

DOWNTOWN VISION PLAN

2017-2027

CITY OF MENASHA



ADVANCE
Menasha, WI

DOWNTOWN VISION PLAN



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Downtown Vision Plan was recommended by the Plan Commission on 9 January 2018 and adopted by the City of Menasha on 5 February 2018.

Donald Merkes, Mayor

Common Council

Rebecca Nichols, Aldermanic District 1
James Taylor, Aldermanic District 2
Stan Sevenich, Aldermanic District 3, Council President
Arnie Collier, Aldermanic District 4
Steve Krueger, Aldermanic District 5
Alex Zelinski, Aldermanic District 6
Ted Grade, Aldermanic District 7
Kevin Benner, Aldermanic District 8

Plan Commission

Kara Homan
Catherine Cruickshank
Dave Schmidt
Kevin Benner (Alderman)
Donald Merkes (Mayor)
Richard Sturm, Parks and Recreation Member
Josh Radomski, Director Public Works
Alternate, Alex Zelinski (Alderman)

City Staff

David Buck, Community Development Director
Sam Schroeder, Principal Planner

Consultant Team

Place Dynamics LLC ■ New Berlin ■ Wisconsin



Short, Elliott and Hendrickson ■ Appleton ■ Wisconsin



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INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

The Downtown Menasha we see today is much different from that of the past generation, or even a decade ago. Manufacturing uses once dominated the riverfront, supported by retail, dining, and services. Several of those manufacturing businesses have departed, leaving behind large empty buildings that are not well suited to today's emerging industries. Retail and service uses have also evolved, with many now preferring auto-oriented commercial strips instead of the traditional buildings on Main Street. Changes such as these occur without our ability to alter them, but we can take actions that shape the uses that follow. Those actions are enumerated in this Downtown Vision Plan, and build upon past initiatives that have seen the emergence of a destination shopping district, large office buildings, and waterfront improvements.

The Downtown Vision Plan was prepared over the course of several months in 2017. Commissioned by the City of Menasha, it was prepared by the consultant team of Place Dynamics LLC and Short, Elliott, and Hendrickson, Inc. During the course of planning, the consultant team sought out the concerns, ideas, and feedback of citizens, business and property owners, and other stakeholders in the community using interviews, a community survey, and public workshops or presentations.

The planning process began with a market analysis to determine what uses would be viable during the life of the document and beyond. Housing was the use with the most immediate and long term demand. With its waterfront, walkable commercial area, and proximity to employment, downtown Menasha can support a large number of both owner occupied and rental housing units, with a noteworthy demand for quality condominiums and high-end apartments. Particularly as there is an increase in downtown housing, more neighborhood-serving commercial uses can be attracted to supplement destination retail and dining businesses. A current glut of vacant office space will suppress the office market for several years, though there are still opportunities to bring small businesses into existing or new downtown space, and individual businesses may be attracted to construct their own office buildings in the district, due to its amenities.



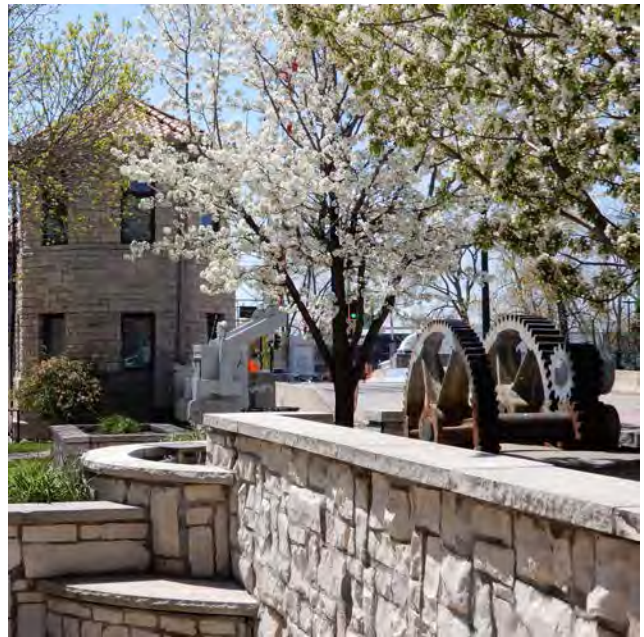
The Banta Mill is an example of a historic industrial property that may be redeveloped for other uses.

The issues, ideas, and priorities in this plan reflect the consensus emerging from the participating public, and are summed up in the following vision statement.

Downtown Menasha fully embraces its waterfront and historic downtown, creating a vibrant, mixed-use neighborhood with a variety of employment opportunities, places to shop, eat, live, and play.

This vision will be achieved through actions and policies organized around a set of ten goals:

1. Create a market-supported, functional, and economically viable future land use plan for downtown Menasha, including its waterfront areas.
2. Maintain the vitality of downtown business districts and residential neighborhoods.
3. Promote a mix of uses supporting an economically and culturally vibrant downtown, with multiple activities throughout the day, evening, and week.
4. Ensure high-quality reuse and redevelopment of vacant or underutilized industrial sites, in terms of both the mix of uses and design character.
5. Encourage residential rehabilitation and redevelopment that emphasizes owner occupied housing and market rate apartments in a range of styles and densities.
6. Plan for additional public and private parks, plazas, trails, and similar spaces along the downtown waterfront, while securing public access to the river wherever feasible.
7. Support existing and new recreational, cultural, and artistic venues that draw people to the district and create a positive image of downtown Menasha.
8. Improve pedestrian, bicycle, and boat access within downtown, and improve connectivity between downtown and



Waterfront features enhance the downtown experience, tie together different parts of the district, and connect it to neighborhoods and the larger Fox Valley region.



neighborhoods, parks, or other destinations in Menasha and the Fox Cities.

9. Integrate the river and canals into the downtown through physical and visual connectivity, expanding waterfront trail systems, and encouraging uses such as outdoor dining that embrace the waterfront.
10. Enhance the overall image of downtown by mitigating industrial impacts such as noise, dust, and poorly maintained buildings.

The City of Menasha and its partners will work to accomplish these goals with the assistance of an implementation plan spelling out actions that need to occur. That implementation plan identifies responsible parties, timelines, and milestones for those actions.



Several workshops and meetings, along with surveys and interviews, were used to gather public input that shaped the vision and recommendations.

This document is organized in several sections, the first of which lays out an overall strategy for the downtown district. Following sections summarize the background information on which the plan was based, presenting the market research used to understand business and real estate development potential, discussing issues and opportunities, and summarizing engagement with the community in the planning process.

VISION AND STRATEGY



VISION AND STRATEGY

This Downtown Plan is intended to guide the City of Menasha in its continuing pursuit of a revitalized downtown and surrounding neighborhoods. The recommended strategy is made up of three parts: 1) a vision and goals that establish what the City hopes to achieve; 2) a land use plan and principles that describe future uses and their desired character; and 3) actions that the City will take to bring about the desired vision. An implementation plan identifies the steps that will be taken and establishes a general timeline for specific actions.

Area plans such as this usually have a ten year horizon. With the passing of time, it is ever harder to predict how future events and circumstances may shape opportunities for the district. Some flexibility is needed in implementing the plan in order to adjust to that changing environment. By conducting an annual review and a minor update in the fifth year, the City can ensure that it is making adequate progress and adjusting to address new opportunities or challenges.

Vision and Goals

Menasha's Downtown Vision Plan was prepared with extensive input from stakeholders and the general public. Numerous interviews with stakeholders and public workshops resulted in the following vision, established early in the planning process.

Downtown Menasha fully embraces its waterfront and historic downtown, creating a vibrant, mixed-use neighborhood with a variety of employment opportunities, places to shop, eat, live, and play.

That same visioning process was used to develop a set of ten goals contained in the plan.

1. Create a market-supported, functional, and economically viable future land use plan for downtown Menasha, including its waterfront areas.
2. Maintain the vitality of downtown business districts and residential neighborhoods.
3. Promote a mix of uses supporting an economically and culturally vibrant downtown, with multiple activities throughout the day, evening, and week.
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7. Support existing and new recreational, cultural, and artistic venues that draw people to the district and create a positive image of downtown Menasha.
8. Improve pedestrian, bicycle, and boat access within downtown, and improve connectivity between downtown and neighborhoods, parks, or other destinations in Menasha and the Fox Cities.

Several commercial or mixed use redevelopment sites were identified. North of the Government Canal, these will develop in a traditional Main Street pattern with closely-spaced shops fronting on the street and accessed by the sidewalk. These may have offices or residences on one or two upper floors. Elsewhere, and particularly on Washington and Commercial Streets, there is more latitude to design to accommodate vehicle traffic.

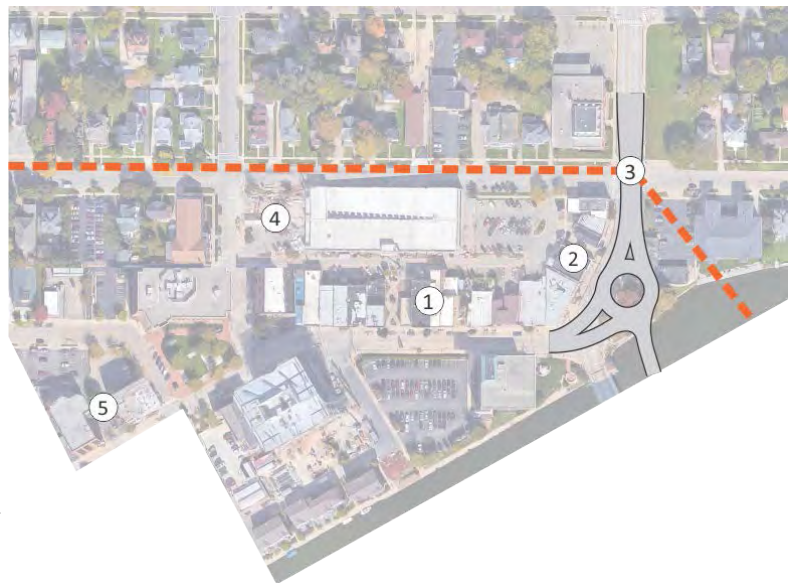
Downtown Sub-Areas and Initiatives

The downtown study area is large. To better organize the City's initiatives, as well as to reflect the differing character, issues, and opportunities found across the district, the downtown was divided into six sub-areas.



Main Street Sub-Area

The Main Street Sub-Area includes the traditional downtown commercial district and adjoining areas, including some of the office buildings constructed in recent decades. This area is intended to remain the commercial and civic center of the downtown, supporting a diverse mix of independent retail, dining, and service businesses. Its historic buildings will be preserved and it will have a well-defined pedestrian character.



FUTURE LAND USE



LAND USE CATEGORY DESCRIPTIONS

TRADITIONAL
"MAIN STREET"
MIXED USE



Development in this land use category will carry on the patterns found in Menasha's downtown core, with closely-spaced buildings designed for small retail, dining, or service businesses on the first floor, and one or two upper floors housing offices or living units. Buildings will be set to the street line, and street facades will feature large transparent glass windows. This is intended to create a walkable environment and space for businesses that generate considerable cross traffic, contributing to a destination district.

OFFICE OR
OFFICE PARK



Communities in the Fox Cities have been successful in attracting office uses to downtown districts. This land use category is intended to ensure that land is made available for future office development that generates employment, and customers for downtown businesses. These districts are not expected to be solely limited to office uses. There are advantages to making space available for services that support the office business or employees, such as printing and shipping stores or restaurants.

HIGH DENSITY
MIXED USE



Mixed use is characterized by a street level dedicated to commercial activities, with some combination of all residential, or residential and office uses on upper levels. This land use category offers the opportunity to develop larger structures and a greater number of units than would be possible in the traditional "Main Street" mixed use areas. While maintaining the quality of the street facade, this use will require additional efforts to accommodate parking demands on-site. Parking will be landscaped and screened from view.

MEDIUM DENSITY
RESIDENTIAL



Medium density residential favors smaller multi-unit buildings often favored for condominium development. The goal of this land use category is to produce six to 16 units per acre. Buildings may be developed to the street line or with a small setback which will be attractively landscaped. They should not exceed three stories in addition to any underground parking.

LOW DENSITY
RESIDENTIAL



Some areas in the downtown are seen as appropriate for detached single family housing similar to what is already in most surrounding neighborhoods. These areas achieve about four to six units per acre. New housing should be designed to blend in with nearby existing homes, matching similar styles and materials.

Pocket Neighborhoods

As an alternative to more typical detached housing, developers may propose a pocket neighborhood. Pocket neighborhoods are clusters of modestly-sized homes grouped around and fronting on shared greenspaces such as a courtyard or pedestrian corridor. Each home does have its own private outdoor space, often transitioning to the common space. Garages and trafficways are designed to not conflict with shared spaces.

LOW DENSITY
COMMERCIAL



The downtown is a large area with a diverse character. Parts of the district can support uses drawing a greater number of vehicles, but still in a pedestrian-friendly environment. Buildings will still be set close to the street and have an entrance and windows on the street facade, while allowing on-site parking and even drive-through access to the back and side. While set further apart than in the traditional commercial areas, gaps between buildings will be minimized to maintain a pleasant walking experience. Street frontage and parking areas will be heavily landscaped.

PUBLIC PARK
OR GREENWAY



Menasha residents expressed a clear desire to secure public access to the shoreline, and to expand upon the number of parks, plazas, and greenways in the district. Several areas have been identified for future parks linked by trail systems along the waterways. Each node along this chain may have a different character or purpose, highlighting the site's environmental features or history, creating viewpoints or event spaces, or accommodating recreational uses. Developers should be encouraged to link private spaces, such as outdoor dining areas or plazas, to the park network.

HIGH DENSITY
RESIDENTIAL



High density residential development is characterized by large buildings, resulting in a density of more than 16 units per acre. As in the high density mixed use category, these buildings may contain several floors of apartments or condominiums. Underground parking is usually provided. These buildings will use high quality exterior materials, and should be encouraged to provide private outdoor space such as usable patios or balconies on upper floors.

ROWHOUSE
RESIDENTIAL



Rowhouses are attached residential units having a front entrance on the street and garages accessed from the rear of the building. Buildings usually have a small setback and attractive street facade. Individual units may have private outdoor space on balconies or in a small rear yard. Because they eliminate the side yard, rowhouses can be developed at a higher density than single family housing, reaching up to twelve units per acre.



1. The City of Menasha will collaborate with the downtown business association (Business Owners of Menasha, or BOOM) and others to foster a vital small business community, assisting businesses and property owners with building renovation, business startup and expansion, and district promotion.
2. Buildings on Racine Street have not attracted the degree of reinvestment, and new businesses, as have those on Main Street. Concurrent with reconstruction of the Racine Street bridge, the City will approach property owners to incentivize renovation and to help recruit new businesses that can occupy these buildings, once bridge construction is completed.
3. The City will install gateway features to mark the entrance of the downtown, concurrent with the Racine Street bridge reconstruction project.
4. The parking garage on Broad Street was designed to allow expansion west to Milwaukee Street. As redevelopment occurs and vacant office buildings attract new tenants, the City will monitor parking demands, and will provide additional parking to ensure the continued access to nearby parking for downtown customers and employees.
5. The former City Hall is vacant and an office building is advertised for lease. In seeking new owners or tenants for these buildings, the City should pursue the potential to convert the street level to uses that help to continue the pattern of shops and restaurants, thereby helping to connect the east and west ends of Main Street.

City Hall Sub-Area

The marina and potential for water access are the hallmarks of this area, which also houses the new City Hall and the senior center. The intent is that this area will redevelop to continue the traditional Main Street pattern of shops and restaurants, heavily oriented to the Government Canal.

