

City of Menahga
Planning Commission Meeting
November 15, 2018, 5 pm

Menahga City Council Chambers
115 2nd Street NE, Menahga

www.cityofmenahga.com





Planning Commission Liz Olson
Planning Commission Member Larry Karjala
Planning Commission Member Sam Kicker
Planning Commission Member Larry Murphy
Planning Commission Member Tim Ellingson, Council Representative

City of Menahga
Planning Commission Meeting
5 pm Thursday, November 15, 2018

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Agenda

- A. Call to Order**
- B. Roll Call**
- C. Pledge of Allegiance**
- D. Approval of Minutes**
- E. Comprehensive Plan Update**
- F. Adjournment**

Comments from visitors must be informational in nature and not exceed five (5) minutes per issue. The City Council cannot engage in a discussion or debate in those five minutes but will take the information and find answers if that is appropriate. As part of the City Council protocol, it is unacceptable for any speaker to slander or engage in character assassination at a public council meeting.

**City of Menahga
Planning Commission Minutes
Thursday, September 6, 2018**

A. Call to Order

The Menahga Planning Commission held a meeting on Thursday, September 6, 2018. Planning Commission Chair Olson called the meeting to order at 5 pm.

B. Roll Call

Comprising a quorum of the council, the following members were present:

Liz Olson	Larry Karjala
Larry Murphy	Sam Kicker

C. Pledge of Allegiance

D. Public Hearing

Commission Chair Olson opened the public hearing. Adam Ripple with American Towers Corporation objected to the approval of the conditional use permit submitted by Uniti Towers. He stated that there are two towers in close proximity to the proposed site, and that the city ordinances state that a permitted use be necessary to public welfare. He also stated the city ordinances don't address colocation, ability of existing infrastructure to accommodate additional equipment, as well as other items specific to cell tower use and that Uniti Towers is taking advantage of gaps in the ordinances.

Scott Buell from Uniti Towers stated that there is nothing in the Agricultural Residential zoning ordinance that disallows the conditional use. He also stated that other more robust city ordinances say that clustering of towers is recommended because of the convenience of having towers located where there are existing towers.

Member Karjala had questions regarding the height of the antennas, whether the new equipment on the tower would interfere with the other tower's equipment. Mr. Buell stated the antennas are 6' tall and that they generally don't have issues with interference because specific frequencies are used. Member Kicker asked whether AT & T currently has equipment on the AMT's tower and was told that they do. The Commission discussed other issues that city attorney Jeff Pederson brought to their attention. One issue was whether this is a subdivision. Mr. Buell said most cities he has worked with do not require a parcel to be subdivided. The issue of whether the use is public or private was addressed by Mr. Buell in that it is a commercial use with a touch of public. It is a business decision to choose a new tower partner. Chair Olson asked whether the commission wants to continue to allow towers in the city limits and member Murphy said the city allows more than one grocery store in town and that it is competition. There was additional discussion about approving the permit with the condition that a cell tower be allowed to lease the property without being required to be subdivided and that the permit be allowed specifically

because there are already two towers existing in the particular area of the A-R district the permit is being requested.

Main Motion: Approving Resolution 2018-001 Recommending the Menahga City Council Approve a Conditional Use Permit to Uniti Towers on a Property (1043 Aspen Ave. S.) Located in the Agricultural District.

Moved by:	Murphy
Seconded by:	Kicker
Action:	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
In favor:	Karjala, Kicker, Murphy, Olson
Opposed:	None

E. Meeting Adjourned

Main Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 5:52 pm

Moved by:	Karjala
Seconded by:	Kicker
Action:	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
In favor:	Karjala, Kicker, Murphy, Ellingson, Olson
Opposed:	None

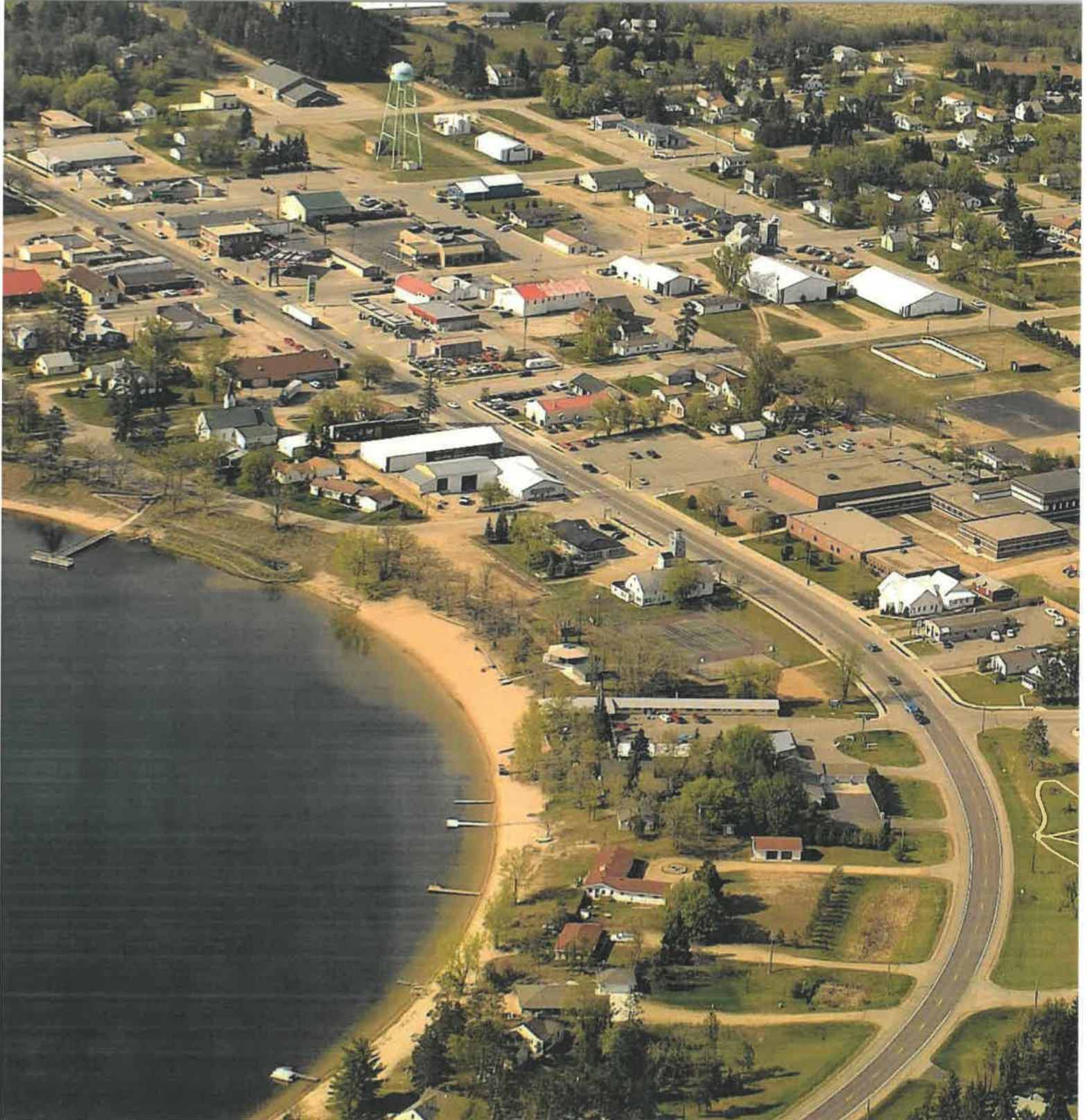
Gina Ellingson, Administrator

Liz Olson, Chair



City of Menahga Comprehensive Plan

Municipal planning, by providing public guides to future municipal action, enables other public and private agencies to plan their activities in harmony with the municipalities plans – MN 462.351



