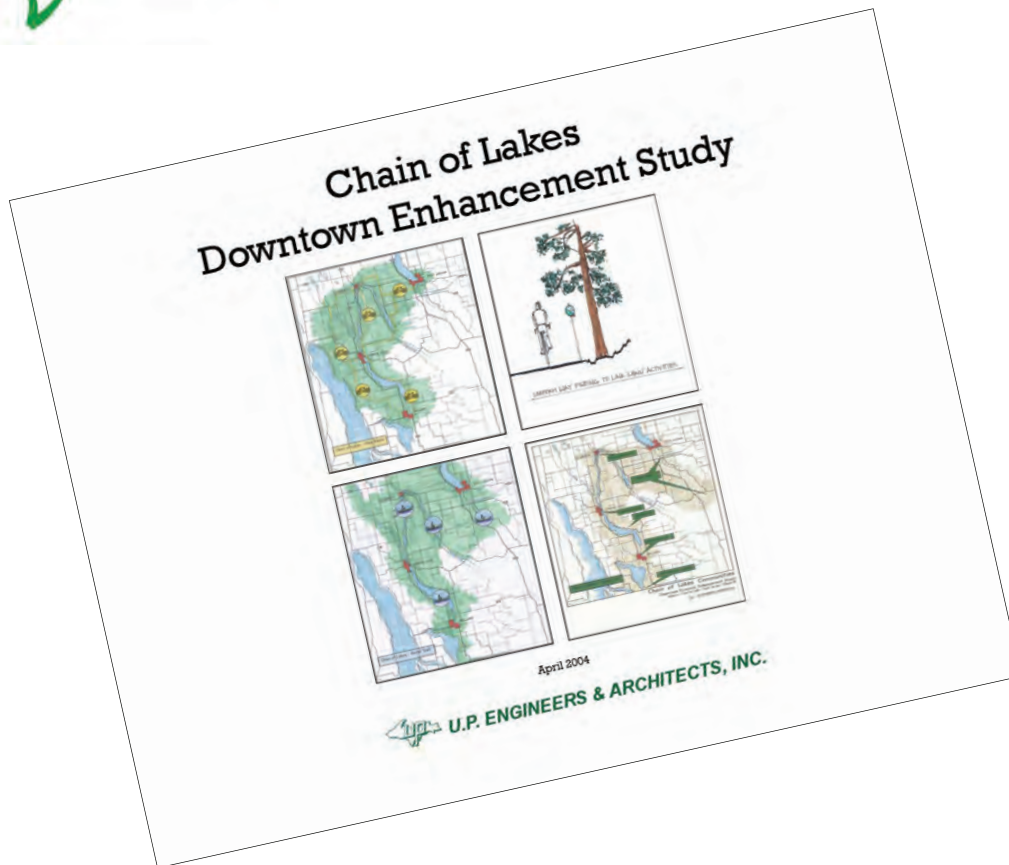




DOWNTOWN STUDY

Chain of Lakes Region, Northern Lower Michigan

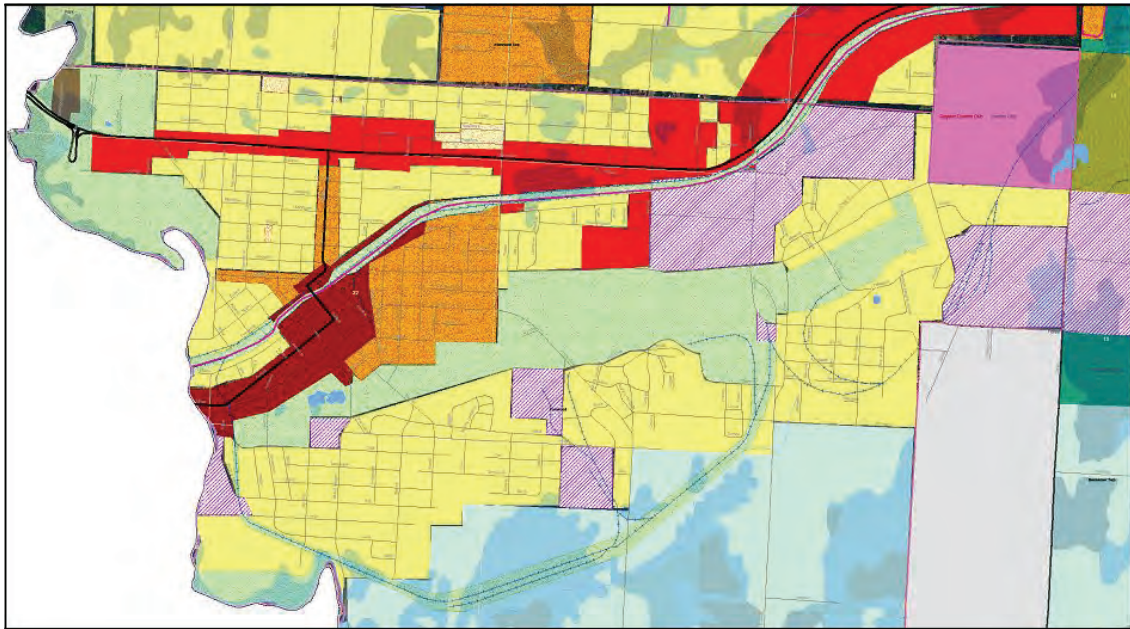


PROJECT: Downtown Enhancement Study

REFERENCE: Sheri Rhoads, Northern Lakes Economic Alliance, 231-582-6482

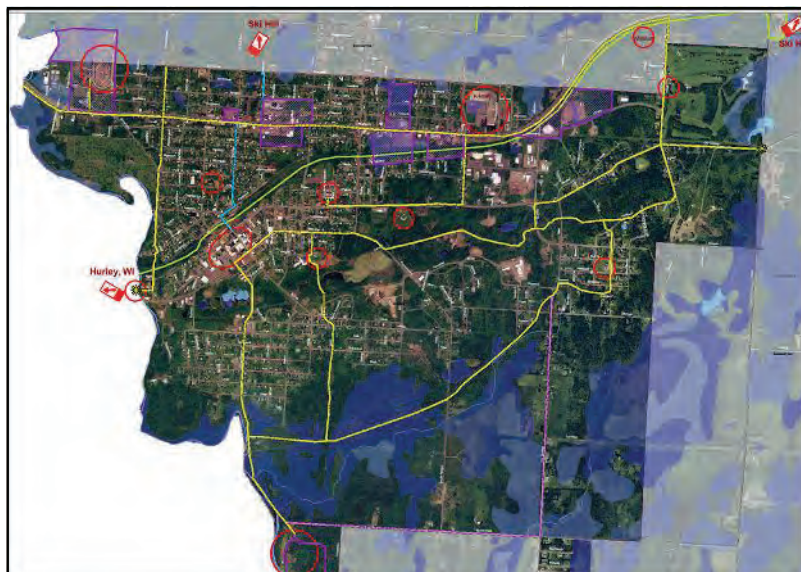
The communities of Bellaire, Central Lake, Ellsworth and East Jordan formed a partnership in 2003 to develop strategies to improve downtown retail and overall economic development opportunities. The Northern Lakes Economic Alliance, a multi-county economic development organization, assisted the group with a successful application to the Michigan Economic Development Corporation for a Michigan Community Development Block Grant for financial assistance for the planning project. The project was intended to develop economic enhancement strategies for each community as well as generate ideas for regional cooperation that will strengthen the area's overall economy. The plan was organized with a regional overview and a specific planning report for each community. It included recommendations, by community, as well as for collaborative efforts. The study included the following planning activities:

- Analysis of demographics, socio-economic characteristics, and retail market data.
- Identification and analysis of downtown issues and opportunities.
- Community participation in the planning process.
- An analysis of downtown and economic development potentials in each community.
- Development of strategies of cooperation among the four communities.
- An action plan for implementation.



ABOVE : CURRENT LAND USE MAP, IRONWOOD.

BELOW: PROPOSED TRAILS IN IRONWOOD



UPEA worked with the Gogebic County Economic Development Commission to create a Comprehensive Plan that would address common issues and opportunities in the County. The EDC wanted to explore opportunities for collaboration, and UPEA designed a planning process that would encourage and facilitate a habit of cooperation. A County-wide workshop was held to gain broad-based input and to encourage visioning toward a shared future. Then area planning commissions and municipal staff were invited to a joint workshop where issues were addressed in break-out sessions, culminating in group presentations which helped municipalities envision common ground.

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Public positive about county's assets

By SARA HILL

Public officials and residents alike are positive about the county's assets, including its scenic views, historic buildings, and natural resources. The county's assets are a source of pride and a key factor in its economic development strategy.

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