

# 1. Issues and Opportunities

## 1.1 Introduction

The *City of Menasha Year 2030 Comprehensive Plan* will guide the future of the City of Menasha for the next 25 years. This document meets the requirements of Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Legislation, Wisconsin Statutes 66.1001.

Development of the *City of Menasha Year 2030 Comprehensive Plan* was in response to the passage of Wisconsin's comprehensive planning legislation (Statute 66.1001). This law requires all municipalities (counties, cities, towns, and villages) to adopt a comprehensive plan by the year 2010 if they wish to make certain local land use decisions. After the year 2010, any municipality that regulates land use must make their zoning, subdivision/land division, shoreland/floodplain, and official mapping decisions in accordance with that community's comprehensive plan.

A community is often motivated to plan by the issues it must address and the opportunities it wishes to pursue. In addition, a community must react to local, regional, state, and national trends that influence development patterns and service levels.

However, a community is more than the borders which encompass it as a part of the region, state, and nation. A community is defined by the people who live and work there, the houses and businesses, the parks and natural features, its past, its present, and its future. No matter the location, change is the one certainty that visits all places, and no community is immune to its affects. How a community changes, how that change is perceived, and how change is managed all have a direct impact on the community. An understanding of the history, combined with a vision of the community's future is fundamental to making sound decisions. Hence, the foundation of comprehensive planning follows the premise of balance among the past (how we got here), the present (what we have here), and the future (what do we want here).

The Issues and Opportunities element of the comprehensive plan provides perspective on the planning process, public participation, demographic information, trends and forecasts, and the overall goals of the comprehensive plan.

A more detailed assessment of specific issues and opportunities relative to each plan element for the City of Menasha is discussed within the respective plan element.

### **Introduction to the City of Menasha**

Members of the Tribal Nations and voyageurs had long been using the Fox River waterway by the time James Doty envisioned a settlement in the Menasha area as he first traveled through in 1820. In 1831 the U.S. Government bought 2.5 million acres of land from the Ho Chunk Nation.

In 1841 Doty became the second Territorial Governor of Wisconsin, and he continued to work with his eldest son Charles and with Harrison and Curtis Reed to develop the area. He owned a large portion of the island which now contains the southern portion of Menasha, and he later

bought 66 acres across the river in the present downtown area for \$838. Governor Doty told his friends that the Ho Chunk Nation called this place "Menashay" which meant "settlement on the island."

Curtis Reed obtained a charter to build a dam across the Fox River, and the City of Menasha was formally incorporated in 1874. Eventually the flour mills gave way to the manufacture of paper.

Paper production and processing, publishing, and packaging are still a major part of the area's strong economy today. Menasha has encouraged continued commercial and industrial growth. Industries, along with the recent completion of the Tri-County Freeway and the recreational opportunities, beautiful parks, and small town atmosphere of the area, make Menasha part of one of the fastest-growing areas in Wisconsin.

The city is centrally located in the Fox Cities approximately 100 miles north of Milwaukee and 30 miles south of Green Bay. The Fox River flows immediately adjacent to the downtown area, and the west and southeast borders are defined by Little Lake Butte des Morts and Lake Winnebago, respectively.

## 1.2 County Planning Process

### **Phase I, Plan for Planning**

During the summer of 2003, Calumet County facilitated a "Plan for Planning" process with local communities to identify needs and desires of a planning process. The process was intended to determine:

- ◆ The work effort needed to develop a county comprehensive plan in conformance with Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning legislation.
- ◆ The resources, both internal and external, that could contribute to the planning effort.
- ◆ An efficient and coordinated planning process between Calumet County and its communities.
- ◆ How the document and maps should be built.
- ◆ The committee structure to direct the comprehensive planning process.
- ◆ Staff and consultant workloads and responsibilities.
- ◆ Comprehensive Plan development costs and the number of participating communities.

This process resulted in the submission of a Wisconsin Department of Administration (WDOA) Comprehensive Planning Grant on November 1, 2003. In February of 2004, the county was informed by the state that Calumet County and its participating communities were awarded \$248,000 to develop a comprehensive plan.