Acknowledgements

2012

City Administrator

Walter Salo

Mayor

Patrick Foss

Council Members

Roger Henstorf

Kim Rasmussen

Tracy Tomperi

Alden Yliniemi

Planning Commission Members

Jerry Wisuri

Roger Henstorf

Thomas MacPherson

Elizabeth Olson

Jordan Torma

Planning Consultants

Jacke Huesbsch, Planner

Tad Erickson, Planner

2018 Update

City Administrator

Gina Ellingson

Mayor

Joan Liimatta

Council Members

Tim Ellingson

Larry Karjala

Robyn Keranen

Art Huebner

Planning Commission Members

Elizabeth Olson

Tim Ellingson

Larry Karjala

Sam Kicker

Larry Murphy

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Executive Summary

Background

Plan Adopted in 2012

Region Five Development Commission was contacted by the City of Menahga in the spring, 2011, regarding assisting to assist the City in updating their comprehensive plan. The Plan was last updated in 1978. A comprehensive plan ad-hoc task force was organized by the City, composed of members representing diverse backgrounds, to advise Region Five planners in the creation of this planning tool.



After input was garnered at ad-hoc task force meetings, a draft comprehensive plan was developed and approved by the Menahga Planning Commission and ordained by the Menahga City Council.

Plan Updated in 2018

The Menahga Planning Commission began reviewing the Plan in 2017 and finalized their review in 2018. The Commission's recommendations were then sent to the Menahga City Council. The Menahga City Council held a public meeting on XXXXX and adopted the updated Plan on XXXX, XXX, 2018.

Comprehensive Plan

A Comprehensive plan, or Comp Plan for short, is a statement of what the community of Menahga wants to become.

It is a collection of principles based on community-defined vision; and an assembly of concepts which have been established to support the principles and the vision. These principles and concepts are not binding to the City, but reflect the community's vision in its desires for growth, maintaining a small-town atmosphere, and respect for the land and the environment.

The Comprehensive Plan, which demonstrates how the community can move forward, is somewhat broad in scope, recognizing that there are many factors influencing how and why the community will change. Therefore, it deals more with concepts, patterns and visions than specific rules and ordinances.

Previous Plans

This document is a continuation of the ongoing planning process in the City of Menahga. It legally ~~replaces~~ updates the ~~1978~~ 2012 Comprehensive Plan, the latest official Comprehensive Plan for the City. The City has used this planning process as an opportunity to evaluate and reinforce the existing growth and development policies. Also, and to evaluate previous planning efforts in order to update and reinforce past decisions that are still valid. A major premise of this Plan, therefore, is to utilize portions of the previous Comprehensive Plan whenever applicable.

Authority to Plan

Municipal planning is authorized under Minnesota State Statute 462.351 - 462.358 which includes the authority to plan, the definition of planning terms, community-based planning, and organization for planning, as well as the preparation, adoption and amendment of the comprehensive municipal plan and zoning and subdivision authority. The City of Menahga complies with this legislation ~~legislature~~ in its ability, authority and need to plan.

Methodology

This Comprehensive Plan is the product of several entities and systemic, ongoing, forward-looking processes including:

- A citizen Planning Task Force composed of a cross section of the community
- Planning Commission
- City Council
- Menahga's Civic & Commerce Association
- ~~Economic Development Committee~~
- ~~Menahga's Horizon Stewardship Team~~

Demographics and historical data were collected from a variety of sources including:

- City of Menahga
- Wadena County
- State of Minnesota
- US Census
- Prior planning documents
- Existing reports and studies

Purpose

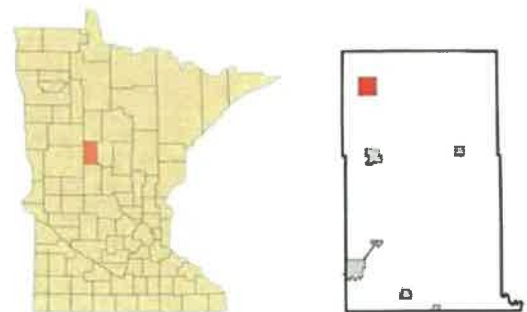
The City of Menahga's Comprehensive Plan is part of a planning tool that can be used to guide the future growth and development of the City. This Plan is based on current, historical and projected demographic data - input garnered from an ad-hoc comprehensive plan task force representational of the community, using governmental planning standards. This Comprehensive Plan will assist the Menahga City Council and Planning Commission in evaluating future land use proposals and assist ~~them~~ in guiding development of the community in a deliberate manner.

Location

Menahga is a City in northwest Wadena County, Minnesota. It is approximately 152 miles from Minneapolis, and is 87 miles from the nearest Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) Fargo/Moorhead.

History

The Menahga area was a part of the Louisiana Purchase, land purchased from Napoleon in 1803.



Historically, this area of Minnesota was used by Native American tribes for hunting grounds.

Little was recorded in the middle 1800's, but a number of changes were taking place in Minnesota. In 1849, Minnesota was organized as a territory and became a state in 1858. The Homestead Act of 1862 brought many people to Minnesota. It promised 160 acres of free land to those who qualified, provided they would live on the land and make improvements on it.

Many of the first settlers in the Menahga area (from 1875-1880) were of 'Yankee' heritage, born and raised in America. They came mostly from Maine, New York, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Virginia, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Canada.

Menahga's early history is linked together with the early history of Paddock, Hubbard, Shell City and Old Wadena. When Paddock had a trading post and sawmill, but no grist mill, the settlers had to haul their grist with ox teams to Hubbard to be ground. This was at least a two-day trip. There was no Menahga village in those days. The settlers cut a new trail northeast of the old government trail from Paddock to Hubbard.



D.E. Jones was responsible for the Menahga town site in January, 1891. In August 1891, when the railroad came through Menahga, many sawmill operators hurried into business to provide lumber for new buildings, etc.

