific plan and specific design** has been completed.
- **Cleveland Cliffs** owns the adjoining land. They chose not to participate in this process and they retain the zoning and permits for their property and rights and responsibilities related to the harbor.
- Both Vision A and B have a **long path to implementation**. This implementation roadmap provides a moment-in-time snapshot of next steps.
- The ultimate reuse of this land may be **phased and interim uses** may be part of that overall strategy.
- Implementation of either Vision A or B will require a **project champion** to drive next steps.
- **This implementation roadmap is intended to identify intermediate steps to spur new development. This is not an exhaustive list of next steps. As a more specific plan and design are identified, this roadmap will need to be updated.**



Revised Vision Scenarios

What we Heard – Overall Input

- In general, broad support for the two visions. Those who preferred the opposite vision generally supported both as potentially viable options.
- Emphasis on framing these as “community visions”
- Support for the large marina space
- Suggestion to add housing to northeast portion of the site in both visions.
- Consider less hospitality and more housing (mix of housing formats)
- Consider whether Biochar is a suitable use for the site
- Consider infrastructure elements such as access for Cliffs, breakwall and water quality

What we Heard – Vision A (Industrial/Business)

Strengths and Support

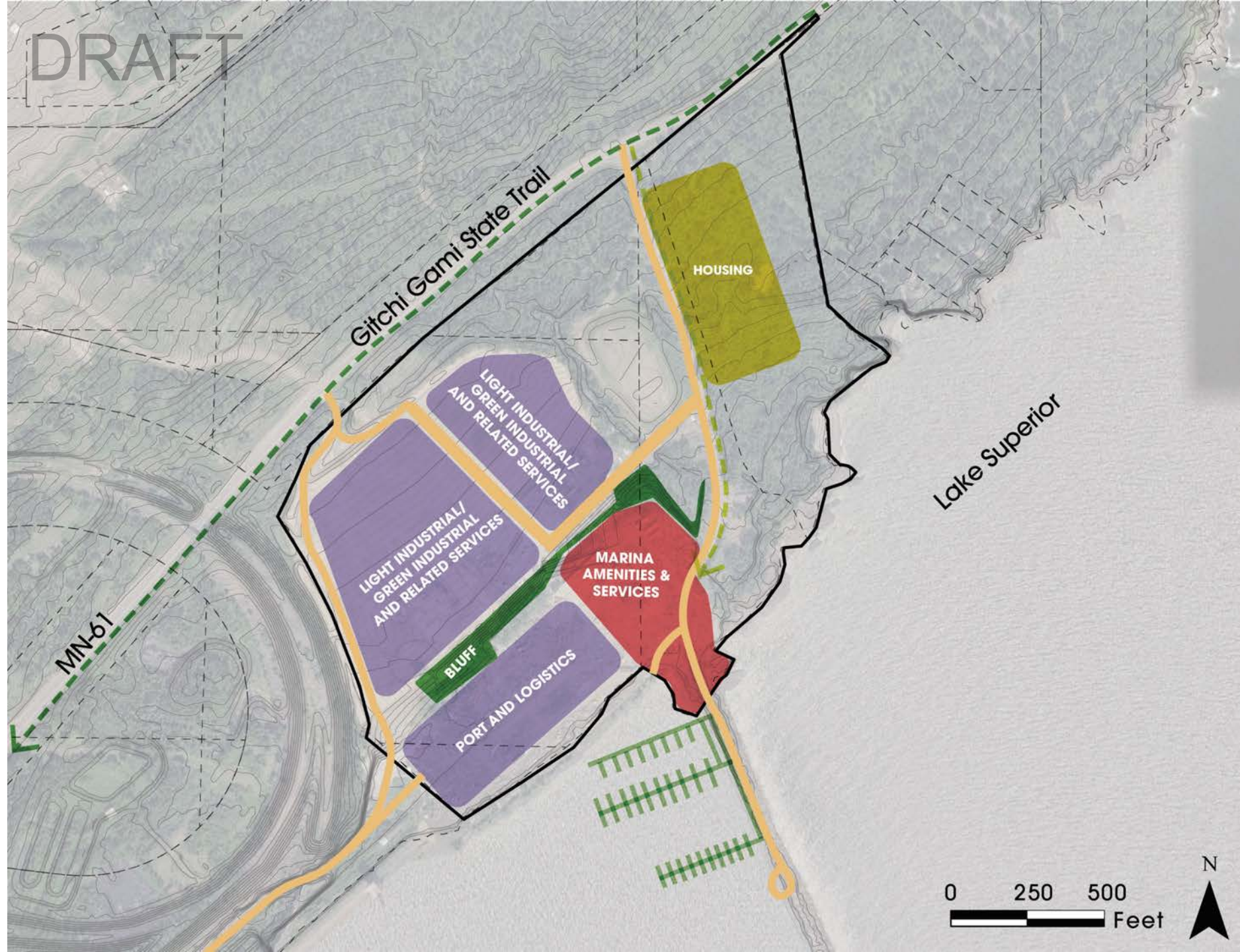
- Broadly viewed as more realistic, feasible, and achievable in the near to mid-term
- Strong support for light industrial / industrial-commercial / business park–style uses, rather than heavy industry
- Seen as most compatible with the site’s industrial history, existing zoning, and adjacent Cliffs property
- Appreciated for its clear separation of uses, with: light/green industrial north of the bluff, port/logistics and harbor functions to the south, housing kept away from the core industrial areas

Suggestions and Clarifications

- Several members suggested reframing or renaming Vision A to better reflect industrial-commercial or business park uses, rather than traditional “industrial.”
- Support for locating housing across the road to reduce remediation challenges and land-use conflicts.
- Interest in ensuring heavy regional or destination-style industrial uses are avoided to limit traffic, emissions, and community impacts.

VISION A: INDUSTRIAL / BUSINESS

- Business/Light Industrial
- Green Industrial
- Port and Logistics
- Marina Amenities & Services
- Housing



What we Heard – Vision B (Mixed Use)