## Phase II, Plan Development

Development of the *Calumet County Year 2025 Comprehensive Plan* was in response to the passage of Wisconsin's comprehensive planning legislation (Statute 66.1001). This law requires all municipalities (counties, cities, towns, and villages) to adopt a comprehensive plan by the year 2010 if they wish to make certain local land use decisions. As of January 1, 2010, any municipality that "affects land use" through regulation, such as zoning, land division or subdivision ordinances, or official mapping must make its decisions in accordance with that community's comprehensive plan. Calumet County falls under this requirement because it administers a variety of ordinances. Therefore, according to the legislation, Calumet County is required to develop a countywide plan to meet the conditions of the legislation.

Incorporated community comprehensive plans are part of the county plan. However, a city or village plan is adopted separately and has autonomous authority for regulation and administration within its respective border. While the comprehensive planning law encourages coordinated planning between jurisdictions, it does not require consistency between plans. Accordingly, it is possible that a city or village preferred land use map may conflict with the plan of a neighboring town and that each respective plan will portray this difference. The state comprehensive planning law does not change the basic authorities or relationships between counties and towns in adoption or administration of plans or zoning.

### Participating Communities

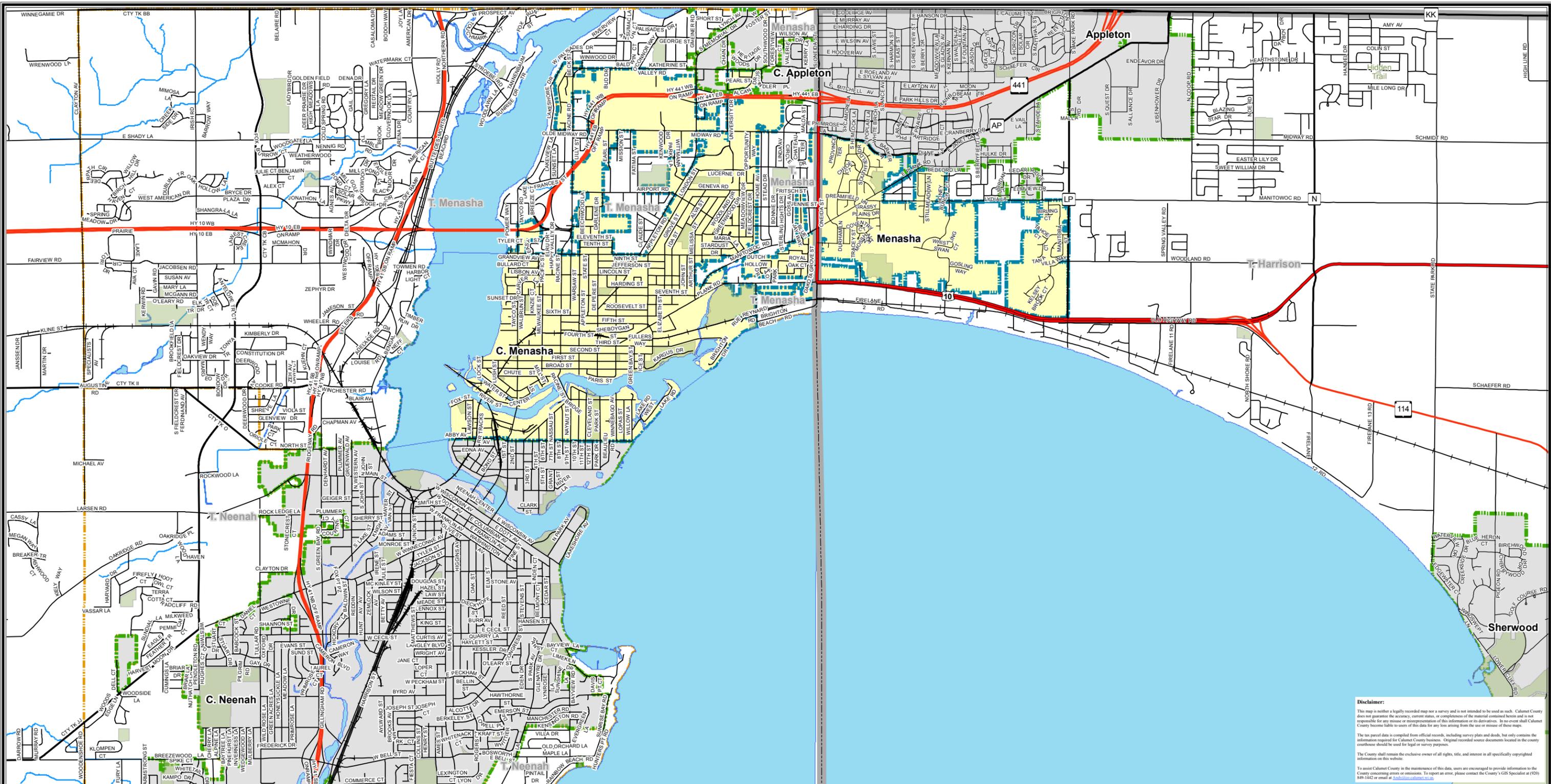
Thirteen local units of government participated with the county in developing local comprehensive plans.

