State of the Community 2024



AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Distinguished Budget Presentation Award

This award is the highest form of recognition in governmental budgeting.

Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting

This is the 33rd consecutive year the City has received this award.



The City of Crystal Lake has a rich history, rewarding quality of life and tremendous community spirit. Crystal Lake is a major economic engine in Northeastern Illinois.

Growing Economic Environment
The City of Crystal Lake enjoys a resilient economy. Crystal Lake continues to be a strong magnet for national and regional retailers. According to the Illinois Department of Revenue last year, retail sales grew to over $1.4 billion and Crystal Lake remained in the Top 20 for Chicagoland Metropolitan Area Retail Sales.

According to the *Melanithy & Associates 2023 Retail Sales Report*, Crystal Lake was:

- ***#1 in McHenry County for Auto Sales with over $284 million in sales.***
- ***#1 in McHenry County for Drinking & Eating Establishments with over $147 million in sales.***

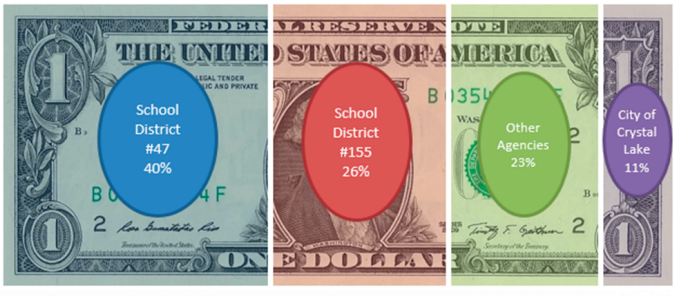
In addition to having the highest sales in McHenry County, Crystal Lake was also:

- ***11th in the Chicagoland Area for Home Improvement Sales, with over $115 million in sales.***
- ***13th in the Chicagoland Area for General Merchandise Sales, with over $162 million in sales.***
- ***According to Naturally McHenry County, last year Crystal Lake had 448,480 visitors that traveled 50 miles or more to visit Crystal Lake.***

Great Service at a Low Price
With strong financial stewardship and long-term planning, the City has a healthy fund balance while delivering high quality services to the community. The largest single source of City revenue is sales tax, which reflects current economic trends and the attraction of new retail and restaurants. The City has experienced a four percent increase in sales tax receipts over last year.

The Crystal Lake City Council recently approved the 2023 Property Tax Levy. The approved 2023 tax levy will supplement funding for the Fire Rescue Department and required pension obligations, as well as funding for school crossing guards. The property tax also includes the Crystal Lake Library's property tax levy. The City has been fortunate to add significant new property construction to the tax rolls, reducing the overall impact to property owners throughout the community.

When comparing surrounding communities that provide like services, Crystal Lake's portion of a property owner's tax bill is among the lowest. Since 1997, the City has not levied a property tax for the General Fund. As a result, only approximately 11% of the property tax bill is attributable to municipal services provided by the City of Crystal Lake (2022 Levy).



Good Things are Happening in Crystal Lake

Value for the Community

HIGHLIGHTS

Low Crime Rate
According to the Illinois State Police using Crime Reporting statistics, Crystal Lake has experienced an estimated 49.74% decrease in reported major index crime offenses from 2008 to 2023.

Enhanced ISO Rating
ISO is the leading supplier of data and analytics for the property/casualty insurance industry.

Fire Suppression
ISO ratings are based on the Public Protection Classification (PPC) survey that conducts an analysis of the structural fire suppression delivery system provided by the City.

The City's current ISO Rating is 2 out of 10, with the lower rating being better.

The City's Class 2 rating placed the City within the top 5% of fire suppression services in the United States.

Building Code Effectiveness
The City received a 4 out of 10 ISO rating for commercial and residential properties, above the average rating of 6 for Illinois communities.

In 2023, the City's residents and businesses benefited from the services listed below provided by the City of Crystal Lake:

Community Development
- Construction permit inspections completed:**13,706**

Public Works and Engineering
- Resurfaced approximately **9.7 lane miles** of roadway and crack-sealed an additional **26.5 miles** of roadway.
- Replaced **4,053 feet** of curb, **3,316 feet** of sidewalk and eliminated **1,137** sidewalk tripping hazards.
- Supplied **1.35 billion gallons** of fresh water.
- Treated **1.40 billion gallons** of wastewater.
- Plowed **326 lane miles** of roadway during each snow event.
- Cleaned **24.3 miles** of sanitary sewer line, lined an additional **2.4 miles** and acoustically tested **58.7 miles** of sewer line.
- Planted **180** parkway trees and trimmed **2,981** parkway trees.

