

## PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA

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**September 11, 2017**  
**7:00 pm**

- 1. CALL TO ORDER -**
- 2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE -**
- 3. ROLL CALL -**
  - Barbara Ronningen (Chair)
  - a) Sally Doherty
  - b) Kris Kopitzke
  - c) Mark Nelson
  - d) Lucia Wroblewski
  - e) Scott Patten
  - f) Jim Langan
  - g) Roger Bowman
- 4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA -**
- 5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES -**
  - A. August 7, 2017 Meeting Minutes -
- 6. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS -**
  - A. Bonnie Power, Chair, Citizens Climate Lobby, St. Croix Valley Group- Suggestions Regarding the Energy and Environmental Resources Sections of the Comprehensive Plan
- 7. PUBLIC HEARINGS -**
  - A. Michael and Carolyn Johnson Variance Application at 771 Indan Trail
- 8. NEW BUSINESS -**
- 9. OLD BUSINESS -**
  - A. Comprehensive Plan Update Process
    1. Draft Updates of Plan Sections by Commission Members
  - B. Update on City Council Actions -
    1. Council Highlights from the August 15, 2017 Council meeting - attached.
- 10. ADJOURN -**

-- This agenda is not exclusive. Other business may be discussed as deemed necessary. --

**A quorum of the City Council or Other Commissions may be present to receive information.**

CITY OF AFTON  
DRAFT PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES  
August 7, 2017

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1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Chair Barbara Ronningen called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** – was recited.
3. **ROLL CALL** – Present: Chair Barbara Ronningen, Kris Kopitzke, Lucia Wroblewski, Roger Bowman, Mark Nelson, Jim Langan, Scott Patten. A Quorum was present. Absent: Sally Doherty (excused)  
  
**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE** – Council Member Joe Richter, City Administrator Ron Moore, City Clerk Julie Yoho
4. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA** – Add item “Conditions that can be put on a PLCD” under old business  
**Motion/Second: Wroblewski/Nelson To approve agenda as amended. Motion passed 7-0-0.**
5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** –  
A. July 10, 2017 Meeting Minutes – **Motion/Second: Patten / Bowman To approve minutes of July 10, 2017. Motion passed 7-0-0.**
6. **REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS** – None
7. **PUBLIC HEARINGS** – None
8. **NEW BUSINESS**
  - A. **City of Woodbury Comprehensive Plan Amendment, The Glen at Valley Creek, Project No. 17-2016-00225** (Southwest Corner of Afton Road and Tower Drive, 7987 Afton Road)  
The City of Woodbury is considering a proposal to build a 42 unit affordable senior multi-family building on property currently zoned R-4 Urban residential. The proposal requires a Comprehensive Plan Amendment to re-guide the property from Low Density Residential to High Density Residential. The process includes adjacent communities providing comments regarding the proposed amendment. The Planning Commission can provide a recommendation to the City Council regarding comments concerning the amendment.  
Bowman noted that the proposal says the developer will cover costs for hook-up to water; but there is no discussion on where the water comes from. There will be a greater impact on the aquifer from higher density housing.  
Chair Ronningen indicated the Planning Commission did not receive the exact verbiage on what the actual amendment to the comprehensive plan wording will be.  
Administrator Moore indicated that he did not receive the final map. Procedurally, questions, requests and comments from the planning commission will go to City Council to then forward to Woodbury.  
Langan stated that he would be interested in how residents around the site feel about it. He also stated that he had contacted Woodbury for more information regarding water use, and was referred to the DNR.  
**Motion/Second: Ronningen/Bowman. To recommend that the City Council convey concerns to the City of Woodbury about the effect of increased water consumption on the City of Afton’s water supply. Also note that the Planning Commission has not seen the actual amendment to the Comprehensive Plan so it is difficult to provide comment on. Motion passed 7-0-0.**
  - B. **City of Woodbury Comprehensive Plan Amendment, Stonemill Farms 16<sup>th</sup> Addition, Project No. 24-2017-00255** (Southwest Corner of Lake Road and Settlers Ridge Parkway)  
The City of Woodbury is considering a request to rezone a 5.7 acres site from Commercial to Medium Density Residential. The proposal requires an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan.  
Patten stated he would rather see the City of Woodbury embrace small business rather than add more high density housing.

55 **Motion/Second: Ronningen/Langan. To recommend that the City Council convey concerns to the**  
56 **City of Woodbury about the effect increased water consumption may have on the City of Afton's**  
57 **water supply; also note that members of the Commission favor small business development vs. high**  
58 **density housing. Motion passed 7-0-0.**

60 **9. OLD BUSINESS –**

61 **A. Comprehensive Plan Update Process**

62 1. Draft Updates of Plan Sections by Commission Members

63 Chair Ronningen stated she would like to hold the public hearing on the Comprehensive Plan in December  
64 or January, then pass it on to City Council.

65  
66 2. Review of the Metropolitan Council's Checklist of Items Required to be Included in the Updated  
67 Comprehensive Plan

68 Chair Ronningen requested that commission members send their edits in to Ron & Julie so that they can  
69 assemble and distribute edited version electronically prior to the next Planning Commission meeting on  
70 September 11.

71 Environment & Natural Resources – Langan has edits

72 Housing and Land Use – Lucia and Sally

73 Transportation – Koptitzke

74 Ronningen – Introduction & process

75 Groundwater / Surface Water Plan – Langan

76 Parks – Bowman

77 Solid Waste – could update a bit

78 Storm Water Management – Moore indicated the plan should be updated with the new treatment  
79 system and the new sewer system; also the levy upgrades.

80  
81 3. Conditions that can be put on a PLCD (Preservation and Land Conservation Development)

82 Administrator Moore indicated that conditions are typically placed on the development to address areas  
83 of concern. The City has wide discretion; but conditions have to address real concerns at the property.

84 Bowman asked if financial guarantees are required.

85 Administrator Moore answered, yes, typically the engineers will put a value on improvements that will be  
86 required and the developer will guarantee or have a letter of credit for 125% of that.

87  
88 **B. Update on City Council Actions**

89 Council Member Richter provided a summary of the July City Council Meeting.

90 General discussion was held on the temporary moratorium on exterior storage in the industrial zone.

91  
92 **10. ADJOURN**

93 **Motion/Second: Patten/Langan To adjourn. Motion passed 7-0-0.**

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95 Meeting adjourned 7:58 PM

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99 Respectfully submitted by:

100  
101 \_\_\_\_\_  
102 Julie Yoho, City Clerk

103  
104  
105 **To be approved on September 11, 2017 as (check one): Presented: \_\_\_\_\_ or Amended: \_\_\_\_\_**

City of Afton  
3033 St. Croix Trl, P.O. Box 219  
Afton, MN 55001

# Planning Commission Memo

## Meeting: September 11, 2017

To: Chair Ronningen and members of the Planning Commission  
From: Ron Moorse, City Administrator  
Date: September 5, 2017  
Re: Citizens Climate Lobby Presentation by Bonnie Power Regarding Comprehensive Plan Update Suggestions

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Bonnie Power, Chair of the Citizens Climate Lobby, St. Croix Valley group, will make a presentation regarding suggestions for the Comprehensive Plan update for the Planning Commission to consider. An outline of the suggestions is attached.

**PLANNING COMMISSION DIRECTION REQUESTED:**

**The suggestions from the Citizens Climate Lobby can be considered as part of the Commission's Comprehensive Plan update discussion.**

----- Forwarded Message -----

**From:** Meierotto, Richard R.

**Sent:** Tuesday, September 5, 2017, 8:55:53 AM CDT

**Subject:** comp plan

9/4/17

Chairman Barb,

These are the Citizens Climate Lobby, St. Croix Valley group, suggestions for the Afton Comprehensive Plan for the Planning Commission to cogitate. This is what Bonnie Power, chairman of the above group, will be presenting to the Pl. Com. on Monday, Sept. 11th meeting.

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Energy

As a sparsely populated rural community, the city will encourage methods of energy conservation and renewable forms of energy that are environmentally friendly. (omitted locally produced)

Reduce community-wide use of non-renewable energy sources attempting to meet state-wide standards of 80% by 2050.

Encourage use of renewable forms of energy, solar, wind, geothermal.

The Metropolitan Land Planning Act requires that local comprehensive plans include an element for the protection and development of access to direct sunlight for solar energy systems. The city of Afton will protect such access by requiring minimum lot sizes, abundant open space, yard setbacks, and maximum height of buildings for urban residents. The city will review and revise, as necessary,,,,,,,,,,,,,

p. 19

Environmental Resources Goals and Policies

1. Preserve a rural landscape and natural ecosystems that sequester carbon and reduce greenhouse gases. Maintain the city's overall one housing unit per ten acres density.....

(to limit development's footprint upon the land. - omit?

8. insert a) Plant diverse species of native trees  
then, b), c), and d)

12. Reduce the use of fossil fuels for energy production by encouraging alternate options like solar, wind, and geothermal.

a) Study the potential for renewable energy use in the community.

b) Leading by example the city will install renewable energy technology on city property.

c) Establish ordinances and building codes requiring energy efficiency and use of renewables.

Any questions, please call us: 651 436 4471

Many thanks, Joan and Rick

City of Afton  
3033 St. Croix Trl, P.O. Box 219  
Afton, MN 55001

# Planning Commission Memo

## Meeting: September 11, 2017

To: Chair Ronningen and members of the Planning Commission  
From: Ron Moose, City Administrator  
Date: September 5, 2017  
Re: Michael and Carolyn Johnson Variance Application at 771 Indian Trail

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### Background

The Johnson property includes a portion of Metcalf Lake in the northwest corner, a creek and wetland in the northeast corner and a wetland in the south and southwest portions of the property. A house and pool previously located in the central portion of the property were recently removed. A newer septic system was installed previous to the removal of the house. A well is located just to the south of both the previous house and the proposed house location. The Johnsons are proposing to build a new house in approximately the same location as the former house, which was a legally nonconforming structure located approximately 75 feet from the Ordinary High Water Line (OHWL) of Metcalf Lake, with the pool located approximately 40 feet from Metcalf Lake. The location of the lake, creek and wetlands, and the topography of the property, limit the buildable area on the property.

### Setbacks from Protected Waters and Wetlands

The required setback from the OHWL of Metcalf Lake is 200 feet. The Valley Branch Watershed District requires a 100-foot AVERAGE unmowed vegetative buffer with no impervious surfaces and a 25-foot MINIMUM unmowed vegetative buffer with no impervious surface adjacent to wetlands and protected waters. The buffer is measured upland from the DNR's OHWL or the delineated wetland boundary, whichever is greater.

### Applicant's Variance Narrative

The applicant has provided a variance narrative and a number of maps and photos that outline the limitations of the property in relation to buildable area, and show the proposed house location in relation to the former house location.

### DNR Review

The DNR has been provided with the application materials but has not yet provided review comments. Staff will obtain their comments for the Planning Commission meeting.

### Zoning Requirements Met

1. Meets the side yard, rear yard and front yard setback requirements.
2. Meets impervious coverage requirements

### Zoning Requirements Not Met

1. The proposed house has a 67.94 foot setback from the OHWL of Lake Metcalf, vs. the required 200 feet.

### Wetland Setbacks

The proposed house is approximately 150 feet from the wetland to the south, and approximately 60 feet from the wetland to the north. There is an existing gravel driveway north of the house that is very close to the edge of the wetland. If the Commission approves a variance, it may want to require the gravel driveway to be removed as a condition of a variance approval.

### Variations Requested

The proposal involves one variance:

1. A variance to allow a 67.94 foot setback to the OHWL of Metcalf Lake vs. the required 200 feet.

#### Discussion

The house could be moved to the south to reduce the OHWL variance required. Moving the house to the south would require replacing the existing well and, depending on how far the house was moved, could move the house from a flat area into a sloped area and would affect existing trees. The house could be moved to the east to reduce the OHWL variance required. Moving the house to the east would move the driveway area from a flat area to a sloped area and would affect existing trees.

#### Planning Commission Recommendation

The Planning Commission may approve the variance application, deny the application or approve a reduced variance.

#### Findings

The Planning Commission will need to provide findings to support its recommendation. Suggested findings for consideration by the Planning Commission are as follows:

1. The property owners are proposing to build a new house on approximately the same location as a former legally nonconforming house that was recently demolished.
2. The proposed house location does not meet the setback from the OHWL of Metcalf Lake.
3. A new septic system was installed previous to the removal of the house.
4. A well is located just to the south of both the previous house and the proposed house location.
5. The house could be moved to the south to reduce the OHWL variance required.
6. Moving the house to the south would require replacing the existing well and could move the house from a flat area into a sloped area and would affect existing trees.
7. The house could be moved to the east to reduce the OHWL variance required.
8. Moving the house to the east would move the driveway area from a flat area to a sloped area and would affect existing trees.
9. The unique and difficult characteristics of the site that limit the buildable area on the site were not caused by the property owner.
10. The proposal would not disrupt the existing natural vegetation

#### Conditions

If the Planning Commission recommends approval of the variance or a reduced variance, the recommendation may include conditions to limit the impact of the house on Metcalf Lake.

#### **PLANNING COMMISSION DIRECTION REQUESTED:**

**Motion to provide a recommendation regarding the Johnson variance application to enable the construction of a new house at 771 Indian Trail with a 67.94 foot setback from the OHWL of Metcalf Lake, including findings, and conditions if desired.**





MICHAEL PAUL  
— DESIGN + BUILD —

August 22, 2017

Variance Narrative  
771 Indian Trail South  
Afton, MN

For Proposed Variance,

We recently obtained a demo permit from the city of Afton and removed the existing home at 771 Indian Trail South. During the demo phase a new home plan was created of similar size and shape. The new home was designed for the newer septic system that was installed in 2015 for the anticipated 2017 build. Also, the homes shape was specifically designed to allow for the use of the existing well on the property, in hopes of not having to cap and replace the current well.

We have positioned the home in a location that allows the use of the updated septic system and current well. The new home has been positioned in the approximate location of the former home that was demolished.

**The hardships we face with moving the proposed location are:**

- If we move the house to much, a new septic system may be required.
- If we move the house any further south, we will need to cap and replace the well.
- If we move the house any further south, the house will “fall off” the steep front hill, and move closer to the wetland on the south side of the property.
- If we move the house further east, we will have to remove dozens of large trees and again the house will “fall off” as it moves towards the east property line.
- If we move the house further east, we still will not meet any current requirements from distance to wetlands, as the wetlands also travel east.
- If we move the house further east, we will also encroach on the neighbor’s privacy, as his house is nearly on our east property line.

Because this land is a peninsula, and is on an elevated “hill”, we are proposing for a variance to build a similar size and shape structure as the previous home that was removed. We have also removed a pool and hardscape that was non-conforming, built within the set-backs from the wetlands, thus improving the previous non-conforming property.

Thank you for your consideration of variance for 771 Indian Trl S.

Z-24

### CITY OF AFTON VARIANCE APPLICATION

(Reference Sections: 12-55, 12-77, 12-328 12-835, 12-1020, 12-1266, 12-1955, 12-2228)

Owner	Address	City	State	Zip	Phone
Michael & Carolyn Johnson	771 Indian Trail S.	Afton	MN	55001	651-324-4334
Applicant (if different than owner)	Address	City	State	Zip	Phone
Michael & Carolyn Johnson	771 Indian Trail S.	Afton	MN	55001	651-324-4334
Project Address	771 Indian Trail S.	AFTON	MN	55001	
Zoning Classification	Existing Use of Property	PID# or Legal Description			
	Residential Home	0502820410002			
Please list the section(s) of the code from which the variance(s) are requested.					
Description of Request					
Build new home on site of former home					
By signing this application, the applicant agrees to pay all expenses incurred by the City of Afton. In connection with this request, your signature constitutes permission for a representative of the City of Afton to enter your property, during business hours, to evaluate this request. This may involve minor excavating or soil borings. If you would like to be present during this evaluation, please contact the City.					
Signature of Owner/Applicant			8/21/17		
			Date		
Make checks payable to: <b>City of Afton</b>					
If multiple variances are necessary from the applicant only <b>one</b> fee is required. However, the deposit fee must be multiplied by the number of variances sought.					
<b>FEES:</b>		<b>ESCROWS:</b>			
Variance	\$250	\$600	TOTAL:	\$850	
Renewal/Extension	\$250	\$350	DATE PAID:	8/22	
			CHECK #:	5698	
			RECVD BY:	[Signature]	

Applicant(s): Michael & Carolyn Johnson  
 Phone: 651-324-4334  
 Mailing Address: 771 Indian Trail S Afton MN 55001  
 Property Address for variance: 771 Indian Trail S. Afton MN 55001

Variance request description: CONSTRUCT NEW HOME NEAR LOCATION OF PREVIOUS STRUCTURE

City Ordinance Section number(s), that variance is requested for: \_\_\_\_\_

Answer the following questions to the best of your ability - based on the criteria found in section 12-77 of Afton's Code (Land Use, Appeals and Variances). Completing this questionnaire will help the Planning Commission and the City of Afton evaluate your application in light of the requirements of Afton's Variance Ordinance. It does not guarantee that your variance request will be approved. If needed use a separate page.