Strengths and Support

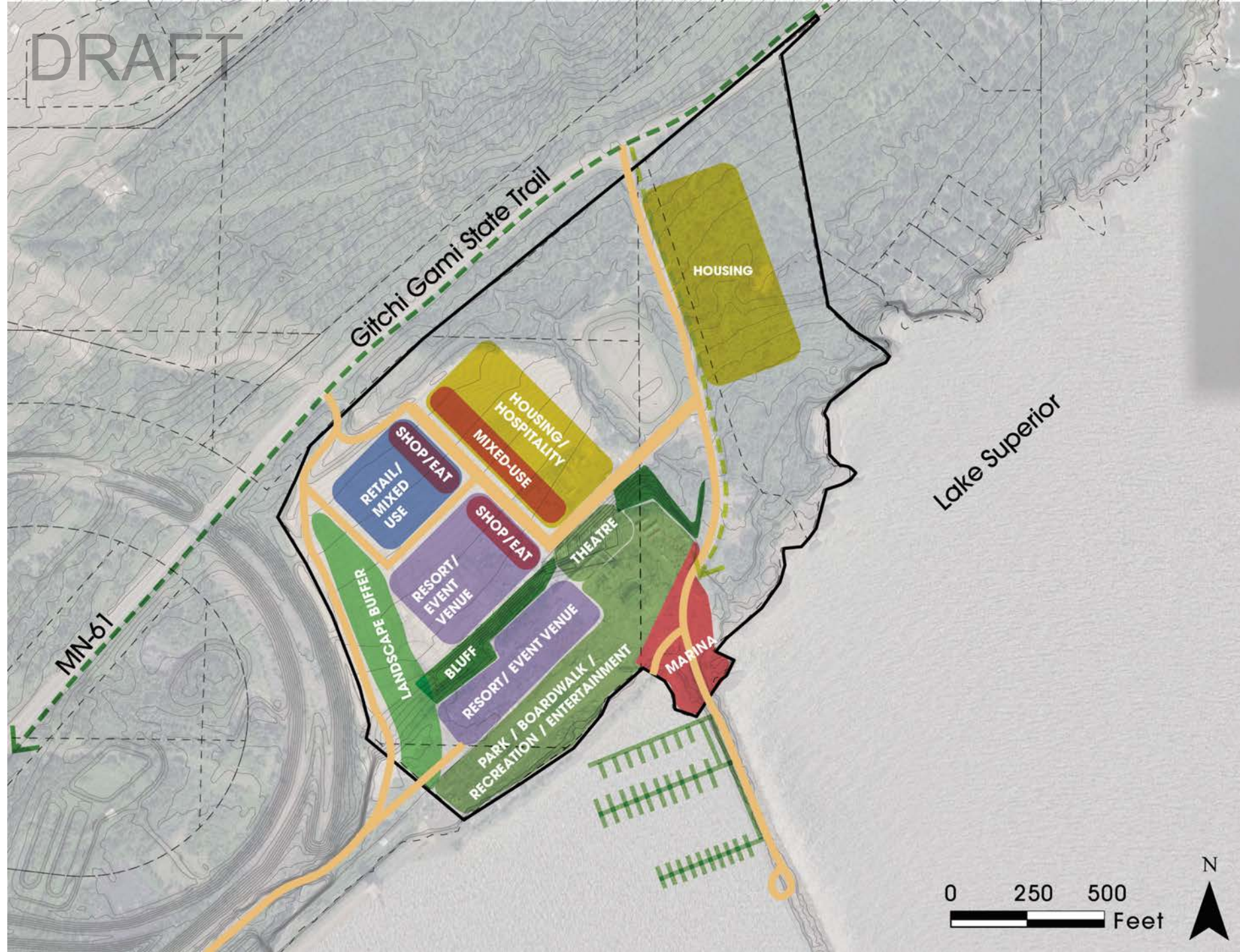
- Strong enthusiasm from some members, especially local property owners, for the amenity-rich, mixed-use concept, including marina, recreation, lodging, and dining.
- Seen as an exciting long-term transformational vision that could become a regional destination.
- Positive feedback on public waterfront access, boardwalks, amphitheater placement, and walkability.
- Appreciation for the landscape buffer and efforts to separate development from Cliffs access routes.

Suggestions and Clarifications

- Widely acknowledged as much more challenging to implement
- Concerns about compatibility with ongoing or future Cliffs industrial operations.
- Some concern that Vision B leans heavily toward tourism-oriented uses and may not sufficiently diversify the local economy.
- Recognition that housing, hospitality, and resort uses were not historically present on the site, which may complicate approvals.

VISION B: MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT

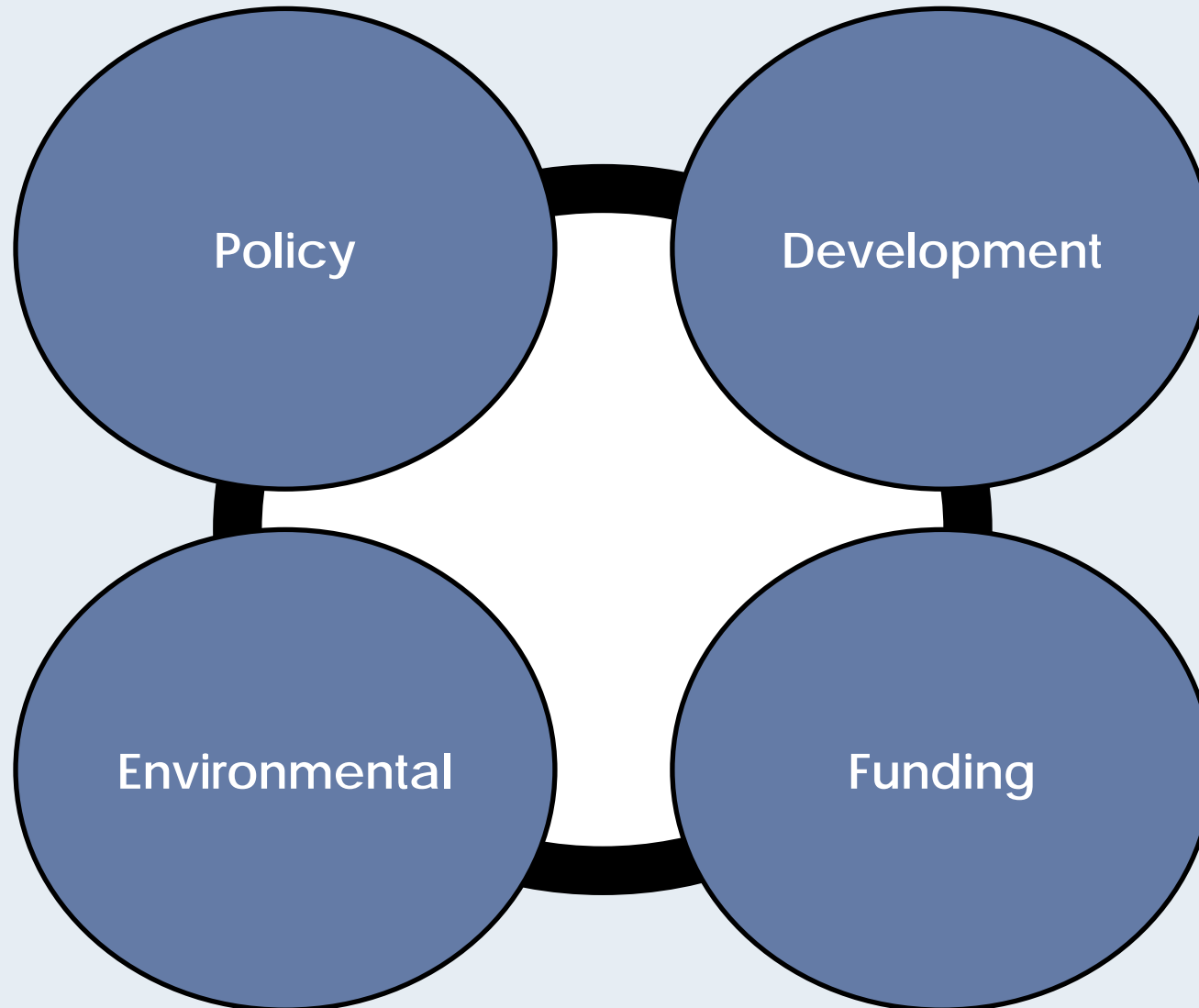
- Marina
- Park / Recreation
- Resort / Event Venue
- Retail / Mixed Use
- Housing