In 1892, Menahga town site was described as Section 21 in Township 138, range 35. At least 200 settlers resided here at that time, most of them having moved to Menahga when the railroad came through.

It is officially recorded that on June 5, 1892, fifty-eight (58) petitioners, residing in Menahga, sent a request to the County Commissioners, in Wadena to appoint a time and a place where the election could be held. Finally, a Certificate of Election was issued on August 6, 1892, stating that the election was held as designated. The certificate was dated and verified before Fritz Boeckers, Notary Public, Wadena County, Minnesota. The State Seal was affixed to this historic document.

Demographics

Table 1 - Historic Population

Jurisdiction	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2012-2016*
Menahga	849	799	835	980	1076	1220	1306	1287
Wadena	3,958	4,381	4,640	4,699	4,131	4,244	4,088	
Wadena Co	12,306	12,199	12,412	14,192	13,154	13,713	13,843	

Source: <http://www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/decennial/>

*Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-year estimates

Table 2 - Percent Change in Population

Jurisdiction	1950-1960	1960-1970	1970-1980	1980-1990	1990-2000	2000-2010	
Menahga	-5.89%	4.51%	17.37%	9.80%	13.38%	7.05%	
Wadena	10.69%	5.91%	1.27%	-12.09%	2.74%	-3.68%	
Wadena Co.	-.869%	1.75%	14.34%	-7.31%	4.25%	.948%	
Minnesota	14.5%	11.5%	7.1%	7.3%	12.44%	7.2%	

Source: <http://www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/decennial/>

*Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-year estimates

Table 3 - Percent of Wadena Co. Population Residing in the Cities of Menahga and Wadena

Jurisdiction	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Menahga	6.9%	6.55%	6.73%	6.91%	8.18%	8.9%	9.43%
Wadena	32.16%	35.91%	37.38%	33.11%	31.40%	30.95%	29.53%

Source: <http://www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/decennial/>

*Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-year estimates

Table 4 - Population Projections

City/Township	2,010	2,015	2,020	2,025	2,030	2,035
Menahga	1,307	1,373	1,437	1,504	1,543	1,573
Wadena	4,238	4,254	4,270	4,289	4,249	4,240
Wadena Co.	14,110	14,470	14,830	15,210	15,300	15,440

Source: Minnesota State Demographic Center <http://www.demography.state.mn.us/projections.html>

*Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-year estimates

Table 5 - Persons by Gender

	2010		*2012-2016	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Menahga	45.9%	54.1%	45.9%	54.1%
Wadena Co.	49.3%	50.7%		
Minnesota	49.6%	50.4%		

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

*Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-year estimates

Table 6 - Number of Persons by Age

Age	2010		*2012-2016		
	All Persons	Total Pct	Age	All Persons	Total Pct
Total Population	1306	100%	Total Population	1287	100%
Under 5 years	115	8.8%	Under 5 years	125	9.7%
5 to 9 years	100	7.7%	5 to 9 years	113	8.8%
10 to 14 years	66	5.1%	10 to 14 years	27	2.1%
15 to 19 years	57	4.4%	15 to 19 years	51	4.0%
20 to 24 years	59	4.5%	20 to 24 years	49	3.8%
25 to 29 years	83	6.4%	25 to 34 years	170	13.2%
30 to 34 years	53	4.1%	35 to 44 years	58	4.5%
35 to 39 years	55	4.2%	45 to 54 years	141	11.0%
40 to 44 years	67	5.1%	55 to 59 years	115	8.9%
45 to 49 years	66	5.1%	60 to 64 years	109	8.5%
50 to 54 years	73	5.6%	65 to 74 years	130	10.1%
55 to 59 years	80	6.1%	75 to 84 years	100	7.8%
60 to 64 years	64	4.9%	85 years and over	99	7.7%
65 to 69 years	77	5.9%			
70 to 74 years	69	5.3%			
75 to 79 years	65	5.0%			
80 to 84 years	69	5.3%			
85 years and over	88	6.7%			

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 7 - Employment and Income

Menahga, MN Income Estimates 2010				
	Households	Families	Married-Couple Families	Single family Households
Total	581	319	254	262
Less than \$10,000	10.8%	6.3%	0.0%	16.4%
\$10,000-\$14,999	12.7%	1.9%	1.2%	26.0%
\$15,000-\$24,999	13.6%	12.2%	11.4%	15.3%
\$25,000-\$34,999	20.5%	13.8%	17.3%	28.6%
\$35,000-\$49,999	15.8%	21.3%	16.9%	9.2%
\$50,000-\$74,999	15.0%	23.5%	26.8%	4.6%
\$75,000-\$99,999	8.8%	16.0%	20.1%	0.0%
\$100,000-\$149,999	2.2%	4.1%	5.1%	0.0%
\$150,000-\$199,999	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
\$200,000 or More	.5%	.9%	1.2%	0.0%
Median Income	\$31,275	\$42,981	\$51,667	\$20,000
Mean Income	\$38,153	\$50,737	-	\$22,808

Source: <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/searchresults.xhtml>

Table 8 - Employment Status for Population 16 Years and Over

Gender by Employment Status for Population 16 Years and Over				
	Total	In Labor Force	Employed	Unemployment Rate
Population 16 +	919	57.3%	55.5%	3.2%
16 to 19 years	49	71.4%	71.4%	0.0%
20 to 24 years	58	75.9%	75.9%	0.0%
25 to 44 years	269	78.8%	76.2%	3.3%
45 to 54 years	150	78.7%	74.0%	5.9%
55 to 64 years	127	62.2%	59.8%	3.8%
65 to 74 years	111	14.4%	14.4%	0.0%
75 +	155	14.8%	14.8%	0.0%

Source: <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/searchresults.xhtml>

Table 9 - Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment	Estimate	Percentage (%)
Population 25 Years and Over	812	100%
Less than 9 th Grade	58	7.1%
9 th to 12 th Grade, no Diploma	48	5.9%
High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency)	301	37.1%
Some College, no Degree	172	21.2%
Associate's Degree	109	13.4%
Bachelor's Degree	76	9.4%
Graduate or Professional Degree	48	5.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 10 - Income Comparison

Median Household Income 2010	
Menahga	\$ 31,275
Wadena City	\$ 28,924
Wadena County	\$ 34,686
Minnesota	\$ 55,459

Source: <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/searchresults.xhtml>

Table 11 - Number of Occupied and Vacant Housing

	Menahga	Wadena	Wadena County
Total	654	2,010	6,899
Occupied	569	1,840	5,705
Vacant	85	170	1,194
Vacant Due to Seasonal / Recreational Use	45	11	743
For Rent	21	70	127

Source: <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/searchresults.xhtml>