Background: This questionnaire is designed to help you and the City of Afton determine whether a variance should be granted. Please consult with the City Administrator who can help you with your variance application and explain the Variance Ordinance to you. The City Administrator will work with you to ensure that the variance you request is the minimum variance required to provide the same rights commonly enjoyed by other properties in the same zoning district. Because of special provisions for certain types of construction, the City Administrator will also determine whether the property is in the Flood Plain District. There are also special provisions for earth-sheltered construction.

**Criteria #1** *The requested use, must be a reasonable use in order to receive a variance. Applicant - Please explain why the proposed use which requires a variance is a reasonable use for this property?*

PERSONAL HOME - RESIDENCE

**Criteria #2** *Exceptional or extraordinary circumstances apply to the property which do not apply generally to other properties in the same zone or vicinity, and result from lot size, shape, topography, or other circumstances over which the property owner, since enactment of this Ordinance, have had no control. Applicant - What exceptional or extraordinary circumstances related to the property do not apply generally to other properties in the same zone or vicinity? Extraordinary circumstances would include lot size, irregular lot shape or topography. Are there other circumstances over which you, as the property owner, have no control?*

Explain? TOPOGRAPHY & POSITION TO WETLANDS

**Criteria #3** That literal interpretation of the provisions of this Ordinance would deprive the applicant of rights commonly enjoyed by other properties in the same district under the terms of this Ordinance.

**Applicant** - How does the literal interpretation of the provisions of the Afton ordinance (from which you are requesting a variance) deprive you of rights commonly enjoyed by other properties in the same zoning district? Explain: BUILD NEW HOME - ON RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY

IN SAME BUILDABLE PAD ON LOT - NOT POSSIBLE TO MEET SETBACK REQUIREMENTS

**Criteria #4** The special conditions or circumstances do not result from actions of the applicant.

**Applicant** - How did these exceptional circumstances related to the property come about? Did actions by you create these circumstances? Explain: - NO

**Criteria #5** That granting the variance requested will not confer on the applicant any special privilege that is denied by this Ordinance to owners of other lands, structures, or buildings in the same district.

**Applicant** - Will the granting of the requested variance confer on you, the applicant, any special privilege that is denied by this ordinance to owners of other lands, structures, or buildings in the same zoning district? Explain: ~~YES~~ NO - NOT POSSIBLE TO BUILD HOUSE THAT MEETS

SETBACK REQUIREMENTS

**Criteria #6** The variance requested is the minimum variance which would alleviate the hardship.

**Applicant** - Is the variance you are requesting the minimum variance which would alleviate the practical difficulty or hardship for your property? Explain: - PRE-EXISTENCE OF WELL & SEPTIC  
& SETBACK REQUIREMENTS - THIS IS THE MINIMUM

**Criteria #7** The variance would not be materially detrimental to the purposes of this Ordinance, or to property in the same zone. **Applicant (Optional)** - Will the variance be materially detrimental to the purposes of this Ordinance, or to property in the same zone? How would the use of the property, if allowed by the variance, affect other properties in the vicinity?

Explain: WOULD NOT AFFECT OTHER - AS WE ARE  
ASKING TO BUILD A NEW HOME IN SAME LOCATION AS OLD HOUSE

**Criteria #8** Economic conditions or circumstances alone shall not be considered in the granting of a variance request if a reasonable use of the property exists under the terms of the ordinance. **Applicant** - Is the requested variance for economic reasons?

Explain: NO - OTHER THAN SAVE NEW SEPTIC WELL

**Criteria #9** In the Flood Plain District, no variance shall be granted which permits a lower degree of flood protection than the Regulatory Flood Protection Elevation for the particular area or permits standards lower than those required by state law. **Applicant (optional), PC** - Is the property in a Flood Plain District?  Yes  No

**Criteria #10** Variances shall be granted for earth-sheltered construction by state statutes when in harmony with this Ordinance. **Applicant** - Is the variance for earth-sheltered construction?  Yes  No

**ADDITIONAL CRITERIA THAT MAY BE CONSIDERED BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION (PC) AND/OR CITY COUNCIL(CC)- Applicant responses to criteria #11 and criteria #12 are optional.**

**Criteria #11** *Variances shall only be permitted when they are in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the ordinance.* **Applicant (Optional), PC** - Is the requested variance in harmony with the Afton ordinances and code? How will this variance if granted (and the proposed use of the property allowed) affect the essential character of the area?

Explain: NO CHANGE TO CHARACTER OF LAND  
Proposition to Build in SAME LOCATION OF OLD SD plus HOME  
(SEE PHOTOS)

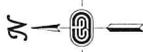
**Criteria #12** *Variances shall only be permitted when they are in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the Afton Comprehensive Plan.* **Applicant (Optional), PC** - Is the requested variance in harmony with the Afton comprehensive plan?

Explain: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Jul 24, 2017 - 4:01pm - S:\PROJECTS\SURVEY\045-Michael\_Paul\_James\_Design\_Buil\060724 (NE-SE Sec. 5-28-20 - City of Afton)\CodeL1\es0724\HP01.dwg

**LEGEND**

- MONUMENT FOUND
- IRON PIPE MONUMENT SET
- WOOD HUB SET
- DRAINAGE ARROW
- x 100' EXISTING SPOT ELEVATION
- (1027.78) PROPOSED ELEVATION
- AS-BUILT ELEVATION
- PROPOSED CONTOURS
- EXISTING CONTOURS
- FIRE HYDRANT
- CATCH BASIN
- ⊙ SEWER MANHOLES
- MAILBOX
- ⊞ CURB STOP
- UTILITY PEDESTAL
- ⊕ LIGHT POLE
- ▲ SIGN
- △ DECIDUOUS TREE
- ☼ CONIFEROUS TREE
- ☼ TREE REMOVAL
- CONCRETE SURFACE



Orientation of the bearing system is based on Washington County Coordinates, NAD 83, (2011 adjustment).

# CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY

## 771 INDIAN TRAIL S., AFTON, MN

**LOT AREA SQUARE FOOTAGE:**  
651,000 SQUARE FEET (14.94 ACRES)

**APPROXIMATE SQUARE FOOTAGE\*:**  
PROPOSED BUILDING AREA = 3,999  
DETACHED BUILDING AREA = 1,385  
DRIVEWAY AREA = 7,190  
WALK AREA = 351

**SURVEYOR:**  
Stonebrooke Engineering, Inc.  
12279 Nicollet Ave. S.  
Burnsville, MN 55337  
Phone: 952-402-9202  
Fax: 952-403-6803  
www.stonebrookeengineering.com

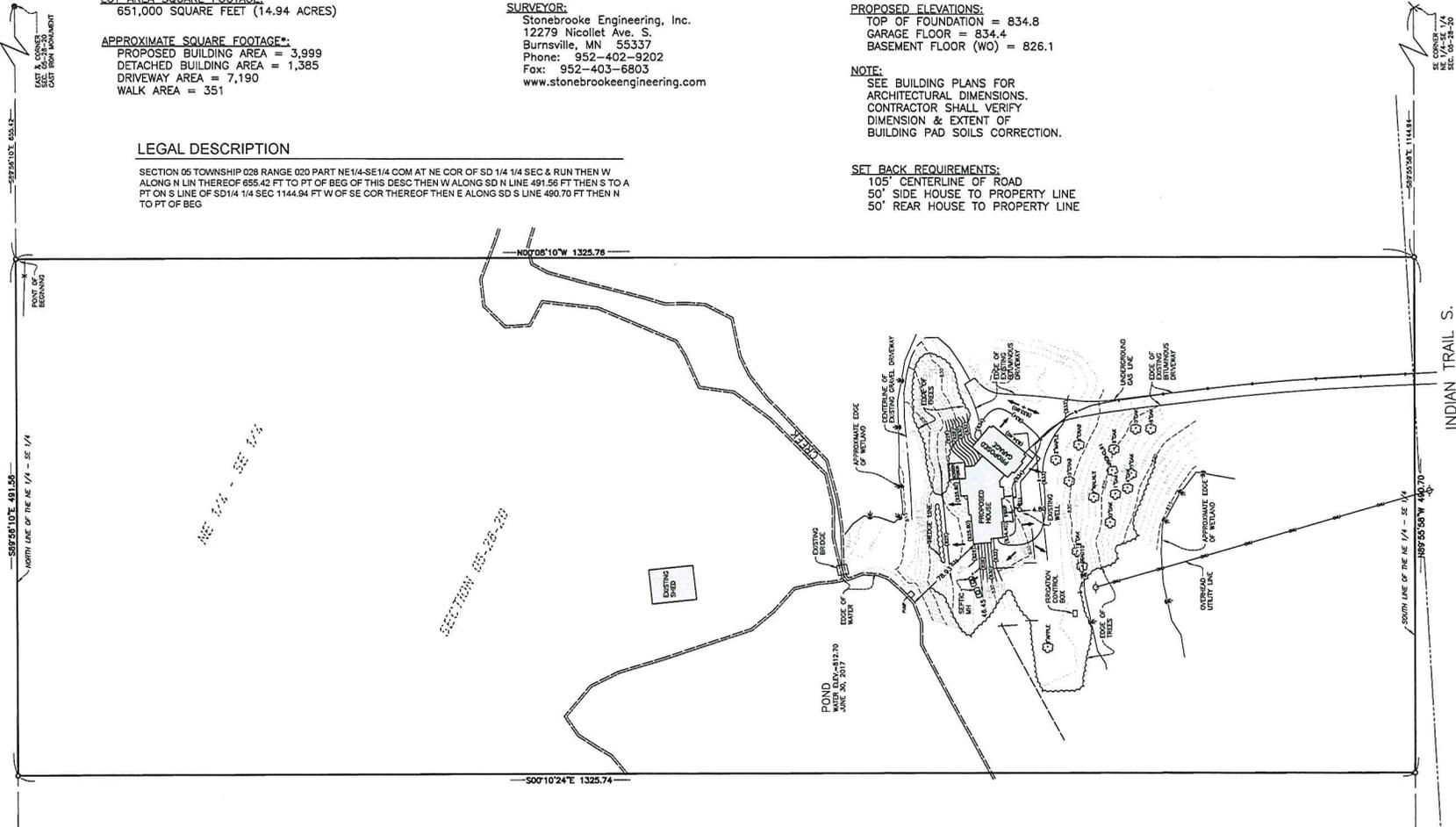
**PROPOSED ELEVATIONS:**  
TOP OF FOUNDATION = 834.8  
GARAGE FLOOR = 834.4  
BASEMENT FLOOR (WO) = 826.1

**NOTE:**  
SEE BUILDING PLANS FOR ARCHITECTURAL DIMENSIONS. CONTRACTOR SHALL VERIFY DIMENSION & EXTENT OF BUILDING PAD SOILS CORRECTION.

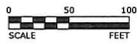
**LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

SECTION 05 TOWNSHIP 028 RANGE 020 PART NE 1/4-SE 1/4 COM AT NE COR OF SD 1/4 1/4 SEC & RUN THEN W ALONG N LN THEREOF 655.42 FT TO PT OF BEG OF THIS DESC THEN W ALONG SD N LINE 491.58 FT THEN S TO A PT ON S LINE OF SD 1/4 1/4 SEC 1144.94 FT W OF SE COR THEREOF THEN E ALONG SD S LINE 480.70 FT THEN N TO PT OF BEG

**SET BACK REQUIREMENTS:**  
105' CENTERLINE OF ROAD  
50' SIDE HOUSE TO PROPERTY LINE  
50' REAR HOUSE TO PROPERTY LINE



REV. NO.	DATE	BY	CHK	DESCRIPTION



I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS SURVEY, PLAN, OR REPORT WAS PREPARED BY ME OR UNDER MY DIRECT SUPERVISION AND THAT I AM A DULY LICENSED LAND SURVEYOR UNDER THE LAWS OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA.

*Caron J. Meigs*

NAME: ABRON J. Meigs LIC. NO. 065507 DATE: 07-24-2017

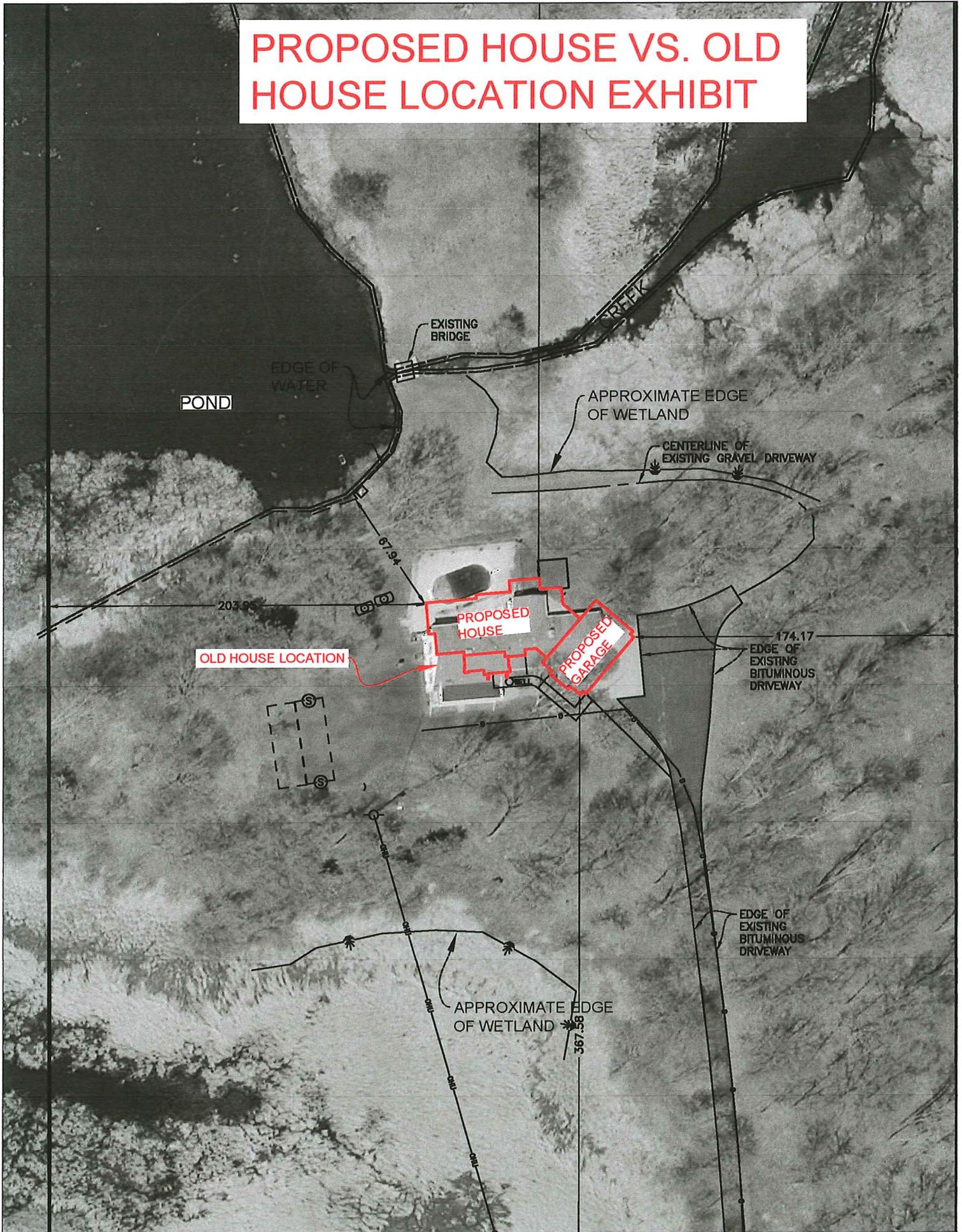
DESIGNED: AJM  
DRAWN: DRW  
CHECKED: AJM



CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY  
PART OF THE NE 1/4-SE 1/4, SEC. 05-28-20  
CITY OF AFTON, WASHINGTON COUNTY, MN

SHEET  
1  
OF  
1

# PROPOSED HOUSE VS. OLD HOUSE LOCATION EXHIBIT



POND  
WATER ELEV.=812.70 (NAVD 88)  
JUNE 30, 2017  
100-YEAR (1% ANNUAL CHANCE)  
FLOOD ELEV.=813.00 (NAVD 88)  
(PER FEMA FIRMETTE MAP NUMBER: 27163C0354E)



← N





↑  
N



← N



Washington County

Washington County Department of  
Property Records and Taxpayer Services  
14949 62nd Street North  
Stillwater, MN 55082

Washington County Parcel Information		
Parcel Number	Status	Last Update
05.028.20.41.0002	Active	8/21/2017 12:50:35 AM
<b>Current Owner:</b> JOHNSON MICHAEL J & CAROLYN 771 INDIAN TRL S AFTON, MN 55001		<b>Property Address:</b> 771 INDIAN TRL S AFTON MN 55001
<b>Taxing District</b> 1005 AFTON-834-VBWS		
Tax Description		
Section 05 Township 028 Range		

Select a Tax Year for Payment History and Tax Detail information.