6. The marina is a signature feature of downtown, but its appearance is marred by the unattractive chain link fence surrounding it. This should be replaced with a lower ornamental fence, if not entirely removed. The trash enclosure adjacent to the gift shop should be eliminated or relocated to a less visible site.
7. The commercial buildings south of Main Street, west of the marina, present one of the most attractive redevelopment opportunities in the downtown district. The City will work with owners to support redevelopment of a walkable urban pattern, with ground floor commercial uses that take advantage of the location and adjacent waterfront, such as restaurants with outdoor seating.
8. The City's parking lot on Chute Street has been identified as an area in which a multi-level parking garage could be constructed. The City will need to monitor how demand for parking evolves as redevelopment occurs and existing office buildings are re-occupied. Structured parking in this location has the potential to provide enough stalls to allow redevelopment of

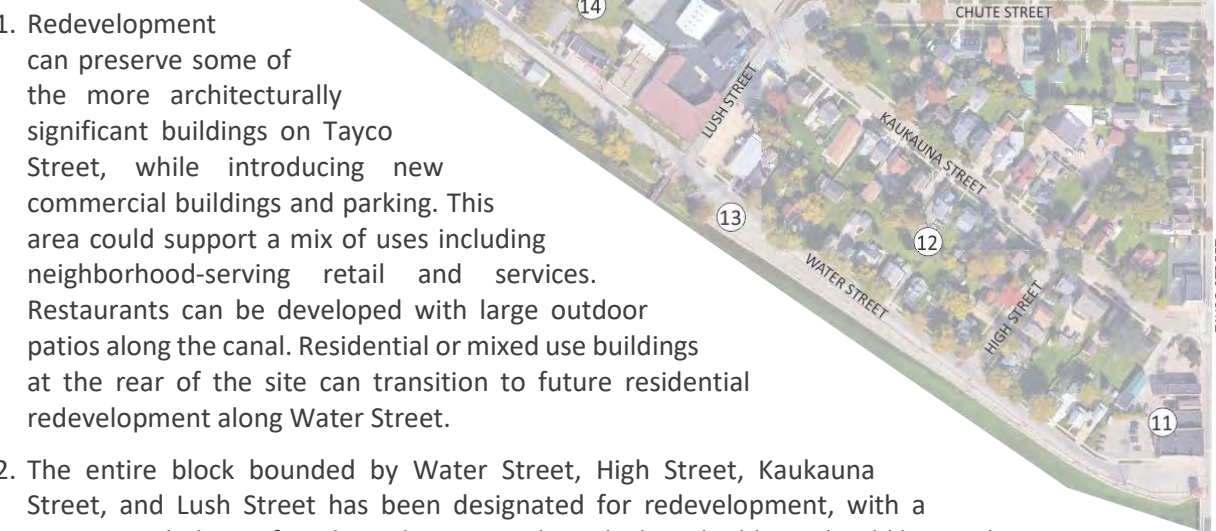


the City-owned lot next to City Hall on Main Street.

9. The corner of Tayco Street and Chute Street would be an appropriate location to install a gateway feature to mark entry into the downtown district. This should be installed at the same time as other gateway features.
10. The building at the corner of Main Street and Tayco Street (the Brin Building) is an attractive historic structure that will be retained in a future redevelopment, although the theater may be demolished to allow uses to embrace the waterfront location.

Tayco-Water Street Sub-Area

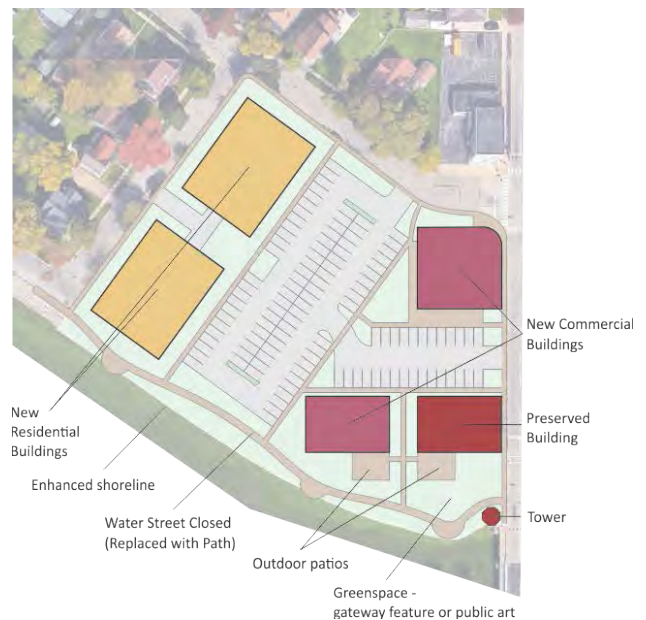
This is largely a residential neighborhood and is intended to remain so, while allowing for higher densities near the Government Canal and commercial or mixed use redevelopment along Tayco Street. This area was designated a priority redevelopment because of the City's plans to reconstruct Water Street in 2020. This plan recommends closing a portion of Water Street, both to enhance redevelopment of the block bounded by Tayco Street, Kaukauna Street, and High Street, and to create a wider greenway through which to construct a trail along the canal. It will also direct traffic to the signalized intersection at Kaukauna Street. Additional redevelopment can occur along the remainder of Water Street, fronting on the canal.

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- The map shows an aerial view of a neighborhood with a canal on the left. A dashed orange line runs horizontally across the middle. Numbered locations 11 through 15 are marked. Street names include Broad Street, Chute Street, Kaukauna Street, High Street, Water Street, Lush Street, and Tayco Street. The 'LOCKS' are indicated on the canal.
11. Redevelopment can preserve some of the more architecturally significant buildings on Tayco Street, while introducing new commercial buildings and parking. This area could support a mix of uses including neighborhood-serving retail and services. Restaurants can be developed with large outdoor patios along the canal. Residential or mixed use buildings at the rear of the site can transition to future residential redevelopment along Water Street.
 12. The entire block bounded by Water Street, High Street, Kaukauna Street, and Lush Street has been designated for redevelopment, with a recommended use of medium-density residential. These buildings should be sited to maximize views of the canal, and have attractive, high quality facades.
 13. While closing Water Street will make it possible to construct a trail from Tayco Street to High Street, further west there is only a narrow strip of land between the edge of the street and the canal. The canal path can be extended through this area, to the locks, as a wide walkway adjacent to the street, with occasional bump-outs to the water's edge. The trail and waterfront are an asset to help

encourage redevelopment on the fronting residential block. They should be attractively designed and landscaped with low-level lighting. Transient docks should be provided along the shore, and the City may consider the possibility of an additional marina or boat slips in the turning basin adjacent to the locks.

14. This block is intended for redevelopment at a lower density than the more eastern block. The Water Street frontage has been identified as a preferred site for rowhouse development maximizing views of the water. These buildings should have an attractive front facade with high quality materials. The Kaukauna Street frontage can remain as detached housing or redeveloped with additional rowhouse units.

15. Residential neighborhoods in and adjacent to downtown are aging. The City will ensure that its property codes are enforced, and will offer assistance to homeowners maintaining or improving their property.



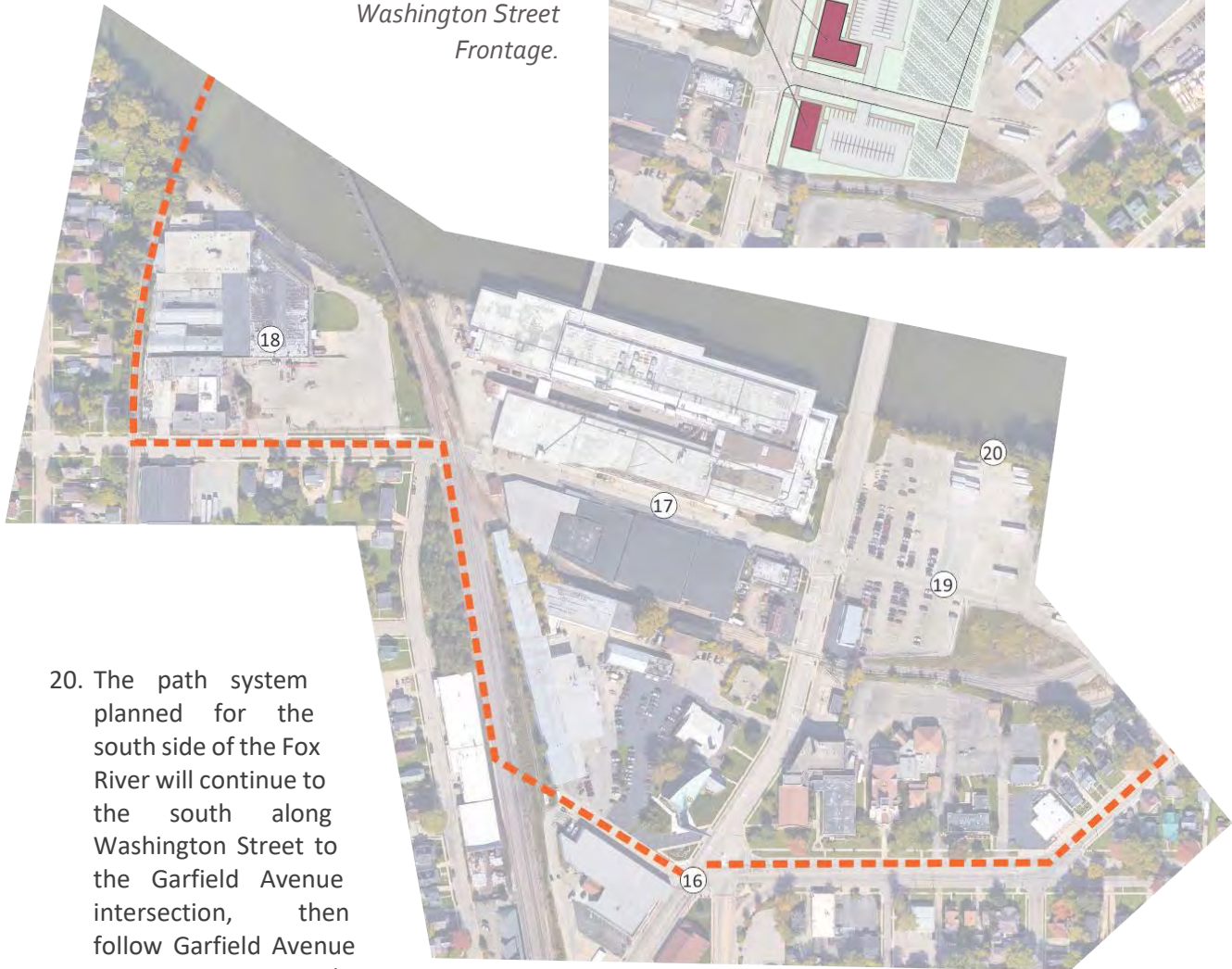
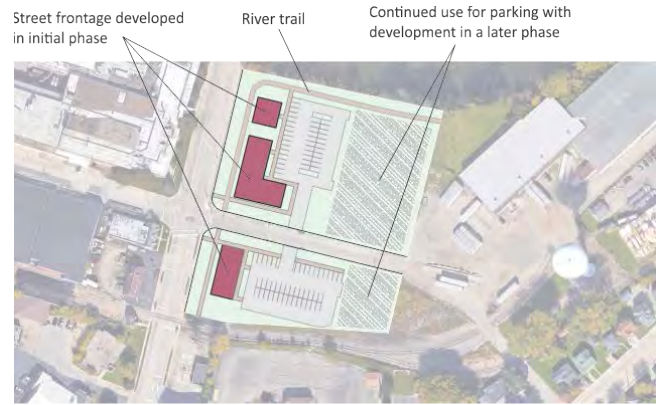
*Redevelopment concept for the
Tayco Street frontage*

Washington Street Sub-Area

Although the Graphic Packaging building northeast of Washington Street and Garfield Avenue is presently vacant, this area is not expected to see large-scale redevelopment in the near future. When redevelopment does occur, interior parts of the area are expected to support new housing at varied densities, while the Washington Street frontage will be lined with commercial uses. This is an area that can support neighborhood retail and services, and may have more auto-oriented site planning. The railroads passing through the area, and continuing industrial uses will pose challenges for redevelopment.

16. The intersection of Commercial Street and Nicolet Boulevard is a gateway to the downtown and should have a significant feature marking entry to the district. This should be completed at the same time as other gateway features.
17. While significant changes to this area are not anticipated in the next several years, the City can begin planning for the eventual transition of these properties to commercial and mixed use development. Some of the existing buildings fronting Washington Street may be preserved, and the City can offer assistance to help in their restoration.
18. This site is not expected to redevelop in the near future. The land use plan designated it for single family housing, and the site should be considered for developing a pocket neighborhood in which smaller homes are closely spaced to front on shared greenspace.
19. Some short term redevelopment may occur if all or a portion of the parking lot on Washington Street were to redevelop with commercial uses. This would also help to improve the visual appeal of the site. Garfield Avenue should be extended east of Washington Street to create a street network serving redevelopment areas south of the river.

Redevelopment concept demonstrating phased redevelopment of the Washington Street Frontage.



20. The path system planned for the south side of the Fox River will continue to the south along Washington Street to the Garfield Avenue intersection, then follow Garfield Avenue west to connect to the Loop the Lake Route.

Lawson Canal Sub-Area

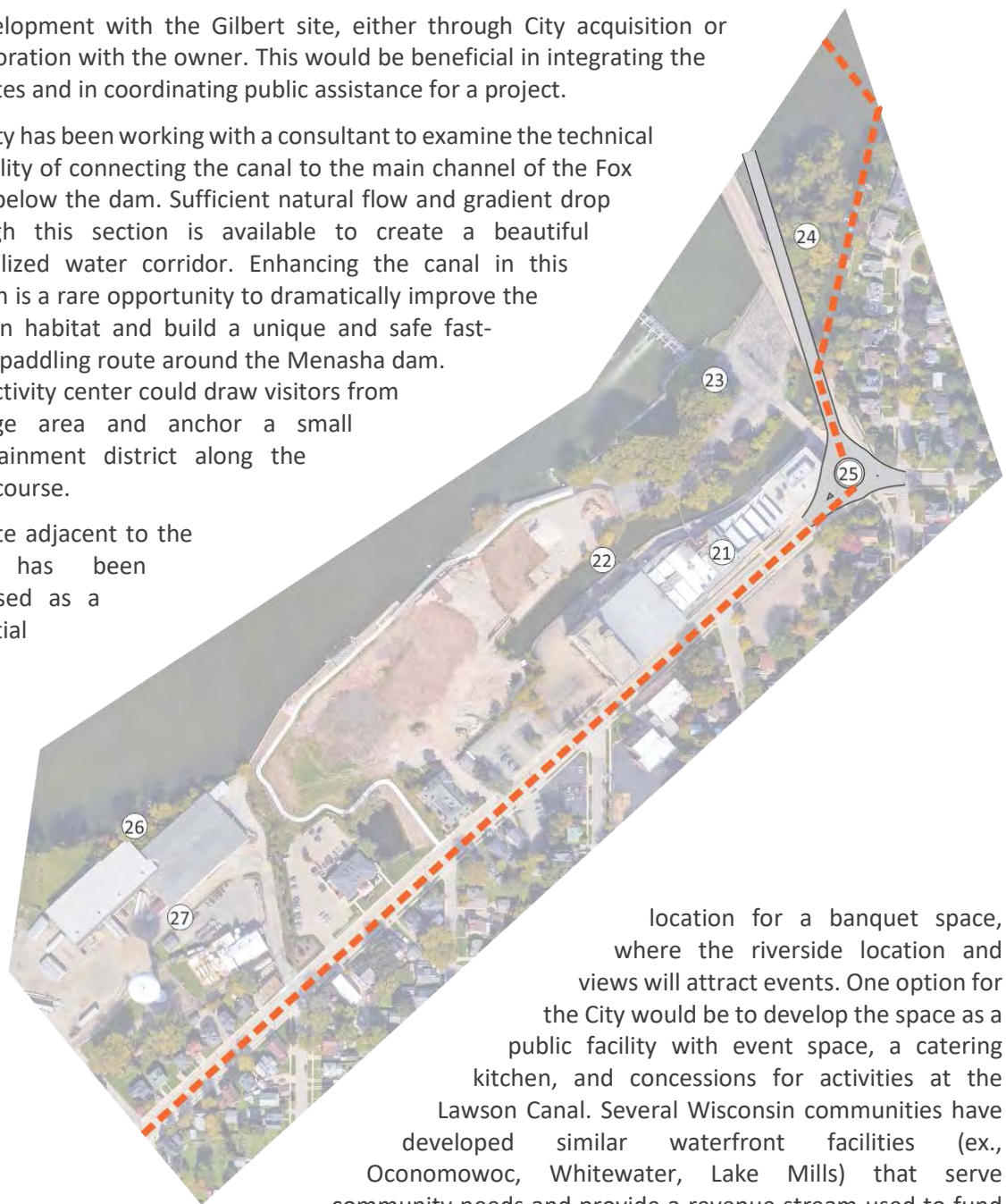
Planned reconstruction of the Racine Street bridge will trigger redevelopment of the Gilbert/Banta site, as the building will be acquired and a portion torn down to reconfigure the intersection with Ahnaip Street. Already, the City has begun to look at how the Lawson Canal may be repurposed as a public recreation asset, and a trail has been constructed along a portion of the Fox River leading to the site. Much of this area is intended for residential development with the potential for some commercial uses. Additionally, an area adjacent to the dam and underneath the new bridge will become public open space, integrated with the Lawson Canal improvements.

21. The Banta / RR Donnelly property is currently the only downtown property slated for public acquisition, giving the City a considerable amount of leverage to bring about very attractive redevelopment proposals. High-value uses on this property, such as owner occupied condominiums, will generate tax increment that can be applied to both the redevelopment project and to public improvements on the canal, waterfront paths, and open space. There is a potential to combine

redevelopment with the Gilbert site, either through City acquisition or collaboration with the owner. This would be beneficial in integrating the two sites and in coordinating public assistance for a project.