Table 12 – MN County 2011 Foreclosure Rank

County	MN Rank
Becker	40
Cass	31
Otter-Tail	21
Todd	37
Wadena	51*

* Tied with Pope County

Source: <http://www.housinglink.org/Research.aspx>

Table 13 – MN County Foreclosure Rates 2010-2011

County	2010 Rate	2011 Rate	Rate Change
Twin Cities Metro	1.72	1.43	-29%
Greater Minnesota	1.11	.91	-2%
Minnesota	1.42	1.18	-24%
Becker	.73	.59	-14%
Cass	1.39	1.08	-31%
Otter-Tail	.65	.60	-5%
Todd	.97	.78	-19%
Wadena	.63	.83	20%

Source: <http://www.housinglink.org/Research.aspx>

Table 14 – MN County Foreclosure Totals 2010-2011

County	2010 Total	2011 Total	2010-2011 Change
Twin Cities Metro	15,779	13,181	-16%
Greater Minnesota	9,894	8117	-18%
Minnesota	25,673	21,298	-17%
Becker	92	75	-18%
Cass	158	123	-22%
Otter-Tail	158	146	-8%
Todd	96	77	-20%
Wadena	34	45	32%

Source: <http://www.housinglink.org/Research.aspx>

Physical Characteristics and Natural Resources

Public Facilities and Services

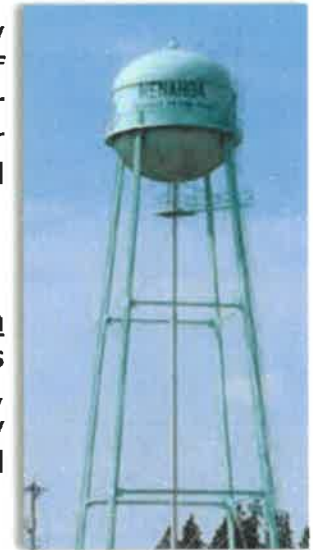
Public facilities ~~need to~~ must be organized and maintained in a way that utilizes funds in the most efficient and beneficial manner for the community of Menahga. Menahga currently offers such public amenities as:

Municipal Administration

As of the date this plan was adopted, the City has twelve full-time employees and fifteen part-time employees. The City has three full-time and ten part-time police officers. Fire services are provided by a twenty-three member volunteer Fire Department and First Response Team.

Municipal Wastewater

Menahga ~~hosts~~ owns and operates the a wastewater treatment facility within the City. The facility currently processes about 100,000 gallons of water per day. The facility has the capacity to process a considerably greater quantity of water (approximately 205,000 gallons). Menahga's waste water treatment facility will likely be able to accommodate future industrial growth. Talk about new plant.....



~~Municipal Wastewater-Sanitary Sewer~~

~~Sanitary sewer Municipal wastewater and water service are the two~~ is a critical factor for a community planning to grow. Menahga currently has adequate services to be able to handle quite a significant capacity. However, extension of this infrastructure would be costly and must be carefully planned. As new areas are developed, services must be extended in a logical and timely manner. Type of treatment, discharge, etc.....

Recreation

The City owns and maintains a public beach on Spirit Lake known for its white sugar-sand. In addition to Spirit Lake, the City also manages numerous parks, ~~in the City~~ most notably the Menahga Memorial Forest Park and Campground, a 40-acre park of majestic pines with campground facilities. Snowmobile and ATV trails provide motorized recreation in the City and beyond. Blueberry Pines Golf Club is located ~~3~~ three miles north along Highway 71 and offers golfing opportunities to the Menahga area.

Cemetery

There are two cemeteries currently within the corporate limits of Menahga. One is owned and operated by the City and the other is owned and operated by the Catholic Church.

Municipal Liquor Store

The City of Menahga owns and operates Northbound Spirits. This municipal liquor store and lounge is located on the corner of Highway 71 and 1st Street NE in the central business district and has both ON and OFF sale liquor. Revenues in excess of expenses

are used to support the City's General Fund. In fiscal year 2018, the liquor store transferred \$62,500 to the General Fund. This transfer reduces the general levy incurred by city property owners.

Greenwood Connections

Greenwood Connections provides assisted living, adult day care, rehabilitation and nursing services. Greenwood Connections is owned and operated by the City of Menahga as a non-profit governmental unit, with 65 Medicare/Medicaid-certified beds and employees 40 full-time and 85 part-time employees. Each year the facility makes a payment in lieu of taxes (PILT) payment to the City. The PILT payment is used to support the City's General Fund. In fiscal year 2018, the facility's PILT payment was \$25,000. This transfer reduces the general levy incurred by city property owners.

Schools

The school system in Menahga is one of utmost importance. The Menahga School District has increased approximately 3912% in the last 150 years from 730 students in 2003 to 815 1,015 for school year ~~2011-2012~~ 2017-2018. The schools ~~not only provides~~ students with the tools they need to obtain an appropriate above-average education. ~~but at the same time,~~ The school is also one of the largest employers in the City. The schools also provides significant recreational opportunities for Menahga, through recreational and extracurricular programs, ballfields, basketball courts, a volleyball courts, and playground equipment. For these reasons, close ties should exist between the schools and the community. There should be a large focus on the schools, their its functions, and the students attending it them.



Library Services

The Kitchigami Regional Library is accessible to Menahga area residents. Library branches in Wadena and Park Rapids provide extensive resources of media, books and other publications. Menahga is also serviced by a book mobile which is operated by the Kitchigami Regional Library.

Facilities and Services

As Menahga grows, facilities will be more heavily used and, as the population ages, there will be additional services required for seniors and the elderly. The services demanded of the City will continue to increase as a result. It should be the goal of the Plan to provide the level of service that residents have become accustomed to, without significant additional cost to the community. This may require restructuring the traditional service delivery methods and forming partnerships to ensure the best service possible.

The following goals will keep these community facilities and services a vital part of the community:

- Continue to locate community facilities within or adjacent to the town center.
- Facilitate joint programming between the School and the City.
- Develop new methods of delivering services, through joint agency programs or public/private partnerships, to lower costs, while enhancing the services being provided.
- Work with surrounding communities to develop service programs as well.
- Provide municipal services to all areas within the corporate limits.
- Make complete use of areas already served by municipal services before extending services.
- Require underground location of new electric, telephone and cable television service ~~to be located underground.~~

In order for the City to be successful at implementing the various projects and improvements discussed in the plan, community participation and involvement is essential. The City will find that, often, it is difficult to get citizens of the community to attend the various meetings and get involved in planning and programming efforts. However, it is imperative that the community be involved. New ways to encourage participation should be explored, keeping in mind all sectors of the population in Menahga, including the young and old. The following are some ways to increase civic involvement:

- Support a civic organizations to lead efforts and develop plans to get people involved.
- Facilitate open and effective communication ~~between~~ among citizens, neighboring communities, and townships.
- Develop an environment which enhances mutually respectful communication.
- Coordinate efforts with other communities and townships.
- Welcome and invite people personally, through newsletter inserts and mass mailings, in addition to printing legal notices.
- Encourage and show support for local elected officials and others in decision-making roles.
- Work, through school and media, to educate the community on current events in the City and how they can contribute.
- Encourage elected officials, school board members, educators, and civic groups to become visible in the community and actively involved in community efforts.