<u>Cities</u>	<u>Villages</u>	<u>Towns</u>
Chilton	Hilbert	Brothertown
Menasha	Potter	Charlestown
New	Sherwood	Chilton
Holstein		New
		Holstein
		Rantoul
		Stockbridge
		Woodville

## Winnebago County Comprehensive Plan

The City of Menasha is among a small number of cities in Wisconsin that are located in multiple counties. The city is located in both Calumet County and Winnebago County. Winnebago County adopted a comprehensive plan in March of 2006. While the City of Menasha elected to participate in the Calumet County planning process, information from Winnebago County is included in the city's comprehensive plan where applicable. In addition, information is provided for the City of Menasha as a whole. Where information was not available for the entire community, it is noted.

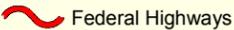
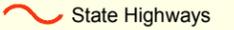
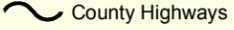
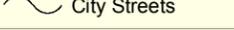
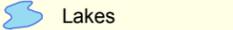
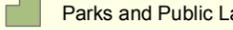
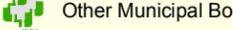
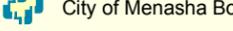
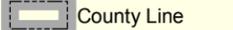
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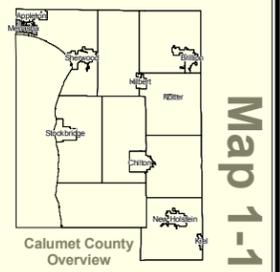
**Disclaimer:**  
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# Regional Perspective

## City of Menasha, Calumet & Winnebago Counties

-  Railroads
-  Federal Highways
-  State Highways
-  County Highways
-  Local Roads
-  City Streets
-  Rivers
-  Lakes
-  Parks and Public Lands
-  Other Municipal Boundaries
-  City of Menasha Boundary
-  Town Boundaries
-  County Line

Map date: December 18, 2007  
 Calumet County LIO  
 206 Court St  
 Oshkosh WI, 53074  
 920-849-1442  
 1 inch equals 4,000 feet



Map 1-1

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## 1.3 Comprehensive Plan Development Process

### **Public Participation**

The Wisconsin comprehensive planning legislation (s. 66.1001) specifies that the governing body for a unit of government must prepare and adopt written procedures to foster public participation in the comprehensive planning process. The procedures must include open discussion, communication programs, information services, and public meetings for which advance notice has been provided, in every stage of the preparation of a comprehensive plan. In addition, the participation procedures must provide for wide distribution of proposed drafts, alternatives, and amendments of the comprehensive plan. The public participation procedures should address how members of the public can send written comments on the plan to the governing body, and how the governing body will respond.

The City of Menasha has complied with all public participation requirements as detailed in Wisconsin Statutes 66.1001 by adopting and initiating a public participation plan on March 21, 2006. A copy of the plan can be found in Appendix A.

### **Local Meetings**

Public meetings have occurred with the City of Menasha both through Plan Commission meetings and focus group meetings.

Plan Commission meetings have occurred on January 3, February 21, February 28, March 7, March 21, July 11, September 19, and October 3, 2006 ; October 30, November 20, and December 18 2007; and January 8 and 22, February 19, March 18, April 22, May 6, May 20, and May 27 2008. At these meetings the consultant and city staff facilitated conversations to address and develop elements of the comprehensive plan. A City Council meeting was held on June 16, 2008 in order to update the Council on the progress of the plan.

Focus group meetings have been held for several of the plan elements including housing (November 29, 2005; and January 10 and 26, 2006); transportation (January 12, 2006); land use, cultural resources, natural resources (February 9, 2006), and economic development (March 7, 2006). Focus group participants have included residents, business owners, employees of local businesses, staff from various governmental and non-governmental agencies, and elected representatives from a variety of levels of government. For a discussion of focus groups, please see the related plan chapter. For a summary of the groups including questions and responses, please refer to Appendix B.

They city staff held a series of workshops on sustainability that were held on April 26, May 10, and May 16, 2007.