Tax Bill Totals						
Tax Year	Net Tax	Total Paid	Penalty/Fees	Interest	Amount Due	
2017	\$5,020.00	\$2,510.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,510.00	
2016	\$5,258.00	\$5,258.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
2015	\$4,980.00	\$4,980.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
2014	\$4,870.00	\$4,870.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
2013	\$4,620.00	\$4,620.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
2012	\$4,604.00	\$4,604.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
2011	\$4,352.00	\$4,352.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
2010	\$4,200.00	\$4,200.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
2009	\$4,136.00	\$4,136.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
2008	\$4,404.00	\$4,404.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
2007	\$4,112.00	\$4,112.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
2006	\$3,934.00	\$3,934.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
2005	\$3,536.00	\$3,536.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
2004	\$3,080.00	\$3,080.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
2003	\$3,160.00	\$3,160.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
					Total	\$2,510.00

Information & Links

APPRAISAL & VALUE INFORMATION with GIS MAP

IS YOUR PROPERTY ABSTRACT OR TORRENS?

TAX PAYMENT OPTIONS

2017 TAX STATEMENT

2016 TAX STATEMENT

2015 TAX STATEMENT

2014 TAX STATEMENT

2013 TAX STATEMENT

BACK OF TAX STATEMENT WITH LATE PAYMENT PENALTY SCHEDULE

2017 VALUATION NOTICE

BACK OF VALUATION NOTICE WITH APPEAL INFORMATION

MINNESOTA REVENUE PROPERTY TAX REFUND

Pay Your Property Tax by Credit Card or eCheck

To make a payment other than the Total Due, use the Partial option and enter the amount.

Select a payment option:

- Total Due \$2,510.00
- Partial

[ADD TO CART](#)

Cart: \$0.00

Online Payment Fees

Convenience Fees are charged for online property tax payments.

**eCheck fee is \$0.75 per transaction.** Be sure to use the 9 digit bank routing number from your checking account, not the internal bank number from a savings or deposit slip. Pay multiple parcels in one transaction with the payment cart.

**Credit Card fee is 2.39% of amount paid.** Discover, MasterCard and Visa are accepted. American Express is no longer accepted.

Fees are paid directly to a payment services provider to cover the costs of the online payment services and charges from the credit card companies.

A \$30 fee will be charged for non-sufficient fund payments.

Payment information collected by our online services provider, or its' affiliates, is private and governed by the service

City of Afton  
3033 St. Croix Trl, P.O. Box 219  
Afton, MN 55001

# Planning Commission Memo

## Meeting: September 11, 2017

To: Chair Ronningen and members of the Planning Commission  
From: Ron Moorse, City Administrator  
Date: September 5, 2017  
Re: Comprehensive Plan Update

---

At its August 7, 2017 meeting, the Planning Commission requested staff to incorporate the edits to the various sections of the Comprehensive Plan provided by the Commission members and to provide those edits as tracked changes for discussion at the September 11 Commission meeting. Attached is the Comprehensive Plan with the edits provided by the Commission members.

### Information from the Met Council

The Met Council has provided information by Traffic Analysis Zone and a population pyramid, as requested by the City. These are being incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan.

### **PLANNING COMMISSION DIRECTION REQUESTED:**

**Direction regarding continuing progress on the Comprehensive Plan update process.**

**CITY OF AFTON**  
**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**  
March 16, 2010  
*Modified: November 30, 2010*

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- Appendix B: Demographic Information
- Appendix C: Watershed Information
- Appendix D: Resource References
- Appendix E: Soils Information
- Appendix F: Parks and Open Spaces
- Appendix G: Wastewater Management Plan
- Appendix H: Community Survey
- Appendix I: Maps
- Appendix J: Agreement for Individual Sewage Treatment System Inspection Services

## Vision Statement

*Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes,  
Flow gently, I'll sing thee a song in thy praise:  
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream,  
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.*

When Robert Burns penned these words, he was describing his own idyllic rural sanctuary in southern Scotland. Half a century later, settlers of the St. Croix Valley would recognize the same spirit in the locale of the township and city they would name Afton.

Today Afton strives to remain true to the vision of a rural environment, a place neither purely agricultural, nor purely residential, but a blend of both. Located only fifteen miles from downtown St. Paul and bordering rapidly growing suburbs, Afton's unique status as a rural sanctuary is worth preserving.

*We, the residents of the City of Afton, Minnesota, in order to:  
\_\_\_\_\_ preserve our rural sanctuary amidst suburban sprawl,  
\_\_\_\_\_ preserve the character of our Old Village,  
\_\_\_\_\_ protect our groundwater and surface water from contamination,  
\_\_\_\_\_ protect our undulating lands from erosion,  
\_\_\_\_\_ provide for open spaces to be enjoyed by future generations, and  
\_\_\_\_\_ ensure a sound tax base and a sense of community,  
Do ordain and establish this 2018 Comprehensive Plan.*

This plan is divided into Sections as recommended by the Metropolitan Council: Inventory, Goals and Policies, and Implementation. The message of this plan and the story of Afton should be abundantly clear. This city is unique among communities in the Metropolitan Area and wants to stay that way. Afton's leaders are to look to the principles espoused within this plan for governing guidance as they define the ordinances that will preserve this place for current citizens and those to come.

The city's Old Village provides a business center and a rural village atmosphere typically only found far away from the conveniences of a metropolitan area. The Old Village is the cultural heart of the community, providing a town square and access to the river.

Afton is a city of water. The St. Croix River and the creeks that flow through Afton shape the landscape and are a critical resource for the community. The quality of groundwater and surface water are essential to maintaining Afton's character. Wells and septic systems, rather than city water and sewers, govern every home's relationship to the land.

Afton is also a city of open fields. The farm fields of southwestern Afton represent the city's

historical roots in agriculture and continue to be farmed in the face of development pressures on Afton's borders. As less land is farmed, new ways of preserving Afton's agrarian roots must be found if the city is to remain a rural sanctuary.

Afton is also a city of rolling hills. Water has carved these hills over thousands of years, but it is the impact of development which the city must protect against. Erosion and deforestation in these hills strip Afton of forests and vistas that are also an essential part of life in Afton.

Most importantly, Afton is a city of people. The community within this rural sanctuary gives meaning to the city's character. A sound tax base provides the community with the means to maintain roads, provide police and fire protection, and provide public facilities for the community.

*How lofty, sweet Afton, thy neighbouring hills,  
Far mark'd with the courses of clear, winding rills!  
there daily I wander, as noon rises high,  
my flocks and my Mary's sweet cot in my eye.*

The rural sanctuary in northern Scotland that Robert Burns wrote of has long passed into history. But on the shores of the St. Croix River, the citizens of Afton have established this plan to maintain the city's deep-seated historical vision. We are stewards of this land and all that is in it or on it, and our government has been granted a trust to preserve and protect our lands.

## **Public Involvement**

In the past, the City of Afton involved the general public in the assembling of plan updates. Since the revisions to this plan in 2018 are more limited, public involvement has been more limited. City commissions were asked to review sections of the plan that pertained to their areas of expertise and pass that on to the Afton Planning Commission. Public hearings held in early 2018 provided the opportunity for citizens to comment on the revised plan.

## **Community Character**

The character of a community defines a place and sets that place apart from others. Putting a value on character is not easy, but we know it has tremendous value. Community character takes generations to build, but is quickly damaged.

Afton's location within a major metropolitan area belies the rural atmosphere that greets commuters at its borders. Residents and visitors to Afton know they have arrived somewhere special. When asked what they like best about living in Afton, residents offer many different answers. Each of them is crucial to making Afton a unique home town.

Afton residents value rural qualities: open spaces, working farms, abundant wildlife, and the historic district which is our commercial and residential "Old Village". Afton residents enjoy Afton's proximity to the St. Croix River, state and regional parks, the convenient location of the City to commercial centers, reasonable taxes, good schools, and our community identity.

The purpose of the Afton Comprehensive Plan is to perpetuate this character. It is to identify and capture those things that make Afton a unique and special place and protect them for current and future residents. This Comprehensive Plan seeks to:

- Promote the health, safety, and welfare of the City of Afton and its residents,
- Preserve agriculture and open space,
- Protect groundwater and natural resources,
- Maintain the historical character of the Old Village,
- Ensure a safe and pleasant environment for residential, commercial, agricultural, industrial and public activities, and
- Ensure a sound tax base, which will provide the resources needed to maintain our quality of life.

## **Background Information**

A number of underlying demographic trends will significantly impact land use pressures and development patterns in the City of Afton over the next 20 years. Those pressures on Afton are important to understand because they have evolved and increased in the years since the last update of the Comprehensive Plan (see Appendix B for a complete demographic analysis).

Afton has long been a desirable place to live. Reasonable commuting distances to the Twin Cities metropolitan area, good schools, low crime rates, and a peaceful and tranquil landscape, make living in Afton an attractive alternative to more urban environments.

Afton is and will remain a highly sought-after location, but new forces will shape and influence Afton over the next twenty years.

#### Migration & Turnover of Population

The population of Afton is aging, but more significantly is that it is not being replenished with younger people. The median age in 1990 was 35.8, in 2000 42.2 and in 2010 a median age of 48.6. Since 1990, the number of young people aged of 20 to 34, declined from 432 in 1990 to 288 in 2010[1] 26 more than in 2000.

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~~This plan is divided into Sections as recommended by the Metropolitan Council: Inventory, Goals~~

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## Public Involvement

In 2007,†The City of Afton took a number of steps to measure public input and involve the general public in the assembling of this plan update.

- ~~Community Survey.~~ To begin the process, the City of Afton conducted a survey of all residents in 2007. Roughly 37% of the adult population of Afton responded to the survey. The survey probed the preferences of respondents on a number of land use related issues and potential courses of action the City could pursue.
- ~~Open House Meetings.~~ Early in the update process, the City held two open house meetings. These were all day sessions that gave residents opportunity to stop in any time during a twelve hour period to register their thoughts on a number of exhibits. The first open house was topically broad and designed to identify the areas of greatest concern for residents as well as what they felt was the most significant opportunities for the community. The second open house meeting probed deeper into identified issues, comparing stated concerns to objectives in the existing Comprehensive Plan and clarifying lines of thinking that were ambiguous or conflicting.
- ~~Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC).~~ The City established a CPAC committee that included all members of the Planning Commission (themselves a broad representation of the community) and a number of other interested individuals. These meetings were also open to the public and anyone who attended a meeting was included in the discussion. The CPAC group met monthly throughout the planning process to discuss ideas, review feedback and edit plan drafts.
- ~~Wiki Group Editing.~~ During the text editing process, there were a number of individuals from the CPAC and the public that had specific changes they wanted to make to the plan. To accommodate this in a public and transparent manner, the entire draft plan was uploaded to a website that utilized a group collaboration approach known as a wiki. This allowed anyone to register at the site and then make direct changes to the plan that would then be reflected in the current version display on the site. Prior versions were saved along with a record of what had been changed, when and by whom. Participants were allowed also to register comments on each section and the entire process was open to the public. Many substantive changes to the plan were made during this process.
- ~~Public Hearing.~~ The Planning Commission received the plan from the CPAC and, after some review and editing, held a public hearing. After hearing comments from the public and making some additional changes in response, the plan was recommended to the City Council for approval.

Updates to this plan in 2017 were far more limited in scope than the 2007 revision. The public review process was accordingly less intensive.

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## Community Character

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Community Character references:

[1] Community Survey: General Priorities

## Background Information

A number of underlying demographic trends will significantly impact land use pressures and development patterns in the City of Afton over the next 20 years. Those pressures on Afton are important to understand because they have evolved and increased in the years since the last update of the Comprehensive Plan (see Appendix B for a complete demographic analysis).

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Afton is and will remain a highly sought-after location, but new forces will shape and influence Afton over the next twenty years.

### Migration & Turnover of Population

The population of Afton is aging, but more significantly is that it is not being replenished with younger people. The median age in 1990 was 35.8, but by 2000 it had grown to 42.2. In that same time period there was a dramatic decrease in the number of residents between the ages of 20 to 34, from 432 in 1990 to 262 in 2000[2]. Many parents who moved to Afton in the 1990's are now "empty nesters" [3].

### Population by Age and Gender in Afton

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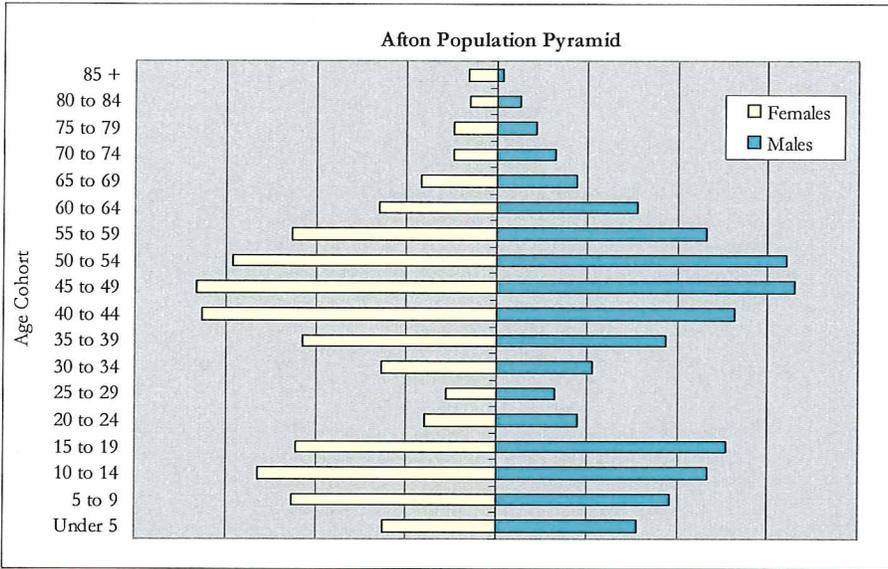


Figure 1—Afton Population Pyramid, 2000 Census

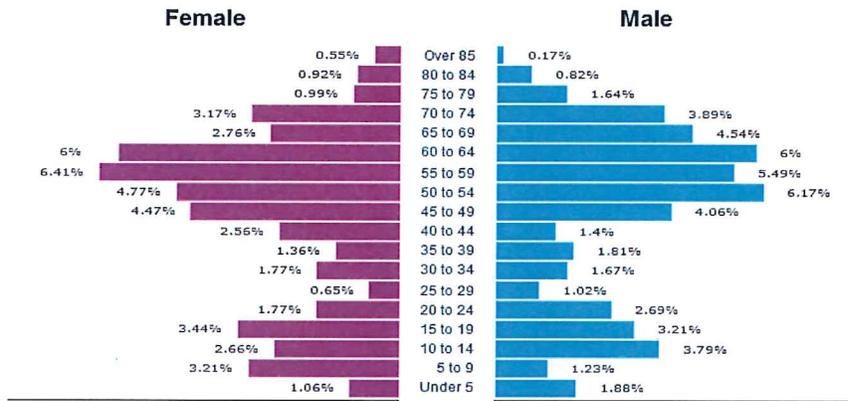


Figure 1 - Afton Population Pyramid, 2011-2015 American Community Survey

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Aging of Afton’s population will continue in the coming decades. One of the results will be a continuing turnover in properties. Many new residents will come from outside of Afton. It is the responsibility of Afton’s residents and leaders to ensure that new property owners come to share the values associated with Afton’s character.

High Housing Values

The median housing value in Afton is significantly higher than both the median housing values of homes in Washington County and the State of Minnesota [4]. This reflects the fact that Afton is a desirable place to live and that the demand for housing in the city is high.

-  
-

**Table 1 - Housing Values**

	Afton	Washington County	Minnesota
Median value (2009 dollars)	397,100	243,600	186,200
Median monthly household costs with a mortgage payment	2,242	1,730	1,490
Median monthly rent	1500	1,144	848

It is not clear what the future will bring in terms of housing values in Afton. Current trends statewide and nationwide suggest that housing values are rising and that demand is high.

....the long-term interests of all property owners in the City of Afton are with maintaining the current development pattern, which is the source of value.

Conclusion

Afton has established a development pattern that residents value and is in high demand throughout the region. The challenge for Afton will be to contain infrastructure costs, maintain a low demand for services, and incorporate new residents and their ideas in a way that focuses on the interests of all Afton residents and will maintain the current development pattern.

This Comprehensive Plan acknowledges these pressures and seeks to address them by reinforcing the existing development pattern in the City of Afton.

Background Section references:

- [1] Appendix A
- [2] Appendix B
- [3] Appendix A
- [4] Appendix B
- [5] Community Survey: General Priorities
- [6][http://www.nahb.org/showpage\\_details.aspx?showpageID=311&gclid=CNDZmJ3z2pICFQZZiAodkCKP6A](http://www.nahb.org/showpage_details.aspx?showpageID=311&gclid=CNDZmJ3z2pICFQZZiAodkCKP6A)
- [7] Data provided by the League of Minnesota Cities
- [8] Data provided by the League of Minnesota Cities

~~These aging trends foretell a significant property turnover in the coming years, either from people downsizing their home, shifting to a lower maintenance lifestyle or through increased mortality rates amongst homeowners. Without a built-in replacement population looking to upgrade within the community, most of the new owners will come from outside of Afton.~~

~~While today's residents hope that new property owners will share their desire for rural living, there is no guarantee that they — or those that are departing and seeking the highest return on their investment — will maintain those values. If they do not, there will be increased pressure to change aspects of this plan or adopt ordinance language inconsistent with it.~~

~~High Housing Values~~

~~The median housing value in Afton is significantly higher than both the median housing values of homes in Washington County and the State of Minnesota [4]. This reflects the fact that Afton is a desirable place to live and that the demand for housing in the city is high.~~

**Table 1—Housing Values**

	Afton	Washington County	Minnesota
Median value (1999 dollars)	225,600	156,200	122,400
Median monthly household costs with a mortgage payment	1,473	1,263	1,044
Median monthly rent	1,375	699	566

Many residents indicate that the desirability of housing in Afton is directly tied to the rural lifestyle and the connection to the natural environment that living in Afton provides [5]. People consistently indicate that they value the low-density development pattern and are willing to pay to secure that.