Land Use

The importance of examining land use characteristics is an essential component in a comprehensive plan. Land use characteristics are human contributed features in permanent locations. A review of land use characteristics usually reveals location, development trends and incompatible land uses present in communities. Without land use examinations, land use growth is subject to irrational decision making which allows for disorganized growth and incompatible

uses.

Land use in Menahga has been classified into nine (9) general zoning classifications. Each classification is listed below:

- Single family (R1)
- Medium Density Residential District (R2)
- Mobile Home (MH)
- Neighborhood Business District (C1)
- General Business District (C2)
- Central Business District (CB)
- General Industry District (I)
- Agricultural (AG)
- Shoreline Development (SD)

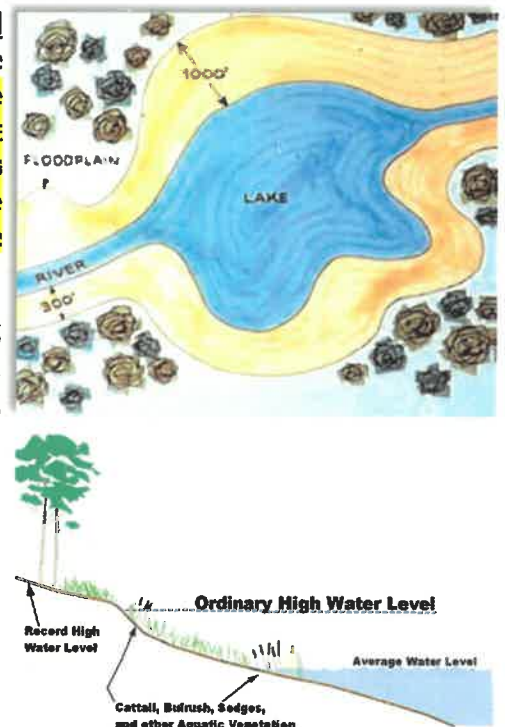


Within each classification, more categories can be defined, but it is important to establish a broad pattern of land use that fits the Menahga community.

The broadest pattern that can be seen in Menahga is the commercial zones which are located along major corridors. This is logical and will prove beneficial to the community. The residential areas surround that central core and the agricultural areas are on the outskirts of the residential areas for the most part.

The Shoreland District area is located around Spirit Lake and Blueberry River. This district creates barriers to development. There are certain regulations which apply to the specific uses of each. ~~Due to the quality of the soil and the elevation of the areas, development is nearly impossible. These areas would likely be best served as wildlife preserves or in coordination with the schools, as nature walks or science/biology study areas. The sensitive features of these areas, in any case, should be protected.~~

The "Shoreland District" label applies to all public waters basins 25 acres or larger, and also includes basins as small as 10 acres within municipalities. It includes all land within 1,000 feet of a lake's ordinary high water level (OHWL). The OHWL also marks the point for determining setback and lot sizes and sets the landward limit where DNR Waters permits may be required. On rivers and streams having a drainage area of 2 square miles or greater, the Shoreland District extends 300 feet from the OHWL, which is usually the top of the stream bank. The Shoreland District can expand beyond 300 feet when it is part of a designated floodplain.



Natural Resources

The City of Menahga surrounds Spirit Lake. The lake's surface area is approximately 113-119 acres and has a maximum depth of 48 feet. Spirit Lake's average water clarity, since 1975, is 2.6 meters. Spirit Lake's Ordinary High Water Level (OHW) is 1,382.9 feet. The highest recorded water level was 1,383.89 feet in 1999, and the lowest was 1,377.82 in 2004. The last recorded reading was 1,377.82 as of November 14, 2011. Table 19 shows the numbers of fish sample in the 2008 survey year.

Table 15: Spirit Lake Fish Samples

Spirit Lake Fish Samples			
Species	Gear Used	Caught	Average Fish Weight
Black Crappie	Trap net	23.11	.34
Bluegill	Trap net	51	.22
Brown Bullhead	Trap net	2.33	1.17
Largemouth Bass	Trap net	.11	.57
Northern Pike	Trap net	.78	1.71
Pumpkinseed	Trap net	11.44	.21
White Sucker	Trap net	.17	5.10
Yellow Bullhead	Trap net	6.44	.65
Yellow Perch	Trap net	.33	.2

Source: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Residential

Consistent with the desires of the community and the prevailing market, single-family residential is the predominant residential land-use type in the plan. As the community grows, both in population and in physical size, the demand for this use may continue and areas outside of the current City limits may need to accommodate the demand.



It is a goal of this Plan to accommodate the housing needs of people of all ages, ethnicities, and income levels, traditional and non-traditional families, and single and elderly residents. Even more than simply meeting their needs, the community should provide quality housing opportunities for all its residents.

~~As a small town, Menahga has the ability should be able~~ to create residential areas that meet the needs of its citizens without compromising the standards of the community. Several strategies must be recognized in order to ensure that new housing areas are not compromised by detrimental adjacent land uses, and that older areas and older buildings can be utilized to serve existing and future residents' needs. ~~Most important, Menahga is an aging community, and has~~ the need for quality affordable housing ~~must be met~~ to serve the needs of this all segments of its Menahga's population. One potential strategy would be to promote the development of senior accessible/one-level patio-type housing within the City.

There is also the notion that Young people looking to buy homes will also be in need of quality affordable housing. One potential strategy

General Goal for residential development should aim to balance the needs of all residents, but particular attention should be given to maintaining a stock of affordable housing in the community. Strategies to consider in achieving goals for residential uses could be:



- Create infill housing in areas where houses have been or will be removed (where it is not feasible to upgrade an existing structure); maintain the character, compatible use, scale and detail of the neighborhood with the new development.
- Develop a strategy that addresses the needs of the aging “baby-boom” generation’s housing needs effectively and efficiently. Individuals aged 65 and over comprise 28% of the City’s population as of 2010, and this trend is projected to increase into the near future
- Mix affordable housing opportunities throughout the community (rather than concentrating affordable housing in a few areas); create incentives for developers to create a percentage of affordable new construction ~~to be more affordable~~.
- Encourage development and redevelopment of multifamily residential uses in areas near the central core of the community, or on sites which have easy access to the central core; encourage multi-family development with a more residential character.
- Provide assistance to seniors and new home buyers to ensure that their housing needs are met.
- Support land for senior housing, incorporate opportunities for assisted living as a part of the development of senior housing.
- Work with county, school, and hospital to develop and enhance the assisted living program.
- Consider usable outdoor space, parks, outdoor living areas, gardens or similar uses at multi-family residential projects.
- Connect neighborhoods with pedestrian/bicycle paths and extend those paths to important community facilities; consider construction of sidewalks in all new neighborhoods; a program of developing sidewalks in established neighborhoods; a street tree planting program in all neighborhoods.
- Reinforce landscape and design character and build identity for the community by regulating outdoor storage, signage and landscape requirements for new developments.
- Consider small lot cluster development through Planned Unit Development process to preserve land and utilize City service extensions more efficiently.
- Enforce codes to maintain the quality, character, viability, value and livability of all neighborhoods.