In addition to these meetings the City of Menasha had a Public Information Meeting on October 3, 2006. This presentation covered progress in the development of the plan to date, including issues and opportunities, summary of focus group findings, goals and objectives, and discussion of the Preferred Land Use map.

A public hearing on the draft comprehensive plan was held (date-description to be added).

## 1.4 State Comprehensive Planning Goals

Wisconsin's comprehensive planning law (Smart Growth) established 14 local comprehensive planning goals to guide state land use actions and local planning efforts. Specifically, local units of government and state agencies are encouraged to design their programs, policies, infrastructure, and investments to strike a balance between their individual missions and the local comprehensive planning goals. The following 14 local comprehensive planning goals were considered throughout the planning process.

1. Promote the redevelopment of lands with existing infrastructure and public services and the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing residential, commercial, and industrial structures.
2. Encourage neighborhood designs that support a range of transportation choices.
3. Protect natural areas, including wetlands, wildlife habitats, lakes and woodlands, open spaces, and groundwater resources.
4. Protect economically productive areas, including farmland and forests.
5. Encourage land uses, densities, and regulations that promote efficient development patterns and relatively low municipal, state government, and utility costs.
6. Preserve cultural, historic, and archaeological sites.
7. Encourage coordination and cooperation among nearby units of government.
8. Build community identity by revitalizing main streets and enforcing design standards.
9. Provide an adequate supply of affordable housing for all income levels throughout each community.
10. Provide adequate infrastructure and public services and a supply of developable land to meet existing and future market demand for residential, commercial, and industrial uses.
11. Promote the expansion or stabilization of the current economic base and the creation of a range of employment opportunities at the state, regional, and local levels.
12. Balance individual property rights with community interests and goals.
13. Plan and develop land uses that create or preserve varied and unique urban and rural communities.

14. Provide an integrated, efficient, and economical transportation system that provides mobility, convenience, and safety and meets the needs of all citizens including transit-dependent and disabled.

## 1.5 City of Menasha Planning Goals

This section contains the goals for each of the nine elements as described and required by Wisconsin's comprehensive planning law. Goals, objectives, policies, and programs will also be included within each of the respective planning elements. The following goals were developed by the City of Menasha to guide and focus the planning process. Goals are broad, value-based statements expressing public preferences for the long term (20 years or more). They address key issues, opportunities, and problems that affect the community.

### Issues and Opportunities

**Goal:** Balance individual property rights with community interest and goals.

**Goal:** Minimize the impact of development on energy and natural resources.

### Housing

**Goal:** Promote a positive image of the City of Menasha as a quality place to live.

**Goal:** Preserve, rehabilitate, and stabilize the city's existing housing stock and residential neighborhoods.

**Goal:** Create a diverse base of housing opportunities appropriate for all segments of the population.

**Goal:** Maintain an adequate supply of sites for single family housing in desirable locations to meet current needs and projected growth.

**Goal:** Maintain an adequate supply of sites for multi-family housing in desirable locations that meet current needs and projected growth.

**Goal:** Increase enforcement of housing and building code standards to ensure that every housing unit is decent, safe, sanitary, and secure.

**Goal:** Create affordable home ownership opportunities for low- and moderate-income residents.

**Goal:** Maintain an adequate supply of affordable rental housing for low- and moderate-income residents.

**Goal:** Maintain an adequate supply of affordable housing for senior and special need households.

**Goal:** Create new housing opportunities in close proximity to the downtown.

**Goal:** End housing discrimination in the City of Menasha.

## Transportation

**Goal:** Provide a safe, efficient, and cost effective transportation system for the movement of people and goods.

**Goal:** Support and promote the development and use of multiple modes of transportation.

**Goal:** Incorporate energy conservation principles in transportation facility design and services.

## Utilities and Community Facilities

**Goal:** Provide high quality and cost effective community facilities and services that meet existing and projected future needs.

**Goal:** Ensure proper treatment of wastewater to protect public health, groundwater quality, and surface water quality while meeting current and future needs.

**Goal:** Promote stormwater management practices in order to reduce private and public property damage and to protect water quality.

**Goal:** Ensure that the water supply for the community has sufficient capacity, is in compliance with drinking water quality standards and regulations, and is available to meet present and future needs.

**Goal:** Promote effective solid waste disposal and recycling services and systems that protect the public health, natural environment, and general appearance of land uses within the community.