22. The City has been working with a consultant to examine the technical feasibility of connecting the canal to the main channel of the Fox River below the dam. Sufficient natural flow and gradient drop through this section is available to create a beautiful naturalized water corridor. Enhancing the canal in this fashion is a rare opportunity to dramatically improve the riparian habitat and build a unique and safe fast-water paddling route around the Menasha dam. This activity center could draw visitors from a large area and anchor a small entertainment district along the watercourse.

23. The site adjacent to the dam has been discussed as a potential



location for a banquet space, where the riverside location and views will attract events. One option for the City would be to develop the space as a public facility with event space, a catering kitchen, and concessions for activities at the Lawson Canal. Several Wisconsin communities have developed similar waterfront facilities (ex., Oconomowoc, Whitewater, Lake Mills) that serve community needs and provide a revenue stream used to fund park operations.

24. Land from the dam to the northern tip of the peninsula anticipated to become public open space. Aside from the potential banquet space, this is expected to be used for passive recreation. The tip of the peninsula would be an excellent location for both an overlook and a gateway feature welcoming boaters to the downtown.
25. A gateway feature should be included to coincide with reconstructing the bridge and intersection.
26. The City's trail on the south bank of the Fox River should be continued to Washington Street. Eventually connecting to the Loop the Lake trail to the west. Additional connections to Ahnaip Street should be included in future redevelopment of the area.
27. This area is considered a long term redevelopment site. It should develop with an internal road network.

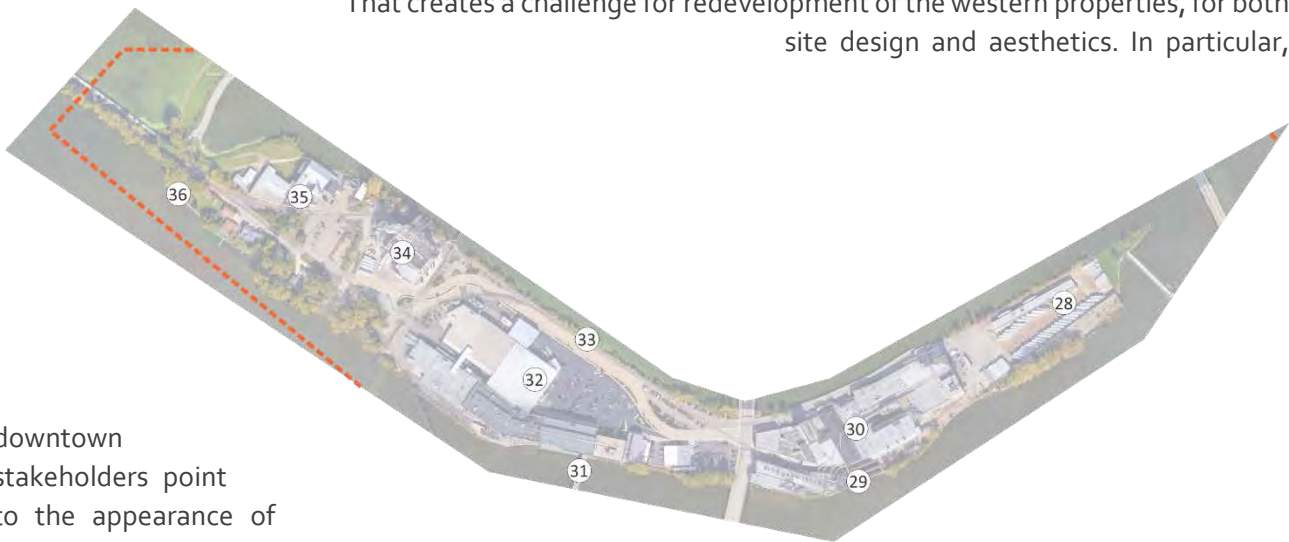


Concept of the Lawson Canal enhanced as a naturalized channel with public access

North Riverbank Sub-Area

The area referred to as “North Riverbank” has always been industrial, save for a small number of homes wedged between the railroad and the Fox River. Both Coveris (at the center of the area) and Sonoco (east of Washington Street) are expected to continue operation over the life of this plan.

That creates a challenge for redevelopment of the western properties, for both site design and aesthetics. In particular,



downtown stakeholders point to the appearance of Sonoco’s buildings and the dust from its parking lot. Over the long term, this entire area is envisioned to redevelop with a combination of high density housing and commercial and office uses.

28. The eastern tip of the area, where the Fox River and Government Canal split, is expected to become public open space. Until redevelopment occurs, the City should work with Sonoco to address the appearance of the parking lot and buildings on the site, especially the north-facing walls and unused warehouse along the river. Sonoco has made recent improvements to minimize dust, and could also consider landscaping to screen views of the site. landscaping to screen the site.

29. The Sonoco site may be a location where riverfront paths and other amenities are developed under private ownership, with public access easements. These paths will have less use than paths on the north bank of the canal and south bank of the river.
30. The Sonoco site is a large property under one owner. The land use plan recommends that it redevelop as an office campus. While office uses may dominate, some latitude should be provided to allow commercial uses on the ground floor, particularly along Washington Street.
31. One of the most unique characteristics of the Coveris and Graphic Packaging sites is a passage between the buildings that crosses over the river. This may be retained as the two properties redevelop, and used to create a very unique pedestrian route between the two sites.
32. The Coveris property is not expected to change its use any time soon, but the sites behind it are candidates for early redevelopment. At the time the property does redevelop, some portions of the existing, Art Deco style, brick Coveris building may be preserved and repurposed.
33. Additional landscaping can be provided along River Street to create a more attractive passage to the former power plant and Whiting Mill sites.
34. Parts of the former power plant are now being used by a food processing company. Action should be taken to remove unused elements such as the large towers and smokestacks. This property could redevelop with residential uses, perhaps retaining some portions of the existing brick structure. Rail spurs across the site make redevelopment challenging.
35. There is current discussion about redeveloping the Whiting Mill with residential uses that will retain a significant portion of the existing structure. This proposal is consistent with the land use plan. Redevelopment should secure an easement for continuation of the waterfront path system, including the Loop the Lake bridge.
36. The City of Menasha should continue to support marketing and possible connections to the Loop the Lake initiative, which includes a bridge over the Fox River from near the locks to Fox Street. Regional trail systems such as this one bring a vibrancy to the district and to the community. They are increasingly a consideration in where people choose to live and where companies locate.

Land Use Principles

In addition to general land use, this plan recommends establishing guidelines, or principles, that describe the character of development it would like to see to ensure the sustained vitality of the downtown and its neighborhoods. These are followed by actions or policies that describe how those principles can be enacted.

THE CITY OF MENASHA WILL ESTABLISH A REGULATORY FRAMEWORK THAT SUPPORTS THE DOWNTOWN VISION DESCRIBED IN THIS PLAN.

This plan proposes changes to land use that may not be achievable under existing zoning or other ordinances and policies. With an update to its Comprehensive Plan on the horizon, the City can proactively look at the regulatory environment to identify and make appropriate changes.

ACTION: Ensure that future land uses, pedestrian and vehicular connections, and principles identified in the Downtown Vision Plan are incorporated into the update to the City's Comprehensive Plan.

ACTION: Review the City's zoning code (particularly the C-2 and multifamily zones) to ascertain that the future uses proposed in this plan are possible, or identify and adopt appropriate changes to the code.

ACTION: Adopt design guidelines for the downtown district, addressing the site planning and building design characteristics recommended in this plan, for commercial, mixed use, office, and multifamily residential

development. These should focus on preserving public access to the waterfront and ensuring a pedestrian-friendly streetfront.

ACTION: The City will adopt an incentive policy that provides guidance on the amount and type of incentives that will be considered in assisting redevelopment projects, and requirements that any assisted project must meet.

AT LEAST HALF OF THE NEW HOUSING UNITS ADDED IN THE DOWNTOWN WILL BE OWNER OCCUPIED. THESE WILL BE DISTRIBUTED THROUGHOUT THE DISTRICT.

Menasha recognizes market demand for owner occupied rowhouse and condominium style housing built on the waterfront. Downtown development sites are well suited to the use in either renovated industrial buildings or new construction. In addition to meeting the housing needs of residents, this policy will result in higher assessed values, generating taxes to support public investment in the downtown through mechanisms such as tax incremental financing. In 2015 the US Census estimated that 63 percent of existing housing in the city was owner occupied.

POLICY: Any development with 40 or more residential units will be required to provide a minimum of 20 percent of the units are made available for sale as owner occupied housing.

POLICY: The City of Menasha will not provide TIF or other incentives, or support state grant applications, for any proposed project with 20 or more units, unless at least 30 percent of the units are made available for sale as owner occupied housing.

POLICY: The City of Menasha will require that at least 50 percent of the units constructed on property controlled by the City, and made available for private development, will be owner occupied.

AT LEAST 75 PERCENT OF THE NEW RENTAL HOUSING UNITS ADDED IN THE DOWNTOWN WILL BE BUILT FOR LEASE AT MARKET RATE. SUBSIDIZED HOUSING WILL BE DISTRIBUTED THROUGHOUT THE DISTRICT, RATHER THAN CONCENTRATED IN ANY SINGLE AREA.

POLICY: No more than 50 percent of the housing units in any new project proposed in the downtown, over 30 units in size, should be subsidized as low- to moderate-income housing.

POLICY: The City of Menasha will not provide TIF or other incentives to new development projects where more than 25 percent of the units will be subsidized low- or moderate-income housing. The City will not support applications under the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program, or other state or federal programs, for any proposed development with more than 50 percent of the units proposed as low- or moderate-income housing.

POLICY: The City of Menasha will not allow the total number of subsidized low- to moderate-income housing units to exceed 35 percent of all housing units in any of the six downtown sub-areas.

THE CITY OF MENASHA WILL ENSURE THAT THERE IS ADEQUATE PARKING TO MEET THE NEEDS OF DOWNTOWN RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES, AND VISITORS TO THE DISTRICT.

POLICY: All new development projects totaling over 10,000 square feet of commercial area will be required to demonstrate that there is adequate parking either onsite or nearby. All newly constructed residential units added in the downtown will be required to provide at least one parking space per unit. This may be accomplished by collaborating with the City to develop designated spaces in public parking lots.

POLICY: The City of Menasha will incorporate on-street parking into street reconstruction projects to the extent possible, where on-street parking is convenient to meeting the needs of downtown businesses and mid- to high-density residential development.

POLICY: The City of Menasha will monitor the need for parking, including the overall number of spaces and their distribution across the district, to ensure that there is sufficient parking convenient to downtown businesses. Deficiencies may be addressed through parking management or adding to the parking inventory.

BUILDINGS ON MAIN STREET WILL CONTINUE A PATTERN OF ACTIVE STOREFRONTS, ENCOURAGING STREET-LEVEL SHOPS, RESTAURANTS, OR SIMILAR USES THAT ACTIVATE THE SPACE AND CONTRIBUTE TO A WALKABLE SHOPPING DISTRICT.

There is a strong desire to see Main Street thrive as a retail and dining district. This requires a critical mass of these businesses, and an urban pattern of closely-spaced shops and restaurants. A significant number of non-contributing uses, or long spans without active uses, can threaten the vitality of the shopping area.

POLICY: Most retail and dining uses should be permitted by right within the downtown district. Service uses and offices should be designated as conditional uses.

POLICY: Any new development on Main Street will be designed to have incorporate retail, dining, or other active commercial space occupying the street level facade.

ACTION: The City of Menasha will work with current or future owners of existing, vacant office buildings on Main Street, to renovate buildings to incorporate retail and/or dining uses into the street level facade.

Waterfront Principles

The Fox River and canals are the single most important asset available to downtown to attract customers to businesses, residents to new housing, and businesses to vacant office space. Access to the river creates additional value for residential or commercial real estate in the district. Downtown residents, workers, and visitors are all drawn to water views and accessibility. To maximize its potential as a catalyst in creating an active and successful district, the City will establish the following principles with regard to the river and canals.

1. Ensure public access to the waterfront wherever feasible, either through public ownership or public access easements on privately developed waterfront.
2. Embrace the waterfront, incorporating it as a focal point in all waterfront development and redevelopment efforts.
3. Increase public access and access points to the Fox River and canals.
4. Maintain and improve visibility of the waterfront from surrounding areas.
5. Improve public connectivity between waterfront uses.
6. Link community destination areas located along the water, such as the Menasha Locks, Trestle Trail, and Jefferson Park.
7. Leverage the waterfront to attract higher quality development whose architecture and site design are exemplary.
8. Support parks, trails, open spaces, and recreation along the waterfront.
9. Recruit a diverse mix of uses attracting people and create activity along the waterfront throughout the week, in both daytime and evening hours.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES



Issues and Opportunities

Planning for the downtown area considered a great number of issues and opportunities drawn from prior studies, observations of the consultant team and City staff, and insight from participants in the public engagement process. Prior planning and studies helping to create an understanding of the area included:

- Downtown Urban Design Plan (1997)
- Riverfront Redevelopment Concept Plan (2006)
- Historical and Architectural Resources Survey (2009)
- Connect Communities Meeting Report (2013)
- Downtown Parking Analysis (2013)
- Menasha Lock Site Visioning Workshop Summary Report (2016)
- Racine Street Bridge Realignment Alternatives



The Study Area

Menasha's downtown study area takes in the city's traditional commercial district along Main Street, the industrial sites along the river and canal, and parts of adjacent residential neighborhoods. It is roughly bounded by Broad Street on the north, Racine and Ahnaip Streets on the east, Nicolet Boulevard on the south, and combination of the railroad, Garfield Avenue, and the river on the west.

Part of a Region

Menasha is not an isolated community. It is part of the Fox Cities, an area comprised of 20 communities with a total population of over 300,000 residents. Several cities and villages in the region have revitalized downtowns that both compete with Menasha, and help to support it when visitors or residents combine destinations. The public largely supports the vision of a physically, economically, and culturally connected region.

There is great deal of collaboration on initiatives that cross municipal borders, such as the Fox Cities Exhibition Center in downtown Appleton or the trail systems that link communities in the Fox River Valley. In working together to build assets or promote visitation, these communities amplify the impact of their individual investments.





ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

1. Vibrant cluster of specialty shops, restaurants, and services in attractive historic buildings.
2. Office employees are an important customer base, but the buildings disrupt a pattern of closely spaced shops. Several vacant buildings might be renovated with ground floor retail and dining.
3. Parking is not presently a problem, but could become scarce if all of the offices are filled at high density.
4. Surrounding neighborhoods are affordable but may need improvement.
5. The realigned Racine Street bridge will have pedestrian features, but roundabouts can still be difficult for pedestrians to cross.
6. Downtown has several plazas or pocket parks connected by path systems.
7. The marina is a unique asset, but improvements are needed to fencing.
8. Older commercial buildings near the marina are a redevelopment opportunity.
9. Both sides of Tayco Street at Main Street can redevelop, with some buildings preserved.
10. Water Street will be reconstructed in 2020 with the potential to reconfigure the street and improve the waterfront.
11. Properties between Water Street and Kaukauna Street are candidates for redevelopment.
12. The locks are a significant historical feature.
13. The Loop the Lake initiative will tie downtown Menasha to the regional population.
14. Redevelopment is contemplated at the Whiting Mill and former power plant.
15. Railroad tracks will remain and are an impediment to redevelopment.
16. Coveris is not expected to redevelop in the near term.
17. Sonoco is not expected to redevelop soon, but its buildings and storage yard are seen as a detraction from improvements made by others.
18. Portions of the Banta / RR Donnelly site will be torn down as part of the Racine Street reconstruction. The site is a prime redevelopment opportunity and some portions of the building may be preserved. Its redevelopment may be combined with the adjacent Gilbert site.
19. The Lawson Canal is viewed as having significant potential as a public recreational asset that can help to spur redevelopment.
20. The City has begun to invest in the south bank of the river with its trail system.
21. This area can redevelop in phases, starting with the street frontage and continuing trail connections.
22. Graphic Packaging might redevelop with some portions of the building remaining.
23. The passage over the river can be retained and incorporated into redevelopment projects.
24. This area is seen as a long term residential redevelopment site.
25. This may be a long term redevelopment site.
26. Gateways to downtown are not well marked.

The Downtown Core

Menasha has a strong, if relatively small collection of good quality retail, dining, and supportive businesses on the north side of Main Street between Milwaukee Street and Racine Street. These are located in mostly restored historic commercial buildings dating back to the late 1800's. While this district has achieved success, it is also restricted in its ability to expand, due to intervening office buildings that have been developed in a way that does not continue the pattern of small, closely spaced shops at the ground level.

Vacancies in some of the large office buildings further west along Main Street may present opportunities to reconfigure the ground level to be more consistent with traditional patterns. The several remaining historic buildings, along with infill sites, can also be redeveloped with small businesses in the same pattern of closely spaced storefronts.



Newer office buildings do not continue the pattern of closely spaced small storefronts that define the core downtown commercial district

Transportation and Connectivity

Railroads played an important role in developing the Fox Valley, and several mainline tracks and spurs cross through the study area. Over time it may be possible to eliminate or reconfigure some spur tracks, but any redevelopment must be configured to conform with the existing mainlines. Additionally, their presence may be a disruption to traffic on roads and pedestrian paths.