Commercial

Commercial areas in Menahga are generally located along the US Highway 71 corridor. Within this area are nearly all retail and service businesses, restaurants and other commercial oriented establishments in the community. Most commercial establishments in Menahga are aimed to directly serve the needs of the Menahga area residents, and recreational populations. There may be a need to call for definition of a more regional customer base for businesses in Menahga and present opportunities for businesses to expand their services and develop in ways that might best

serve their entire potential customer base.

Commercial areas in Menahga are a true challenge for the community. Residents rely on services that exist today and desire opportunities for additional goods and services today and in the future. At the same time, they want a community that reflects the character of a small town; they desire quality buildings and permanent structures, especially relative to areas that face the outside (outside of what??). The challenge is to create commercial uses that have a permanent or long term commitment, that are a part of the community, reflect the desired character, provide the needed goods and services for the residents as well as those that attract outside new patrons to town.



Health care services located in the City include:

- Dental
- Medical Clinic
- Chiropractor
- Assisted Living
- Physical Rehabilitation
- Home Health Aide
- Natural Alternative Medicine

Along with the challenge of developing the appropriate types of commercial establishments is the challenge of acquiring the space for additional developments. It could be expected that further commercial development would logically be located along the Highway 71, County Highway 17 or Highway 87 corridor. If additional land is obtained for commercial development, it might be logical for the City to consider purchasing parcels of land on these corridors.

In order to make commercial development fit into the scope of Menahga, development must maintain a high quality appearance and take measures to mitigate its potential negative influences on the desired community character and neighboring land uses. The following are important considerations to the development of commercial areas that fit the Menahga community:

- Recognize historic buildings as character elements and take steps to ensure that new development carefully considers how the traditional elements are extended to new development by designing buildings which have similar scale, mass and detail as the historic buildings.
- Develop public parking areas that are shared by all uses within the core area of Menahga.
- Encourage pedestrian activities in the town center.
- Link the town center to neighborhoods and community facilities.
- Buffer commercial areas from residential areas.
- Regulate outdoor storage and signage.
- Actively market those services provided in Menahga to the residents of Menahga and surrounding communities.
- Use public money to impact private development. Encourage existing businesses to expand

their services and encourage new businesses to locate in Menahga. Offer incentives for development and expansion.

- Focus on attracting businesses that will be committed to the community and that can provide jobs for people living in Menahga.
- Work with the township to encourage commercial and industrial growth in the City of Menahga, according to existing township and City Comprehensive Plan and agreements.

Industrial

Industrial operations occurring near to residential, commercial, and other incompatible uses, could potentially cause conflicts. Industrial operations may potentially produce higher amounts of noise, traffic, odors, dust, glare, etc. Because of this, they are often better located away from other uses and with adequate buffers from them.

In the future there will likely be a need to provide additional employment opportunities in Menahga in order to create additional tax base for the City, and to provide jobs for residents and to attract new residents to the area. The following are important to consider in regards to industrial development:

- Define standards for operations of industrial uses.
- Connections for City services should be logical in order to facilitate potential residential, industrial, and commercial growth.

Recreation

Parks in Menahga should not only be a space for recreation, they should recall the character of the larger landscape of the region. By locating parks to best serve the needs of the residents, guest and tourists by using natural features of the land as focal points, they will add to the character and image of Menahga. Parks and trails may also be a way to advocate for the creative use of open space, which would reinforce residents' desires to maintain the small town feel and a connection to the rural atmosphere.



The following goals represent ways of providing for the recreation needs of Menahga, preserving locally significant features of the landscape, and creatively using parks and trails in the community:

- Retain floodplain/shoreline areas as natural parks, providing passive recreation opportunities and protecting a community and environmental resource.
- Work with the schools to develop nature walks.
- Expand on and enhance camping facilities in areas where recreational opportunities can be found as well (trails, nature walk, park, picnicking, swimming beach and picnic areas).
- Develop and/or enhance a trail system, for bicycles and pedestrians to link parks, neighborhoods, schools and other community features.
- Conduct an inventory of the recreational facilities available, along with an assessment of the condition of each facility.
- Identify the needs of the residents, and develop park facilities to meet the needs identified.
- Work with partners to develop a parks and recreation plan/strategy.

- Work with partners to develop and/or enhance existing snowmobile trails to be used for cross country skiing, ATV use, hiking, and biking.

Transportation

The private automobile remains the primary mode of transportation in the Menahga area. Regional transportation is provided mainly from US Highway 71. US Highway 71 travels in a north-south direction through Menahga and Wadena County. Traveling south US Highway 71 connects to Interstate 94 (80 miles) and US Highway 10 (23 miles) in Wadena and the regional cities of Park Rapids (12 miles) & Bemidji to the north (63 miles). Three of the seven cities in the County are located along the Highway 71 corridor. In addition to US Highway 71, Minnesota 87 provides another connection to US Highway 10. Minnesota 87 connects to U.S Highway 10 through the City of Frazee, MN (30 miles). U.S Highway 10 provides a connection to Menahga’s closest Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) Fargo, ND (87 miles).



Menahga is a small town, small enough that most people could walk or bike from one end to the other in a reasonable amount of time. Children might walk or bike to school or recreational areas such as Spirit Lake. Trails should connect these areas to Menahga's neighborhoods, allowing residents to promote walking and biking.

Goals to guide the development of transportation elements of Menahga include:

- Recognize a hierarchy of streets, allowing only local streets or major facilities to have access directly to major corridor roadways.
- Promote the Jefferson Highway (Hwy 71) and support efforts for historical designation.
- Further, enhance both of the entrances to Menahga on US 71 as the gateways to the community.
- Continue pursuing transit programs.
- Develop a bicycle and pedestrian network.
- Research and develop traffic calming strategies for crossings at US 71.
- Promote good sidewalk and pathway.
- Continue an open communication with Blueberry Township on future development.

Transition and Expansion

Transition/Expansion areas are those areas that lie outside of the City's corporate limits of the City of Menahga, but need to be considered along with other land uses of the community's future.

As Menahga may grow beyond its current boundaries, it the City will need to recognize the need to work with Blueberry Township to ensure that its needs are met and that transition occurs in ways that are mutually beneficial.