It is not clear what the future will bring in terms of housing values in Afton. Current trends statewide and nationwide suggest that housing values will stagnate or decline [6], although if Afton remains an exclusive community with a limited housing supply, housing values could buck the trends. What is clear is that the demographic makeup of the community is going to naturally create more sellers, and thus more properties for sale, than has been experienced in recent history.

...the long-term interests of all property owners in the City of Afton are with maintaining the current development pattern, which is the source of value.

With more properties for sale, and with appreciation of those properties slowed or potentially reversed, there may be more pressure to consider development patterns different than the one clearly desired by current residents. While this may prove beneficial to a few property owners in the short term, the long-term interests of all property owners in the City of Afton are with maintaining the current development pattern, which is the source of value.

Low Tax Rate but High Tax Amount

Afton residents pay a much lower property tax rate than residents of other cities in Minnesota [7]. This would seem to suggest that Afton residents do not pay much in taxes, which is incorrect. In reality, the actual amount of property tax paid per resident is significantly higher than in the average Minnesota city [8].

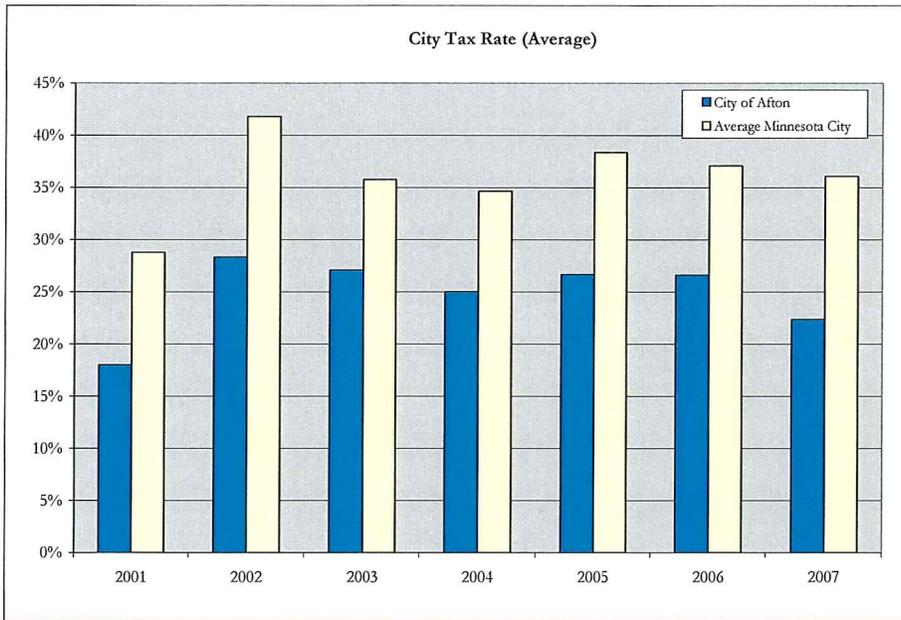


Figure 2 – City Tax Rate (Average)<sup>1</sup>

The residents of Afton pay for their development pattern through higher amounts of taxation. Property values in Afton are high. The high values of property in Afton allow for a tax rate that is low (that is, a low rate applied to a high value). This creates a situation where Afton residents may be paying a low rate of taxation, but because that rate is applied to a larger value, the aggregate amount of tax is high.

There are base costs to running a city (for example: elections, reporting and basic accounting are things that must be done by all cities, regardless of size). The dispersed development pattern and low density of Afton creates a situation where the cost of each service is distributed amongst fewer households. This can be seen most clearly in the item of road maintenance, where Afton residents in a dispersed development pattern must each pay, through taxes, a larger portion of road maintenance than if there were fewer roads and a more compact development pattern.

As with most cities, there is an understandable pressure in Afton to keep taxes low. With the tax base Afton has, there is no reason why the rate of taxation should not remain amongst the lowest in the state. However, the desirable way of life in Afton comes at a price. While residents in Afton

<sup>1</sup>Data obtained from the League of Minnesota Cities

have higher property values and have enjoyed, and will likely continue to enjoy, greater appreciation of their property than will other parts of Minnesota, they will also continue to pay more in taxes to support their investment.

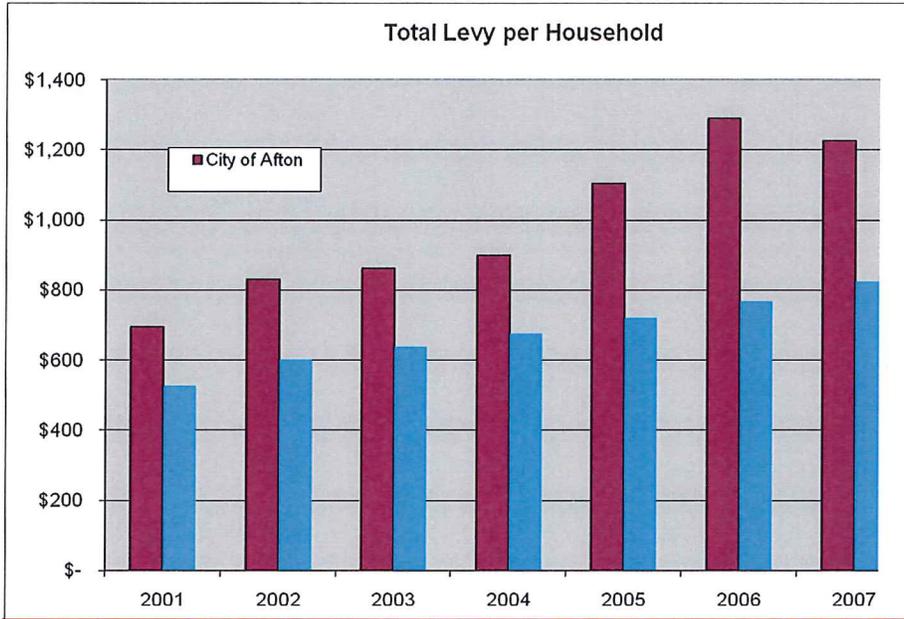


Figure 3—Total Levy per Household<sup>2</sup>

As properties change hands in coming years, there will be continued pressure to reduce the amount of taxes paid per capita. This is healthy so long as the City does not respond to that pressure by adopting a strategy to grow the tax base through increased residential development or commercial development outside of the Old Village. Such a strategy would spread the amount of tax over a greater population and, in the short term, lower the individual amount of tax paid. The offset, however, is that the demand for increased services would drive up the overall rate of taxation and the size of Afton's city government.

Residents who do not join in this new development pattern would experience the worst financial impacts: increasing rates of taxation on a highly valued property that is no longer appreciating. Those property owners would be, in a sense, subsidizing the new development.

<sup>2</sup>Data obtained from the League of Minnesota Cities.

Conclusion

Afton has established a development pattern that residents value and is in high demand throughout the region. The challenge for Afton will be to contain infrastructure costs, maintain a low demand for services, and incorporate new residents and their ideas in a way that focuses on the interests of all Afton residents and will maintain the current development pattern.

This Comprehensive Plan acknowledges these pressures and seeks to address them by reinforcing the existing development pattern in the City of Afton.

Background Section references:

~~[1] Appendix A~~

~~[2] Appendix B~~

~~[3] Appendix A~~

~~[4] Appendix B~~

~~[5] Community Survey: General Priorities~~

~~[6] [http://www.nahb.org/showpage\\_details.aspx?showpageID=311&gelid=CNDZmj3z2pICFQZZiAodkCKP6A](http://www.nahb.org/showpage_details.aspx?showpageID=311&gelid=CNDZmj3z2pICFQZZiAodkCKP6A)~~

~~[7] Data provided by the League of Minnesota Cities~~

~~[8] Data provided by the League of Minnesota Cities~~

## **Environmental Resources Plan**

### **Intent**

To preserve and protect the soils, wildlife, slopes, drainage ways, vegetation, lakes, streams and river that make up Afton's natural features. Additionally, to protect Afton's environmentally sensitive areas so as to preserve the health and safety of the residents, the aesthetic qualities of the landscape and air and water quality.

### **Background**

The citizens of Afton have a high regard for their environment. While the city is only fifteen miles east of downtown St. Paul, there is a world of difference between Afton and the urban and suburban development to its west. Citizens desire to keep the city as natural and rural feeling as possible, while still enjoying the benefits of being located close to a major metropolitan area.

Afton's natural features exist in gently rolling uplands cut by deep ravines, drainage ways, and streams that flow into the St. Croix River. This type of topography, while uniquely defining, presents distinct challenges, particularly with storm water and agricultural runoff. Low density development is interspersed amongst environmentally sensitive areas such as a trout stream, a lake, bluffs, ravines, wetlands, steep slopes, floodplains and a river. The commitment to preservation is strong; many residents believe there should be public investment, or taxes, to preserve these sensitive areas [1].

Afton plans to accommodate future development without compromising the assets that make the city an environmentally friendly area. In addition to those mentioned above, natural resources in need of preservation include view sheds, soils, wildlife habitat, groundwater resources such as springs and aquifers, geologically significant topographic features, vegetation, and drainage areas.

### Soils

The different types of soil in Afton are directly attributed to glacial till [2]. Most of the Afton area includes soils overlaying bedrock having slow percolation rates, steep slopes, periodic flooding and seasonal high water tables, although there are some karst areas with rapid infiltration rates. There are some areas in Afton that have been subject to mining.

These geologic features have created deep ravines and drainage ways. Soil types associated with these features are generally unsuitable for development due to their instability, high erosion potential and low absorption rates. Development in these areas needs to be monitored to prevent further soil degradation.

The Washington County Soil Conservation District issued a soil survey in April 1980. Different types of soil have been categorized in terms of supporting future development, a rural atmosphere, farming, groundwater protection, wildlife habitat, and a biological diversity for its citizens [3]. The

soil survey indicates that nearly 50 percent of the soils in Afton have a severe limitation for on-site sewage treatment systems. Nearly half of the soils with a severe limitation is located in the areas with shallow bedrock.

Not only is there insufficient soil depth to treat septic effluent in these areas, the effluent may also flow through fractures in bedrock and enter water wells without being properly treated [4] in the soil. Care should be taken when constructing septic systems on sloping sites. In general, as the grade of slope increases so does the likelihood that erosion will occur. When designing and constructing a septic system, care should be taken to ensure that the septic system design and installation do not adversely harm the construction site and any adjacent water bodies [5].

The challenging soils and topography in Afton, combined with the proximity to high-value water resources, creates the need for a higher standard for wastewater treatment. The most widely adopted technology – a septic tank and drain field or mound disposal system – may not be the best available approach. Other advanced methods of wastewater treatment that are accepted by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency for use on individual homes may provide a higher level of treatment and monitoring. These are the systems that need to be installed in Afton.

Some of the City consists of prime agricultural soils [6] and soils of statewide importance. While soils are a major factor in determining the importance of land for agricultural purposes, there are many other factors that influence whether a land is most suitable for agricultural uses. In Afton, the prime agricultural lands tend to be those areas most easily developed, having few topographic or environmental constraints. Yet, these areas provide some of the broadest expanses of non-fragmented open space in the city and are thus critical preservation areas.

#### Topography

Afton's steep slopes are a result of erosion by flowing water. It is vital to the community that these drainage ways be protected and maintained. It is essential that every attempt be made to limit the amount of additional storm water and agricultural runoff that flows through these drainage ways, many of them in or near the Old Village. Afton currently protects slopes with a grade over 18 percent and slopes with a grade over 12 percent if the soils on such slopes are deemed fragile [7]. Continued care must be taken when allowing development in the upland areas of the City.

#### Vegetation

The vegetative cover is an essential part of the City of Afton's natural environment. In an area where there is such dramatic topography, damage to the vegetative cover can result in such things as increased erosion and storm water runoff, increased danger of flooding and siltation, lessening of water quality, loss of landscape diversity, decreased land values, detriments to surrounding wildlife and ecosystem, and degradation of soil and air quality. The tree cover is predominant where there are steep slopes, areas not being farmed and along watercourses and drainage ways. The vegetative cover consists mainly of deciduous trees, with several areas of planted conifers.

### Riparian Systems

Afton is divided by major drainage ways [8]. These include: Valley Creek, South Fork Valley Creek, Trout Brook and other major ravines and drainage way tributaries to the St. Croix River. Much of the surface water that flows from Afton into the St. Croix River goes through or near the Old Village. It is vitally important to the safety of the Old Village, and to the health and vitality of the St. Croix River, that these drainage ways be protected and stabilized and the amount of storm water runoff through these drainage ways be kept to a minimum.

The City of Afton includes the Valley Branch Watershed District which governs the Valley Creek watershed, the Middle St. Croix Water Management Organization which governs the St. Croix Basin, and a small portion of the South Washington Watershed District which drains toward the Mississippi River.

The Valley Creek watershed is located on the eastern edge of the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area and covers approximately 65 square miles that gathers the water eventually giving it to the St. Croix River. Valley Creek is a small (approximately 4.5 miles) but significant stream because it is one of the few remaining high quality trout streams in the Twin Cities Metro Area. Brown, brook and rainbow trout all are found in Valley Creek. The outstanding quality led the DNR to list Valley Creek as a state-designated trout stream. The Valley Creek watershed also is home to more than 20 endangered, threatened, and special concern species, including the American brook lamprey, the Hooded Warbler, and Blandings turtle. The exceptional habitat value of Valley Creek has been identified in Minnesota's State Wildlife Action Plan, which identifies Valley Creek as a "Key River Reach".

In addition to what is known about Valley Creek, the Creek also appears to be home to a species of crane fly (genus *Phantolabis*) previously undescribed by science and currently the subject of research by the University of Minnesota. The Valley Creek Protection Initiative, composed of the Belwin Conservancy, the Minnesota Land Trust, the Conservation Fund, the Valley Branch Watershed District and Washington County have collaborated to protect and restore scientifically targeted sites (approximately 900 acres) that will ensure the long-term ecological stability of this riparian system. Belwin currently owns approximately 1,400 acres which has enabled a continuous protected corridor along 70% of Valley Creek.

The Middle St. Croix watershed encompasses approximately 19.8 square miles and is located in the east-central part of Washington County. The watershed is unique in that it has many small, parallel watersheds that all flow to the St. Croix, whereas the other watersheds in the County generally have one major drainage way with a headwaters and outlet. Land use in the watershed is evenly distributed between agricultural uses, rural residential and high-density residential/commercial land uses.

The St. Croix watershed basin consists of approximately 4,918,800 acres, or about 7,700 square miles, of which 2,258,800 acres (or 46%) are located within the state. It is one of the premier mussel habitats in the world, approximately 38 mussel species live in the St. Croix watershed. Additionally, the watershed is home to many Midwestern species such as wolf, Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, and Karner blue butterfly; all of which are on the Federal list of threatened and endangered species.

The population of the basin prior to 1950 was 150,000. In the year 2000 there were 400,000 people. By 2020 it is estimated that there will be over 500,000 people living within the basin, a 39% increase. This increase in watershed residents will likely bring increased urbanization and agricultural activities, additional nutrient and sediment loading from wastewater discharges and polluted runoff, and a continued decline in water quality from these additional loadings. A threatened resource, the watershed basin has already been impacted by nutrient and sediment pollution.

The Afton Natural Resources Inventory and Stewardship Plan Natural Community Evaluation (2001) identified Kelle's Coulee as the most important and highest quality natural area within the City of Afton. It included mapped areas of native white pine/hardwood forest, mesic oak forest, bedrock bluff prairie and lowland hardwood forest and identified several rare plants, animals and natural communities in the area.

The far upper ephemeral reaches of the Kelle's Coulee stream begin in a rural residential area and pass through relatively low quality field grasses and lawn areas.

The ephemeral reaches of the stream then pass into an average quality area of lowland hardwood forest dominated by red oak. Other trees present include box elder, American elm, black willow, silver maple, hackberry and bur oak. A fairly diverse shrub layer includes common elder, sweet viburnum, red-berried elder, buckthorn, and wild grape. A highly diverse herbaceous layer exists including false Solomon's seal, common burdock, wood nettle, white snakeroot, Virginia waterleaf, sweet cicely, stinging nettle, swamp buttercup, common motherwort, yellow avens, violets, lady fern, jack in the pulpit, and hog peanut. Associate graminoids in the ground layer include Pennsylvania sedge, rice cut grass, and Virginia wild rye.