**Goal:** Maintain and enhance recreational opportunities in the community.

**Goal:** Ensure the provision of reliable, efficient, and well-planned utilities to adequately serve existing and future development.

**Goal:** Encourage improved access to health care facilities and child care.

**Goal:** Provide a level of police, fire, and emergency services that meets present and future needs.

**Goal:** Promote quality schools and access to educational opportunities.

**Goal:** Reduce the long-term costs and environmental impact of municipal facilities and operations.

### **Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources**

**Goal:** Support the agricultural resources of the county and the region.

**Goal:** Maintain, preserve, and enhance the city's natural resources.

**Goal:** Mitigate impacts of development and land management practices on surface waters.

**Goal:** Preserve natural features like woodlands, wetlands, floodplains, shorelands, and open spaces in order to maintain and enhance community green space.

**Goal:** Enhance community image with attractive entrances, a mix of business types, a vital downtown, and community culture and events.

**Goal:** Preserve significant historical and cultural sites, structures, and neighborhoods that contribute to community identity and character.

**Goal:** Raise awareness of opportunities for buying locally grown or processed produce.

### **Economic Development**

**Goal:** Support the economic development initiatives in the community and region to promote the creation of jobs and income opportunities.

**Goal:** Maintain and improve the utility, communication, and transportation infrastructure systems that promote economic development.

**Goal:** Support the retention and expansion of existing businesses.

**Goal:** Support entrepreneurial development and new business attraction efforts.

**Goal:** Maintain a quality workforce to strengthen businesses and maintain a high standard of living.

**Goal:** Support and pursue opportunities to increase and diversify the city's tax base.

### **Intergovernmental Cooperation**

**Goal:** Foster mutually beneficial intergovernmental relations with other units of government.

## Land Use

**Goal:** Provide for a compatible mix of land uses within the city.

## Implementation

**Goal:** Promote consistency between plan recommendations, ordinances, and other land use regulations.

### 1.6 City of Menasha Issues and Opportunities

The following issues and opportunities identified by the Plan Commission (acting as a Citizen's Advisory Committee) were used to help form the goals, objectives, and policies in the comprehensive plan. These issues and opportunities are also addressed throughout the plan.

#### Issues and Opportunities

As recorded, without priority, after reviewing and eliminating duplicates.

- ◆ Menasha's waterfront is a definite asset.
- ◆ There is a need to revive and enhance community events.
- ◆ The school system is strong.
- ◆ Utilities are competitively priced.
- ◆ There needs to be more done with stormwater run-off.
- ◆ There should be more elderly housing.
- ◆ The city has a lot of renter occupied housing, especially in the core of the city, which by nature means the population is somewhat transient.
- ◆ The library is good.
- ◆ The park system is an asset.
- ◆ The city has an increasing socio-economic and racial mix. That is seen as a positive, but with that mix, comes a sometimes increasing burden on social services in the area.
- ◆ The housing stock in the city needs to be maintained.
- ◆ The city is safe and quiet.
- ◆ There are a variety of jobs in the area.
- ◆ The city is moving forward.
- ◆ The system of trails (bicycle, walking, and hiking) within the city is a strength.
- ◆ The level of service of public works is high.
- ◆ The public transportation system is strong but there are places where the walk to the stop is too far.
- ◆ Assets to the community include: the marina, the university, the arena, the museum and planetarium, a large variety and number of churches, and the nature reserve.
- ◆ There is a lack of sufficient level of economic activity downtown and on Doty Island.
- ◆ The city is landlocked and has no place to expand.

- ◆ There is sometimes the desire to convert single family to multi-family housing. With this comes complications including parking and traffic issues.
- ◆ The sanitary districts limit growth. The city also can't support its own districts. The level of support is growing yet the population is growing.
- ◆ There are service responsibilities outside of the city boundary.
- ◆ The financial responsibilities of redevelopment are a big burden.
- ◆ Downtown needs a grocery store.
- ◆ Downtown is improving with the aesthetics, interest level, diversity of businesses, and making use of existing buildings.
- ◆ The government is responsive.
- ◆ The recreation program in the city is strong across age levels. There are reciprocity agreements with Appleton and Neenah and the Town of Menasha as well.
- ◆ There is a need to improve the image of the city, both internally and externally.
- ◆ The school districts are fragmented which creates issues with identity. Often children go to school in a different area than they live in and it's hard to get a sense of belonging.
- ◆ The corridors into the city need a visual boost.
- ◆ Wayfinding throughout the city needs to be enhanced.
- ◆ Private property can hinder access to the water. The beach is hidden away and hard to get to.
- ◆ There is a niche market in the city for medical services. There is potential to continue to grow this market.
- ◆ There are several community identity issues. There needs to be a tie between the east and the west sides of the city. Identity on the east tends to be by name of the subdivision. There is a perceptual difference in the identity east of Oneida Street. This area is seen as isolated because of the farmlands.
- ◆ The opening of US Highway 441 changed the dynamics in the area.