Guiding Principles:

- Reasonable patterns of land use
- Logical extension of City services
- Protection of sensitive features and environmental quality
- Respect for the character of the area
- Expansion of residential land uses



Continue to foster a mutually beneficial relationship with Blueberry Township and a strategic land use plan will be the most critical elements of expansion of the City. A range of options exist and should be explored. The goal is to define a course of action regarding future land use and growth management, resolving issues by participation and debate rather than conflict. The best result will be a plan that is reached by consensus. The following options for accommodating growth range from those that may result in conflict to those that promote collaboration and mutual benefit.

Options for Accommodating Growth:

The goal of defining areas for transition and expansion is to protect these lands from haphazard or insensitive development, reserving it until the time is appropriate for thoughtful development. Strategies to achieve this goal could be:

- Work with Blueberry Township to limit development in the areas designated as Transition/Expansion until development occurs with extended City services.
- Maintain the integrity of the Township boundaries by annexing according to discouraging all annexation not done of an Orderly Annexation Agreement.
- Encourage landowners and developers to petition for larger annexations by providing incentives, as permitted by law, for development.
- Explore options which best serve the Menahga community, recognizing the that people of surrounding township may have economic, family, school, social, spiritual and geographic ties to the City of Menahga.

Goals and Strategies: Housing

Goal: Maintain and enhance existing residential areas of predominantly single family housing and encourage new residential development of all housing types to provide a full range of housing opportunities at different densities and price ranges.

Strategies:

1. Allow flexibility in residential design and development.
2. Garner input from the private sector (home builders and owners) in regard to future planning and zoning controls.
3. Promote development that will strengthen the community sustainability ~~of the community~~ over the long term through tax base, jobs, and new dollars brought into the community.
4. Continue to ensure a safe and neat community by enforcing zoning controls, mitigating occurrences of blight within the community.
5. Enforce Menahga's Zoning Code Ordinance relating to future development and rehabilitation.
6. Promote sustainable housing opportunities within the community through grant opportunities for housing rehabilitation, foreclosure prevention, and first time home owner programs, etc.
7. Plan adequate and appropriate areas for residential land uses and allow only progressive development to insure the economical extension of utilities.
8. Explore opportunities to update older residential areas by eliminating substandard housing and conditions of blight.
9. Protect residential areas from other incompatible land uses.
10. Promote smaller lot size and green/open/common spaces.



Action Items:

1. XXXXX

Goal: Encourage the development of senior living options in Menahga.

Strategies:

1. Use housing to encourage life-long residency in the City of Menahga.
2. Promote land use that places seniors in close proximity to shopping, socialization and healthcare.

Action Items:

1. Review Comprehensive Plan
2. Review Zoning Code Ordinance
3. Consider housing study/plan to assist in planning
4. Monitor foreclosure situation

Goals and Strategies: Natural Environment and Resources

Goal: To protect and preserve the natural environment of the Menahga's Lakes lakes, rivers, wetland and open areas in a manner consistent with existing development patterns.

Strategies:

1. Encourage enforcement of all applicable shoreland and wetland regulations.
2. Prohibit the encroachment by filling or other development into drainage courses.
3. Do not allow the filling of wetland and low areas without careful analysis of the consequences on the hydrology of the area and the impact on wildlife.



Policy:

To encourage the use of natural and open space lands in a manner that will not lend to the elimination of natural habitat.

Action Items:

1. XXXXX

Goals:

1. Allow for large lot sizes in certain areas of the City and uses that preserve open and undeveloped lands.
2. Encourage adequate parks and open spaces in new developments.

Policy:

To grow, develop and protect public lands including lakes, woodlands and trail systems through proper controls and ordinances while allowing for their use by residents and visitors.

Action Items:

1. XXXXX

Goals:

1. Enforce City controls covering open lands and trail systems that encourage their development and funding.
2. Assist local public and civic groups with expansion efforts of trails and park systems.
3. Partner with groups such as MN DNR, Region Five Development Commission and others to develop trails, explore grants and grow in a sustainable way.

Action Items

1. Review comp plan
2. Review zoning ordinance
3. Review parks and trail plan in conjunction with other officials
4. Continue to explore marketing plan

5. Explore grant opportunities with key stakeholders

Goals and Strategies: Parks and Open Spaces

Goal: Improve and protect Menahga’s physical environment as a setting for activities, making it more attractive, healthful and efficient.

Strategies:

1. Protect and enhance the natural resources and amenities to preserve Menahga’s outdoor environment.
2. Maintain and grow Menahga’s open space system for recreation and other uses by taking advantage of natural features when possible.
3. Develop the area surrounding Spirit Lake and the camp ground, partnering with the private business community to find the highest and best use of the property.
4. Promote Spirit Lake for community recreation and to encourage the tourism industries.
5. Continue to develop and promote the City campground to attract tourists and economic development.
6. Expand, promote and integrate the Menahga’s network of trails and paths for use by pedestrians, bicycles, etc., which would further link together many of the community’s public facilities such as schools, community center, churches, parks, beach area river, ball fields, campground and downtown, into an existing trail system found in our region. Continue to promote and build upon connectivity to regional ATV and snowmobile trails.
7. Promote and explore the sustainability of Menahga parks, open spaces and related business community by exploring grant opportunities, marketing initiatives, and strategic partnerships with likeminded groups and organizations.
8. Create, retain and promote attributes that will add to the fabric of the community and create an environment that will help attract new and retain existing residents.

Action Items:

1. XXXXX

Goals and Strategies: Business & Industry

Goal: To promote the growth and diversification of Menahga's economy making it a well-rounded community with a broad economic base.

Strategies:

1. Promote Menahga as a progressive expanding community willing to cooperate with industries seeking new sites and stressing the natural amenities of the Menahga area to attract a wide range of industries in a small town environment.
2. Encourage a steady rate of private sector growth providing employment opportunities for a broad range of skills.
3. Encourage and promote beautification for the Central Business District.
4. Foster and promote the Central Business District commercial area.
5. Encourage new private development.
6. Partner with local and regional business development organizations such as Region 5 Development Commission, City EDA, Civic and Commerce, (C&C), University of MN Extension BR&E Program and others to explore new business assistance programs and learn from best practices.
7. Support a local Menahga Economic Development Committee to take advantage of local business community technical skills, Region Five Development Commission, Menahga Civic and Commerce (C&C), etc., to strengthen the local business environment.
8. See City's Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) for additional strategies (Appendix G).



Action Items:

1. XXXXX

Goals and Strategies: Recreation and Tourism

Goal: Capitalize on the many advantages of Menahga’s location in the State and the amenities of its setting.