From this point, the streams perennial flow enters into a moderate quality lowland hardwood forest with small inclusions of black ash seepage swamp. Common tree species include black ash, black cherry, butternut, basswood, black willow, and white oak. The shrub layer is dominated by buckthorn but also contains a good diversity of native species including: speckled alder, blue beech, wild raspberry, common elder, and sweet viburnum. A rich diversity of herbaceous species exist in the ground layer, including marsh marigold, marsh fern, yellow avens, wood nettle, Virginia stickseed, jack in the pulpit, saw toothed sunflower, hog peanut, maidenhair fern, wild ginger, horsetail, rice cut grass, giant manna grass, and Canada wild rye.

The perennial flow continues on through a very high quality lowland hardwood forest characterized by an upper canopy of cottonwood, black ash and black willow. Canopy trees in this area are quite large and some are 140+ years in age. Subcanopy trees include basswood, American elm, sugar maple and hackberry while the shrub layer is composed of buckthorn, Pagoda dogwood, and prickly ash. The herbaceous layer is very diverse including wild ginger, common Burdock, zig-zag goldenrod, enchanter's nightshade, white avens, pale touch-me-not, Blue cohosh, fringed loosestrife, daisy fleabane, Virginia waterleaf, maidenhair fern, lady fern, Ostrich fern, and scouring rush. Common graminoids include bottle-brush grass, Virginia wild rye, reed canary grass, giant manna

grass, and sedge species. This area contains the best quality forest complex within the City of Afton and is designated as Minnesota County Biological Survey site 59 by the MNDNR Natural Heritage Program.

The stream finally leaves the ravine, passes under St. Croix Trail and makes its way through a good quality floodplain forest and out across a small sandy beach to its confluence with the St. Croix River. Common tree species in this area include silver maple, cottonwood, green ash, and American Elm. Buckthorn is common in the shrub layer. The herbaceous layer is composed largely of wood nettle, asters, stinging nettle, Virginia wild rye, and rice cut grass.

The St. Croix River, a National Wild and Scenic River, is one of the most pristine large river ecosystems in the upper Midwest. Unfortunately, it was just named one of the Ten Most Endangered Rivers in the United States by American Rivers. It is shared and highly valued by two states, Minnesota and Wisconsin. Land use along the river is governed by the Departments of Natural Resources of both states, as well as the US Park Service and local municipalities. In addition to local zoning regulations, all development must conform to the provisions of the Lower St. Croix Bluffland, Shoreland, and Floodplain Management Ordinances.

According to the 1996 National Water Quality Inventory, storm water runoff is a leading source of water pollution. Storm water runoff can harm surface waters such as rivers, lakes, and streams which in turn cause or contribute to water quality standards being exceeded. Storm water runoff can change natural hydrologic patterns, accelerate stream flows, destroy aquatic habitats, and elevate pollutant concentrations and loadings. Development substantially increases impervious surfaces thereby increasing runoff from city streets, driveways, parking lots, and sidewalks, on which pollutants from human activities settle.

Nutrients (phosphorus and nitrogen) and sediment enter the St. Croix and its tributaries from many different sources: wastewater treatment plants, urban storm water, crop land, pastures, animal feeding operations, construction sites and natural sources. Common pollutants in runoff include pesticides, fertilizers, oils, metals, pathogens, salt, sediment, litter and other debris.

#### Groundwater

Afton must keep the groundwater in its natural condition, free from any degradation caused by human activities. All homes in Afton are served by individual wells and septic systems and there is a strong desire to remain that way. Afton is currently outside of the metropolitan urban services area (MUSA) and has no intention of utilizing sewer and water services even if they become available. It is of the utmost importance in order to maintain our rural residential and agricultural character, that we have ample supplies of clean drinking water throughout the city. In areas that have been mined, it is essential to monitor groundwater to prevent unfiltered septic effluent from damaging the aquifer.

Mining removes the topsoil and sub-soils that filters runoff and sewage system effluent. Systems installed in these soils may result in the effluent moving quickly and untreated through the coarse soils to the water table resulting in pollution of water wells. This is of even greater concern if the area is one of groundwater recharge. Areas of groundwater recharge are critical areas that have soil

characteristics that are conducive to rapid percolation of water from the surface into the substrate and ultimately into the local water table and connected hydrologic systems (wetlands, lakes, and rivers). Pollution of the groundwater supply can have a devastating financial and environmental effect on a community and its residents.

#### Aggregate Resources

Afton contains limited mineral deposits, primarily sand and gravel. Minnesota Geological Survey Information Circular 46 indicates that much of Afton falls within area designated as “Afton Valley Fill”, which is described as:

*Colluvial material which fills in lower-lying areas within the bedrock uplands in southeastern Washington County. We interpret most of these deposits to be thin and gravel-poor.*<sup>3</sup>

The circular also indicates that, “*In all likelihood, the majority of these deposits will not continue to be available for mining because of competing land-use pressures.*”

Of the areas in Afton that could potentially be utilized for aggregate extraction, most are either within existing, residential neighborhoods or encumbered by a permanent conservation easement.<sup>4</sup> The remaining areas are zoned primarily Industrial, which allows for extraction through a permitting process outlined in Chapter 12, Article X, of the Afton City Code.

#### Energy

In conjunction with its concern for the environment, the community of Afton is also concerned about energy waste. As a sparsely populated rural community, the City will encourage feasible methods of energy storage and conservation, and locally produced renewable forms of energy that are environmentally friendly, including wind, photovoltaic, geothermal, and cellulosic ethanol.

The Metropolitan Land Planning Act (Minnesota Statutes 473.859, Subd. 2) requires that local comprehensive plans include an element for the protection and development of access to direct sunlight for solar energy systems. The City of Afton will protect such access by requiring minimum sizes for lot sizes, amounts of open space, yard setbacks, and maximum height of buildings for urban residents. Land uses should not preclude the possible use of solar energy systems. The City will review and revise, as necessary, the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances to ensure the protection of solar access.

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<sup>3</sup> Minnesota Geological Survey Information Circular 46. Appendix A. Page 63

<sup>4</sup> Lands within the Belwin Conservancy are unavailable for aggregate extraction.

~~New subdivisions are required Section 12-1258 of the Afton City Code requires new subdivisions to “be designed to accommodate extensive use of passive and active solar energy systems...” Section 12-132-230 New and modified structures are prohibited from blocking reasonable capture of Solar Resource within the buildable area of other parcels, including vacant lots. prohibits the construction of any structure that will block solar access for an existing principle structure or infringe on the solar access of the buildable area of a vacant lot.~~

### **Environmental Resources Goals, Policies and Strategies**

The City of Afton establishes the following environmental resource goals:

1. Maintain the city’s overall 1/10 density to limit development’s footprint upon the land
2. Protect surface water resources from degradation
  1. Reduce nutrient loading by 20% (Total Maximum Daily Load).
  2. Improve and protect water quality in Kelle’s Creek, Valley Creek, Lake Edith and the St. Croix River
3. Protect supply of groundwater in area aquifers
  1. Maintain springs, area wells, Lake Edith and Valley Creek at current surface elevation
4. Protect groundwater recharge areas from pollutants
  1. Prevent untreated wastewater and unfiltered storm water runoff from entering the groundwater
5. Protect groundwater aquifers from contamination
  1. Provide for safe drinking water
  2. Prohibit mining and prevent contamination from previously mined areas
  3. Institute a well monitoring program
6. Maintain and enhance fish and wildlife habitats so as to retain or expand the current diversity of species
  1. Ensure the long term ecological stability of the riparian system
  2. Restore the riparian forests that line the banks of Valley Creek
  3. Provide for natural corridors throughout the City
7. Preserve existing forests, woodlands and prairies and control invasive species
  1. Control and eradicate European Buckthorn
  2. Control and eradicate invasive species to facilitate agricultural operations
8. Protect and preserve steep slopes and the land atop them from development
  1. Preserve viewsheds
  2. Prevent erosion
9. Protect soils from erosion, contamination and loss
  1. Utilize best management practices in all development
  2. Provide natural buffers to stabilize soils and contain run-off where possible
10. Protect and preserve natural features unique to the City of Afton
  1. Promote conservation and scenic easements
11. Reduce the use of fossil fuels for energy production by encouraging alternative options
12. Protect the night sky from light pollution
13. Promote wise land stewardship

The City of Afton establishes the following environmental resources policies:

1. Maintain the city's overall 1/10 density
2. Use water quality protection practices such as reducing the use of phosphorus fertilizers and detergents and support protection efforts by state, county and federal agencies, as well as the Valley Creek Protection Initiative
3. Work with various agencies to develop a strategy for reasonable and achievable reduction of nutrient and sediment loading from wastewater treatment plants, ISTS, storm water run-off, crop land, pastures, animal-based agricultural operations, construction sites and natural sources
4. Strive for the highest standard possible for Individual or Communal Subsurface Sewage Treatment System technology and advanced treatment of wastewater where that technology has been tested, proven reliable and approved by regulatory agencies
5. Work with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) with support from the St. Croix River Water Resources Planning Team; an interagency planning team consisting of federal, state and local members to develop TMDL requirements which will enhance the water resources in the St. Croix River Basin
6. Prohibit clear cutting, monitor and control land uses which contribute to erosion, pollution, and well contamination by enforcement of ordinances
7. Work with the various agencies involved with groundwater monitoring in regard to the east well-field area in the City of Woodbury
8. Develop and provide funding for a volunteer well-monitoring program
9. Study and consider ordinances to allow for economically sustainable, locally renewable and environmentally friendly means of energy production
10. Actively enforce all land use ordinances, including the various special overlay districts
11. Protect steep slopes, tree cover, wetlands and other fragile lands through conservation easements, scenic easements, and other available means; and require setbacks from the crest of all slopes of 18% or greater, except in the Lower St. Croix Bluffland District where the percentage is slopes of greater than 12%.
12. Utilize data from the Natural Resources Inventory when considering all land use applications

Environmental Resources references:

[1] 2007 Community Survey: Groundwater, Farmland and Rural Character

[2] Tester, J.R., *Minnesota's Natural Heritage*, University of Minnesota Press, 1995; Chapter 1.

[3] See Appendix E for detailed soils information.

[4] <http://septic.umn.edu/factsheets/gravity.pdf>

[5] Christopherson, Sara. Personal Correspondence. 6/6/2008. Extension Specialist, Onsite Sewage Treatment Program .University of Minnesota 173 McNeal Hall, 1985 Buford Ave St. Paul, MN 55108

[6] <http://soils.usda.gov/technical/handbook/contents/part622.html#00>

[7] Afton City Ordinances, Section 12-132

[8] Afton is part of the Valley Branch Watershed District, the Middle St. Croix Water Management Organization and the South Washington Watershed District.



## Housing and Land Use Plan

The residents of the City of Afton have consistently supported the concept that Afton must remain a rural and agricultural community, permanently outside of the suburban growth areas. This longstanding, focused sense of purpose and intent has prompted Afton officials to establish and administer restrictive land use policies. These policies are based on an evaluation of the agricultural, residential, industrial and commercial uses within the City.

### Agricultural Land

After several years of work, and in conformance with the Metropolitan Council's prior Development Framework Plan, in the Comprehensive Plan of 1982, the City of Afton established an Agricultural Zone with a density of 3 dwelling units per quarter-quarter section (approximately 40 acres) of land and passed ordinances to enforce that policy. At that time, and continuously to the present, the residents of the City of Afton value the agricultural economy and rural character that an agricultural environment provides.

Agriculture plays an important role in preserving the balance of economic conditions in the Twin Cities Metropolitan area, but productive agricultural land is being lost to nonagricultural development. Once agricultural land is developed for nonagricultural residential, commercial or industrial use, it is forever lost to agricultural production.

The citizens of Afton intend to preserve agricultural land for permanent agricultural use. Agricultural use of these lands has an intrinsic value in and of itself that is beyond simply maintaining a holding area for future development. The community values agricultural land as open space in an increasingly urban environment - a sanctuary for a rural lifestyle that Afton residents have consistently desired to maintain.

In April 1980, the State of Minnesota enacted the Metropolitan Agricultural Preserves Act. This act provides a package of benefits designed to give farmers in the seven-county metropolitan area the assurance that they can continue their farm operations on an equal footing with other farmers in the state, without the pressures of urbanization. These benefits include:

1. Agricultural use valuation.
2. A limit on total tax rates so that they cannot exceed 105% of the statewide average in townships for all purposes.
3. Prohibition of special assessments for sewer and water.
4. Protection for normal farm practices -- a local government would be prohibited from enacting ordinances which inhibit normal farm practices unless they bear a direct relationship to the public health and safety.
5. Protection from eminent domain -- before Ag Preserve land can be acquired by eminent domain, it must be shown that there are no reasonable, cost-effective alternatives which would have less of a negative impact on Ag Preserves. The process of review is conducted

by the Environmental Quality Board. A suspension of up to one year is possible, but it cannot permanently stop eminent domain [3].

In order to take advantage of these benefits, a farmer's land must be designated "agricultural" on the city's land use map and zoned at a density of no more than one dwelling unit per quarter-quarter section (approximately 40 acres) for residential development. In addition, the farmer must apply for and receive certification from the city stating that the property is eligible for "preserve" status. Once a farmer's land is designated a preserve, the land must remain in agricultural use indefinitely or for eight years after the landowner applies for an expiration of the preserve designation.

**Agricultural Zoning District and Ag Preserve Overlay District**

To address the development pressure that currently exists within the agricultural areas of the City, to address environmental concerns detailed within this plan and to maintain our overall 1/10 density, this plan reflects the creation of an Agricultural Preservation Overlay District. With the Ag Preserve Overlay District, the Agricultural District is envisioned to allow for three development scenarios:

Option A – Ag Preserve Overlay District : 0 or 1 dwelling unit per quarter-quarter section (approximately 40 acres)

Option B –Agricultural Zoning: 3 dwelling units per quarter-quarter section (approximately 40 acres)

Option C –Agricultural Zoning with a Preservation and Land Conservation Development and a minimum of 80 acres: 4 dwelling units per quarter-quarter section Land developed under Option C would be subject to conservation easements, and subdividers would be required to set aside an extensive part of their property for continued farming or conservation. The City intends to do more intensive land use planning throughout this zone so as to coordinate and link the preservation areas for maximum benefit and minimal impact to the character of the community.

Note that, pursuant to the Agricultural Preserves Act, lands in the Agricultural Preserves Program would only be allowed to pursue Option A, which is the only option that provides for a density of 1 unit per 40 acres on a specific, designated parcel.

**Residential Development**

According to the 2000 census, there were a total of 1,031 residential housing units in Afton [4].

Table 6. Housing Type	Afton	Afton %	Washington County %	Minnesota %
1-unit, detached	1026	99.50%	73.70%	67.77%
1-unit attached	3	0.30%	11.80%	5.20%
2 units	2	0.20%	1.10%	3.01%
3 or more units	0	0.00%	13.40%	24.02%

The majority of the housing stock (99.5%) that existed in Afton in 2000 was single-unit detached, which is a higher proportion than either Washington County (73.7%) or the State of Minnesota as a whole (67.77%).

The predominance of older housing is a unique feature of Afton. Many older, historical homesteads still have the capacity to function as viable housing units [5].

Year structure was built	Afton	%	Washington County	%	Minnesota	%
1990-1999	189	18.3%	25,191	34.2%	333,271	16.1%
1980-1989	151	14.6%	13,877	18.8%	299,068	14.5%
1970-1979	201	19.5%	14,126	19.2%	375,503	18.2%
1960-1969	233	22.6%	7,560	10.2%	247,952	12.0%
1940-1959	101	9.8%	6,592	9.0%	382,877	18.5%
1939 or earlier	156	15.1%	6,309	8.6%	427,275	20.7%

Nearly a quarter of Afton’s current housing was built in the 1960’s and 15% of the housing stock was built prior to World War II. In total, just over 18% of Afton’s homes, as counted in the 2000 census, were built in the 1990’s building boom. These facts reinforce the historic roots of the development pattern of Afton.

Homes in Afton hold their value and have appreciated much more quickly than homes across the county and state [6].

Housing Values	Afton	Washington County	Minnesota
Median value (1999 dollars)	225,600	156,200	122,400
Median household costs with a mortgage (monthly)	1,473	1,263	1,044
Median monthly rent	1,375	699	566

The high land values in Afton have been an obstacle for those looking to locate affordable housing in the City. This is not likely to change in the near future. The City of Afton is willing to work with Washington County and the Washington County HRA to address low- and moderate-income housing needs and to identify resources to maintain and advance housing affordability in the community, where possible and in a manner consistent with the development pattern of the community.

#### Rural Residential Zoning District

The Rural Residential Zoning District provides for residential development on private wells and on-site sewage treatment systems, with each lot requiring a minimum of five acres, including 2.5 acres

of contiguous buildable area. With the steep topography of a majority of the land in the rural residential zone, the average density attainable in this zone is expected to be about one unit per ten acres.

#### Light Industrial

Approximately 239 acres of the City are zoned for light industrial use. The light industrial area is located near I-94. The light industrial area is bounded by I-94 to the north, State Highway 95 to the west, and shall include the one 70 acre parcel directly abutting the south side of the Interstate Frontage Road and the east side of State Highway 95, as well as all property north of the Interstate Frontage Road between state Highway 95 to the city limits to the east, providing a location for light industry within the City of Afton.