Police
- Responded to **26,590** calls.

Fire Rescue
- Responded to **7,576** calls.
- Served **4,952** patients.
- Performed **414** plan reviews.
- Performed **839** life safety and re-inspections.
- Public Education Events (total attendees): **15,808**

Three Oaks Recreation Area
- **77,450** vehicles entered the park in 2023.
- **75,963** guests visited the Swim Beach in 2023.
- **6,471** watercraft rentals in 2023.







Good Things are Happening in Crystal Lake

Intergovernmental Cooperation

Intergovernmental cooperation takes many forms, including mutual aid agreements for police and fire services, intergovernmental service contracting, joint purchasing agreements, coordinated growth management planning, and regional provision of emergency services. One of the advantages of these types of arrangements is that they provide economies of scale and allow entities to do more with less.

The City has been a leader for years in intergovernmental cooperation. Some examples include:

Southeast Emergency Communications (SEECOM)
The City was a founding member of SEECOM, a regional public safety dispatch center.

Liability and Workers' Compensation Insurance Pool
The City is a participant in the Intergovernmental Risk Management Agency (IRMA), which allows municipal entities to band together for the purposes of reducing liability insurance costs.

Contracted Fire Rescue Services
Through a fee agreement, the City provides fire rescue services to the Village of Lakewood and the Crystal Lake Rural Fire Protection District.

Health Insurance Pool
The City is a participant in the Intergovernmental Personnel Benefit Cooperative (IPBC) which allows municipal groups to band together for the purposes of reducing health insurance costs.

McHenry County Municipal Partnering Initiative (MPI)
The City is a member of the McHenry County MPI which is a purchasing collaboration of local governments in McHenry County. This is an initiative to reduce program costs through basic principles: bulk purchasing, the sharing of best practices, and the sharing of workloads. Any community could choose to opt out of a proposed project, maintaining the ability for communities to choose to do things their way while simultaneously allowing interested parties to cooperate and save on costs.

Joint Purchasing Agreements
The City Council adopted a Procurement Ordinance which allows the City to take advantage of cooperative purchasing opportunities by becoming a member of various cooperative purchasing programs in addition to the State of Illinois Joint Purchase Program and the Suburban Purchasing Cooperative.

IRMA

SEECOM

IPBC Intergovernmental Personnel Benefit Cooperative

Three Oaks Recreation Area

In 2023, Three Oaks Recreation Area continued to be a desirable recreational amenity. This is reflected in the continued high customer satisfaction ratings. The 2023 season saw an increase in beach attendees and pavilion rentals for the third consecutive year. The park is highly regarded by those who visit as a regional and national attraction.

Guest Satisfaction Remains a Priority

- Per customer survey information, guests continued to be very satisfied with customer service provided by staff at the beach and marina. Ninety-nine percent of surveyed guests are either likely or very likely to return to the park.
- The number of repeat guests continues to remain high. Guests who visited the swim beach at least once a month increased in 2023. Thirty-eight percent of guests surveyed rented a watercraft at least once per month.

Attendance

- 75,963 guests visited the Swim Beach in 2023.
- Over 70,000 vehicles entered the park in 2023.
- Over 65 percent of park guests are from areas outside of Crystal Lake.

Park Vendors

- The Quarry Cable Park, Board House, and Cottage on the Beach continued successful operations at the park in 2023.

Media Attention

- Three Oaks Recreation Area ranked No. 1 on Trip Advisor's Top 20 Things to do in Crystal Lake.

Revenues and Expenses

- Part-time staff expenses, which accounted for 46% of all park expenses, were completely paid for by park use revenues.









City Investment in Business Community

Clearly CRYSTAL LAKE

HIGHLIGHTS

Investment in Business

- $592,129 in City facade grants to businesses from 2010 to present
- $4,630,792 in City sales tax sharing agreements from 2010 to the present
- $4,600,000 in City Hotel/Motel Tax Funding awarded to community organizations from 2002 to present

2023 Business Development

- 1,100,122 SF of commercial occupancies
- 666 new jobs created
- 41 new small businesses (< 20 employees)

Crystal Lake is a well-established community with an abundance of opportunities for new development as well as redevelopment. The city is home to approximately 4,000 businesses, providing a workforce of over 27,000 employees.