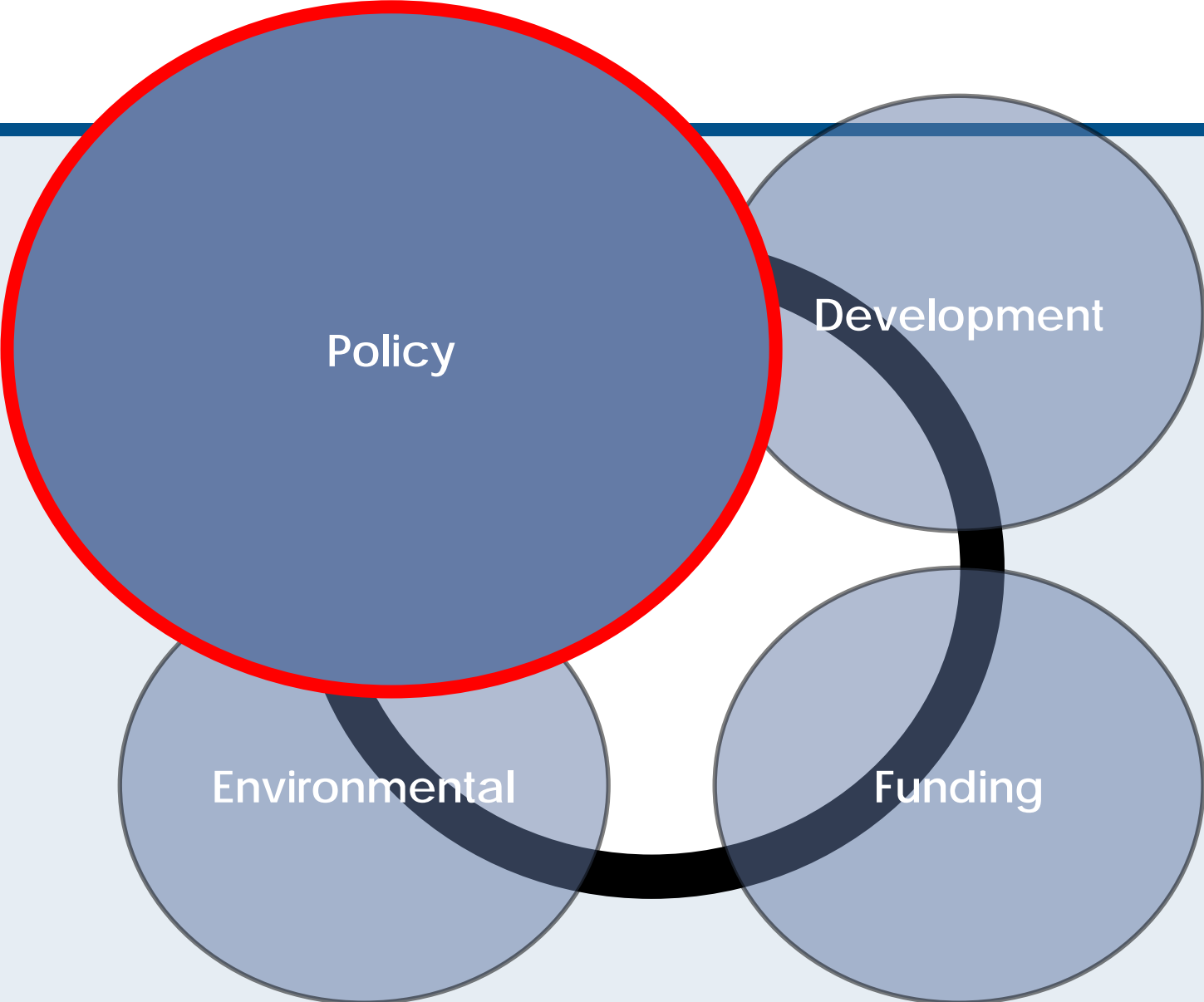
Implementation Roadmap

The background image shows a coastal scene with a breakwater made of large grey rocks extending from the shore into a calm body of water. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds, and the water reflects the light. In the foreground, more large rocks are visible, and a small green sign is mounted on a post on the breakwater. The overall atmosphere is serene and natural.

Implementation Buckets

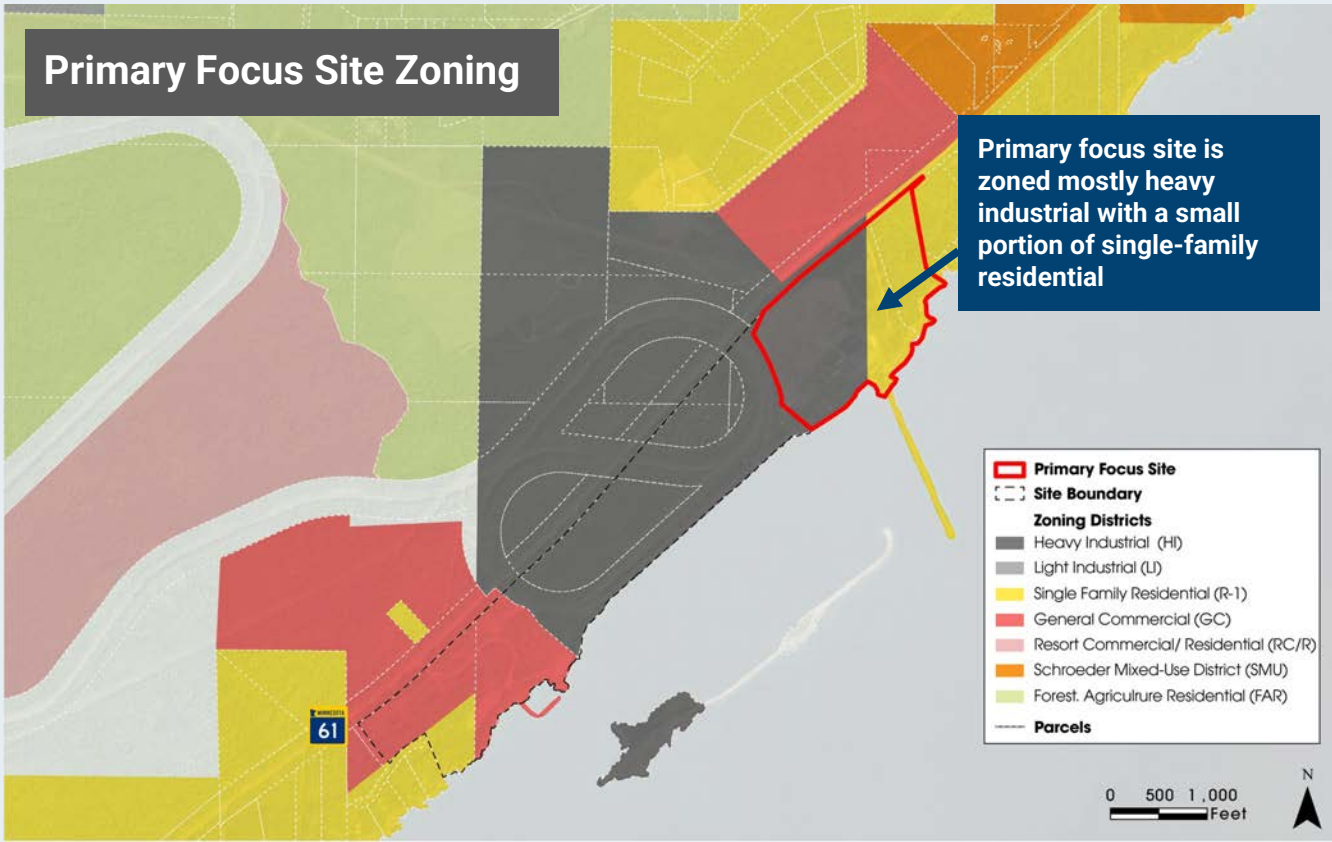


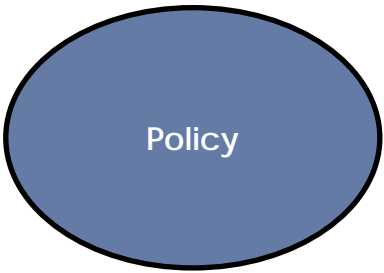
IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP



Cook County Comprehensive Plan and Zoning

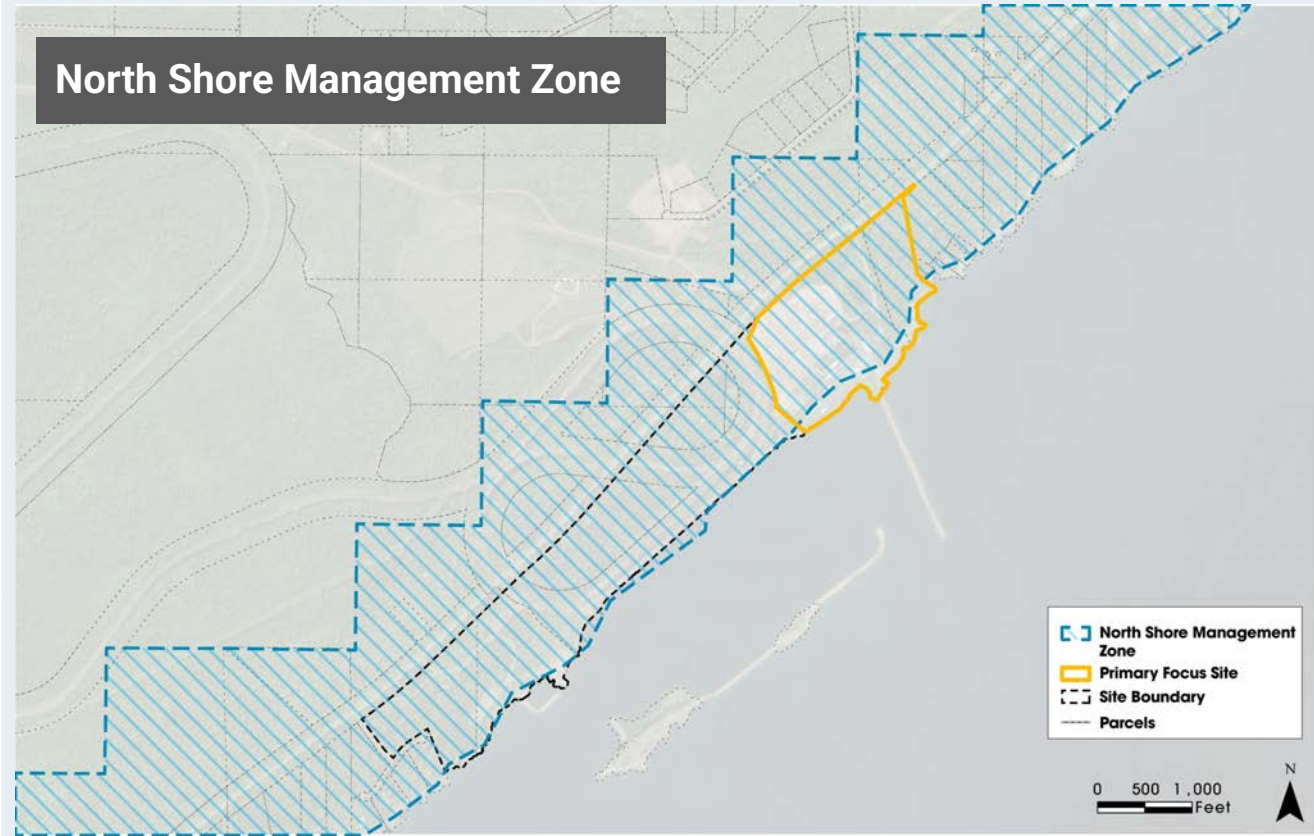
Implementation Roadmap	What Does It Entail?	Why Does It Matter?
Cook County Comprehensive Plan Update	Cook County is planning to update its Comprehensive Plan. This is an ideal opportunity to solidify the vision (or visions) for the Taconite Harbor site.	<p>Comprehensive Plan solidifies the community’s vision for the site.</p> <p>It sets the policy for the types of uses allowed to be developed.</p>
Rezoning	After the Comprehensive Plan Update, revise the zoning for the site.	Cleans up previous inaccuracies and clarifies uses allowed that align with community vision.