The Commercial Street-Washington Street-Tayco Street corridor and the Racine Street-Ahnaip Street corridor are the primary routes through downtown Menasha. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation is planning to reconstruct the Racine Street Bridge, realigning it from its current location and installing roundabouts at Main Street and at Ahnaip Street. This is intended to improve vehicle traffic flow and pedestrian safety, but roundabouts can be more difficult to cross than typical signalized intersections.

A considerable amount of boat traffic uses the Government Canal and Fox



Features like the river and railroad tracks enabled Menasha's industries to develop in the 19th Century, but are also impediments to vehicle and pedestrian traffic

River during warmer months. Menasha is unique in that it has created transient dockage along the canal, enabling boaters to tie up and visit downtown businesses. This is one of very few places where boaters can access a commercial district. The City of Menasha has a marina in the downtown, and there is potential to develop additional moorings in the canal. The locks are closed to prevent the spread of brown goby. Until an alternate barrier can be installed, it is not possible to travel from Lake Winnebago to Little Lake Butte des Morts and further up the Fox River without portaging. Reopening the locks could have a significant impact on downtown visitation, tourism, and economic development.

The City has constructed walking paths along the north bank of the Government Canal from Tayco Street to Racine Street. There is also a path along a portion of the south bank of the Fox River. A third path has been constructed on a former railroad trestle, crossing Little Lake Butte des Morts from Fritse Park in the Village of Fox Crossing to the locks within the City of Menasha. Called the Friendship Trail, it is part of the “Loop the Lake” trail system. This can be connected to existing and future paths through the study area and beyond.

Parking was examined in a 2013 study commissioned by the City of Menasha. At the time, there was adequate parking due to vacancies in some office buildings. The study noted that if these were filled with high density office uses, there would be pressure on the existing inventory of public and private parking spaces. Workers would need to park further from work, and patrons of commercial businesses might be challenged to find nearby parking. Both the City and developers will need to consider parking as uses in the district evolve.



The Menasha Dam can be an attraction for adjacent parks, residences, and uses like a banquet facility.

Public Assets

Many of the City of Menasha's most significant investments have been concentrated in the downtown area. These include its city hall, the library, the senior center, the marina, existing waterfront improvements, and other recreational sites.

Rather than a single large site, the City of Menasha has established several small parks scattered throughout the downtown. Advantages to this approach are the intimacy found in smaller spaces, proximity to gathering places in all parts of the district, and the ability to vary design and highlight different features of the area. Larger events can be accommodated by temporarily closing Main Street.

Curtis Reed Square is the largest of the downtown public spaces. Other sites include the tiered grass strips between Main Street and the marina, an overlook and pocket park at the east end of Main Street, a new pocket park under construction next to One Menasha Center, the passage from Main Street to the parking garage on Broad Street, a small plaza on the eastern side of Tayco Street adjacent to the bridge, and the locks at the end of Broad Street. Many of these are connected by the walkway along the canal between Tayco and Racine Streets. The path on the south bank of the river, and future paths, can build additional connection between these and new sites.



Curtis Reed Square is the largest of the existing parks and plazas in the downtown.

Federal and state funds have also gone into improvements in the area. These include the dam and the continuing commitment to restore and maintain locks along the entire Fox River system. The State of Wisconsin will be reconstructing the Racine Street bridge with pedestrian access to connect both banks of the river to the existing and planned trail system.

Industrial Buildings and Redevelopment Sites

Downtown Menasha has a history as a center for manufacturing, with large industries located along both sides of the Fox River and the Government Canal. Some traditional industries are in decline, and the sites they occupied often do not meet the needs of current manufacturers. There are presently several vacant industrial buildings in the study area. Some of these are potentially historic and have a character that facilitates their conversion to housing or commercial uses, while others are nondescript industrial spaces that would most likely be torn down in any conversion to a new use.

- Whiting Mill - Access is a paramount concern for this site, which is on an island, at the west end of River Street, and cut off by railroad tracks. The vacant industrial buildings can be preserved and converted to residential uses with very good water views. The potential to add boat slips in the adjacent turning basin has been discussed. There is current developer interest in the site.
- Former City Power Plant - This building is now being used by a food processing company. Although it may continue as an industrial facility, the site can be redeveloped for other uses, most likely residential. Some portions of the building may have potential for conversion. Unused towers and smokestacks should be removed to improve the appearance of the property.
- Coveris - Coveris is one of the industrial uses in the corridor that is not expected to redevelop in the near term. In the future, if the operation should close, the art deco office portion of the building might be a candidate for residential conversion, while the industrial structures will most likely be demolished as part of a redevelopment project. One of the unique features of this building is a covered passage that crosses the river to the Graphic Packaging building. Originally used to move goods between the two buildings, it may be incorporated into a future redevelopment project. The front part of the property, on Washington Street, would support commercial or office uses.



The former Whiting Mill is a near-term candidate for redevelopment to add housing to the district.

- Sonoco - The Sonoco site consists of the large industrial plant, a large parking lot, and a warehouse building along the river. While the plant is operating and is expected to remain, unused parts of the buildings are not well maintained. Dust from a gravel lot, and the appearance of the buildings was often cited as a concern by downtown stakeholders. Sonoco paved a portion of the gravel lot in 2017, which will alleviate some of the concerns. Additional landscaping improvements could be made. The site would lend itself to several potential uses if redeveloped.
- Banta / RR Donnelly Site - The mill is a large, multi-storied structure filling the space between Ahnaip Street and the Lawson Canal. A portion of the building will be razed with the realignment of the Racine Street bridge. Of the remainder, the southern, four-story brick section may be preserved to incorporate into a future redevelopment project. Part of the site between the canal and the river has been used for parking, and may be redeveloped with a combination of private uses and public park space. The canal has been proposed for rehabilitation as a naturalized waterway. Due to the approximately eight-foot drop to the river level, there may be the potential to naturalize the channel with public recreational access. The Banta site and adjacent Gilbert site are a population location for fishing, which should be considered in future plans for recreational improvements in the area.
- Gilbert Site – The site of the former Gilbert Mill has been cleared, and environmental remediation has been completed to allow for its redevelopment. While it could develop separately, there may be some synergies in redeveloping this site along with the adjacent Banta site, resulting in a more cohesive development pattern and enabling the City to more effectively coordinate public participation, whether through the use of financial incentives or the development of parks and other public assets. This might occur through City acquisition or through a partnership with the site's developer.



The Lawson Canal runs adjacent to the Banta Mill. There is considerable interest in enhancing the canal as a naturalized corridor and opening the lower end to the main channel of the Fox River to create a fast-water route past the Menasha Dam.

- **Graphic Packaging** - This is a large, U-shaped building fronting on Washington Street and extending some distance along the river and Garfield Avenue. It is connected to the Coveris building by a passage over the river. While there is a potential for continuing industrial use of this vacant building, the site may also be a candidate for redevelopment. Some portions of the building along the river, and the offices, could be preserved for adaptive reuse. The parking lot on Washington Street may be a short term redevelopment opportunity.



The passage over the Fox River that connects the Graphic Packaging and Coveris buildings (above), and the office portion of the Coveris building (below).



- **Warehouse Specialists** - A metal-sided warehouse lies across Garfield Street from the Graphic Packaging building. The appearance of this building detracts from the desirability of redeveloping Graphic Packaging for residential uses, but the Warehouse Specialists structure is actively used and is not expected to redevelop in the near future.
- **Gunderson Cleaners** – The City has an opportunity to work with the owner to consolidate their operations at another site within Menasha, which would make this property available for redevelopment.

Continuing industrial activity can cause conflicts with other uses already in the district, or which may locate there. Some of the more commonly cited issues include the volume of truck traffic, noise and light, and the appearance of properties. For example, during the public engagement process, many people commented on the large unpaved parking areas and the maintenance and appearance of large industrial buildings.

Commercial Redevelopment Sites

Commercial sites in the downtown may also be considered candidates for redevelopment due to their location, current use, or building conditions.

- **Water Street** - Water Street is slated for reconstruction in 2020. To the south, the street is adjacent to the Government Canal. A combination of small homes and aging commercial buildings lines the north side of the street. Many of these are in poor condition.

Additional walkways and other waterfront improvements are contemplated as part of the street reconstruction project. Redeveloped property on the north side of the street, and potentially the entire block depth, would take advantage of the waterfront location.

- **Tayco Corner** - The southeast and southwest corners of this intersection (Tayco and Main Streets) contain a collection of one and two story commercial buildings dating from the late 1800's to middle 1900's. None of the buildings are particularly well-maintained and several are vacant or house marginal businesses. Redevelopment may preserve the best of these buildings while reconfiguring the remainder of the area to embrace the water, or more efficiently serve customer traffic. This site would be a good location in which to provide small retail and other businesses serving the neighborhood.



The R&R Bar and other properties on Tayco Street, and the former City Hall on Main Street are sites where commercial redevelopment may occur.



- **Marina West** - This is an area from Center Street to the Tayco Corner site, on the south side of Main Street. The community has long perceived an opportunity to redevelop with uses that complement the marina, such as a restaurant, shops, and residential units that would take advantage of marina and canal views.
- **Office Buildings** - Several of the mid-sized office buildings on the north side of Main Street are vacant. These include the former City Hall. Any of these buildings might be re-occupied by new office uses. It would also be possible to convert ground floor space to shop or restaurant space that allows expansion of the downtown core and encourages patrons to walk a larger segment of the downtown. One idea that has been suggested, but for which the market was not examined, is a boutique hotel that might occupy the upper floors of one of these buildings.
- **Residential Neighborhoods** - The residential neighborhoods surrounding downtown Menasha are made up of mostly single family homes, and some multifamily buildings, that have been built out for at least a half century. They are very affordable, but commonly have issues related to their age and both the design preferences and infrastructure (such as electrical and plumbing) common to the time of their construction. Not all properties have been maintained to the highest standards. Although there may be some infill sites within the neighborhoods, it is expected that the City's focus here will be to encourage home ownership and rehabilitation of the existing homes.

Other Issues and Opportunities

Several other issues may have a bearing on opportunities or constraints for downtown revitalization. As noted elsewhere in this document, there are surprisingly few neighborhood-serving business clusters in the area around the downtown. These are the chain and independent businesses often found in neighborhood strips - hair salons, insurance agents and real estate offices, hardware stores, convenience stores, restaurants, and similar kinds of uses. The Tayco Street - Washington Street - Commercial Street corridor may be an attractive place for these uses, developed with associated parking to facilitate customer visits.

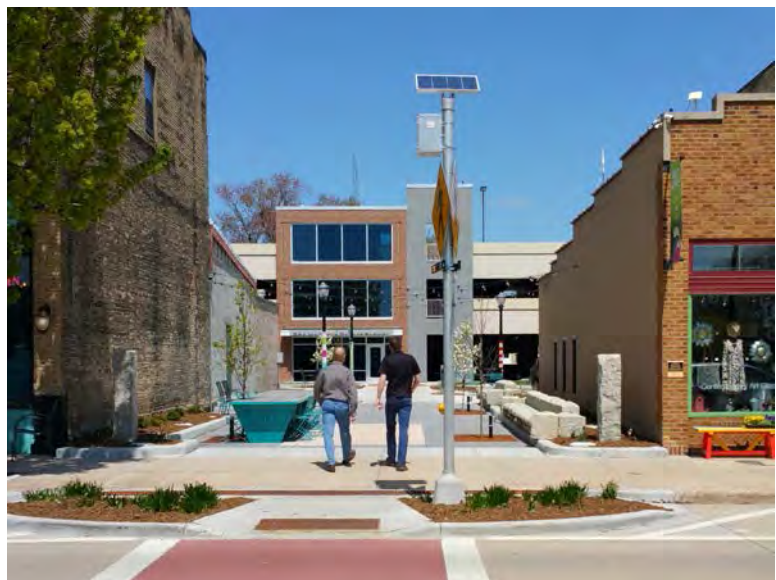
Downtown is acting as a cultural center to the community, with several annual events and a farmer's market held during the summer months. Events help to draw people to the district, where they can become acquainted with its businesses. At the same time, the downtown lacks a significant feature that would draw people from a larger area. Competing cities have features like ThedaCare and the YMCA in Neenah, the Performing Arts Center and new Fox Cities Exhibition Center in Appleton, and the Grand Opera House, YMCA, and convention center in Oshkosh, along with the nearby UW-Oshkosh campus. While Menasha does have a marina and a commercial district easily accessible by boat, this will be of interest only to people with a boat, and only in summer. The downtown plan should give thought to establishing a unique feature that will create a year-round draw for residents of the Fox Cities, and visitors, such as the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center does for Appleton.

The Fox Valley has a rich history that is seen in its buildings and infrastructure. That history is an important part of the downtown's brand. Key elements of its can be preserved and interpreted in a way that makes visiting the district an interesting and visually distinctive experience.

The Fox River and canals are both a barrier and an asset. Crossed only at Racine Street, Tayco Street, and in the future at the lock, the river and canal prevent people from moving easily between different parts of the



The locks are an important historical feature. Pedestrian connections through the downtown can create ties to the waterfront



downtown. At the same time, the water is an attraction that will draw people to businesses, and will draw buyers or renters to housing. Redevelopment should contemplate how to maximize both views and physical connections to the water, even for sites that are not directly located on it. Development along the waterfront can contain a mix of public and private gathering spaces allowing people to enjoy the water, such as small parks, overlooks, and seating or outdoor dining areas. Whether publicly or privately developed, the waterfront should remain (or become) accessible to the general public.

Downtown Menasha has not defined its entry points. Establishing gateway features can help to create an image for the district and tie together its disconnected sub-areas.

Although the City has made investments in trail systems, parks and plazas, and streetscapes in the downtown, these have not always been well maintained or mapped to show their connections. Other actions may have not been carefully considered for their impact on the quality of the visitor experience. For example, the chain link fence around the marina is unattractive and prevents visitors from getting close to the water, and a trash enclosure has been located next to the marina near the gift shop.

Implementation

The implementation section on the following pages lays out a sequence of tasks, and associated information, to achieve the vision described in this plan. This is intended as a general framework, and changing circumstances may cause some actions to be advanced, while others fall back. The City should annually review the plan to assess progress, and update it as necessary. To help organize these tasks, they have been laid out in a table at the end of the section. The order in which they are presented is not meant to infer any prioritization.

1. Work with Racine Street business owners to encourage renovation in conjunction with street reconstruction.

LEAD – Community Development

Ongoing

These buildings are located around the corner from the very desirable cluster of restored buildings and shops and restaurants on Main Street.

2. Continue the Paint and Restore Program, and investigate other programs to encourage home remodeling and maintenance.

LEAD – Community Development

Ongoing

Neighborhoods around downtown contain many houses in need of better maintenance. Programs such as Paint and Restore provide assistance to owners to undertake repairs they might otherwise put off. Other programs might be developed, perhaps with grant funding through sources like the Wisconsin Division of Housing's CDBG-Housing grants.

3. Monitor the need for additional parking and adopt policies to meet future downtown parking demand.

LEAD – Public Works / Community Development

Ongoing

The City has routinely examined parking needs in the downtown. The most recent analysis noted concerns that parking could become problematic if existing, vacant office buildings were filled with high density uses. Additional commercial, office, or residential development on downtown sites can

also create needs for more parking, and particularly within specific areas. The City will need to consider parking demands generated from new uses through its application review process, and examine public, or public-private improvements to add parking in the district as needed.

4. Establish a downtown organization to help implement the plan and manage the downtown. This can include public entities, community organizations, businesses, property owners, and residents.

LEAD – BOOM / Common Council

Ongoing

While Business owned of Menasha (BOOM) is an important resource for downtown's businesses, an organization with broader support – including businesses, property owners, community organizations, and others – will be able to tap more resources, as well as greater political support to make improvements benefitting the district. The City can lend its support, but the impetus to create the organization should come from within the community.

5. Monitor progress in implementing the downtown plan.

LEAD – Community Development

Ongoing

The Community Development Department should convene an annual meeting of those City departments and outside partners engaged in promoting the Downtown Vision Plan, with the purpose of reviewing progress, discussing activities to be accomplished in the coming year, and considering new initiatives that may arise. This process will help to ensure that the plan is implemented.

6. Explore opportunities to add art and interactive features to the downtown; for example, using LED technology to create a luminary destination along the waterfront. Engage local artists, property owners, and businesses to explore the potential of a downtown arts district.

LEAD – Public Works / Parks and Recreation / Community Development

Ongoing

Public art installations can be considered independently or in conjunction with planned infrastructure improvements, such as street reconstruction projects. Continuing interaction with the arts community can help to identify the desire for an arts district that may be accommodated in the downtown.

7. Regularly communicate with the CN Railway to review planned redevelopment projects and discuss how railroad conflicts can be mitigated.