When it comes to business, Crystal Lake is the perfect blend of growth and excellent quality of life, making our community a hot spot for development in Chicagoland. Crystal Lake has seen major success with local small businesses, maintaining a 99% business occupancy rate in the downtown, and continued attraction and growth of key national retailers along the Northwest Highway commercial corridor. In the past year, Crystal Lake welcomed national brands to the market including Guzman Y Gomez, Wingstop, Crumbl Cookie, Banfield, Hallmark, and Boot Barn. Other local brands to join the Crystal Lake market this year include Rookies Sports All-American Pub & Grill, Pots and Pies, Rosie's Gluten Free Sweets, Off the Vine and Crystal Lake Junction.

Housing is booming with a new array of modern living options. More than 1,000 new housing units will be added to the Crystal Lake community in the next few years.

Fun Facts

- Crystal Lake is one of the nine best Illinois small towns to visit for a weekend getaway by *World Atlas*.
- *REJournals* named Crystal Lake Among the Most Affordable Suburbs.
- WGN Radio featured Crystal Lake in the "Your Hometown" Segment.
- *Chicago Parent* named Crystal Lake a "Top Town" in 2023.







Good Things are Happening in Crystal Lake

New & Expanded Businesses

Mercyhealth - 875 S. Route 31
The 152,000 square-foot hospital and medical facility employs over 150 new people and provides 13 hospital beds in addition to three floors of medical offices and physical therapy services. The facility provides private inpatient rooms, intensive care suites, surgery suites, an oncology/infusion center, as well as, diagnostic services, including laboratory, radiology, and sleep studies along with now offering 24/7 emergency care in Crystal Lake.

With the addition of the brand new Mercyhealth hospital in Crystal Lake, the healthcare community has never been stronger. Crystal Lake is becoming the destination for health care services from hospitals, to urgent care and medical offices, with all major brands now represented in the market including Advocate Heath Care and Northwestern Medicine facilities.

Clayens - 815 Tek Drive
Recently took over the former Springboard facility and specializes in the transformation of high-performance polymers and composites. The Crystal Lake facility has 204 employees, 88 machines and 18 lines making specialized plastic injection molding products for the medical field.

Guzman Y Gomez - 5459 Northwest Highway
A fast casual restaurant from Sydney, Australia, who has put their fresh spin on a taqueria. Opening their third US location here in Crystal Lake, it is known for their nachos, burritos, burrito bowls, salads, tacos, fries and quesadillas.

Wingstop - 5005 Northwest Highway, Unit 102
An American carry-out and delivery chicken wing chain with an aviation-theme. Offers a wide range of chicken wings sauced or tossed in special seasonings.

Crumbl Cookies - 5500 Northwest Highway, Unit C
Known for its variety and size of unique and tasty cookies. Each week's menu changes so dramatically that a visit to the store is a surprise-and-delight moment.

Banfield - 6340 Northwest Highway
Veterinarian office and pet hospital dedicated to your pet's wellness. Offering a wide range of pet care services including general surgery, dental care and x-ray services.

Rookies All American Pub & Grill - 72 N. Williams Street
A family friendly sports bar and grill known for their burgers and drinks opened its sixth location in Downtown Crystal Lake.

Hallmark - 6124 Northwest Highway
Offers a wide variety of home décor, unique gifts and something for every special occasion. Featuring cards for all occasions and their famous Keepsake ornaments.

New/Expanded & Future Businesses

Off the Vine - 129 N. Main Street
Owners of Vine and Plate bring the newest retail store in downtown Crystal Lake. Off the Vine offers a variety of wines, spirits, beer and merchandise. Perfect for treating yourself or finding a gift.

Boot Barn - 4423 Route 14
Opened its second Illinois store location in the Twin Ponds Shopping Center. Boot Barn offers the latest styles in cowboy boots, hats and clothing including brands like Carhartt, UGG and Free People, specialized in a wide variety of boots including work boots, dress boots and casual boots. Boot Barn has grown from a single store, opening in 1978, to over 220 stores in more than 30 states.

Crystal Lake Junction - 88 Railroad Street, Unit B
Adding new variety to the Crystal Lake restaurant scene, Crystal Lake Junction serves breakfast, lunch and dinner. In the morning, they offer breakfast sandwiches, pastries, espresso drinks and coffee and then for the lunch and dinner crowd, Mediterranean inspirations, burgers, protein bowls, and grilled cheeses alongside alcohol-free mocktails and picture worthy milkshakes!