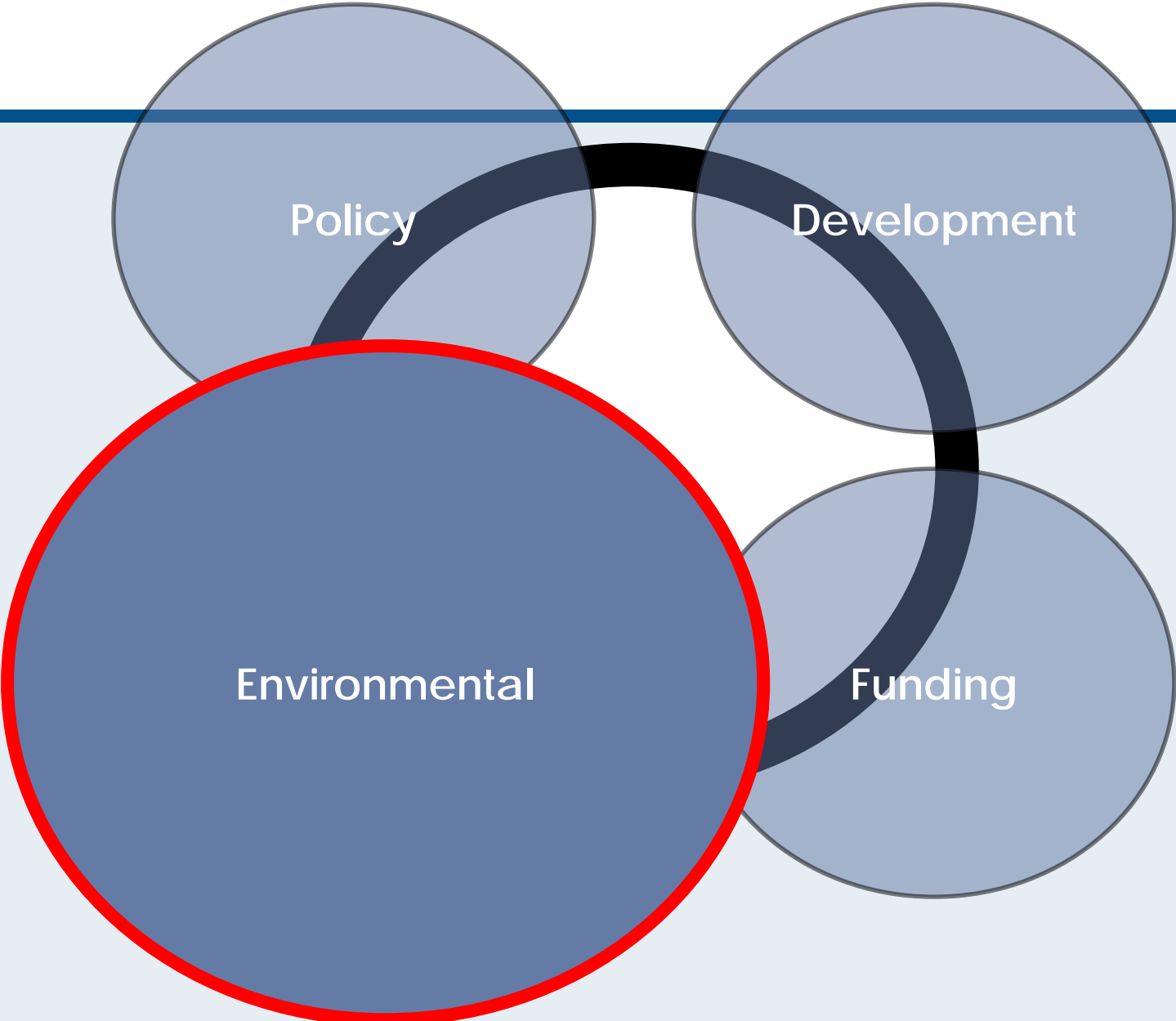


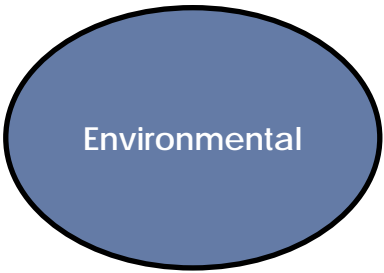
Local Permitting

Implementation Roadmap	What Does It Entail?	Why Does It Matter?
North Shore Management Zone Review	DRAFT North Shore Management Plan (April 2026 Update) recently published for public comment. Develop plans to generally comply with these updated regulations.	North Shore Management Zone regulations apply to the property. Shoreline protection was an important takeaway from the advisory committee process.
Cook County Coordination/ Permitting	Initiate discussions with Cook County (land use authority) early.	Continued coordination with County will support process and ensure alignment with County goals/ regulations.



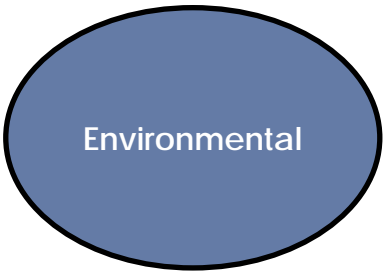
IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP





Environmental and Regulatory

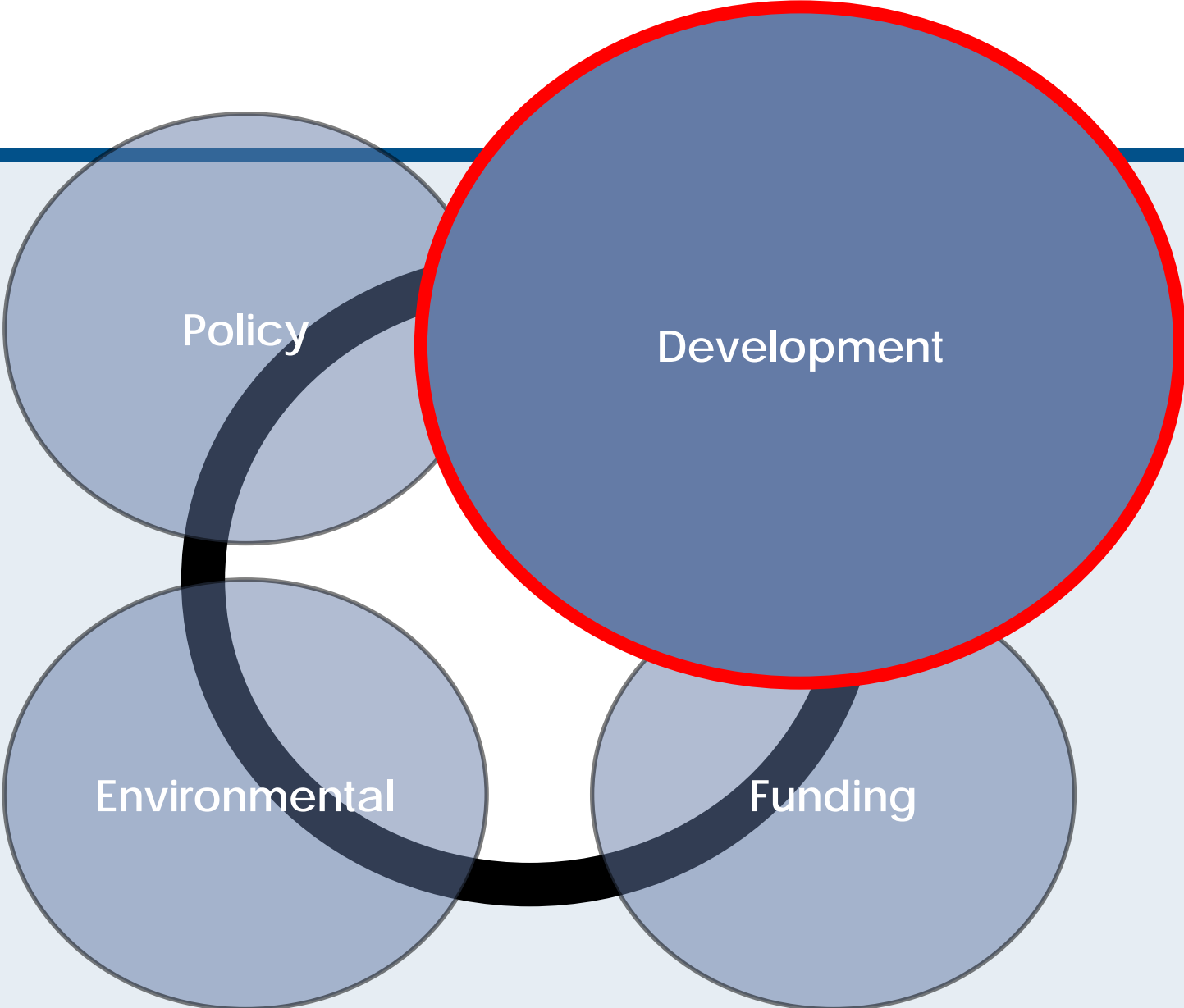
Implementation Roadmap	Vision A: Industrial / Business	Vision B: Mixed Use Development
<p>Environmental Review- Initiate background review to support expedited review in the future.</p> <p><i>*Site control required for field study (e.g., Minnesota Power were to sell land)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desktop & field studies (aquatics, threatened and endangered species, cultural resources) • Noise modeling • Aesthetics (consider building heights & viewsheds) • Cover Types to balance pervious vs. Impervious surfaces; guide landscape treatments and consider bluff/adjacency to L. Superior • Examine potential for "port" for industrial/commerce use • Water/Wastewater capacity specific to industrial needs • Traffic specific to industrial accessibility and safety • Desktop or field Geotech to identify capability or restrictions 	<p>In addition to or differentiated from Vision A approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noise modeling in consideration of potential residential and commercial on site. • Examine potential for "port" for leisure/recreation • Traffic specific to variety of users with residential and commercial, which could include non-motorized

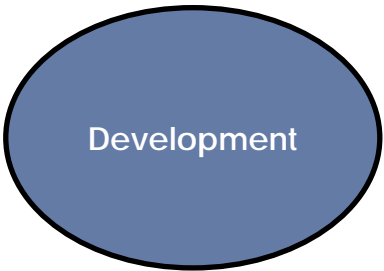


Environmental and Regulatory

Implementation Roadmap	Vision A: Industrial / Business	Vision B: Mixed Use Development
<p>Update Environmental Site Assessments (ESA) with Pre-Work</p> <p><i>*Site control required for field study (e.g., Minnesota Power were to sell land)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2025 ESA was desktop only for planning (shelf life typically <180 days) • ESA likely required with land acquisition (real estate transactions or financing for) • Updated ESA with field study would: identify current and historical uses of property; Recognized Environmental Conditions (RECs) and remediation/mitigation required <u>specific to the potential future land use.</u> • Remediation would be based on risk of exposure for users/workers (including users' length of exposure, use of exterior areas, safety training, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition to or differentiated from Vision A approach, risk and level of remediation would examine residential use, residential outdoor space use, residential construction (e.g., homes with basements). • Past coal-fired power use on site & potential for fly ash deposition would likely require consideration of the following remediation steps: soil excavation and/or soil capping and testing. • Risk considerations incl. length of exposure and potentially sensitive users/occupants (e.g., children, elderly, and pregnant women)