LEAD – Community Development

Ongoing

The railroad has a significant impact on the district. Its tracks divide redevelopment sites and create barriers between parts of the district. Train operations can disrupt traffic, create a nuisance for residents, and pose safety concerns. Maintaining regular communication is an important step in anticipating conflicts and helping to mitigate negative impacts on the district.

8. Work with Business Owners of Menasha (BOOM) or other downtown organizations to craft an effective, multi-channel marketing program for the district.

LEAD – Community Development

Ongoing

The success of Menasha's small downtown businesses depends on generating customer traffic. A great number of cities have partnered with local business organizations to support their combined marketing initiatives, often bringing knowledge and capabilities that the businesses do not possess.

Menasha should similarly place its efforts at bringing professional marketing talent to the district to assist its businesses in identifying, understanding, and reaching their target markets across a variety of the most effective media.

9. Work with owners and developers to secure access to the waterfront, and to develop trails and other waterfront enhancements as property is redeveloped or made available.

LEAD – Community Development

Ongoing

The City has made clear its desire that the downtown waterfront will be accessible to the public, either through acquisition or the granting of public easements. This can be accomplished through the development review process or proactively by opening a dialogue with property owners to discuss acquisition.

10. Encourage redevelopment on priority sites identified in the plan.

LEAD – Community Development

Ongoing

- a. Banta / RR Donnelly – The City is currently pursuing acquisition. Once the property has been purchased, the portions not needed for the Racine Street bridge realignment can be made available for redevelopment. Steps in this process will include acquisition, environmental investigation and remediation, preparation of a redevelopment concept, demolition (all or part of the structure), subdivision of the portions of the site that will be retained as open space, and solicitation for a developer.
- b. Former City Hall – The former City Hall is currently listed for sale. Ideally, its sale will trigger a renovation to the façade to open up street level shops, restaurants, or other active uses. The City should consider incentives to encourage these improvements.
- c. Gilbert – The City should continue discussion with the owner to either acquire the property or to jointly seek a single developer for this site and the Banta / RR Donnelly site. Joint development will help to address concerns about access to the riverfront portions of the Banta / RR Donnelly site, and create a well-integrated development plan.
- d. Gunderson Cleaners – The owner has expressed interest in consolidating operations to a single location within the City of Menasha, making the property available for redevelopment. The City can provide financial and technical assistance to help this occur.
- e. Tayco (Brin block) – The City can help to incentivize renovation of the street façade, and redevelopment of the portions of the building along the canal. One option may be to try to combine this site with the Gunderson Cleaners property to create a more cohesive project.
- f. Tayco (R&R block) – Efforts to spur redevelopment on this block may occur simultaneously with reconstruction of Water Street, through with the city will close a portion of the street and install a path and other greenspace features adjacent to the bridge. One approach may be to incentivize a project by defraying the costs of site preparation and restoration of the R&R bar building.
- g. Water Street – This may be a site where the City can rezone the redevelopment area to allow townhouse and mid-density residential development. It is expected that developers will initiate property acquisition and bring project proposals to the City, which may consider financial assistance to defray project costs.
- h. Whiting – There is developer interest in this site. Challenges for redevelopment include access, the location of rail spurs, and the appearance of the former power plant. The City can play an active role in helping to negotiate a resolution to these concerns.

11. Update the City's Comprehensive Plan to incorporate the Downtown Vision Plan and its recommended land uses and policies.

LEAD – Community Development with the assistance of an outside consultant

Short term, 2018-2020

The Comprehensive Plan is the document, adopted by ordinance, that establishes an overall framework for development within the community. The recommendations contained within the Downtown Vision Plan can be adopted into the Comprehensive Plan and integrated into planning for the larger community. It is expected that the City will hire a consultant to assist in updating the Comprehensive Plan within the next two years.

12. Update the City's Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP) to include parks, trails, and similar recommendations in the Downtown Vision Plan. This should include detailed recommendations for the downtown waterfront.

LEAD – Parks and Recreation with the assistance of an outside consultant

Short term 2018-2020

The Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan is an official document containing an inventory of parks and facilities, as well as other recreation assets. The City is required to have a plan adopted within the last five years, in order to be eligible for grant funding from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. These grants are a significant source of funding for land acquisition and some facilities. This plan can be updated to coincide with the Comprehensive Plan update. It will also provide an opportunity for the City to develop a more complete framework for waterfront acquisition, trail development, and other features along the waterfront.

13. Update the City's zoning ordinance, zoning map, and official map to ensure that the types of development recommended in the Downtown Vision Plan are permitted as intended.

LEAD – Community Development

Short term, 2018-2020, and as necessary

The land uses proposed in the Downtown Vision Plan, as well as their desired development character, may not be consistent with the existing zoning. An update to the zoning ordinance can occur with the Comprehensive Plan update. Zoning map amendments will occur as property owners initiate the process. The official map indicates the locations of future streets and other transportation features, parks, and other public assets. This can also be updated concurrently with the Comprehensive Plan.

14. Prepare a pattern book to describe the character of development intended in different parts of the downtown.

LEAD – Community Development

Short term, 2018-2020

Unlike traditional design guidelines, a pattern book describes the character of desired development while often providing the owner greater flexibility to meet the requirements. The pattern book can also be adopted through the Comprehensive Planning process.

15. Work with the site owners to improve the appearance and mitigate nuisances from the Sonoco site.

LEAD – Community Development

Short term, 2018-2020, and as necessary

Although a large portion of the parking lot has now been paved, there are continuing problems with views from both the north and south, and with maintenance of the buildings. The City can continue

to work with the owner to encourage landscaping to act as screening, and repairs and improvements to the structure.

16. Encourage redevelopment of the Washington Street frontage of Graphic Packaging's parking lot.

LEAD – Community Development

Short term, 2018-2020

The parking lot frontage is “low-hanging fruit” for redevelopment, in a location where redevelopment will greatly improve the experience of entering the downtown district. Redevelopment can be accomplished in a way that leaves sufficient parking available to support continuing industrial use of the remainder of the property. Portions of the riverfront trail system can be constructed at the same time.

17. Study, design, and reconstruct Water Street, closing the portion between Tayco and High Streets, and constructing a trail and promenade along the canal.

LEAD – Community Development

Short term, 2018-2020

The Water Street reconstruction project will commence in 2018. The partial street closure can be incorporated into engineering for the street, replacing that section with greenspace, an entry feature, and an enhanced trail.

18. Work with the owners of the former city hall (140 Main Street) and adjacent building (130 Main Street) to renovate the façade to create street level storefronts.

LEAD – Community Development

Short term, 2018-2020

These two buildings were originally developed as office buildings with facades that do not have a pedestrian-friendly street façade. Current vacancies open the door to possible renovation projects that open the street level and allow retail, dining, or other uses to occupy the space. Achieving these conversion will help to bridge the disconnect between the core specialty downtown district, and future commercial development further west on Main Street.

19. Eliminate the fence around the marina or replace it with a lower ornamental fence.

LEAD – Marina

Short term, 2018-2020

A great number of negative public comments were received concerning the fence around the marina. Ideally, access may be modified to allow the fence to be removed. Alternatively, it should be replaced with a lower ornamental metal fence. Additionally, the trash container adjacent to the gift shop should be eliminated or relocated to a less visible location. This can occur as early as 2018. Additional improvements to the public space around the marina may occur in following years.

20. Install gateway features at downtown entry points.

LEAD – Parks and Recreation / Public Works

Short term, 2018-2020

This plan recommends installation of gateway feature on Racine, Tayco, and Washington Streets and on the Fox River (for boaters). These can be installed at the same time that Racine Street and Water Street are reconstructed.

21. Prepare a city-wide bicycle and pedestrian plan, and study mobility in the downtown, and to the Fox Cities region.

LEAD – Parks and Recreation / Community Development

Short term, 2018-2020

This planning is typically done in conjunction with updating a city's comprehensive plan or Comprehensive outdoor recreation plan.

22. Plan and execute a reconstruction project on Main Street that will result in an enhanced streetscape to support the pedestrian environment.

LEAD – Public Works

Short term, 2018-2020

Improvements to Main Street can include new lighting, accessibility (ADA) enhancements, parking, landscaping, public art installations, outdoor gathering places, and wayfinding signage. These should be planned and coordinated with businesses to minimize disruptions to customer traffic.

23. Pursue acquisition and restoration of the Lawson Canal as a publicly-accessible, naturalized water channel with recreational features.

LEAD – Community Development

Short to long term, 2018-2028

The canal is seen as a unique asset that can be naturalized, with an outlet to the river bypassing the dam. It would help to draw residents and visitors to the area. The City is currently negotiating to purchase the Banta / RR Donnelly property on which it is located. Eventual redevelopment should retain the canal as public property and permit its restoration. Following acquisition, the City will need to plan and engineer restoration of the canal, secure funding, and construct improvements. This is expected to take up to a decade to complete.

24. Examine the feasibility of a city-owned banquet space along the river.

LEAD – Community Development, Parks and Recreation

Intermediate term, 2021-2023

The Downtown Vision Plan recognizes the potential for a banquet and meeting space near the dam, on the Banta / RR Donnelly or Gilbert sites. It has been suggested that this could be a City-owned facility, as has been built in several other Wisconsin Communities. The first step in planning will be to conduct a feasibility study. This would be best timed to coincide with planning for improvements to future park space on the south bank of the Fox River.

25. Explore the use of tools such as business improvement districts (BIDs) or tax incremental financing districts (TIDs) to support downtown enhancements.

LEAD – Community Development

Intermediate term, 2021-2023

As the City ramps up its capabilities and seeks to undertake more ambitious projects, it will want to examine the feasibility of adopting mechanisms such as a business improvement district (BID) or tax incremental financing districts (TIFs) to help fund downtown initiatives.

26. Investigate potential demand for “shared economy” facilities such as coworking, makerspaces, or an innovation or industrial arts district.

LEAD – Community Development

Intermediate term, 2021-2023

Shared economy uses like coworking and makerspaces are gaining traction as an economic development tool to encourage entrepreneurship, innovation, and small business growth. They are ideally located within vibrant mixed-use districts such as Menasha's downtown, and unique spaces like those that may be provided in historic industrial buildings are considered highly desirable. The first step in planning for a space will be to conduct a market and financial feasibility study.

27. Investigate environmental conditions that may delay or present challenges for redevelopment.

LEAD – Community Development

Intermediate to long term, 2021-2028

Environmental contamination is suspected on many potential redevelopment sites in the downtown. This can be a barrier to redevelopment, at the least extending the length of time needed to bring a project to fruition. The Wisconsin Department of Commerce or Department of Natural Resources, and the US Environmental Protection Agency or Economic Development Administration may be sources of funding to begin the investigative process. The City's first steps should be to approach property owners to determine interest in participating, should grant funding be obtained.

28. Develop in-depth redevelopment concepts for sites on which there is owner interest.

LEAD – Community Development

Intermediate to long term 2021- 2028, as needed

A detailed concept plan and financial feasibility analysis can be very effective tools to market redevelopment opportunities, especially on sites controlled by the City. The process of preparing these plans is also an effective approach to building community consensus around new uses within the neighborhood, smoothing the approval process. Conceptual site planning should only be entertained when the City owns or has optioned the subject property, or has invested in its redevelopment, or when approached by the owner.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

ACTION/INITIATIVE	COMMENTS	LEAD	2018-2020	2021-2023	2024-2028
Work with Racine Street business owners to encourage renovation in conjunction with street reconstruction.	Timing renovation with street reconstruction will minimize business impacts. These buildings are a logical continuation of the retail and dining uses on Main Street.	Community Development	X	X	X
Continue the Paint and Restore Program, and investigate other programs to encourage home remodeling and maintenance.	The City may consider other home renovation programs funded through programs like tax incremental financing or the state's CDBG-Housing grants.	Community Development	X	X	X
Monitor the need for additional parking and adopt policies to meet future downtown parking demand.	Although parking is not a significant problem, it may become an issue with future development. This plan recommends some policies concerning the need to provide additional parking for private development. Other policies can be considered.	Public Works, Community Development	X	X	X
Establish a downtown organization to help implement the plan and manage the downtown. This can include public entities, community organizations, businesses, property owners, and residents.	Most successful downtowns are supported by an organization that helps to direct physical improvements and policies, coordinates activities in the district, assists in marketing, and advocates for the downtown.	Community Development	X	X	X
Monitor progress in implementing the downtown plan.	Use the measures identified in this implementation matrix, along with others identified below, to monitor annual progress.	Community Development	X	X	X
Explore opportunities to add art and interactive features to the downtown; for example, using LED technology to create a luminary destination along the waterfront. Engage local artists, property owners, and businesses to explore the potential of a downtown arts district.	Art enhances the experience of visiting downtown, and interactive or changing displays engage visitors, encouraging them to return frequently.	Public Works, Parks and Recreation, Community Development	X	X	X

ACTION/INITIATIVE	COMMENTS	LEAD	2018-2020	2021-2023	2024-2028
Regularly communicate with the CN Railway to review planned redevelopment projects and discuss how railroad conflicts can be mitigated.	The CN Railway has extensive rail lines through the downtown, with a considerable amount of switching and spurs or sidings to enable train movements. These tracks can be in locations that impede redevelopment, and their use detracts from the quality of the downtown environment, particularly for residents.	Public Works, Community Development	X	X	X
Work with Business Owners of Menasha (BOOM) or other downtown organizations to craft an effective, multi-channel marketing program for the district.	Promoting downtown will help to increase customer traffic and create an environment that encourages redevelopment.	Community Development	X	X	X
Work with owners and developers to secure access to the waterfront, and to develop trails and other waterfront enhancements as property is redeveloped or made available.	The City intends to ensure public access to as much of the waterfront as is possible.	Community Development	X	X	X
Encourage redevelopment of priority sites identified in the plan.	Banta / RR Donnelly Former City Hall Gilbert site Gunderson Cleaners Tayco (Brin Block) Tayco (R&R Bar Block) Water Street Whiting	Community Development	X	X	X
Update the City's Comprehensive Plan to incorporate the Downtown Vision Plan and its recommendations.	This will create consistency between the planning documents and enhance the City's ability to achieve the desired redevelopment outcomes.	Community Development	X		
Update the City's Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP) to include parks, trails, and similar recommendations in the Downtown Vision Plan. This should include detailed recommendations for the downtown waterfront.	Adding these sites and improvements to the CORP will establish eligibility for the City to pursue grant funding from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.	Parks and Recreation, Community Development	X		

ACTION/INITIATIVE	COMMENTS	LEAD	2018-2020	2021-2023	2024-2028
Update the City's zoning ordinance, zoning map, and official map to ensure that the types of development recommended in the Downtown Vision Plan are permitted as intended.	The Downtown Vision Plan recommends land uses and densities that may not be addressed in the current code. Updates should be done in conjunction with creating a pattern book to ensure their compatibility.	Community Development	X		
Prepare a pattern book to describe the character of development intended in different parts of the downtown.	This document will provide guidance to developers to assist them in preparing plans for redevelopment in the downtown area.	Community Development	X		
Work with the site owners to improve the appearance and mitigate nuisances from the Sonoco site.	Resident concerns center on dust from the parking area, the appearance of the north wall of the building, and the derelict warehouses along the river.	Community Development	X		
Encourage redevelopment of the Washington Street frontage of Graphic Packaging's parking lot.	While much of the parking lot may still be needed to support the manufacturing building, the frontage can be parceled off for redevelopment, retaining the back portion to meet the tenant's needs.	Community Development	X		
Study, design, and reconstruct Water Street, closing the portion between Tayco and High Streets, and constructing a trail and promenade along the canal.	Eliminating the eastern section of Water Street opens more space for a trail and other improvements, such as a gateway feature or art installation, and creates an attractive setting for buildings on the adjacent site. Traffic will be channeled to the signalized Kaukauna Street intersection.	Public Works, Parks and Recreation, Community Development	X		
Work with the owners of the former city hall (140 Main Street) and adjacent building (130 Main Street) to renovate the façade to create street level storefronts.	Storefronts with retail, dining, or office uses would help to continue the walkable pattern of closely spaced storefronts and activities embracing the sidewalk.	Community Development	X		

ACTION/INITIATIVE	COMMENTS	LEAD	2018-2020	2021-2023	2024-2028
Eliminate the fence around the marina or replace it with a lower ornamental fence.	The chain link fence currently in place is an eyesore at one of the City's most important gathering places.	Marina	X		
Install gateway features at downtown entry points.	Gateway features should be installed on Racine, Washington, and Tayco Streets, and on the river at the entrance to the canal.	Public Works, Parks and Recreation	X		
Prepare a city-wide bicycle and pedestrian plan, and study mobility in the downtown.	The objective of this study will be to identify ways of improving bicycle and pedestrian safety as well as access to the downtown and other destinations.	Parks and Recreation, Community Development	X		
Plan and execute a reconstruction project on Main Street that will result in an enhanced streetscape to support the pedestrian environment.	ADA and aesthetic enhancements will improve the pedestrian experience.	Public Works	X		
Pursue acquisition and restoration of the Lawson Canal as a publicly-accessible, naturalized water channel with recreational features.	A naturalized channel would be a unique asset to the downtown and would help to spur redevelopment on the Gilbert and Banta sites.	Community Development, Parks and Recreation	X	X	X
Examine the feasibility of a city-owned banquet space along the river.	Several Wisconsin communities have developed city-owned facilities available for public rental, providing a service to residents and supporting local businesses by generating customer traffic and demand for services.	Community Development, Parks and Recreation		X	
Explore the use of tools such as business improvement districts (BIDs) or tax incremental financing districts (TIDs) to support downtown enhancements.	These are the most commonly-used tools to finance downtown revitalization in Wisconsin.	Community Development		X	
Investigate potential demand for "shared Economy" facilities such as coworking, makerspaces, or an innovation or industrial arts district.	These can be effective economic development tools, and often favor environments such as downtown Menasha.	Community Development		X	

ACTION/INITIATIVE	COMMENTS	LEAD	2018-2020	2021-2023	2024-2028
Investigate environmental conditions that may delay or present challenges for redevelopment.	By being proactive in investigating potential brownfields the City can mitigate delays in redevelopment. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources may offer grant and technical assistance.				
Develop in-depth redevelopment concepts for sites on which there is owner interest.	Detailed site planning should examine environmental factors, utilities, and other site conditions, along with the market and financial feasibility, to package potential redevelopment opportunities.				