Future Businesses

Krystyna's Deli/KD Market
A Polish grocery store that has been serving the Chicago area since 1998. Located at 29 Crystal Lake Plaza, KD Market will open next summer and be the grocer's largest store at approximately 41,000 square feet. The grocer's newest location will continue its traditional offerings but is also looking to expand its product selection to include a more diverse range of international foods and in-store dining.

Starbucks
Developers are building a new building that will house a 2,500 square-foot Starbucks and a 4,500 square-foot dental office at the southeast corner of Randall Road and Meredith Drive next to the CVS near Crystal Lake South High School.

La Rosita - 230 Virginia Street, Unit 100
La Rosita, a family-owned chain of local markets and taquerias, recently expanded and is locating in the Country Corners Shopping Center. The new 40,000 square-foot grocery store will feature traditional offerings and an expanded selection of grab-and-go pre-made meals.

Sierra Trading Post - 5786 Northwest Highway
Sierra Trading is a bargain retailer like TJ Maxx but for outside gear and sporting clothes, offering a wide variety of known quality brands at discount prices.

Future/Planned Developments - Housing



Woodlore Estates

New home construction continues at the Woodlore Estates Subdivision. Over 463 permits of the 492 homes have been issued and residents have moved in. Once completed, the subdivision will consist of 68 townhome units, 105 senior single-family homes, and 319 single-family homes. The senior single-family homes are ranch-style homes available to residents 55 years of age and older.



Enclave - 95 Crystal Lake Avenue

Brings a mix of amenity-rich rental townhomes and apartments to downtown. The 99-unit community is located downtown on a key corner close to shops and the Metra train station, and is connected to the McHenry County Conservation District Prairie Trail system.



Redwood

Redwood Crystal Lake is a 304-unit ranch-style townhome community located near Mercyhealth Hospital and Walmart on Central Park Drive. The community will feature high-end finishes and is open to all age groups with a key feature of being ADA compliant throughout the development.



Woodlore Townes

An extension of Woodlore Estates, Woodlore Townes adds 47 townhomes to the community along Carpathian Drive. These for-sale townhomes feature all of the perks of Woodlore Estates with high-end finishes and access to amenities.

Clover Communities

Located at the southeast corner of Terra Cotta Road and Route 176, Clover will construct 121 age-restricted independent living apartment units. This development will provide Crystal Lake residents an opportunity to age-in-place.



Water's Edge

Water's Edge, Crystal Lake's newest and largest redevelopment project, is currently underway. This mixed-use development will offer 240 garden apartments and 20 luxury townhomes alongside amenities like a pool, sand volleyball, basketball, pickleball and a clubhouse. The new development is being led by Heartland Real Estate Partners and will bridge the natural beauty of Three Oaks Recreation Area with the vibrancy of the Northwest Highway key commercial corridor.

Featured Capital Improvement Projects



Congress Parkway Roundabouts

- Constructed full roundabout at Exchange Drive and a Mini-Roundabout at Federal Drive
- Reduce crashes and vehicle speeds at intersections
- Landscaped center island at Exchange Drive
- Developer and Metra funding participation



Dole Avenue Reconstruction

- $6.7 million dollar project to reconstruct 75-year-old roadway base
- New, larger water main to improve water flow
- Wider sidewalks, construct bike lanes at US 14 intersection
- Fall 2024 completion



Three Oaks Road/Sands Road/Lutter Drive Intersection Project

- Anticipated spring 2024 construction
- Additional turn lanes and installation of traffic signals
- Multi-use path along south side of Three Oaks Road
- $1.5 million in federal funding and developer contributions



Re-Establishment of Crystal Creek

- Removal of the storm sewer pipe installed in the 1950s. This portion of the creek will be re-established.
- Project will reduce flooding and improve water quality.
- Construction anticipated to start in summer 2024 and be complete in summer 2025.

Annual Roadway Resurfacing Program

- The City is dedicated to maintaining its roadway network.
- In 2023, approximately 9.7 lane miles of roadway were resurfaced and an additional 26.5 miles of roadway were crack-sealed.
- Almost $1.5 million was spent on the program in 2023.