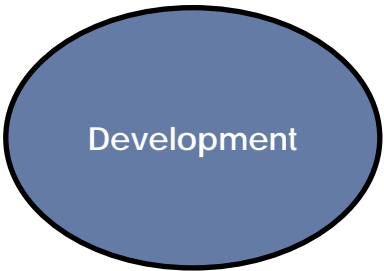
IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP





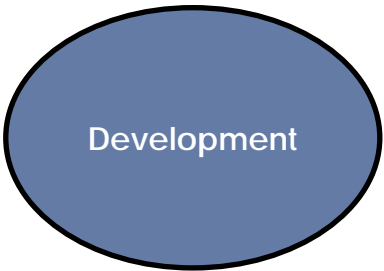
Development – Big Picture

Implementation Roadmap	What Does It Entail?	Why Does It Matter?
<p>Complete Plant Decommissioning (MN Power – Ongoing)</p> <p>Gain Regulatory approval/closure (MN Power – Ongoing)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Completion of power plant decommissioning 2. Soil and groundwater testing in industrial areas for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coal ash and Mercury • Hydrocarbons • Heavy metals 3. Regulatory Sign Off: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) • Department of Natural Resources (DNR) • Potentially others with funding restrictions 	<p>Even if contamination is modest, liability clarity is essential. Developers won't touch the site without:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defined cleanup standards • Legal clarity on who's responsible if issues emerge later <p>Local reporting and EDA materials should explicitly identify environmental legacy and topography as major redevelopment constraints.</p>
<p>Ownership and Site Control</p>	<p>Currently under private ownership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minnesota Power/Allete Inc. • Cliff Erie (Rail/Dock etc) <p>Need to get some sort of public ownership to allow public access (sale, lease, easement).</p>	<p>Until site control is consolidated or clearly delegated, private investment is unlikely.</p>



Development – Infrastructure

Implementation Roadmap	What Does It Entail?	Why Does It Matter?
Infrastructure Planning and Investment	Evaluate threshold criteria for each scenario: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Water 2. Sewer 3. Roads 4. Natural Gas 5. Electrical capacity 6. Marina upgrade 7. Safety upgrades 8. Public trails/designated use area(s) 	This site lacks needed infrastructure: no potable water, no storm or sanitary sewer in place, no roads/circulation, additional electric capacity will take time. Each utility will have different needs depending on what the development plan includes.
Phasing - Likely will need to be phased as users are attracted to the site.	Not all infrastructure needs to be built at once, start with key areas and small projects with a focus on public areas and one pilot development site.	The public investment to tackle infrastructure for a whole development will overextend the project before it starts.
Tax Increment Financing (TIF) or Tax Abatement	Explore eligibility for TIF or Tax Abatement to support infrastructure and other site development priorities.	Some pilot systems can be used for phased development to build development momentum.



Development – Intermediate Steps to Spur Future Development

Intermediate Step	What Does It Entail?	Why Does It Matter?
Identify Site Champion(s)	EDA, County, Minnesota Power, Community Stakeholders, others?	Who will keep the project moving? Without champion(s) there will be little progress.
Guidelines for Development	Get partners on the same page as to goals, rules, steps and process for future development and prepare guidelines for interested developers.	This help provide clarity for future developers of what will or will not be allowed for the development and be ready when opportunity knocks.
Prioritized Access and Safety; Build Upon DNR Small Craft Harbor Lake Access	Capitalize on current access at the small boat harbor; Ensure safe access routes are clearly designated; then provide signage welcoming public to the site.	Make those who come feel safe and know where they can go and still be safe.
Gitchi Gami Trail Connection	Provide public access to/through the site through coordination with the extension of the Gitchi Gami Trail expansion.	Provide more visibility to the site/community. Ensure the trail has a prominent Taconite Harbor Lookout.
Heritage and site interpretive signage	Build upon the signage and artifacts that currently celebrate Taconite Harbor. Potential partnership with Cross River Heritage Center.	Celebrate Taconite Harbor’s company town, ore dock, and energy transition as assets; generate a “buzz”.

Learning From Others

Wausau East Riverfront Development



Ashland Ore Dock Wisconsin



Source: onlyinyourstate.com

River Point Development



Green Bay Shipyard



- Start with site access and site identity; not development
- Phased development, accept partial access; build upon existing
- Public trust before economic use
- Earned credibility and identity

Future Opportunity: Reduce Ambiguity and Build Trust

Uncertainties & Risks

- ? Unclear access and boundaries
- ? Unknown or misunderstood risks
- ? Shifting stories and expectations
- ? Decisions feel sudden or opaque

When the site doesn't explain itself, people guess.



What We Focus on First Reduce Uncertainties & Risks

- 📍 Clarity: What's open, restricted, or undecided
- 🗺️ Plain-language maps
- 👤 Predictable process
- 🛡️ Honest messaging