MARKET ANALYSIS

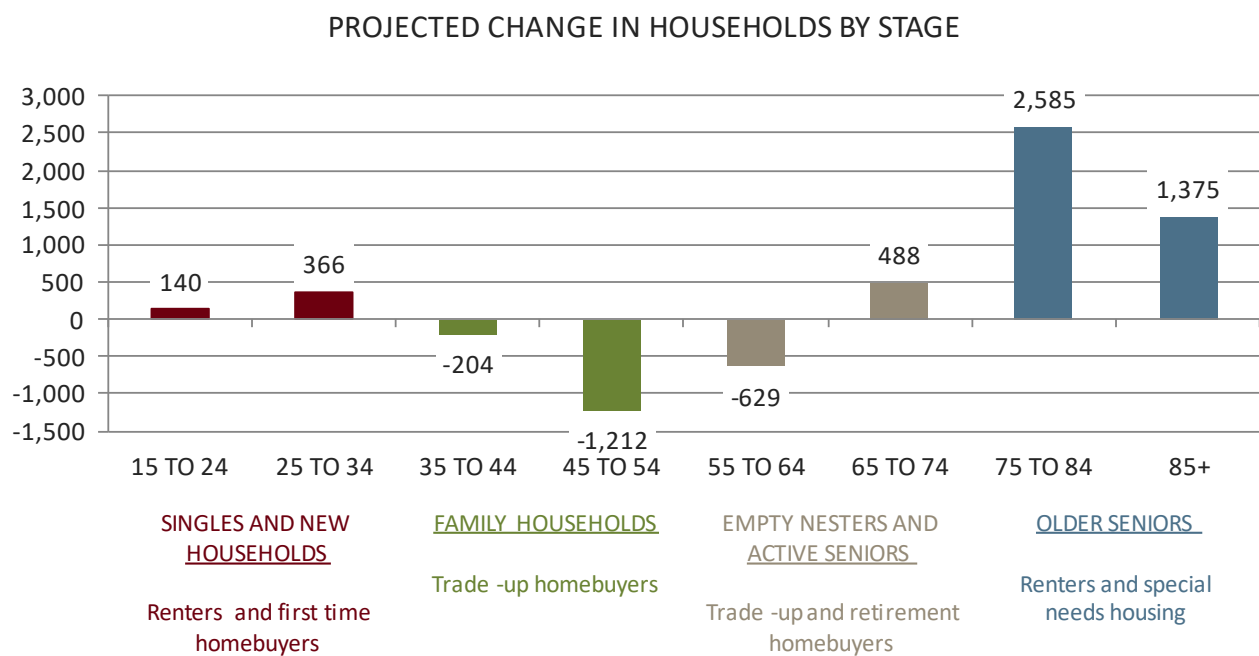


MARKET ANALYSIS

Menasha has a clear opportunity to add quality housing on redevelopment sites in the downtown area. The ability to front development on the river or canal, the proximity of existing or planned recreational amenities, and access to a walkable commercial district with desirable shops and dining will support owner occupied housing and high end apartments. With the strength of the existing specialty commercial district on Main Street, and as additional housing units are added through redevelopment, more specialty and neighborhood-serving commercial uses can be added at the west end of Main Street and along Washington Avenue. Only the office market currently lags, as the region deals with an oversupply of large office spaces. Regional growth has been among small office-based businesses, and these can be attracted to existing vacant office buildings in the district.



Downtown Menasha's commercial businesses are drawing about two-thirds of their customers from Neenah, Menasha, and southern parts of Appleton along with the western part of the Town of Harrison. It is a trade area estimated to have 113,100 residents in 2017. Over the course of the next decade that will grow to 121,600 residents, an increase of 7.5 percent.



Housing Demand

Demand for housing will be strong across all property types and at all price points. That demand will include condominiums and rowhouses - property types that are not well represented in the regional market. Menasha can look to examples in the Milwaukee area, where urban condominiums, in new and renovated buildings, have comprised a substantial part of the housing market. These are units desired by both younger and older buyers, and are usually singles and couples without children living at home. They are attracted to locations where there are nearby amenities such as the Menasha's vibrant Main Street, the river, and recreational assets. Desirable amenities often include views such as of the canal or river, private outdoor space like a patio or balcony, high-quality interior finishes, and unique features such as the character that may be furnished in a renovated industrial building.

ESTIMATED ANNUAL HOME BUYERS BY AGE

AGE	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
15 TO 24	66	65	65	64	64	64	63	63	63	63	63
25 TO 34	460	457	454	451	448	446	443	441	440	439	438
35 TO 44	219	217	216	215	213	212	211	210	209	209	208
45 TO 54	175	174	173	172	171	170	169	168	168	167	167
55 TO 64	109	109	108	107	107	106	106	105	105	104	104
65 TO 74	66	65	65	64	64	64	63	63	63	63	63
75+	22	22	22	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21
TOTAL	1,116	1,109	1,102	1,095	1,088	1,082	1,077	1,072	1,068	1,065	1,063

ESTIMATED ANNUAL HOME BUYERS BY PROPERTY TYPE

TYPE	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
DETACHED	859	854	848	843	838	833	829	825	822	820	819
ROWHOUSE	89	89	88	88	87	87	86	86	85	85	85
CONDO (5+)	78	78	77	77	76	76	75	75	75	75	74
CONDO (2-4)	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	21	21	21	21
OTHER	78	78	77	77	76	76	75	75	75	75	74

The tables above project demand for home purchases in the trade area. At the lower end of the pricing scale, buyers will primarily be interested in existing housing in neighborhoods near the city center. Aside from homes on the water, most single family houses in the area are selling in a range from \$60,000 to \$175,000.

There will be demand for over 400 units priced at \$300,000 or above. These are buyers that urban parts of the Fox Cities seem to have neglected. A large number of these buyers would consider purchasing a rowhouse or condominium that targeted upper income buyers with high-end features and a desirable location.

The waterfront is the unique asset that will appeal to these buyers. It will enable Menasha to attract buyers from elsewhere in the region. Many other communities in the region have missed their opportunity to build waterfront condominiums, leaving Menasha with a somewhat unique opportunity to capture this market niche. These units will have a high assessed value while having fewer demands for city services than would a single family home, so can be expected to have a positive impact on the municipal budget.

ESTIMATED ANNUAL HOME BUYERS BY PURCHASE PRICE

PRICE RANGE: LOW/HIGH	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
UNDER \$100,000	182	181	180	179	177	176	176	175	174	174	173
\$100,000 TO \$149,999	148	147	146	145	144	143	142	142	141	141	141
\$150,000 TO \$199,999	117	116	116	115	114	113	113	112	112	112	111
\$200,000 TO \$249,000	110	110	109	108	108	107	107	106	106	105	105
\$250,000 TO \$299,999	127	126	125	124	124	123	122	122	121	121	121
\$300,000 TO \$349,000	94	93	93	92	92	91	91	90	90	90	89
\$350,000 TO \$399,999	85	84	84	83	83	82	82	81	81	81	81
\$400,000 TO \$449,999	58	58	58	57	57	57	56	56	56	56	56
\$450,000 TO \$499,999	30	30	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	28	28
\$500,000 OR MORE	165	164	163	162	161	160	159	159	158	158	157

The same considerations are true for rental housing. The second-largest group of renters, by monthly rent, are those who can afford to spend over \$2,000 per month. Included in this are many of the area's young professionals, empty-nesters, and retirees splitting their time between the Fox Valley and a retirement home elsewhere. Upper-end rentals also play an important role for those transferring to the area and renting while they search for a home to purchase. As with potential owners, these buyers will expect high-end interior finishes and amenities like balconies and enclosed garages.

ESTIMATED ANNUAL RENTERS BY AGE

AGE	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
15 TO 24	723	725	729	733	738	743	750	757	765	775	785
25 TO 34	1,915	1,924	1,933	1,942	1,951	1,960	1,970	1,980	1,990	2,001	2,013
35 TO 44	1,284	1,278	1,271	1,266	1,261	1,258	1,255	1,253	1,252	1,253	1,254
45 TO 54	855	839	824	812	800	790	781	773	765	759	753
55 TO 64	812	810	807	801	794	786	777	768	758	749	739
65 TO 74	475	484	491	497	502	506	508	510	510	509	507
75 TO 84	362	377	392	407	422	437	451	464	476	487	497
85+	329	357	385	413	441	469	498	527	556	586	615
TOTAL	6,754	6,793	6,832	6,870	6,909	6,949	6,989	7,031	7,073	7,117	7,163

Menasha is not seeing its elderly population growing at the same high rates common in other places. Over the next decade the number of households headed by a person 65 or older is expected to increase by about 40 percent, or roughly 450 households. The pace of growth will slow as the smaller Generation X enters their retirement years. Meanwhile, each successive generation is less likely to want to live in age restricted housing. While some housing for seniors can be built in Menasha, it is not likely to be a big part of the mix.

Demand for low-cost rentals will also increase modestly over the decade. A good part of the existing inventory is comprised of single family homes in neighborhoods around the downtown. While subsidized apartments (ex., section 42 Low Income Housing Tax Credit) could be developed in the study area, it is not the highest and best use, particularly on waterfront sites. Low income housing could be incorporated into mixed use buildings or make up a minority percentage of multifamily projects.

ESTIMATED ANNUAL RENTERS BY MONTHLY LEASE COST

MONTHLY RENT	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
UNDER \$600	1,525	1,534	1,543	1,551	1,560	1,569	1,578	1,588	1,597	1,607	1,617
\$600 TO \$699	548	551	554	557	560	564	567	570	574	577	581
\$700 TO \$799	400	402	405	407	409	412	414	416	419	422	424
\$800 TO \$899	352	354	356	358	360	362	365	367	369	371	374
\$900 TO \$999	486	489	492	495	497	500	503	506	509	512	516
\$1,000 TO \$1,099	243	244	245	247	248	250	251	253	254	256	257
\$1,100 TO \$1,199	179	180	181	182	183	184	185	186	187	188	189
\$1,200 TO \$1,299	282	283	285	286	288	290	291	293	295	297	299
\$1,300 TO \$1,399	385	387	389	391	393	396	398	400	403	405	408
\$1,400 TO \$1,499	310	312	314	315	317	319	321	323	325	327	329
\$1,500 TO \$1,749	515	518	521	524	527	530	533	536	539	543	546
\$1,750 TO \$1,999	569	573	576	579	582	586	589	593	596	600	604
\$2,000 OR MORE	961	966	972	977	983	989	994	1,000	1,006	1,013	1,019



Residential neighborhood adjacent to downtown Menasha.

Retail Demand

Menasha has a small but vibrant Main Street district with several good independent shops and eating and drinking establishments. The district would likely be larger except for the fact that adjacent sites have been redeveloped with large office buildings that do not continue the pattern of closely-spaced small storefronts. The office buildings do bring in workers, however, who are an important source of customers for restaurants.

Retail Potential

Residents of the trade area, downtown workers, and visitors to Menasha combine to generate \$1.38 million in demand for retail goods and services. Of this, only a portion is spent in the kinds of stores that could locate in the study area. These could be classified as two main types - neighborhood and destination retailers.

Neighborhood Retail

Neighborhood-serving retailers are uses that meet the needs of people living in the area. Examples might include a pharmacy, dry cleaner, or hardware store. These kinds of uses are scattered outside of the downtown area, and it is unusual in that there are no significant clusters in the built-up areas of Neenah or Menasha. Redevelopment areas in the downtown could



One of downtown Menasha's unique shops.

present an opportunity for these uses. Examples of neighborhood-serving uses that may be supported in the downtown area include the following, some of which may also support destination traffic:

- Auto parts, tires, and accessories
- Electronics stores (ex., cellular phone providers)
- Specialty food stores
- Beer, wine, and liquor stores
- Health and personal care stores
- Gas stations with convenience stores
- Hobby, toy, and game stores
- Pet supply stores
- Personal services (barbers, salons, pet grooming, dry cleaning, etc.)
- Health care services (doctors, dentists, other medical services)
- Financial services (banking, tax preparation, etc.)

Destination Retail

The second retail type consists of destination businesses selling specialty products. These businesses attract customers from a greater distance, in search of unique products and an enjoyable shopping experience. The setting is an important part of that experience, and Menasha's historic buildings and reclaimed waterfront contribute to an attractive environment for these uses. As additional areas along the canal and river redevelop, it may be possible to support complementary retail and dining clusters in other parts of the downtown.

Examples of the kinds of specialty retail uses that may locate in the downtown include:

- Furniture and home furnishings stores (ex., home decor)
- Clothing and accessories stores
- Jewelry stores
- Sporting goods stores
- Gift, novelty, and souvenir stores
- Art galleries

Dining Potential

Demand for eating meals away from home continues to grow among nearly all segments of the population. In many parts of the country, spending at restaurants exceeds spending at grocery stores. Downtown Menasha is an ideal environment for eating and drinking places in that it is central to a large population, is walkable to many residents and employees, and has qualities that make dining entertaining; namely, its historic buildings, waterfront settings, and the ability to have outdoor seating.

Residents of the trade area are estimated to spend \$129.9 million at eating and drinking establishments in 2017. This is split between \$66.2 million at full-service restaurants and \$57.2 million at limited service restaurants. Another \$6.5 million is spent at other types of venues.



Inside Your Daily Grind, a popular coffee shop and eatery in downtown Menasha.

Dining is a critical element in making destination districts a success. Good restaurants will often be among the first business to draw people to a district. Additionally, they play an essential role in lengthening visitors' stays. They are an amenity sought out by home buyers, and are increasingly factored into the decision of where to locate offices, as a means to help attract employees.

Downtown Menasha can support several eating and drinking formats including full service restaurants, limited service restaurants, snack and beverage shops, and bars or taverns. To compete with chains and other independents in the market, they should take advantage of the downtown's unique assets. Chief among these is the waterfront. Redevelopment sites along the canal or river should be designed with restaurants in mind, providing river views and outdoor seating.

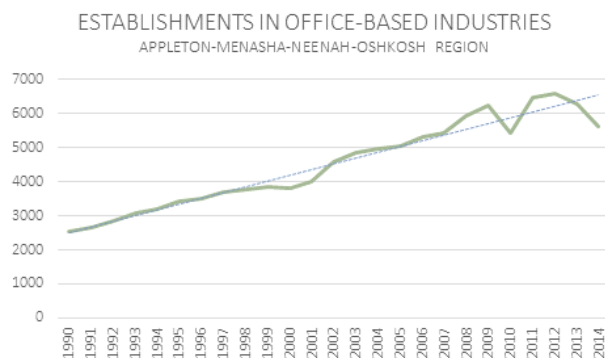
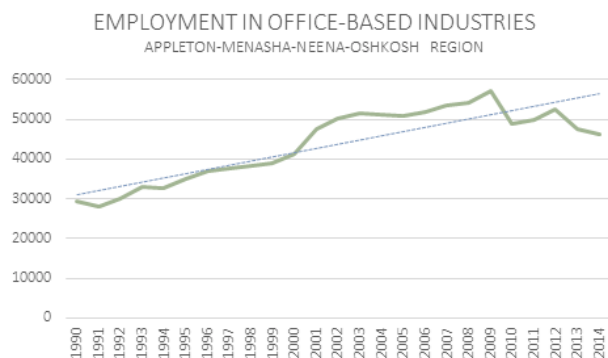
Areas of downtown that develop with a more suburban character will be attractive to quick service restaurant chains, including the growing fast casual brands like Bruegger's, Panera Bread, Noodles and Company, Chipotle, and Starbucks. These are likely to be sited on Commercial Street / Washington Street, which has significant passing traffic.