City Officials

MAYOR

Haig Haleblian

COUNCILMEMBERS

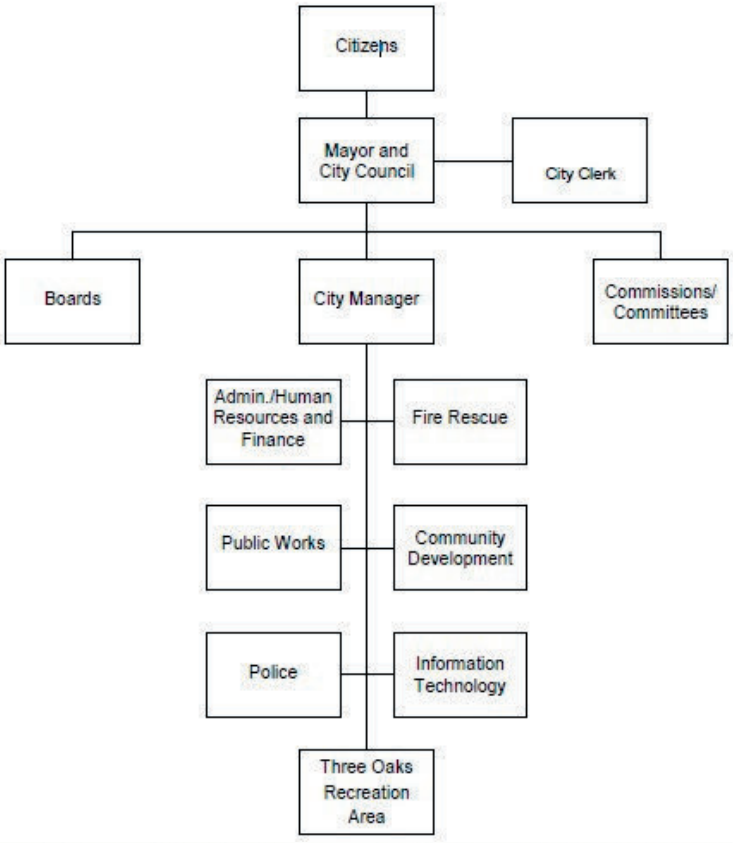
Ellen Brady
Denise Smith
Brett Hopkins
Cameron Hubbard
Mandy Montford
Ian Philpot

CITY CLERK

Nick Kachiroubas

ADMINISTRATION

Eric T. Helm	City Manager
Nick Hammonds	Assistant City Manager
Jodie Hartman	Finance Director
Kathryn Cowlin	Director of Community Development
Julie Meyer	Director of Human Resources
Michael Magnuson	Director of Public Works and Engineering
James Black	Chief of Police
Craig Snyder	Chief of Fire Rescue
Steve Weishaar	Director of Information Technology



Outreach

The City of Crystal Lake is committed to delivering information to the public that is clear and timely and promotes two-way communication between City officials and the Crystal Lake community.

The City publishes a monthly newsletter to provide residents with information about municipal programs, services, community events and actions of the City Council. In a continuing effort to keep residents informed about City news and events, residents can register to receive timely news about municipal services, City Council meetings, agendas, news releases, and more via e-mail.

Comcast and AT&T U-Verse provide the City with a 24-hour community access channel. Comcast and AT&T subscribers can tune in to view information about community news and events.

The City's website at www.crystallake.org offers several interactive tools designed to help foster better communication and efficiency, including E-News, online bill pay and licensing, online permit and development applications through ezApp, the City's Transparency Portal, and the Form Center for requests or concerns.

Public documents are uploaded to the City's website to help provide greater access to information for residents, businesses and visitors. The City has a "Transparency Portal" page, a one-stop location that directs residents to details about City spending and operations, including current and past year budgets and audits, salary information for all City employees, and City Council and Committee Meeting agendas and minutes.

Social Media

Electronic Bidding

The City utilizes "QuestCDN", an electronic bidding notification and procurement system. QuestCDN enables suppliers and vendors to identify, respond to, and potentially win bid opportunities with the City of Crystal Lake.

The City issues competitive solicitations for goods and services using the QuestCDN Electronic Bidding System. Vendors are able to view, and when applicable, submit bids and proposal requirements electronically using the system. There is no charge to vendors to use the QuestCDN Electronic Bidding System, however vendors need to register. Vendors can also register through the City of Crystal Lake's website.

Interactive Maps

In response to the surging demand for online access to a wealth of public information, the City has taken great strides in providing this information in easy to access maps via the City's online ESRI map. For residents seeking information about a particular property, the online map is an easy way to view an array of information on a specific property or the City overall. Online maps can be found on the City's website at https://bit.ly/48q4uqM.