Light industry and storage related activities will continue to be allowed in the light industrial area under current zoning ordinances. Afton intends to maintain this area as a relatively low intensity transitional use between the interstate highway and the nearby residential zone. The light industrial area provides a location within the city for those uses that would be incompatible with the residential and agricultural districts.

#### Marine Services

The City has created a separate Marine Services District to complement the river accesses and marinas and to permit storage and repair of boats and boat trailers by Conditional Use Permit. This District is generally confined to the area just north of the Old Village that was designated General Business and Light Industry in the Township of Afton before the Lower St. Croix River Bluffland and Shoreland Management Ordinance was adopted, with the exception of a boat storage facility located on Manning Avenue just north of 8<sup>th</sup> Street.

#### Old Village

The former village of Afton, hereinafter referred to as the "Old Village", is located in sections 22 and 23 of Afton along the St. Croix River. The eastern boundary of the Old Village is established by the St. Croix River. It is bounded on the southern and western sides by steep slopes and river bluffs. The northern boundary is the intersection of St. Croix Trail South and Stagecoach Trail South.

The commercial area of the city is only located within the Old Village (VHS Zone) which has been certified as a Historic District. This area has been the traditional commercial focus for the city and for area visitors. The existing village atmosphere needs to be preserved while allowing a balanced and complementary mix of residential, recreational, locally attractive commercial and tourist uses. Infrastructure improvements should be designed to eliminate environmental hazards and to sustain the long term viability of the commercial area [7].

Commercial uses in that portion of the Old Village zoned commercial are within the Lower St. Croix Bluffland and Shoreland Management District and thus allowed by Conditional Use Permit only.

The quaint character and charm of this unique, rural village stands in stark contrast to the commercial development happening in neighboring communities. The gas lamps, with their soft, warm light, reinforce the pedestrian-friendly atmosphere. The mix of small businesses and residential properties provides a unique destination experience.

The Old Village has a special place in the history of Afton. The Old Village was platted in 1855 by R. Haskell, Joseph Haskell, H.L. Thomas, and C.S. Getchell. The plat is typical of land divisions of that time: 50 x 150-foot lots and 80-foot wide street rights-of-way designed in a grid pattern overlaying the natural topography and other physical limitations of the site.

Afton's Old Village offers unique opportunities to business owners and professionals. The Old Village has attracted a number of successful small businesses as well as professionals drawn both to the lifestyle and the natural environment. This mix of businesses fits with the residential development of the Village and, together, they reinforce the context that makes the Old Village such an important feature of the City of Afton. Because of the location and the natural constraints on development, most successful businesses in the Old Village have a focused market. The Old Village is not the place for a big box store but rather an ideal location for specialty shops, services, and as a destination place for recreational tourists.

The Old Village was established on river flats subject to flooding from the St. Croix River. A significant portion of the Old Village lies within the 100-year floodplain and, over the years, there has been periodic flooding. The City of Afton has made improvements to the levee that protects the Old Village; continued maintenance of the levee will be necessary to protect against future flooding and encourage reinvestment in existing properties. The physical features noted above, bluffs to the West and South, the St. Croix River to the East, naturally constrain expansion of the Old Village beyond its present limits.

Levee Certification  
~~There have been various attempts to obtain certification of the levee that protects the Old Village from flooding. While certification remains a long-term objective, the reality for the foreseeable future is that the City of Afton, and the property owners in the Old Village need to consider strategies for dealing with periodic flooding.~~

St. Croix Trail is the main thoroughfare running through the Old Village. It is maintained by Washington County at county standards. The other improved streets in the Old Village are typical of a rural village. The driving surfaces are relatively narrow, causing slower traffic speeds, a safe pedestrian environment and the aesthetic of the Old Village. Challenging soil conditions have combined with stormwater management issues to prematurely deteriorate streets, damaging property and negatively impacting the aesthetics of the area. A Village-wide approach to stormwater management and street maintenance is needed to protect public and private investments in the Old Village.

Old Village residences and businesses utilize private wells and on-site sewage treatment systems. Small lot sizes leave limited room on each property for sewage treatment. The overall density creates

concerns over the total amount of sewage effluent being discharged into the ground in a limited area. This concern is heightened by the existing, high groundwater table, which leaves limited vertical space for soil treatment before effluent reaches the groundwater. Add these concerns to the intermittent flooding, and geography, the Old Village has a small margin for error when it comes to properly treating sewage and therefore must carefully control remodeling and new construction. The City of Afton has taken steps to require periodic inspections of wastewater treatment systems within the Old Village.

Many of the structures in the Old Village are of historical interest, which is a tremendous asset for the area. Unfortunately, some of these buildings are vacant or in disrepair. Where the historical value is not realized and the properties become blighted, it negatively impacts the entire community. A map showing structures and sites of historical value in the City of Afton is included in this plan (Map 8).

#### State Park

Afton State Park is owned by the State of Minnesota, and is operated as part of the State Park System. The Park provides substantial open space and natural features, as well as recreational opportunities for Afton residents and the general public. It is anticipated that the land will continue to be used in this way far into the future.

#### Table of Acreages by Zoning District

Agricultural:	7180
Rural Residential:	7702
VHS:	176
Industrial:	289
Marine Service:	25
State Park:	793

#### Housing and Land Use Goals, Policies and Strategies

The City of Afton establishes the following housing and land use goals:

1. Maintain the city's overall low density
2. Preserve the rural character of Afton
3. Encourage agricultural uses
4. Maintain natural open spaces
5. Promote wise land stewardship
6. Maintain a low demand for public expenditures
7. Avoid the need for extension of the metropolitan wastewater system into the City of Afton
8. Resist development pressures and land speculation, which tend to create urban sprawl
9. Establish an Agricultural Preserve Overlay District
10. Ensure that development within the Old Village is sensitive to the natural environment that surrounds it
11. Preserve the rural village character of the Old Village and promote its use as an entry point for recreational activities in the area

12. Maintain a mix of single-family residential structures and commercial structures containing niche businesses
13. Provide for adequate parking in the Old Village
14. Encourage pedestrian-friendly sidewalks and lighting
15. Promote relatively narrow driving surfaces and slower traffic speeds in the Old Village
16. Improve access to and residents' usage of the city docks and access to the St. Croix River as it relates to Main Street
17. Determine the estimated replacement value of and cost of improvements to the city dock at the end of its life expectancy
18. Ensure that untreated wastewater and storm water do not flow into the St. Croix River
19. Reduce flood damage potential

The City of Afton establishes the following housing and land use policies:

1. The overall development density of the City shall not exceed one unit per ten acres
2. The City shall maintain the current densities for the following land use classifications
  - Agricultural– 3 dwelling units per quarter-quarter section
    - Ag Preserve- 0 or 1 dwelling unit per quarter-quarter section
    - Agricultural with a Preservation and Land Conservation Development and a minimum of 80 acres– 4 dwelling units per quarter-quarter section
  - Rural Residential - 1 dwelling unit per 5 acres, with a minimum of 2.5 contiguous buildable acres
  - Old Village – 1 unit per 22,500 square feet \*1 unit is considered one structure and may include one commercial unit, one residential unit or a combination commercial unit on the main floor with residential unit above.
3. The City shall maintain the current minimum lot sizes for newly created lots in each of the following land use classifications:
  - a. Agricultural – 5 acres with a minimum of 2.5 contiguous buildable acres
  - b. Rural Residential – 5 acres with a minimum of 2.5 contiguous buildable acres
  - c. Old Village – 22,500 square feet
4. Provide for a mixture of land uses which maintains a rural environment and lifestyle and prevents the installation of metropolitan sewer systems, municipal water and sewer systems, and other urban services in the Agricultural and Rural Residential zone.
5. Prohibit land uses which are inconsistent with the rural character of the Rural Residential zone and which might place excessive demand on city services.
6. Discourage residential development on lands suitable for agricultural use and adhere to planning practices that will allow farms to operate without external pressures.
7. Require a minimum of 300 feet of frontage on a public street for all newly created residential lots outside of the Old Village or within the Agricultural and Rural Residential Zoning Districts.
8. Prohibit long and narrow lots and irregularly shaped lots except when deemed advisable in the Rural Residential District.
9. Restrict industrial uses to those which do not pose a threat to air or groundwater

10. Hazardous waste facilities will not be allowed within the city limits of Afton.
11. Restrict industrial development to those uses that do not generate large amounts of traffic, sewage, and can operate efficiently on an onsite standard drainfield approved by City ordinances.
12. Restrict industrial uses to those which would not create the need for metropolitan sewer, municipal water or sewer, or additional urban services.
13. Commercial uses will only be in the VHS District. Retail, restaurants and other similar commercial uses are allowed as principle uses only in the VHS District.
14. Multi-unit dwellings within the Old Village are prohibited as they are not in keeping with the context of the community.
15. Improve streets, lighting and sidewalks in the Old Village.
16. Encourage economic revitalization of the commercial portions of the Old Village.
17. Complete the upgrade of the gas street lights to the new, energy efficient standard that has been used successfully in Town Square Park.
18. Support the establishment of a municipal wastewater collection and treatment system to serve properties within the Old Village, conditioned on users and potential users paying for both the construction and ongoing operating costs.
19. Support the development and implementation of an effective storm water drainage system for the Old Village and surrounding area.
20. Explore opportunities to prevent future flooding.
21. Continue to allow mixed use structures in the Old Village as they are consistent with the current character of that area.
22. To ensure the preservation of the character of the historic district, current non-conforming uses that are rendered unusable may be restored to their prior use in accordance with State Statute.

The City of Afton will seek to implement the following strategies:

1. Establish an Agricultural Preservation District consistent with the goals and policies of this section.
2. Prepare a plan establishing priority conservation areas within the Agricultural Preservation District. The plan should identify areas that are best-suited for continued agricultural production as well as linkages/corridors that should be established throughout the district.
3. Partner with the Minnesota Land Trust and other independent, non-profit organizations that would serve as a holding entity for conservation easements.
4. Develop a plan and seek funding opportunities to deal with potential future flooding in the Old Village.
5. Study parking needs in the Old Village.
6. Develop and enforce requirements for construction and maintenance of sidewalks and lighting in the Old Village.
7. Develop a management plan for unimproved right-of-ways in the Old Village.
8. Incorporate traffic-calming and place-making techniques into road improvements within the Old Village to encourage a pedestrian friendly environment.

9. Incorporate design review standards created by the Design Review/Heritage Preservation Commission for future village construction.
10. Develop a visionary plan for “Main Street” in conjunction with Washington County’s reconstruction of St. Croix Trail.
11. Partner with Washington County and others to conduct a storm water drainage study of the Old Village and surrounding area.
12. Consider the creation of a special taxing district to facilitate infrastructure improvements located within the Old Village.
13. Develop signage and pedestrian-friendly connections to the St. Croix River.
14. Protect Steamboat Park as a nature preserve and passive use area.

Housing and Land Use references:

[1] Omit

[2] Omit

[3] Minn. Stat. 473H.01 - 473H.17 Metropolitan Agricultural Preserve

[4] U.S. Census Bureau’s 2000 decennial census, obtained at [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).

[5] U.S. Census Bureau’s 2000 decennial census, obtained at [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).

[6] U.S. Census Bureau’s 2000 decennial census, obtained at [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).

[7] For more information, see the Old Village Action Plan contained within this Comprehensive Plan

## Transportation Plan

In 1855 the City of Afton consisted of a main street through the center of the village going north and south with short side streets extending up the sides of the bluffs. Today, Afton is served by an extensive network of federal, state, county and local roads.

The continued emphasis on low density, rural development pattern will not result in significantly more roads being added to the City of Afton. The projected household growth is estimated to be 12% over the next 20 years. There is a higher growth forecast for cities and towns adjacent to Afton. This higher adjacent growth forecast may bring more traffic to roads within the City.

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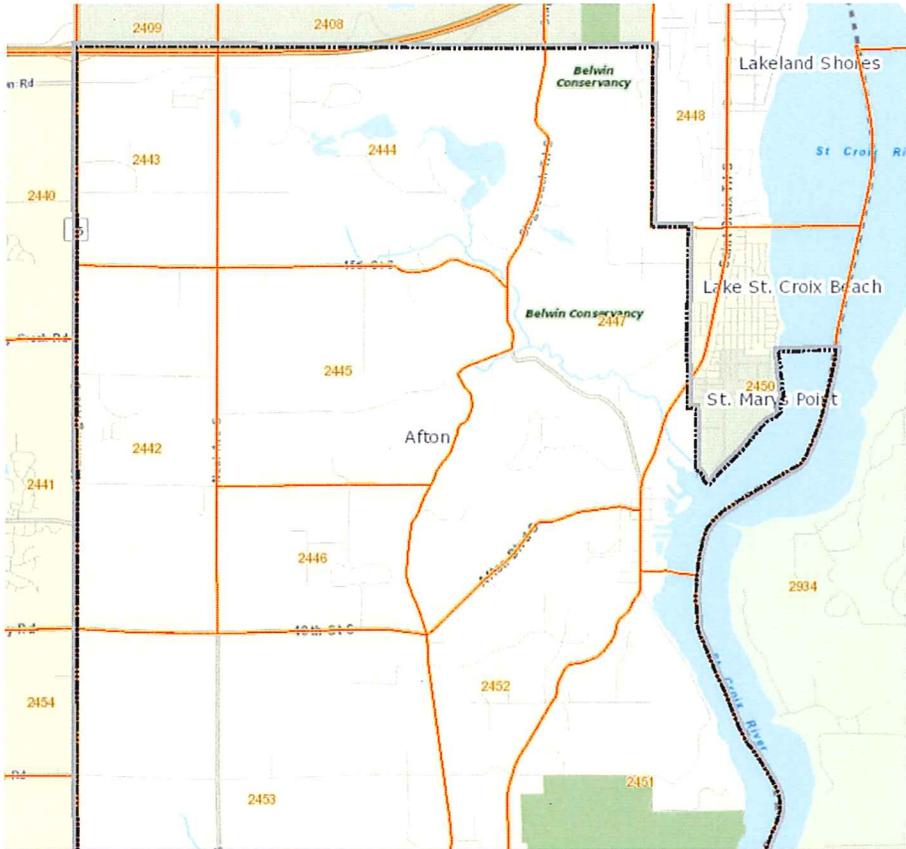
Denmark, Woodbury, Lakeland, West Lakeland data?

Development of the road system over the past few decades has focused on the construction of new roads in cooperation with the developers of the subdivisions. The developer has been responsible for the construction of paved roadways and appropriate drainage to city standards and the city has assumed maintenance of these roadways upon completion and ownership after a period of one year.

~~Where possible, consideration has been given to creating throughways to better manage traffic flow through the city.~~ Due to the low development density of the Agricultural zone, road development has been deemed unnecessary and is prohibited within this zone.

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Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZ) for Afton used to create the 2030 forecasted traffic volumes are detailed below. The projected growth for 2030 is 150 new homes and an increase in employment by 180.



Traffic Analysis Zones for Afton (TAZs)

Met Council TAZ	Population	Households	2014	
			Retail Employment	Non-Retail Employment
2442	224	81	3	8
2443	247	91	29	89
2444	338	119	2	74
2445	203	81	0	1
2446	203	77	1	11
2447	788	312	9	67
2450	1227	535	62	96
2451	263	104	0	5
2452	552	231	3	97
2453	555	201	0	100

<b>TOTALS</b>	<u>4600</u>	<u>1832</u>	<u>109</u>	<u>548</u>
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<u>Met Council TAZ</u>	<u>2020</u>			
	<u>Population</u>	<u>Households</u>	<u>Retail Employment</u>	<u>Non-Retail Employment</u>
<u>2442</u>	<u>200</u>	<u>80</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>2443</u>	<u>250</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>100</u>
<u>2444</u>	<u>340</u>	<u>130</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>70</u>
<u>2445</u>	<u>230</u>	<u>90</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
<u>2446</u>	<u>210</u>	<u>80</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>2447</u>	<u>810</u>	<u>330</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>2450</u>	<u>1260</u>	<u>560</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>180</u>
<u>2451</u>	<u>290</u>	<u>110</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
<u>2452</u>	<u>590</u>	<u>230</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>80</u>
<u>2453</u>	<u>590</u>	<u>220</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>90</u>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<u>4770</u>	<u>1930</u>	<u>120</u>	<u>548</u>

<u>Met Council TAZ</u>	<u>2030</u>			
	<u>Population</u>	<u>Households</u>	<u>Retail Employment</u>	<u>Non-Retail Employment</u>
<u>2442</u>	<u>210</u>	<u>80</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>2443</u>	<u>250</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>110</u>
<u>2444</u>	<u>350</u>	<u>140</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>70</u>
<u>2445</u>	<u>230</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
<u>2446</u>	<u>220</u>	<u>90</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>2447</u>	<u>830</u>	<u>350</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>90</u>
<u>2450</u>	<u>1260</u>	<u>570</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>200</u>
<u>2451</u>	<u>290</u>	<u>120</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>2452</u>	<u>590</u>	<u>240</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>0</u>
<u>2453</u>	<u>630</u>	<u>250</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>90</u>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<u>4860</u>	<u>2040</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>585</u>

<u>Met Council TAZ</u>	<u>2040</u>			
	<u>Population</u>	<u>Households</u>	<u>Retail Employment</u>	<u>Non-Retail Employment</u>
<u>2442</u>	<u>210</u>	<u>90</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>2443</u>	<u>250</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>110</u>
<u>2444</u>	<u>350</u>	<u>150</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>70</u>
<u>2445</u>	<u>230</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
<u>2446</u>	<u>220</u>	<u>90</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>2447</u>	<u>830</u>	<u>360</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>100</u>
<u>2450</u>	<u>1280</u>	<u>570</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>210</u>



Met-Council TAZ	Population	Households	Retail Employment	Non-retail Employment
1111	135	70	14	46
1193	24	29	3	12
1194	91	51	47	58
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>180</b>	

2030				
Met-Council TAZ	Population	Households	Retail Employment	Non-retail Employment
1111	961	379	19	212
1193	638	263	4	12
1194	1601	608	88	295
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>3200</b>	<b>1250</b>	<b>630</b>	

## Roads and Highways

A combination of Federal, State, County, and local roads serve Afton as shown in the existing transportation figure on the following page. Ideally, roads are designed to perform a designated function and are located to best serve the type of travel needed. The four functional classifications assigned by the Metropolitan Council that describe roads in Afton are principal arterial, minor arterial (A Minor/B Minor), collector, and local. Principal arterial routes are roadways intended to connect metropolitan areas, major industrial centers, etc. that are the highest traffic volume roadways such as interstates. Minor arterials connect urban service areas to cities and towns inside and outside the region. The emphasis of minor arterials is on mobility as opposed to access in the urban area. Collector roadways provide connections between neighborhoods and regional business centers. Local roads provide land access by connecting blocks and land parcels.