Although not specifically addressed in the market analysis, the downtown may be able to support a banquet hall, perhaps developed in connection with public park space, where events can be held. Several Wisconsin communities (ex., Oconomowoc, Lake Mills, Whitewater) have developed similar lakefront facilities that are equipped with a catering kitchen, and can be rented for personal or organizational activities. These assets can produce a revenue stream to defray the cost of maintaining adjacent park and public spaces.

Office Demand

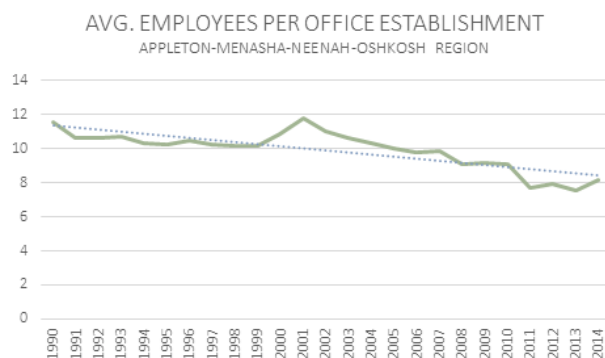
Over the past couple decades there have been a significant number of large office buildings constructed on redevelopment sites in the downtowns of both Neenah and Menasha. Most have been build-to-suit projects for a specific tenant. Some of the older office buildings in Menasha now are vacant. The City and School

District moved into one of these buildings, in the process leaving the former city offices vacant. Filling the vacant space will present some challenges, and the excess space will suppress demand for new office construction for a considerable time.



Regional demand for office space has grown since the 1990's. Employment within industries that are predominantly office-based grew from 1990 to 2009, when it declined during the Great Recession. Those losses were sustained through at least 2014. The number of establishments also declined in the recession, before increasing briefly, and then declining again. This is consistent with state and national observations that many people who became unemployed started businesses as a means to find work, and then quit them as the economy improved and they were able to locate paid jobs.

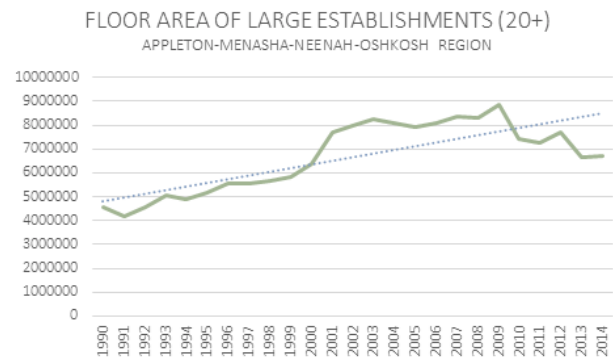
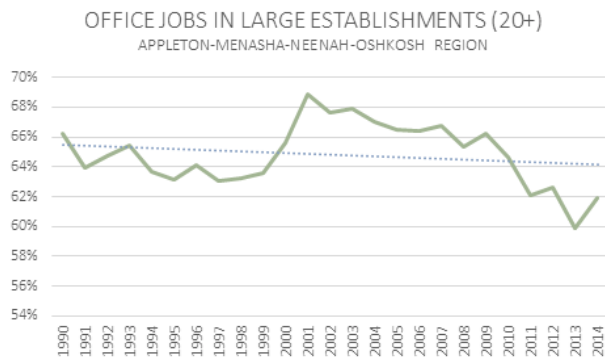
Although the number of office jobs and establishments has grown, the average number of jobs per establishment steadily decreased, from 11.5 employees in 1990 to 8.2 employees in 2014. This is also a trend seen throughout the economy, and it has implications for the total floor area, type of office space, and amenities desired by companies in the market for office space. Single offices, small office suites, shared workspaces, and shared resources will be more in demand.



Menasha and Neenah have several large office buildings with a typical floor area of about 5,000 square feet or larger. While varying by industry, an establishment will usually need to have at least 20 employees to occupy a 5,000 square foot space. Since peaking in 2001, the share of office jobs among these larger employers has been declining. As a result, the total floor area required by these larger businesses declined from 8.87 million square feet in 2009 to 6.70 million square feet in 2014. Landlords are often faced with the need to subdivide larger spaces to fill vacancies. At the same time, the soft retail market is causing the owners of strip centers and small commercial buildings to market to office users, creating more competition.

and 2016, to \$11.95 per square foot. This is below the state average of \$13.52 per square foot. The asking price for offices on the market has not changed over the year, remaining at \$63.26 per square foot. Co-Star estimates a 5.0 percent vacancy rate with 307,187 square feet of vacant space. Current office real estate listings, however, greatly exceed that figure, and REIS reports the vacancy rate at 23.8 percent in the first

quarter of 2017. Normally, a vacancy rate of about five percent is thought to reflect a balanced market. Listings are priced from about \$6 to \$20 per square foot, with most falling around \$10 to \$15 per square foot. REIS reports a \$14.80 per square foot average rent.



The locational patterns of office-based industry employment have shifted over time, to become less concentrated, even as overall employment increased. In 1994, a few locations stood out as having significant concentrations of office jobs. Twenty years later the only area to grow in significance was Appleton's downtown. Office employment has become more evenly distributed across the region, reducing the significance of several nodes. New concentrations have also emerged.

Downtown Menasha was once more significant as an area of office employment than it is today. More rapid growth in other areas is the primary reason for this decrease in office employment concentration, with the loss of some office jobs contributing.

There are three types of areas competing for the office uses that might locate in Downtown Menasha: other similar downtown districts, suburban office parks, and offices distributed in commercial corridors. The fact that downtown Appleton has developed an even stronger concentration of office employment over the past 20 years attests to the desire for many companies to locate in city centers, where they are central to their employees and where there are amenities within walking distance. Appleton and Neenah present the strongest competition of this type. Both communities have significant office space available, and have a healthy small business community of retail, dining, and service businesses.

Office parks are mostly found in suburban settings along Interstate 41 and Highway 441. They tend to offer larger footprints on a single level, ample parking, and access to the interstate. Buildings in office parks may be newer than those in central business



Downtown Menasha has attracted significant office investment.

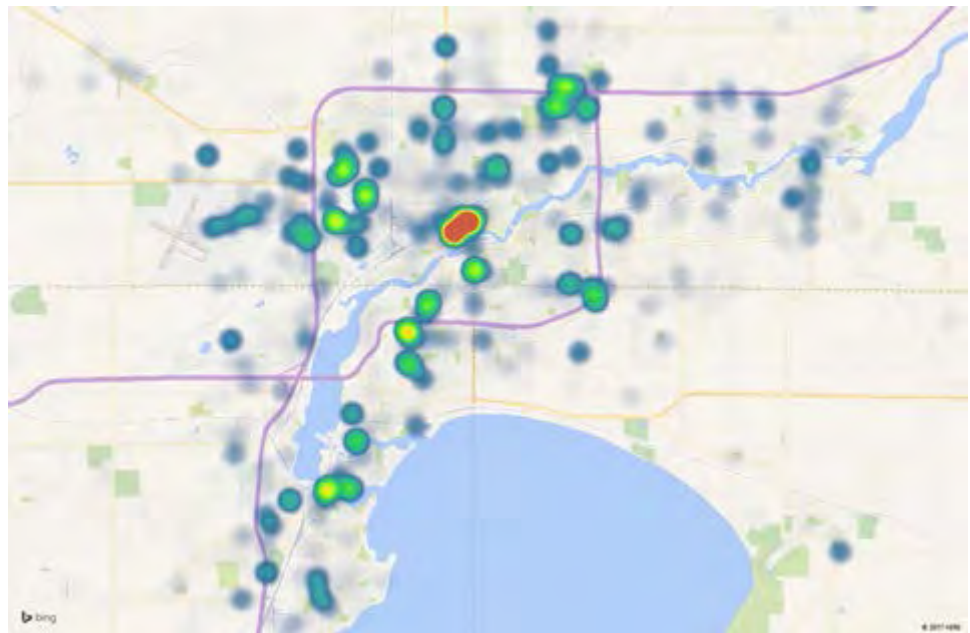
districts, and may have a lower rent. Scattered sites have an appeal for small businesses and for those that may have more frequent contact with individuals. These can include stand-alone buildings and strip centers in commercial districts. In recent years, the percentage of office uses in strip centers has doubled, as center owners turn to offices to fill space vacated by retail stores. Health care is a large segment of the total.

Prospects for new large office development in the downtown are not very good for the foreseeable future, as the regional market has a very large inventory of space that will need to be absorbed. This does not preclude the possibility of a build-to-suit project, but the majority of potential tenants are going to be small companies.

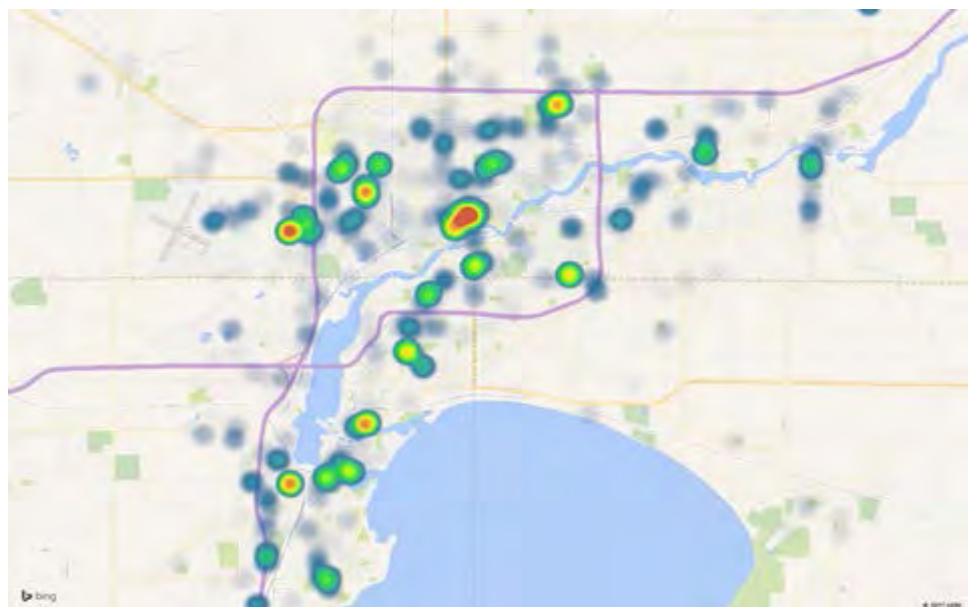
Menasha's chief advantages are the downtown's amenities. The most important of these are a healthy and diverse mix of small retail, eating, and drinking establishments, walkable environment, and proximity to the river and its views.

Challenges include the difficulty in providing parking for workers, and the expanse of "dead space" between different parts of the downtown.

Several long blocks without active street-level uses discourage walking. This needs to be considered in plans for all new office construction, and in re-tenanting strategies for existing buildings. Maintaining and continuing the pattern of regularly-spaced, close-set storefronts is essential to growing a vibrant destination for retail, dining, and services.



Concentrations of office employment in 1994 (above) and 2014 (below).



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The City of Menasha actively sought input from residents and downtown stakeholders throughout the planning process. This began by interviewing key stakeholder groups, and continued through a survey, interactive website, public workshops, and presentations held at different stages as the plan developed. Final opportunities for public input were provided at presentations to the Plan Commission and Common Council.

Interviews / Focus Groups

In order to gain insight into the unique opportunities and challenges facing downtown Menasha, the consultant team and City staff facilitated a series of four focus group meetings. Conversations engaged participants around questions such as:

1. What are downtown Menasha's greatest assets?
2. What do you like most about downtown Menasha?
3. What are the primary challenges facing downtown Menasha?
4. What types of downtown land uses (retail, housing, restaurants, office, entertainment, etc.) would you like to see more of? Which do you feel make most economic sense, and why?
5. What types of downtown land uses (retail, housing, restaurants, office, entertainment, etc.) would you like to see less of, and why?
6. Would you or your friends and family or customers or business associates consider living or establishing a business or developing property in downtown Menasha? Why or why not?
7. Is there a different downtown that you really like, that when you think about Menasha you sometimes wish it could be more like? What are the things that make you like that downtown so much?
8. What next steps should be taken to continue revitalizing downtown?

A more detailed summary of the responses was provided in a memorandum to the City and posted on the project website.

- The waterfront is seen as a great asset that is currently underutilized. There is a desire for greater access and programming or active space that will draw people to the district. Waterfront redevelopment areas are seen as an opportunity to bring market rate housing and commercial activities to the downtown.

INTERVIEW / FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Sandra Pufahl, La Belle Maison
David Zehner, Renewed and Reclaimed Antiques
William Banti, Lemon Loves Lime Boutique
Colleen Flanagan, Aunt Esther's Attic Boutique
Rebecca Mader and Tim, Your Daily Grind Coffee Shop
Alex Zielinski, Alderman
Blaine Ott, 180 Main Street
Nick Jevne, 210 Main Street
Doris Szymanski, 234 Main
Terry Bomier, Bomier Properties, Inc
Elizabeth Ringgold, Newmark Grubb Pfefferle
Bob Driftka, Driftka Group
Ted Grade, Alderman
Stan Sevenich, Alderman
Randy Stadmueller, Stadmueller and Associates
John Hogerty, Menasha Downtown Development
Todd Hutchison, ABC Development LLC
Rich Batley, RB Hospitality
Pierce Smith, Menasha Corp.
Kim Vanderhyden, Menasha Downtown Development
Arnie Collier, Alderman
Don Merkes, Plan Commission
Tom Grade, Landmarks Commission
Kim Vanderhyden, Redevelopment Authority
Richard Sturm, Parks Board
Tim Rose, Fox River Navigational Authority

- There is a desire for more greenspace and trails in the downtown, which should be connected to each other and to the street.
- Several comments focused on how the marina is fenced off and not better utilized as a downtown asset. Boat storage is an issue. Boat access can be an advantage for commercial and residential uses.
- Older, often historic buildings are seen as an opportunity for restoration and as a location for small retail and dining businesses. The loss of these buildings on the western portion of Main Street is recognized, and there is a desire that key remaining buildings be preserved. The western portion of Main Street and the Tayco intersection are seen as redevelopment priorities for commercial and mixed use buildings.
- Residential uses are favored for redevelopment sites throughout the study area. Sites on the south bank of the Fox River, the Whiting Mill, and Sonoco were often cited. There are concerns about the amount of low income housing around the district. Market rate housing was preferred, including condominiums and other multifamily products. Senior-oriented, higher-end housing was also a preferred use.
- BOOM, or Business Owners of Menasha, is seen as a catalyst for small business development, with Main Street business owners organizing for group marketing and collaboration. Meanwhile, businesses west of Center Street are not engaged.
- More events are needed that bring people downtown. In particular, there is a need for activities to keep people in the district after offices close.
- There is a need for improved street appeal like window dressings, storefront rehabilitation, streetscaping, plantings, and outdoor/sidewalk tables and uses.
- There is perceived to be a lack of easily accessible parking in convenient spaces. If the downtown grows this will become even more apparent. Businesses, in particular, noted a need for longer term for parking (maybe three or four hour limits) and dedicated employee parking further from core.
- Industrial uses are seen as creating nuisances as well as having an unappealing aesthetic that can deter investment.
- There is a desire for more retail and dining uses in the downtown. Sports bars or brew pubs were given as examples, as well as destination retail stores.
- Short-term actions suggested by the participants included addressing parking management issues, improving wayfinding signage, and removing or replacing the marina fence. The City should be more aggressive in readying sites and marketing redevelopment opportunities.
- The City is not seen as having a coherent vision or goal for the district. It is important to have a top-down strategy or common goal that can be shared with the development community. The City will need private-public partnerships to make things happen, especially on large and potentially contaminated sites.
- Many existing structures block views of the waterfront and create a district that is disconnected. Redevelopment should allow for more passage to the water from the interior, and open views across the river.
- Water Street is a good redevelopment opportunity for medium density residential uses. Views of industrial buildings across the canal are a challenge. Many homes on the street are not well maintained.
- Traffic flow is a problem. Main Street is not a major travel corridor and corridors to downtown are not desirable. Reconstruction of the Racine Street bridge can be an opportunity to improve traffic and to encourage renovation or redevelopment.

- The arts are seen as a desirable activity for the downtown. The Tayco/Main intersection is an area where it may be possible to create an arts district. Art should be incorporated into the public streetscape.

Visioning Workshop

A visioning workshop was conducted on 27 July 2017, during which the consultant team presented an overview of the planning process and summaries of background analysis and the market analysis. Participants then engaged in an interactive exercise to share their thoughts about the downtown. A visual preference exercise helped to establish the character of development preferred in the district.

Hopes and Concerns Exercise

Participants were asked to share their hopes and concerns for the downtown area and ideas were grouped into themes.