Strategies:

1. Promote and capitalize on Menahga’s proximity to regional population and recreational hubs for the purpose of promoting housing, tourism and industry.
2. Promote and capitalize on Menahga’s location on Highway 71.
3. Promote the improvement, expansion, beautification, promotion and maintenance of transportation systems including highways and trails.
4. Continue to work with stakeholders to foster the City’s image and branding by marketing campaigns such as the Gateway to the Pines and St. Urho to not only promote tourism in the area, but also tout Menahga as a great place to live and raise a family.
5. Support the development of the area surrounding Spirit Lake, partnering with the private business community to find the highest and best use for the property, possibly as a recreation area.
6. Promote development that will strengthen the sustainability of the community over the long term through tax base, jobs, and new dollars brought into the community.

Action Items:

1. XXXXX

Goals and Strategies: Historical & Cultural

Goal: Preserve and promote Menahga's cultural heritage

Strategies:

1. Promote the preservation of Menahga's historical characteristics and explore and take advantage of programs available to financially assist owners of said properties in these endeavors.
2. Preserve and promote Menahga's heritage by encouraging local community ethnic and religious celebrations.



Action Items:

1. XXXXX

Goal: Promote and explore opportunities to expand the cultural opportunities available to Menahga residents as well as to tourists.

Strategies:

1. Promote cultural events and opportunities provided by the schools and Menahga Area Museum.
2. Bolster arts in the community.
3. Promote cultural events that will add to the fabric of the community, and create an environment that will help attract new and retain existing residents by including youth more.

Action Items:

1. XXXXX

Goals and Strategies: Quality of Life

Goal: Encourage population and community growth.

Strategies:

1. Attract industries which provide employment opportunities while expanding and retaining existing industries.
2. Provide a variety of affordable housing options.
3. Provide a broad range of public services and facilities and nurture local institutions such as schools, churches, medical and social services, and police and fire protection.
4. Capitalize on the fiber to the home. Expansion, implementation and use of broadband internet for business, educational and private use.



Action Items:

1. XXXXX

Goal: Improve the overall environmental quality and insure the general welfare of Menahga residents - present and future, while protecting their individual choices.

Strategies:

1. Balance the interests of the individual and community.
2. Inject long range consideration into the determination of short term actions.
3. Facilitate the democratic process in decision making.

Action Items:

1. XXXXX

Goal: Encourage senior living developments and services in order to help seniors remain in the community.

Strategies:

1. Consider a Menahga Housing & Redevelopment Authority (HRA) or similar agency to encourage and create additional senior living developments and services in the community.

Action Items:

1. XXXXX

Next Steps

Once this plan is adopted by the City Council of the City of Menahga, a program for moving forward must be established. Some existing policies of the City may require revision to incorporate aspects of this plan and maintain its integrity into the future. Conflicts can be minimized or avoided if strategies suggested by this plan are followed as modifications are made. The use of the tools described below will allow Menahga to achieve its vision as defined by this plan. Each of the tools becomes vital to logical, orderly and desirable development, all factors necessary to meet the needs of current and future Menahga residents.

Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations

After adoption of the plan, zoning ordinances and subdivision regulations may require revision or clarifications to ensure that the intentions of this plan are met. The zoning map may need to be revised to allow for land uses defined in the plan or to change the desired character of certain areas. Zoning ordinances should be reviewed whenever a deficiency becomes apparent, and whenever it becomes necessary to make adjustments to this plan. Likewise, the City's subdivision ordinance should be reviewed to ensure that it fulfills the intentions of this plan. The subdivision regulations establish procedures for subdivision of the land and standards for lots, streets, setbacks and other items. When reviewing proposed development, the Planning Commission will determine whether the proposed subdivision meets the land use and facilities goals of this plan.

While it is important for a City to articulate its vision through its comprehensive plan, and to develop policies and rules through the use of zoning ordinances; these plans are only as effective as the City's ability to enforce its vision, policies and ordinances. It is important for the cities governing bodies to bear in mind that enforcement and execution of the City's planning mechanisms is the key to achieving the goals outlined in the comprehensive plan.

Official Map

An official map is required to prevent construction of any private improvement in an area designated for future rights-of-way, street widening or extensions. It does not create public ownership of the land. It merely identifies the City's intention for specific areas for future public purposes. Before land can be used according to the official map, the owner of the land must be compensated at fair market value at the time it is acquired, or the land must be dedicated to the City by the developer of the property. The official map is a legal document which must be recorded through the County Register of Deeds, and it is enforced as building permits are issued for subject properties.

Capital Improvements Program

A capital improvements program will itemize, on an annual basis, future public improvement needs, their costs, their impact on the City's operating expense and the proposed funding. Funding of projects outlined on a capital improvements program may be through taxation, sale of bonds, dedication or utility fees. In all cases, the projects identified must demonstrate sufficient public purpose and local commitment. The capital improvements program also allows the City to budget for major expenses over time, and to plan for anticipated needs well in advance. In short, the

capital improvements plan can identify projects on a time line with priority rankings and budget costs so that the City will have direct focus on which projects need to be completed within a certain time frame.

Growth Management

With land for residential development nearly gone, it is a certainty that areas outside of the City may need to be brought into its corporate limits. Several options for growth management were listed in the plan, and the City of Menahga and Blueberry Township need to begin working to accommodate potential growth. Early efforts will help to avoid later conflicts, and open discussion will help to assure that the transition of areas outside the City will be timely, orderly, and meet the needs of both parties. Maintain the integrity of the Townships current boundaries and discourage all annexation not done as part of an *Orderly Annexation Agreement*.

Amendments

Changes to this plan must be anticipated, for it is intended to be flexible and allow for changes that will occur. When it is changed, it must be done so that the spirit of this plan is not violated. Plan amendments should not be discouraged as times and conditions change. It will be necessary to document the changes that have occurred so it can be determined if the change is warranted.

Plan amendments might occur through petitions to the City or may be initiated by the Planning Commission. In either situation, proposed amendments must be carefully considered to make certain that the proposal does not adversely affect neighborhoods, community character or set an undesirable precedent. When amendments are proposed by a petitioner, the burden of proof to evaluate the community effects of the change lies with the petitioner. It is the petitioner's responsibility to demonstrate the effects of the change on each of the elements of this plan (land use, transportation, parks, etc.). Similarly, the City will be responsible for demonstrating the impacts of any change proposed by the Planning Commission.

For any amendment which is specific to a parcel of land, public notice should be published and mailed in accordance with the requirements for rezoning. For a City-wide amendment, notice should be given in the official City publication as required in advance of the hearing date. Some amendments may affect several parcels and may be considered to have City-wide impact; in such a case discretion should be used and notices mailed.

A plan amendment requested through the petition process should be presented to the Planning Commission at least 21 days prior to the date of the public hearing. The application should be accompanied by all documentation required to support the proposed change and its effects on the City, the specific area and the plan itself. It should also document the changes that have occurred since the adoption of the original plan, demonstrating that the amendment is warranted.

Plan amendments do not become City policy until the change is adopted by the City Council. A public hearing at the City Council level following action by the Planning Commission will be required.

Appendix A

Appendix B

Appendix C

Appendix D