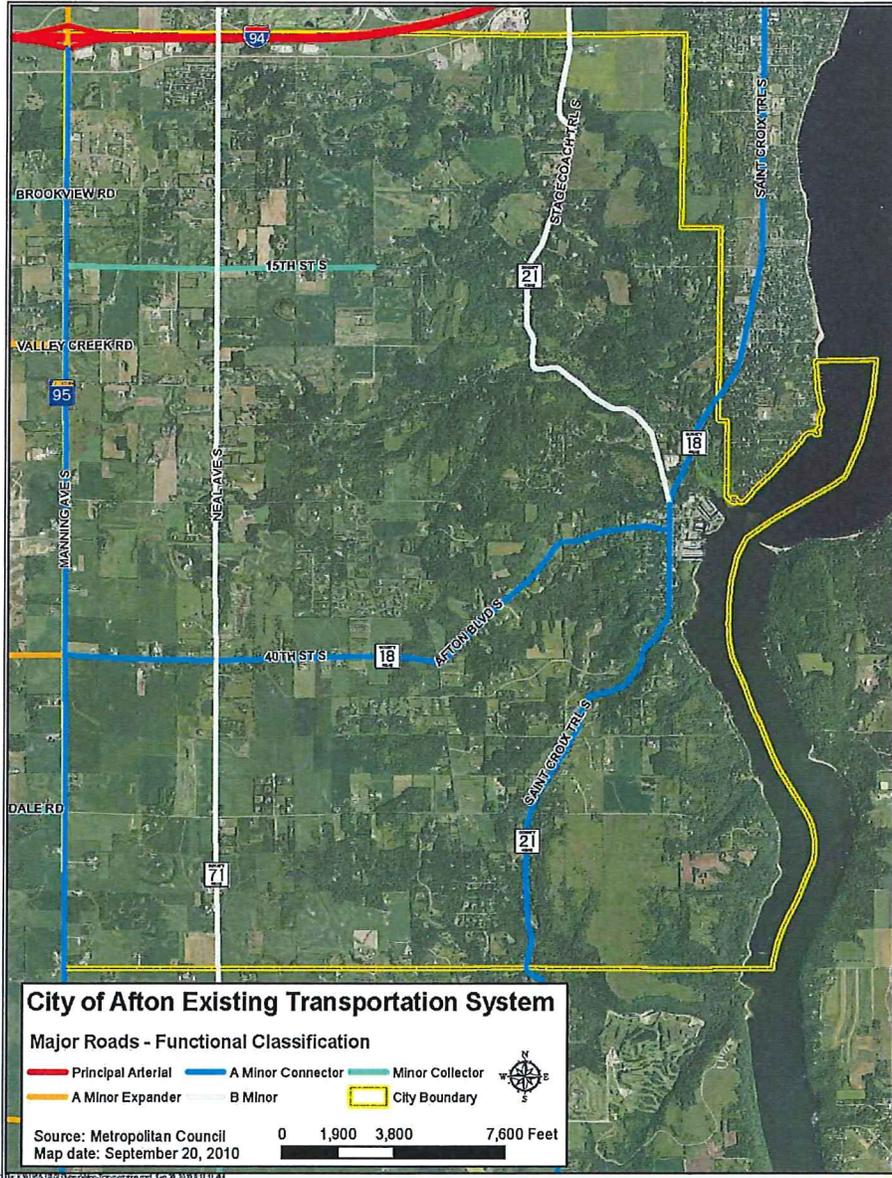
Interstate (I) 94 is a principal arterial along the northern border of the City. "A" minor arterial connectors within the City are Trunk Highway (TH) 95, Washington County Road (CR) 18, and CR 21 (from the village to Denmark Township). "B" minor arterial routes are CR 71 and CR 21 (from the village to the north). Collector routes include 15<sup>th</sup> Street South (from TH 95 east to Oakgreen Avenue South). All other roads in Afton are considered local.

Washington County has proposed improvements within the City included in their 2010-2014 Capital Improvement Plan. These improvements include planning and design for CR 21 through the village (downtown) Afton. It is anticipated that the construction of CR 21 through the village will occur in 2015.

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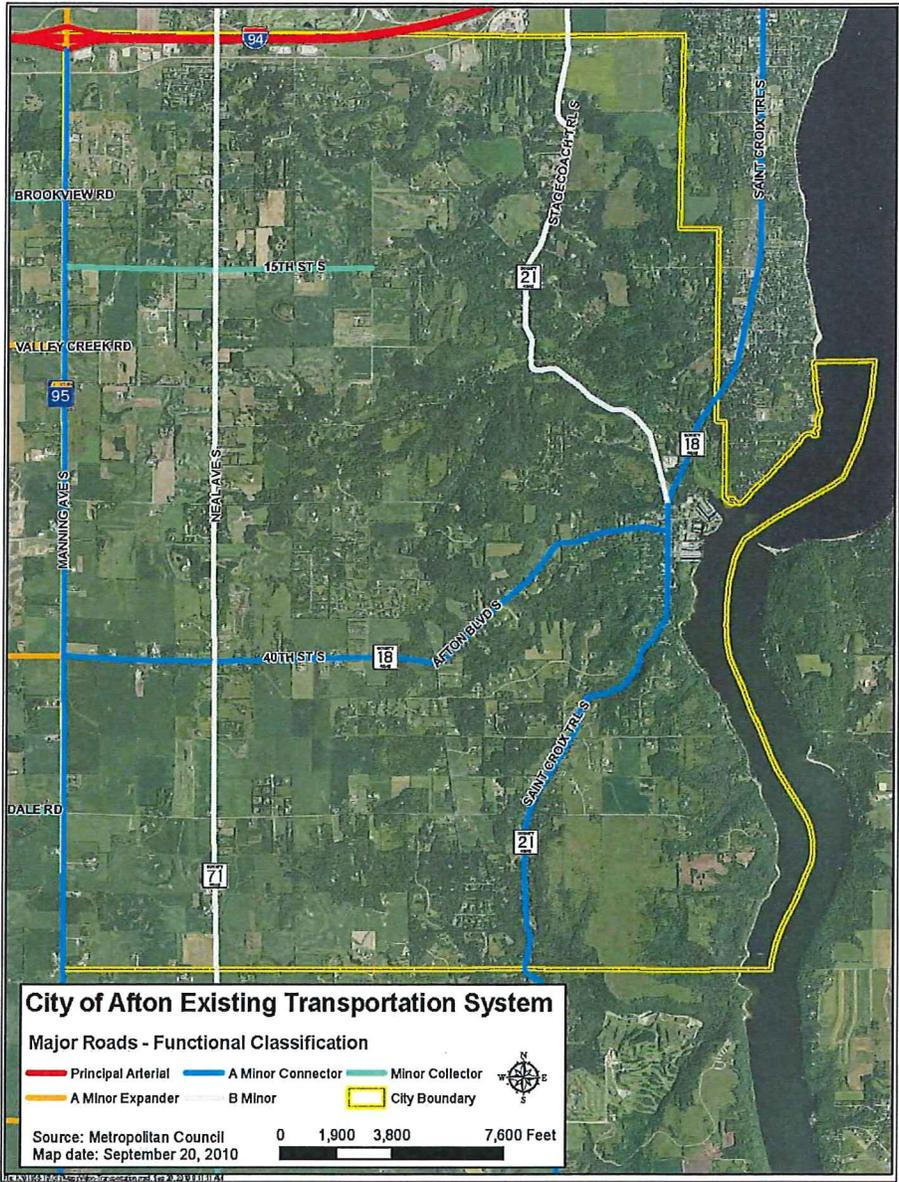
The City of Afton has a draft Capital Improvement Plan 2011 through 2016 that includes roadway improvements within the village including Pennington Avenue and other standard roadway maintenance. Other maintenance includes reconstruction of roadway approaches on 50<sup>th</sup> Street and 15<sup>th</sup> Street, seal coating, and crack filling.

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What are the major proposed improvements over the next decade?

The remaining unpaved roads in Afton were paved in (2007 or something?). As these and other roads age, maintenance expenses are expected to increase over the next decade. The city is committed to maintaining the transportation infrastructure of Afton in a timely manner. The city should plan for road improvements over the long term and facilitate budgets that include ongoing funding. When necessary, bonding may provide funding for unanticipated improvements, providing such bonding includes planning to return to on-going funding.



{Update Me ^}

### Safety

The City will construct new roadways and reconstruct roadways to meet City standards (what standatds are these?) and increase safety and mobility.

### Access Management

The City encourages the alignment of new access points with other existing access points, the provision of adequate spacing to separate and reduce conflicts, and the consideration of sight distance limitations. The City will use Washington County's access management requirements as a guide for design standards on local roadways.

### Aviation

Afton does not have an airport or landing strip and will not allow any, public or private, due to the lack of central services, suitable land space, fragile soils, and noise pollution. Heliports are likewise prohibited. The City of Afton promotes the protection of airspace navigations and electronic communication. Current City ordinances prohibit any structures, including antennas and wind turbines, over 150 feet in height. Proposed, new structure construction will require a Conditional Use Permit where the applicant will be required to submit a "Notice of Proposed Construction or Alteration" to the Federal Aviation Administration (CFR – Part 77, Form 7460-1).

### Transit

Afton is outside of the Metropolitan Transit Taxing District; there is no regular route transit service existing or planned in the City. There is a Park and Ride lot located at I-94 and St. Croix Trail. Washington County provides limited transit service for the elderly and disabled. The City is located in Market Area IV; service options for transit in Market Area IV include dial-a-ride, volunteer driver programs, and ridesharing. The City, in conjunction with its neighboring St. Croix Valley communities and Washington County, may be an advocate for a light rail corridor along I-94 to the St. Croix River. As our population ages, our City may choose to explore the expansion of bus service into our community.

### Non-motorized Transportation

While the City of Afton encourages non-motorized transportation, it is not practical as a primary mode of transport outside of the Old Village. However, with the paving of most of Afton's streets, the City has become a destination for the recreational bicyclist who would enjoy the rolling hills, open spaces, and low traffic volumes within much of the community. Update

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## Transportation Goals, Policies, and Strategies

The City of Afton establishes the following transportation goals:

1. Ensure safe routes for motor vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians.
2. Ensure that roadways are adequate for use by emergency vehicles.
3. Provide appropriate roadways for area businesses depending on their location in an industrial zone or within the historic Old Village.
4. Provide reliable access to roadways outside of the City of Afton.
5. Provide and maintain roadways and intersections by the most cost effective means possible.
6. Avoid disruption to the natural environment.
7. Promote safe, contemporaneous use of the roads by motorized and non-motorized traffic, as well as oversized and slow moving farm vehicles and implements.
8. Utilize appropriate design and construction techniques to avoid premature degradation of roads adjacent to waterways.
9. Encourage "Park and Ride" lots for commuters in areas adjoining major thoroughfares.
- ~~10. Provide for the possible extension of all local streets in new subdivisions to avoid the need for cul-de-sacs.~~
- 11.10. Require right-of-way dedication for existing easement roads and existing streets whenever land is subject to City Council approval.

The City of Afton establishes the following transportation policies:

1. Prohibit the construction of new streets in the agricultural preservation district except where deemed necessary to allow a property owner to use the property in keeping with the agricultural zoning and to promote land conservation to the maximum extent.
2. Control the upgrading of existing roads and construction of new roads which would serve to encourage non-farm development in the agricultural zone.
- ~~3. Require a 150-foot setback along designated collector streets.~~
- 4.3. Work with Washington County to restore the historic character of St. Croix Trail through the Old Village as a slow speed, small village street.
- ~~5.4.~~ Airports, landing strips and heliports are prohibited within Afton.
- ~~6.5.~~ Update and implement a capital improvement program.

**Commented [KK1]:** The "150 foot" piece of this is to specific for the comp plan and it is unclear what the rationale for this setback is. Delete or describe the outcome we seek with this policy.

The City of Afton will seek to implement the following strategies:

1. Post speed limits, weight and parking restrictions on City streets, where appropriate.
2. Post share-the-road signs for bicyclists, equestrians and other uses, where appropriate.
- ~~3. Incorporate traffic calming into road improvements within the Old Village.~~

## Groundwater and Surface Water Plan

The City's draft Surface Water Management Plan is attached, and has been provided to the appropriate Watershed Districts, and the appropriate Met Council staff, for review.

## Wastewater Plan

Properly treating wastewater is a critical concern of the residents of Afton. There is a strong desire to ensure that wastewater is properly treated so as to limit the impact that development in Afton has on the natural environment. There is an equally strong desire to avoid the land use patterns that come with centralized collection and treatment of wastewater.

The City of Afton has no plans, or desire, to install a sewer collection system or provide centralized sewage treatment except within the boundaries of the Old Village. Continued use of highly efficient and well maintained individual sewage treatment systems will avoid public expenditures for central sewer and will prevent development at urban densities.

There are 1,119 individual, subsurface sewage treatment systems within the city limits. In addition, there is one, community system that serves eleven homes.

Choosing to rely on individual, subsurface sewage-treatment systems (SSTS), also commonly called “septic systems”, will require the City of Afton to be diligent to protect residents’ health, safety, and welfare. Development restrictions in place limit development in areas with unsuitable soils.

To further ensure the health and safety of Afton’s residents, the City performs a thorough review of all SSTS designs and provides expert inspection for all installations. Afton has also implemented a maintenance program for existing systems, including an on-site, biennial mandatory inspection and the gradual upgrading of all substandard systems [1].

The installation, maintenance and inspection of all SSTS and community septic systems (cluster systems) are regulated by both the City of Afton and Washington County in accordance with Minnesota Rules Chapter 7080. An agreement is in place whereby Washington County provides individual sewage treatment system inspection services within the city limits.<sup>5</sup> As part of this agreement, the City of Afton has agreed to adopt a revised ISTS ordinance within twelve months of the County’s adoption of a revised ISTS ordinance. The city has agreed to be consistent with, or more restrictive than, the county.

A septic system soil suitability map has been created for the City of Afton, which indicates where septic systems may be most easily sited. The Wastewater Management Plan for the City of Afton can be found in Appendix G.

### Wastewater Goals, Policies and Strategies

The City of Afton establishes the following wastewater goals:

1. Reduce the volume of wastewater that is discharged to the soils of Afton.

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<sup>5</sup> See Appendix J for a copy of the ISTS inspection services agreement.

2. Protect ground and surface waters to the greatest extent practicable by improving the quality of wastewater effluent.
3. Protect the groundwater from chemical or hazardous waste introduced from wastewater systems.

The City of Afton establishes the following wastewater policies:

1. Encourage the use of individual, highly efficient, wastewater treatment systems for all homes and businesses within Afton.
2. Restrict industrial uses to those which would not create the need for metropolitan sewer, municipal water or additional urban services.
3. Educate all residents on the proper maintenance of a septic system.
4. Encourage upgrading of all substandard wastewater treatment systems and the immediate upgrading or replacement of failing systems.

Wastewater references:

[\[1\]](#) See Appendix G – SSTS Management Program

## Parks and Open Spaces Plan

Residents value the rural atmosphere of Afton. Five-acre minimum lot sizes outside of the Old Village that do not dominate the views of the countryside, large non-buildable areas of the City, and the large amount of farmland create an open feel to the landscape and help to preserve our rural character and lifestyle. Open spaces, in and of themselves, are valuable to residents of the City as preserves of nature and sanctuaries for flora and fauna. An adequate area of properly managed parks and open spaces help to protect and recharge surface and ground water which is used by every resident of the city.