1. Vision
 - a. To reconnect all of these projects, consistency throughout
 - b. Hope for Water Street planning is to listen to existing businesses and neighbors
 - c. The Vision Plan is viable in the long term
2. Waterfront
 - a. Mixed-Use on Waterfront
 - b. Better views of the water – most of the downtown hides the water
 - c. Water, water, water
 - d. Development that maintains an open waterfront. No building on the waterfront
 - e. More marina space (with housing – condos?) possibly between locks and Tayco, Water Street to First Street
 - f. More waterfront paddle boats/activities
 - g. Accentuate and take advantage of our waterfront property
 - h. Connected to water
 - i. Better use of property along the river – i.e., area by Gunderson's, Becher Electric, etc.
 - j. Access to water
3. More Activities and Vitality
 - a. More weekend and daytime activities and events
 - b. Bring Historical Museum to downtown Menasha



Menasha, WI
DOWNTOWN VISION PLAN

CITY OF MENASHA
DOWNTOWN VISION PLAN






PUBLIC WORKSHOP
Thursday, July 27, 2017

Menasha City Center/City Hall
First Floor
100 Main Street
Menasha, WI 54952

Workshop from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

The City of Menasha is developing a Downtown Vision Plan, designed to guide revitalization efforts of Downtown Menasha as it relates primarily to future land-uses.

Please consider attending the workshop and providing the city your ideas, hopes and desires for the future land uses as well as share your thoughts on the challenges and opportunities currently facing our downtown.

For more information please contact:
David Buck
City of Menasha
Community Development
Department
(920) 967-3650
dbuck@ci.menasha.wi.us

Project Website: www.downtownmenasha.wordpress.com

- c. Attract a “museum” or other destination type organization
- d. Become a destination for family-friendly activities
- e. Bazaar-good
- f. “Splash”
- g. More like City Deck, Green Bay
- h. More events on weekends
- i. Businesses that attract a diversity of ages
- j. A diversity of small businesses, similar to what downtown Menasha had 40-50 years ago
- k. Use of water for boaters
- l. Free WI-Fi to downtown area
- m. Restaurants, coffee shops that spill to the outdoors in good weather
- n. Vibrant downtown area with retail, dining, housing (more retail shops, restaurants)
- o. Attract people to the community
- p. Be proud to live here
- q. More entertainment venues for downtown
- r. More night life
- s. More retail
- t. More restaurants (2)
- u. Waterfront restaurant



Menasha - July 27th Vision Workshop
Map 1



Comments

73. an area comparable to river health area (housing) – restaurants, coffee, outdoor venue green space and trail

74. green space, community gardens (charge for use), native prairie, bridge to 83

75. remove and revitalize

79: community space – trail head area

81,82,87,88. open, active recreation activities, natural green spaces, 4 season shared community space (combination of all of these)

83. revitalize to green space, with a bridge to 74

84-85. Some sort of housing

86. condos keeping character of building

121. Recreational kayak, canoe, observation deck and light foods

122. Continue Riverwalk along water st. to trestle trail

125. condos, mixed use lower level, could be stand out architecture if a continuous size.

126. connect gilbert Riverwalk to downtown

129. Clean slate for continuity

133, 137. A business to relocate here

- v. Businesses and activities that attract people for entertainment and fun
 - w. More appealing to young families, young people
 - x. More options (eats, venues, etc.)
 - y. More social areas
 - z. More restaurants and stores downtown to encourage festivals like Bazaar After Dark
 - aa. Mixture of daytime, nighttime events
4. Parks and Open Space
- a. Easy access for bikes from surrounding cities
 - b. Easy access for kayaks and canoes to downtown
 - c. Kayak and canoes rental at the marina
 - d. More trail links
 - e. Re-use of old City Hall
 - f. Community gardens
 - g. Future potential amenities like larger recreational area around trestle trail
 - h. More opportunities to enjoy the water and parks
 - i. Trails
 - j. Kayaking
 - k. Promote to the community
 - l. Much more green space and parks
 - m. More views
 - n. More multi-family quality housing
 - o. More access to water
 - p. Keep all retail, office together in one place
 - q. More functional greenspace that builds community
 - r. Continue bike connections to all trails and parks
 - s. Better connect Jefferson Park to Trestle Trail
 - t. Extended walking and bicycle trails along the water
5. Destinations and Arts
- a. A downtown area that identifies as one
 - b. Create sport ventures
 - c. Create entertainment sites
 - d. Public walkway
 - e. Public art
 - f. Arts district
 - g. Indoor sports complex – soccer fields, baseball, basketball, volleyball

- h. Keep a heritage sector (north side of Main St.?) and expand city with modern office, housing, and retail
6. Access and Circulation
 - a. Link the Loop the Lake to have an easier access to downtown stores and restaurants
 - b. Utilize the Water Street waterfront
 - c. More and better connectivity
 - d. Multiple ways to get around
 7. Downtown Living
 - a. Future Menasha has plenty of opportunities to “rebuild” – we have the land and the desire
 - b. Mixture of daytime, nighttime events
 - c. Residential and commercial
 - d. Upscale apartments, condos on the waterfront
 - e. Condos bring people into the area – tax base
 - f. Waterside living – people, people, people
 - g. If possible, utilize BANTA as industrial apartments similar to Fox River Mills in Appleton
 - h. More people living downtown
 - i. Apartments for Banta property – with docking for use of water – is that possible?
 8. Development and Investment
 - a. Downtown more small business
 - b. More job creating uses
 - c. Development along Water Street – huge opportunity to rebuild tax base and improve housing
 - d. Taller buildings with views
 - e. Corporate headquarters
 - f. Refurbish/retain Brin Building
 - g. Keep our history!
 - h. Do not tear down the Brin
 - i. Increase educational opportunities for youth – connect with the downtown and water
 - j. Relocate Gunderson’s to industrial park in Menasha
 - k. Boutique hotel as a “bookend” to the marina
 - l. Place apartment building on west end of marina
 9. Gunderson and Becher buildings razed
 - a. New tax base
 - b. Nice housing
 - c. Nice shops
 - d. Bring a new Menasha home

- e. Full utilization of Main Street through Tayco St. (potential touchpoints along the way) – retail, service contacts, etc.
- f. Development of Banta property – apartments and green space
- g. Restore dilapidated areas for aesthetic appeal
- h. Revitalization of corridor streets – Appleton Road and Racine Street
- i. Better utilize the buildings from Becher Electric toward Tayco Street bridge
- j. Clean up the front facades with fresh paint – make it cheerier its very depressing

10. Quality Development/Character

- a. Quality of materials and design for all improvements
- b. Low quality development
- c. Things die out and don't redevelop
- d. New people try it/look at it and don't like and don't come back
- e. Inconsistency among projects
- f. Better awareness of what Menasha offers already
- g. Appearance of the industrial area
- h. Gilbert property? Will we be tearing down blocks of houses?
- i. Whiting Property
- j. Industrial sites
- k. Water view from downtown needs to be more desirable (no views of trucks), which could then be more attractive for restaurant, etc.



11. Connectivity

- a. Downtown east & west more connected. Seems like “downtown” is more east (‘should’ be developed as one)
- b. No parking on waterfront
- c. Connectivity

12. Leadership/Funding

- a. In order for this and any vision and plan is for the full support of city officials, Mayor, alderman for local businesses
- b. Ability to implement the vision, both financially and politically
- c. High taxes a concern already

- d. Concern that downtown redevelopment cost is adding to that (disincentive to people who own property here)
- e. Funding
- f. As a homeowner on Water Street what happens to me and my property
- g. How will this impact our taxes?
- h. Ability to attract needed investment
- i. City Council doesn't see the value and doesn't vote pro development

13. Development

- a. We already have Mayberry – leave it
- b. Fill vacant buildings downtown – how many right now?
- c. Housing that is affordable and safe for people = not just high rent/cost housing
- d. A concentration of banks and bars – no diversity
- e. Less low-income housing
- f. Failure to complete redevelopment of buildings along the river
- g. Proposed areas are not developed and left as is
- h. Less rentals
- i. Don't want high capacity apartment buildings, takes away from small town feel
- j. Untouched areas of downtown
- k. Existing buildings are not upgraded or improved to integrate with proposed development
- l. Regulatory/Environmental
- m. Control of 'SCA odor' that migrates to Main Street
- n. Availability of Menasha locks
- o. Any WDNR concerns
- p. Parking/Traffic
- q. Shared parking
- r. Traffic – how can we make it easy to drive/walk/bike kayak into downtown Menasha?
- s. Do not relocate bridges
- t. Access to the area
- u. Highways bypass the community
- v. Not enough parking



- w. Roundabouts will hamper/kill bicycle and pedestrian traffic

14. Community

- a. Ability to attract our kids and grandkids to want to be here
- b. How can we attract generational citizens to Menasha?

Visual Preference Exercise

Participants were asked to place a sticky dot next to a series of images on four display boards. The display boards included images for Mixed Use Development, Commercial Development, Residential Development, and Open Space/Parks. Red dots were used to show dislike for an image. Green dots were used to express support for the image. Following the exercise the consultant team facilitated a group discussion to explore what attracted (or turned people off) to certain images. Input from the visual preference exercise suggest:

1. Strong support for additional parks/open space
2. Desire not to duplicate what is being built in Jefferson Park
3. Diverse and unique park features that draw people to interact
4. Access to the waterfront
5. More support for 2-4 story development; less support for higher story development
6. Small to moderate-sized buildings
7. Strong preference for commercial uses that front the street, with office or residential uses above; no long, blank street frontage
8. Like unique features such as the “food truck” and patio
9. Some preference for traditional architecture, but others thought it desirable to reflect new styles
10. Different design approaches may be appropriate in different areas

A graphic for the Downtown Menasha Vision Plan. The top half features a blurred background image of a downtown street scene with buildings and a fountain. Overlaid on this is the text "DOWNTOWN MENASHA" in large, bold, black capital letters, and "VISION PLAN" in slightly smaller, bold, black capital letters below it. The bottom half of the graphic has a solid dark grey background. In the center of this dark area, the text "OCTOBER 10TH OPEN HOUSE BOARDS" is written in white, bold, capital letters. Below this, in a smaller white font, is a paragraph of text: "Land Use Concepts (6 Oct) Revised Web These boards presents three alternative land use options and redevelopment sites for downtown Menasha. Downtown Issues and Opps FINAL This board summarizes key findings from previous studies Vision and Goals Board This board summarizes the draft overall vision and downtown planning goals Waterfront Guiding Principles Board This board [...]". At the very bottom, centered, is a white rectangular button with the text "READ MORE →" in black capital letters.

DOWNTOWN MENASHA

VISION PLAN

OCTOBER 10TH OPEN HOUSE BOARDS

Land Use Concepts (6 Oct) Revised Web These boards presents three alternative land use options and redevelopment sites for downtown Menasha. Downtown Issues and Opps FINAL This board summarizes key findings from previous studies Vision and Goals Board This board summarizes the draft overall vision and downtown planning goals Waterfront Guiding Principles Board This board [...]

READ MORE →

Open House

Taking into consideration all of the comments from the interviews and visioning workshop, the consultant team prepared alternatives for future land uses in the downtown. These were presented in a number of posters during an open house. After a brief presentation to inform attendees of prior visioning and planning, the participants were asked to review the ideas presented on the board and leave feedback concerning their preferences. The boards were made available on the project website so that they could be viewed later and additional comments could be submitted to the City.

Approximately 60-70 people attended the event, which was well-covered by area radio and TV stations. A summary of participant surveys is provided below by topic (display board) category.

Vision and Goals

Draft Vision Statement:

Downtown Menasha fully embraces its waterfront and historic downtown, creating a vibrant, mixed-use neighborhood with a variety of employment opportunities, places to shop, eat, and play

Draft Goals:

1. Create a politically and economically viable, holistic future land use plan for downtown Menasha including its waterfront areas
2. Increase vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle, and boat access to and from the waterfront and downtown, as well as connectivity between downtown and existing city parks, trails, and waterfront areas
3. Promote a mix of uses to support an economically and culturally vibrant downtown with multiple activities throughout the day, evening, and week
4. Plan for additional parks, trails, and open space downtown and along the waterfront
5. Encourage residential rehab and residential infill including single family and mid to high density multi-family housing (both affordable and market rate)
6. Support existing businesses and residential neighborhoods in and adjacent downtown
7. Support development of cultural and artistic venues which create entertainment opportunities and strengthen the image of downtown and the riverfront
8. Support quality new development on underutilized/vacant industrial sites
9. Provide additional waterfront dining opportunities on the waterfront
10. Enhance the overall image of downtown including mitigation of industrial impacts (noise, dust, poorly maintained buildings)

All of the feedback received indicate support for the draft vision and goals. Additional comments suggested that the draft vision and goals say something about providing “continuity” of visitor experience within the Fox Cities. The majority of the respondents indicated strong support for continuous public access along the waterfront, as well as stressing the importance of making downtown Menasha more walkable and safe for pedestrians. Historic preservation and the need to prioritize action plans were also cited. Several people commented that they would like to see the City find a way to clean up the eastern half of the Sunoco site and convert it to green space.

Waterfront Guiding Principles

Draft Guiding Principles:

1. Embrace the waterfront incorporating it as a focal point in all riverfront development and redevelopment efforts
2. Increase public access and access points to the shoreline
3. Maintain and improve visibility of the waterfront from surrounding areas
4. Improve public connectivity between waterfront uses
5. Link community “destination areas” located along the water, such as the Menasha Lock Site/Trestle Trail with downtown and Jefferson Park
6. Leverage the waterfront to attract higher quality development whose architecture and site design are exemplary
7. Support parks, trails, open spaces and recreation along the waterfront
8. Recruit a diverse mix of uses which attract people and create activity along the waterfront throughout the week (both during the day and the evening)

Written and verbal feedback on the waterfront guiding principles suggest strong support for increased pedestrian access to the waterfront and linkages to other community assets including the Trestle Trail and Jefferson Park. When asked “how important is continuous public access along the entire waterfront?” the most frequent respondents indicated was “high importance.” When asked where the City should focus development to support “active public or private uses” along the waterfront the most common response was at the tip of the Sunoco site or the Banta/Gilbert area.

Paraphrased responses to the question “do you agree with the draft guiding principles – why or why not?” included:

- Prioritizing the principles in order to provide greater focus for future decision making
- Maximizing use of the waterfront as key to community vitality and attractiveness
- Maximize waterfront access to support residential development
- Waterfront preservation is the key to drawing people in

Land Use Alternatives

Overall people expressed support for elements of each of the three alternatives. When asked to choose a preferred alternative, the majority of respondents preferred Alternative B, with some support for Alternative C and very minimal support for Alternative A. When asked “what do you like about alternative B,” respondents indicated:

- Restaurants, banquet facility/banquet hall
- Most comfortable with blend of land uses. Also more green space on the waterfront
- Turning the Banta/Gilbert site and other waterfront areas into high density (high end) residential with access close to downtown will help rejuvenate downtown businesses
- High density residential behind businesses on busy street
- High density mixed use option within preserved buildings, west of Washington Ave. and N of Garfield
- Nice mixed use



- Green space on the island between downtown and Doty Island could be a very unique gathering place unique to Menasha with trestles
- Love the access to water, pathways along the isle/canal/greenway along canal
- Sunoco is gone/greater green space on Sunoco island
- Extension of waterfront path to Washington St. and Racine
- Public access trail on north side of S. channel
- Pedestrian bridge across river
- River street trail
- Sufficient green space/open space/more trails/a lot of green space

Key themes from all of the comments related to land use include:

- Mid to higher density residential development is desired. Participants commented on the need for a mix of housing affordability, including options for people with higher incomes.
- Owner-occupied housing products such as row houses or condos are desirable. Smaller lot single family development was cited as an opportunity as well.
- Redevelop Water Street with residential housing. Several participants liked the concept of row housing or mid to higher density multi-family housing.

- Many of the participants expressed support for eliminating all or a portion of Water Street. There was also support for extending a greenway along the canal.
- Projects which generate tax base are desirable.
- There is support for restaurants or banquet facilities on the water, along with outdoor seating.
- Proactively addressing parking issues and concerns should be a priority regardless of what alternative is chosen.
- Visual and physical connections to and along the waterfront are desirable. Green space including parks, trails, walkways are a priority along the waterfront.
- The old Brin building is a downtown asset.
- Preserve older historic buildings where feasible.

Priority Reuse & Redevelopment Sites

The number one priority is to redevelop the former Gilbert / RR Donnelly site (24 comments). There was also strong support for rehabilitating the Water Street area, the Whiting Mill, and the eastern half of the Sunoco site.

Lawson Canal Restoration

Participants were asked about opening up the Lawson Canal into a free-flowing, naturalized river channel and public recreation space around the dam. All of the responses to this question were positive, with several people showing strong support for a whitewater/recreational area that would attract visitors and add to downtown Menasha' quality of life.