## 1.7 Issues and Opportunities Goals and Objectives

Wisconsin Statutes 66.1001 requires a statement of overall goals and objectives of the local governmental unit to guide the future development and redevelopment of the local governmental unit over a 20-year planning period. The following are the goals and objectives developed by the City of Menasha.

### ***Goal 1 Balance individual property rights with community interest and goals.***

#### ***Objectives***

1. Utilize the city's comprehensive plan as a tool to guide city decision making.
2. Create opportunities for citizen participation throughout all stages of plan and ordinance development, amendment, and implementation.

**Goal 2** *Minimize the impact of development on energy and natural resources.*

**Objectives**

1. Promote energy-efficient, ecologically friendly living and building practices.

1.8 Issues and Opportunities Policies and Recommendations

Policies and recommendations build on goals and objectives by providing more focused responses and actions to the goals and objectives. Policies and recommendations become the tools that the community should use to aid in making land use decisions. Policies and recommendations that direct action using the words “will” or “shall” are advised to be mandatory and regulatory aspects of the implementation of the comprehensive plan. In contrast, those policies and recommendations that direct action using the word “should” are advisory and intended to serve as a guide.

1. Public participation shall be required throughout all stages of comprehensive plan development, amendment, and implementation.
2. The comprehensive plan shall be updated to maintain consistency with state comprehensive planning requirements.
3. Community policies, ordinances, and decisions regarding land use shall be made in conformance with the comprehensive plan.
4. The need for public participation shall be considered during the development of and/or amendment to plans, ordinances, or programs.
5. The existing road network and public facilities/services will be utilized to accommodate new development to the maximum extent possible.
6. The comprehensive plan will be referred to and/or utilized for all future development, planning, or implementation decisions within the community.
7. Consideration should be given to innovative planning or related land use initiatives such as the Natural Step Program.
8. The comprehensive plan will be assessed annually for compliance with Wisconsin Smart Growth Statutes.
9. All community policies and actions will be evaluated for compliance with the applicable provisions of the comprehensive plan.
10. All future community policies, actions, and programs will be developed and implemented in a manner that is consistent with the applicable goals and objectives identified within the comprehensive plan.

11. Future community issues, trends, opportunities, and conflicts that were not included within the comprehensive plan will be assessed and amended to the plan as necessary.
12. Adequate funding and staffing shall be maintained to properly administer community programs (i.e. permits, land use controls, etc.).
13. Establish community focal points that include historic and cultural locations, such as park, school, library, historic downtown, riverfront, etc., where citizens feel safe and comfortable, and are identified as gathering locations throughout the community.
14. Coordinate capital improvements with the recommendations presented in the city's comprehensive plan.

## 1.9 Issues and Opportunities Programs and Resources

The following programs and resources are currently utilized by the community or are available for use by the community to implement the goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations identified.

### AB608, Wisconsin Act 233 – Clarification of Smart Growth Law

This bill was signed into law in April 2004. This new law reduces the number of programs or actions with which a comprehensive plan must be consistent. Under the new legislation, the only actions which must be consistent with a comprehensive plan are official mapping, local subdivision regulation, and zoning ordinances, including zoning of shorelands or wetlands in shorelands. The bill also iterates that a Regional Planning Commission's comprehensive plan is only advisory in its applicability to a political subdivision (a city, village, town, or county), and a political subdivision's comprehensive plan.

### Wisconsin Department of Administration, Demographic Services Center

The Demographic Services Center's primary responsibility is to develop annual total population estimates for all Wisconsin towns, villages, and cities. It also makes annual estimates of the voting age population for all municipalities and total population estimates for Zip Code Areas. In addition, the Demographic Services Center develops population projections by age and sex for the counties, population projections of total population for all municipalities, and estimates of total housing units and households for all counties. For further information on the Service Center contact the WDOA or visit its web-site at [www.doa.state.wi.us](http://www.doa.state.wi.us).