### Existing Parks

The City does not yet have a substantial amount of public open space and developed parks. The City of Afton has one park for active recreation, Town Square Park, and another for passive recreation, Steamboat Park, along the St. Croix River. Both parks are located in the Old Village.

Steamboat Park's 27 acres lies mostly in the floodplain, and is approximately thirty (30) acres in size. It serves as a sanctuary for many birds and various kinds of wildlife. It is one of the few locations on the lower St. Croix River that is not readily accessible for large boat traffic. Recreation is limited to passive recreation, such as picnicking, walking, swimming, bird and wildlife viewing.

Town Square Park is a more active site. The park provides space for basketball, baseball, picnicking, music concerts, skating and group activities. There is play equipment, a band shell, and a picnic shelter in the park, as well as primitive restroom facilities. Town Square Park is the focal point of such annual events as the Fourth of July Parade, May Fair, Antique Car Rallies, and Art in the Park.

Over the course of many years, the City has acquired a number of other parcels throughout the city of Afton with the potential to develop into local parks. These public lands were acquired in conjunction with the approval of major subdivisions over the course of several decades and remain undeveloped. In all, there are 53.44 acres of designated park land available for public use.

Community and regional parks (Afton State Park, Lucy Winton Bell Athletic Fields, Lake Elmo Regional Park Reserve, St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park, and Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park) also provide a variety of different types of recreation to Afton residents.

Two biking/hiking trails pass through the City. One trail follows St. Croix Trail South and extends from the northern edge of the Old Village to Interstate 94. The other, Afton Bluffs Regional Trail, is designated along County Road 18 running east and west, and is not separated from the roadway.

The planned St. Croix Valley Regional Trail will parallel the St. Croix River, and will connect Point Douglas County Park, Carpenter Nature Center, St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park, Afton State Park and the proposed Afton Bluff Regional Trail. This trail will be aligned parallel and in close proximity to the St. Croix River.

The City seeks to protect a number of significant natural features within its boundaries. These include Trout Brook, Valley Creek and its North Branch, Bissel's Mounds and Kelle's Coulee in the Old Village. Bissel's Mounds in particular are unique to Washington County and are a recognized landmark in the City. Other natural features that are determined to be either unique or geologically sensitive will be preserved as the property around them is developed.

Afton State Park is located south of Afton and a portion of the park (787 acres) is located within the City's boundaries. The park was authorized by legislation in 1969 and was opened to the public in 1982. The terrain of the park is defined by a glacial moraine cut by deep ravines running into the St. Croix River. To Afton's residents, the state park offers many recreational amenities, including: backpack camping, swimming, hiking, fishing, cross country skiing, a prairie landscape, bird watching, and animal sighting. Some of the animals the park offers a home to include hawks, bluebirds, meadowlarks, deer, fox, badgers, thirteen-lined ground squirrels, turkeys, and gray and fox squirrels. Afton State Park is also home to an array of natural vegetation. It contains a combination of oak savannah and woodlands. Park wildflowers include woodland ephemerals in the spring, butterfly weed and puccoons in the summer, and sunflowers and blazing star in the fall.

Belwin Nature Center also holds considerable land within Afton that is held in a conservation easement by the Minnesota Land Trust. This land is designated quasi-public and is open to the public by invitation only.

#### **Parks and Open Space Goals and Policies**

The City of Afton establishes the following parks and open space goals:

1. Acquire and preserve adequate amounts of open space to maintain a rural atmosphere (Aftons 2012 Park Plan)
- 4.2. Obtain and maintain designated open spaces to provide for wildlife habitat and migration.
- 2.3. Reconnect Afton's historical linkages to the St. Croix River.
- 3.4. Provide expanded access to the City docks to all residents.
- 4.5. Provide safe areas to ride bicycles within the City.
- 5.6. Provide safe areas to ride horses within the City.
- 6.7. Provide pedestrian friendly means of enjoying Afton's scenic views, wildlife, and connections to the St. Croix River.
- 7.8. Preserve locally important water resources, natural and scenic features.
- 8.9. Periodically identify the recreational needs of Afton citizens and evaluate ways to meet them.
10. Consider alignment of the Afton Bluffs Regional Trail to run east-west from the City of Afton to the City of Woodbury.
11. Manage all City owned or controlled land to maintain or repair to naturally occurring species of plants and trees plus those necessary to anticipate climate change.
12. Manage all City owned or controlled land to promote erosion prevention, recharging of ground water and carbon storage.

13. {Text needed to describe policies regarding PUAD kind of setasides: public access or not, maintenance, other requirements?}

The City of Afton establishes the following parks and open space Policies:

1. Preserve open spaces and natural resources for passive use and create non-motorized trails through direct purchase, subdivision, scenic and/or conservation easements and other means to include the seeking of grants and the use of matching funds when they are available, but not the use of eminent domain.
2. Maintain central community places.
3. Maintain safe environments for children to play and for the community to gather.
4. Maintain designated open spaces to provide for wildlife habitat and migration.
5. Work cooperatively with Washington County, Belwin, the Science Museum of Minnesota, and other quasi-public and private entities to preserve sensitive lands and open space.
- 5.6. Develop a forestry plan for all park and open space land to enhance water quality.

The City of Afton establishes the following parks and open space Strategies:

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1. Develop signage and pedestrian friendly connections to the St. Croix River.
2. Protect Steamboat park as a nature preserve and passive use area.
3. Develop a long term plan to obtain additional city owned land in areas identified as desirable to reach city goals.
4. Develop a forestry plan to identify plant and tree species native to Afton and hardy in projected climate conditions which will provide effects beneficial to water quality and carbon storage.
5. Develop a long term plan to pay for acquisition and development of Afton's parks and open spaces.

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## **Solid Waste Plan**

The City of Afton does not currently have a solid waste disposal site due to the fragile nature of the soils and the underlying geological substrate. Because of this, the City contracts with trash haulers to collect solid waste.

The City prohibits the burning or dumping of trash and garbage and also has a very active recycling program that encourages citizens to recycle on a regular basis. The City also has a contract with a recycling hauler to assist with these efforts.

### **Solid Waste Goals, Policies and Strategies**

The City of Afton establishes the following solid waste goals:

1. Significantly reduce the amount of material that Afton residents and businesses contribute to landfills or waste incinerators.
2. Educate residents about the opening of the new Environmental Center at 4039 Cottage Grove Drive in Woodbury for disposal of household hazardous waste, electronics and recyclables.

The City of Afton establishes the following solid waste policies:

1. Provide for trash hauling and recycling service.
2. Provide information to residents on the Environmental Center hazardous waste facility through various means.

## City Governance Plan

The City provides services consistent with those provided in small rural communities, including paving of gravel roads, general street maintenance, parks and recreation facilities, police service, fire protection, building inspection services and general assistance at City Hall. These services have typically been managed from City Hall by a city administrator and small staff, sometimes in a full-time capacity and sometimes in a part-time capacity.

The City of Afton owns five public buildings located on three parcels of property. The Afton Village Hall, leased to the Afton Historical Society and City Garage are located on Lots 1, 2, and 3 of Block 8 in the Old Village. The Town Hall (leased) and Garage are located in the NW quarter of the SW quarter of Section 10, on Stagecoach Trail South. The City Hall is located on Lots 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 of Block 11 of the Old Village. The City also owns docks that are leased to a private operator.

Police protection is provided through a contract with the Washington County Sheriff's Department. As the city grows the cost of police protection may increase, and the provision of these services should be a consideration as new developments are proposed. Fire, ambulance, and rescue services are provided by way of a joint powers agreement among the five Lower St. Croix Fire Protection District cities with a fire station located in Lake St. Croix Beach.

There are no current plans to add additional public facilities.

### City Governance Goals, Policies and Strategies

The City of Afton establishes the following public facilities goals:

1. Maintain a small and efficient government.
2. Properly maintain public facilities.
3. Encourage a "pay-as-you-go" approach to maintaining public facilities and infrastructure.
4. Public subsidy for development, in the form of tax breaks, shall be discouraged by the City of Afton.

The City of Afton established the following public facilities policies:

1. The City of Afton will comply with all FAA and Met Council Aeronautic Safety Standards regarding the height of structures and any regulations that pertain to airspace safety and electronic interference over the City of Afton.
2. Comply with all state and federal mandates.
3. City property is to be leased at market value.
4. The City Code shall be properly maintained so that current version is annually provided to all elected and appointed officials.

The City of Afton will seek to implement the following strategies, over time, to implement the goals and policies regarding city governance:

1. Institute a budgeting process that annually takes a long-term examination of the City's finances.
2. Prepare a Capital Improvements Plan that outlines the costs and phasing for all maintenance activities required for municipal infrastructure.

## System Statement Compatibility

The Metropolitan Council has issued a system statement for the City of Afton, which indicates specific issues that must be addressed by the Comprehensive Plan before the Plan is considered complete by the Metropolitan Council. The City of Afton seeks to comply with all aspects of the system statement and has done so as per the following:

1. **Population, Housing, and Employment Forecasts:** The Metropolitan Council (Met Council) provides population, housing and employment forecasts for the City of Afton until the year 2030. These are required to be part of the plan update and are cited in the Demographics Appendix of the Comprehensive Plan.
2. **Density and Land Use Classification:** The Met Council classifies the geographic area that the city of Afton is located in as “diversified rural” and partially “agricultural”. Diversified rural areas include a mix of large-lot residential and clustered housing with agricultural and other uses. Density in diversified rural areas must be less than 1 housing unit per 10 acres. Agricultural areas are planned and zoned by local communities to maintain agriculture as the primary long-term land use. The density of agricultural areas may not exceed 1 housing unit per 40 acres.

This plan identifies policies, in the Housing and Land Use Action Plan, that will maintain an overall development density within the parameters required in the system statement.

3. **Aviation Plan and Facilities:** The system statement requires that the City of Afton must include airspace protection in its comprehensive plan. The protection is for potential hazards to air navigation including electronic interference. Airspace protection should be included in local codes/ordinances to control height of structures, especially when conditional use permits would apply. The comprehensive plan should include policy/text on notification to the FAA as defined under code of federal regulations CFR-Part 77, using the FAA Form 7460-1 “notice of proposed construction or alteration”.

There are no public or private airfield facilities within the City of Afton. Furthermore, public and private airfields and heliports are not allowed within the City of Afton. Language has been added to the Public Facilities Action Plan to reflect the Afton’s desire to follow all FAA and Met Council Aeronautics Safety Standards in regards to airspace safety in the City of Afton.

4. **Sewage Treatment:** The system statement requires that the City of Afton incorporate current MPCA regulations as part of a program for managing individual and cluster sewer systems in the local comprehensive plan and implement the standards in issuing permits. An overview of Afton’s management program must be included in the community’s local comprehensive plan update.

Afton should include in the sewer element of its comprehensive plan the conditions under which private treatment plant would be allowed. The use of private wastewater treatment

plants must be consistent and compatible with the long-term regional wastewater system plan.

SSTS and Cluster septic system regulations and management plan is attached to the Comprehensive Plan as Appendix G. The City of Afton does provide for private sewage treatment plants.

5. **Watershed Management.** The system statement requires that a local surface water management plan should be prepared once a watershed plan for the area has been approved. The local surface water management plan must be submitted to both the water management organization(s) within whose watershed the community is located and to the Metropolitan Council for its review.

Afton is required to complete a local surface water management plan. The plan will be submitted to the Met Council for its review concurrent with the review by the watershed management organizations.

6. **Trail Connections:** The system statement indicates that a proposed regional trail following the St. Croix River (St. Croix River Regional Trail) and a planned trail (Afton Bluffs Trail) will be located within or traverse across the City of Afton. These trail alignments are acknowledged in the Parks and Recreation Action Plan.

## Implementation Plan

The City has adopted and does enforce the following ordinances, among others. The ordinances and official controls listed in this section will continue to be enforced in order to implement this Plan.

1. The Zoning Ordinance, as amended from time to time and incorporated by reference herein, implements the primary elements of this Plan by establishing the type, location, and intensity of uses throughout the city as prescribed by this Plan.
2. The Shoreland Management Ordinance, as amended from time to time and incorporated by reference herein, protects wetlands, water bodies and water courses throughout the City as prescribed by this Plan.
3. The Floodplain Ordinance, as amended from time to time and incorporated by reference herein, protects man-made development from floodwaters and the floodplain areas that carry and discharge regional floods by limiting development in those floodplains and floodways in the City as prescribed by this Plan.
4. The Sanitary Sewer Disposal Ordinance, as amended from time to time and incorporated by reference herein, governs the installation, inspection, and maintenance of septic systems as prescribed by this Plan. Further, the City issues septic system permits, inspects installation of all septic systems, reviews soil tests for subdivisions, issues building permits after the City has issued any required zoning use permit, and provides consultant planning services.
5. The Subdivision Ordinance, as amended from time to time and incorporated by reference herein, regulates the division of all property as prescribed by this Plan.
6. The Mining Ordinance, as amended from time to time and incorporated by reference herein, establishes uniform performance standards for sand and gravel extraction and for land reclamation as prescribed by this Plan.
7. The Lower St. Croix River Bluffland and Shoreland Management Ordinance, as amended from time to time and incorporated by reference herein, protects the natural environment and aesthetics of this wild and scenic river as prescribed by this Plan.
8. International Building Code.

In addition to these ordinances, the city utilizes and depends on the following agencies for reviews of proposed developments and advice on ordinance revisions:

1. Watershed and Water Management Organizations review all proposals within the watershed and recommend permit conditions for building within four different watershed districts within City limits.
2. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources reviews and approves all developments along the St. Croix River, other public water bodies and floodplains.
3. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers reviews and approves alterations of public water bodies.
4. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency reviews pollution problems.
5. Metropolitan Council reviews and approves the comprehensive development plan.

6. Lower St. Croix Valley Volunteer Fire Department recommends ordinances necessary to protect the health and safety of Afton residents, and comments on development proposals.
7. Washington County Soil and Water Conservation District reviews proposed projects and offers recommendations on slope, wetland, and fragile lands protection.
8. Minnesota Department of Transportation and Washington County Highway Department maintain and develop state and county roads.

In 1997, the City amended and recodified its ordinances to eliminate any inconsistencies and to assure conformance with the Comprehensive Plan. In addition to enforcing the existing ordinances that will implement this Plan, the city will update and revise pertinent ordinances in order to implement all of the policies contained in this Plan. As a general overview, it is the City's intent to amend the ordinances and policies in conformance with this plan by July 2010.

While this plan contains much of the language, intent and purpose of the previous version of the City's Comprehensive Plan, it has been formatted quite differently. The plan is now organized into sections of background followed by topic specific goals. It is the intention of the City of Afton to work, over time, on developing policies and strategies for implementing these goals. When adopted, these would require an amendment to the plan, which would need to follow required procedures for making plan amendments.

Additionally, there are statements of policy or regulation contained in the 1998 version of the plan that were lost in the conversion to the new format, yet are significant and require additional ongoing discussion. It is not the intent of this plan update to modify the spirit and intent of the 1998 plan, but to provide a more clear vision and create a document that can be strongly implemented.

## Capital Improvement Program

The City has limited funding for capital improvements and seeks to minimize debt. As such, the City needs to correlate the tax base with the long-term capital needs of the community, including:

- Re-pave gravel, reconstruct and sealcoat streets
- Repair bridges, streets and culverts as required
- Use Park Dedication Funds to upgrade existing facilities and to purchase land and/or easements to add to future park and trail infrastructure
- Resolve surface water erosion issues
- ~~Manage storm water run-off on Old Village streets and boulevards~~
- ~~Replace the 201 system in the Old Village when needed~~
- ~~Repair sidewalks in the Old Village~~
- ~~Expansion of gas lights in the Old Village~~

**Commented [KK2]:** All the Old Village activities are resolved. New CIP activities?

A detailed CIP outlining cost estimates, income sources, and payment schedules will be attached to this plan at a future date. The CIP will be reviewed and revised annually. Sound financial planning will be utilized so as not to significantly increase the tax burden on individual property owners in fulfilling the capital improvement plan.

### August 15, 2017 City Council Meeting Highlights

The Council took public comments regarding excessive noise and speed on Afton's roadways, and discussed a proposed motor vehicle noise ordinance but did not approve the ordinance.

The Council authorized staff to send comments to the City of Woodbury on their proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments noting the City's concerns about the impact of increased water consumption on the aquifer, and its impact on Valley Creek.

The Council authorized staff to work with Tri-County to plant trees along 37<sup>th</sup> Street by Kathy Bolton-Iverson's property.

The Council approved payment of Pay Voucher No. 4 for the Downtown Village Improvement Project from Geislinger and sons Inc. in the amount of \$851,496.77.

The Council approved payment of Payment Request No. 5 from Ellingson, Inc. for the Wastewater Treatment System Project in the amount of \$145,193.72.

The Council approved payment of Pay Voucher No. 2 for the 2017 Pavement Management Project from Park Construction Co. in the amount of \$271,819.09.

The Council approved Jim Cox's Architectural Fee in the amount of \$4,800 plus expenses.

The Council accepted a donation of \$1,200 for a park bench from Judy Louis and Linda Hanner in memory of their parents Elton ("Blackie") and Amy Hancock.

The Council authorized staff to expand current rules for burying power lines in subdivisions to include any new or moved lines in the city.