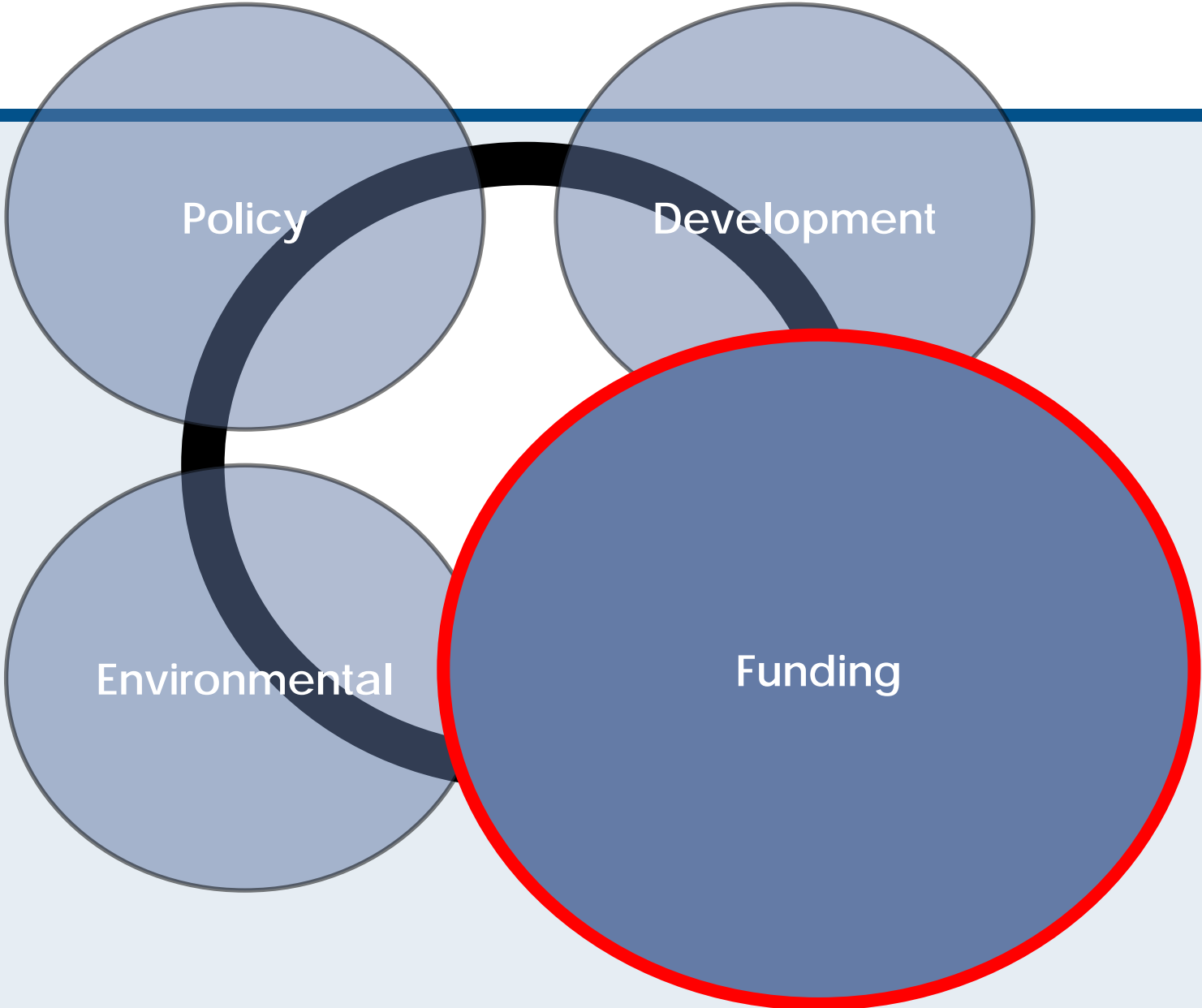
Feasible & Trustworthy Site

- ✓ Clear access and limits
- ✓ Known risks explained plainly
- ✓ Consistent messaging over time
- ✓ No false promises

People like certainty — they need consistency.

Clarity eliminates guessing. Trustworthy eliminates fear.

IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP



POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES APPLICABLE TO VISION A

Funding

Infrastructure** for Light Industrial/ Green Industrial Port

4 Grants
\$20,000,000+ available in Funding

- Greater Minnesota Business Development Public Infrastructure (BDPI)
- Public Works Program
- Redevelopment Grant Program
- Transportation Economic Development Infrastructure

** Infrastructure: Roads, Sewer, Water, Storm

Roads

5 Grants
\$30,000,000+ available in Funding

- Rural Surface Transportation Grant
- Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD)
- Local Road Improvement Program
- Rural and Tribal Assistance Pilot Program
- Transportation Economic Development Program



Port

1 Grant
Upto 80% of eligible costs

- Port Infrastructure Development Grants

Housing

3 Grants
\$1,000,000+ available in Funding

- Housing Grant Program
- Workforce Housing Development Program (WHDP)
- Multifamily Consolidated Request for Proposals (RFP)

Environmental

3 Grants
\$5,000,000+ available in Funding

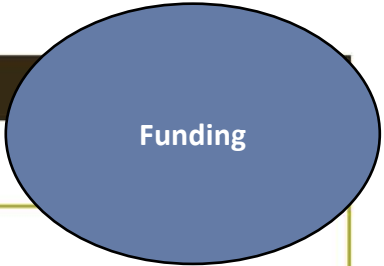
- Brownfield Investigation
- Brownfields Assessment Grant Program
- Contamination Cleanup & Investigation Grant

Marina

2 Grants
\$300,000+ available in Funding

- Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) Program
- Public Water Access Sites - Partnership Funding

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES APPLICABLE TO VISION B



Infrastructure** for Resort, Park, et al

1 Grant
\$10,000,000+ available in Funding

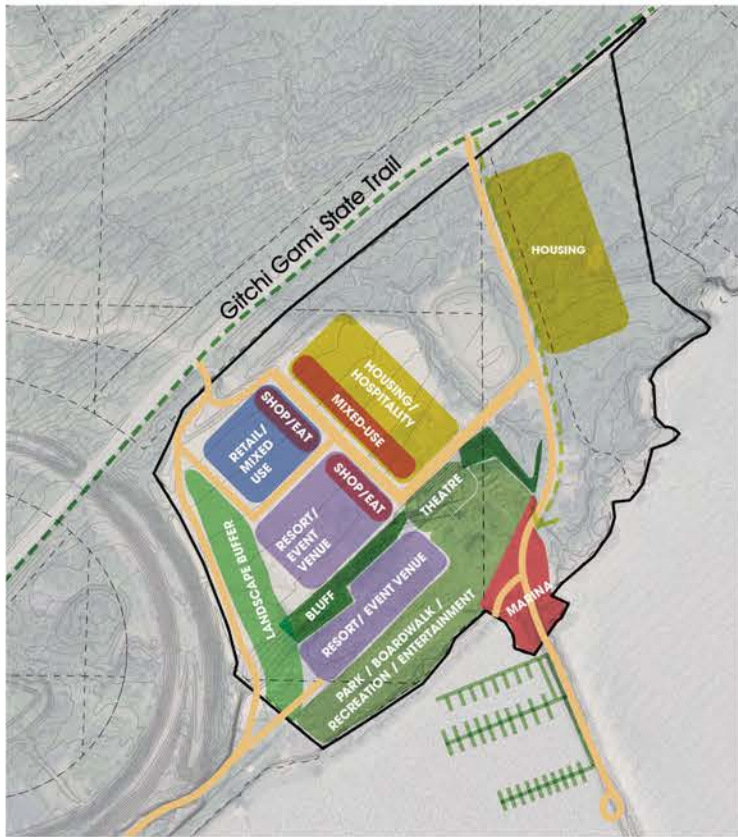
- Public Works Program

** Infrastructure: Roads, Sewer, Water, Storm - only if US EDA considers tourism as economic development for this region.

Roads

5 Grants
\$30,000,000+ available in Funding

- Rural Surface Transportation Grant
- Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD)
- Local Road Improvement Program
- Rural and Tribal Assistance Pilot Program
- Transportation Economic Development Program



Park and Recreation

2 Grants
\$350,000 available in Funding

- Outdoor Recreation Grant
- Parks & Trails Legacy Grant Program

Housing

3 Grants
\$1,000,000+ available in Funding

- Housing Grant Program
- Workforce Housing Development Program (WHDP)
- Multifamily Consolidated Request for Proposals (RFP)

Environmental

3 Grants
\$5,000,000 available in Funding

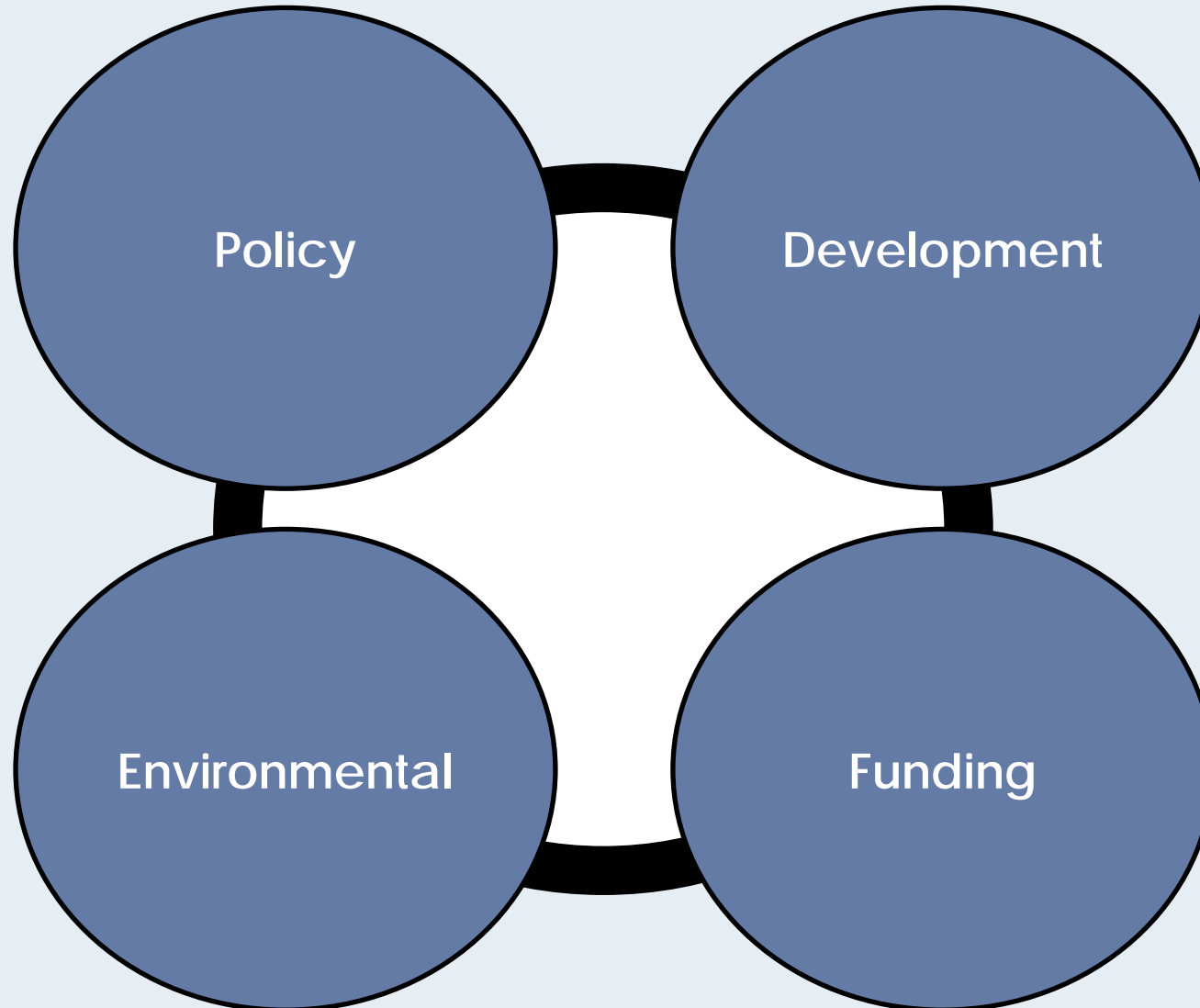
- Brownfield Investigation
- Brownfields Assessment Grant Program
- Contamination Cleanup & Investigation Grant

Marina

3 Grants
\$300,000+ available in Funding

- Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) Program
- Public Water Access Sites - Partnership Funding

Key Takeaways



IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP

Key Takeaways

Rich history with importance to celebrate

Former Energy Community, strong grant eligibility

Lack of public site control is a constraint. Start with what you have and try to create phases of public development and lake access where possible.

Harbor infrastructure is an asset, but investment and public access are essential; DNR has small public access at small boat harbor

Environmental cleanup continues and may have constraints and/or controls needed to manage residual contamination

Limited utilities and remote location shape what's possible; opportunities for pilot projects.

Policy clarity needed on community and decisionmaker desires for site reuse. What will be allowed and what is the process if "Company X" wants to build.

Although numerous funding programs exist at the federal, state, and regional levels, they are highly competitive and closely tied to the site's end uses.

Ignoring the constraints could lead to a stalled or failed project. Development is slow but will gain momentum.

Respecting the constraints make progress achievable when work is done collaboratively with champions of clear and common goals.



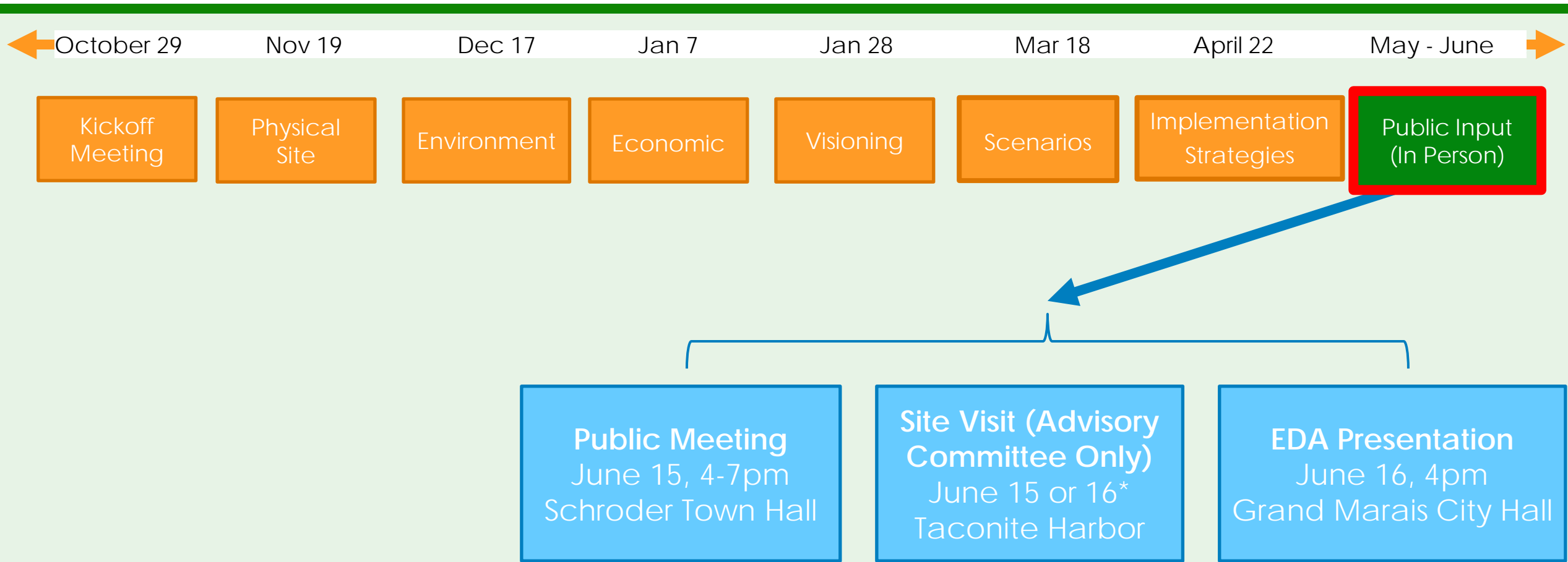
Taconite Harbor 1969 - Basgen Photography

Next Steps

A scenic view of a rocky coastline. In the foreground, large, grey, angular rocks are scattered across the bottom. The middle ground shows a calm body of water with a long, narrow breakwater made of similar rocks extending from the left towards the center. A small green buoy is visible on the breakwater. To the right, a forested hillside rises from the water's edge. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds, and the overall lighting is diffused, suggesting an overcast day.

NEXT STEPS

Comments/Questions?



*To be confirmed