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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Comprehensive Plan General Guiding Principles

Finlayson is a community with beautiful natural areas, with historic properties, and a spirited community. Finlayson's success today is a result of active efforts through community work and foresight. This Comprehensive Plan seeks to build on previous work and to enhance those qualities that make Finlayson a special place.

The Comprehensive Plan provides an overview of Finlayson, including historical context, existing land use, water and natural features, public facilities, transportation, and trends in population, housing, and employment. It provides a vision for the future, as well as goals and policies to help secure that vision, and an implementation plan to make the vision a reality.

The following four general guiding principles offer a framework for the tasks related to this Comprehensive Plan update.

1. Maintain and upgrade the central city corridor and its associated amenities as a community anchor by pursuing policies and decisions to help support an economically viable atmosphere for the City's businesses and organizations;
2. Continue to be a good steward of the City's natural resources while encouraging (and at times requiring) private parties to do the same;
3. Encourage policies and decisions that support Finlayson as a multi-generational small town;
4. Maintain the central role of a school in the community. The Finlayson Elementary School is part of the City's fabric. By providing community-oriented spaces, attracting a workforce and associated housing, the positive impact of a community school remains central to Finlayson.

B. City of Finlayson Mission Statement

The city of Finlayson embraces small town values, guided growth, and the preservation of historical, cultural, and natural heritage.

C. Purpose of a Comprehensive Plan

Development and adoption of a comprehensive plan can promote the public health, safety, and general welfare of the residents and visitors of the city. The comprehensive plan brings a group of basic goals with associated policies plus general plans that guide the city council, planning and zoning commission and citizens of Finlayson in the review of development in a desirable way for the City of Finlayson.

Uses for this comprehensive plan include: 1) guiding decisions by elected and appointed officials regarding land development, infrastructure improvements, acquisition and utilization of public land, capital improvements planning, natural resources protection, and the establishment of regulatory changes; 2) developers will use the plan when acquiring property for development and establishing this such as street alignments in newly developing areas; 3) in legal issues it serves as a basis for official controls that include ordinances, regulations, and other tools promoting orderly development.

Any adopted land use controls such as ordinances and regulations must remain consistent with the comprehensive plan, with updates and amendments to this document when necessary.

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D. Scope of the Plan

Plans that anticipate too far into the future typically do not provide guidance needed for day-to-day decisions, rather than looking first at making the city a better place to live, work, and play right now. As new issues arise, plan amendments offer a timely mechanism for this plan's look for the next ten years, with annual reviews built into the process.

E. Plan Update Processes

Descriptive information and data about the City of Finlayson was gathered through a variety of sources and updated as needed. These were helpful in identifying community assets, weaknesses, values, goals, and basic demographics of the city.

Between October the Fall of 2024 and the Fall of 2025, a working sub-group of the City's Planning and Zoning Commission formed and met monthly to review the existing comprehensive plan, oversee community engagement efforts, community survey development and use, along with guiding the preparation of the plan update.

A community survey was distributed via mail to all known property owners and residents of Finlayson in early 2025. The responses from the comprehensive questionnaire provided foundational guidance specific to the goals and policies contained in the comprehensive plan. The survey and responses are part of the Appendix of this document.

Several community engagement efforts took place in the Fall of 2025 that helped the community stay informed about the processes underway. These engagements and public meetings related to the acceptance of the comprehensive plan update by the City of Finlayson.

F. Authority to Plan

Minnesota State Statute 462.351-462.358 offers the authority to plan, the definition of planning terms, community-based planning, organization for planning, as well as the preparation, adoption, and amendment of the comprehensive municipal plan and zoning and subdivision authority.

The statement of policy from the Minnesota legislature includes: “Municipal planning will assist in developing lands more wisely to serve citizens more effectively, will make the provision of public services less costly, and will achieve a more secure tax base.”

The City of Finlayson complies with this legislation in its ability, authority, and need to plan.

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II. BACKGROUND

A. Location

Finlayson sits in the northern half of Pine County four miles west of Interstate 35 along Minnesota State Highway 18. Located centrally between the metropolitan areas of the Twin Cities (94 miles north) and Duluth (67 miles south) in east central Minnesota's Pine County. Its neighbors include the cities of Sandstone, Rutledge, Askov along with Pine Lake Township and Finlayson Township.

B. History

While many early residents came from Finland, the city and township's name came from David Finlayson, a Scottish sawmill owner. In 1894 the historic Hinckley Fire swept through large parts of Pine County sparing the Village of Finlayson that incorporated eleven years later on August 24, 1905.

Early attractions for settlers to Finlayson included vast stands of virgin white pine and abundant fur bearing animals. The Kettle River offered waterpower and a ledge of exposed buff sandstone. The Kettle River Sandstone Quarry opened in August 1885 offering employment at the quarry in Sandstone, a ten-mile walk from Finlayson. Quarry workers stayed in Sandstone during the week, coming home with supplies to their families on the weekend.

The Duluth-St. Paul Railroad Company brought immigrants, of mostly Finnish background to the areas for jobs or farmland. The Northern Pacific Depot was built in 1909 to replace an earlier depot on the Northern Pacific Railway line. The railroad's depot remains as a focal point within Finlayson's downtown. It's listed on the National Register of Historic Places and benefits from stewardship offered by a local non-profit organization.

Around 1894, the Oldenburg-Jasberg Land Company purchased a large tract of land around Finlayson and began advertising land for sale to Finnish speaking people. The railroad played an active role in bringing people to the region. John Oldenburg, a land agent for the railroad spoke several languages greatly assisting him in attracting immigrants to the area. With the railroad's commitment to Finlayson such as donating land for churches, Oldenburg's role in the community included his ownership of a mercantile store, bank, hotel, and real estate office. He also served as a Justice of the Peace.

Raising dairy cattle, potatoes and other tubers dominated farming endeavors in Finlayson. The new immigrants brought with them the products familiar to Finland and Scandinavian countries from which they came. Early businesses in Finlayson included a sawmill, pickle factory, and two potato warehouses, in addition to the Northern Pacific Railroad station.

By the 1900s quarrying began diminishing with the advent of alternative building methods. Logging also declined as the remaining stands of pine were cut. Farming remained a large part of the community's economy through the mid-1900s.

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C. Population Trends

1. Minnesota Statewide

According to the Minnesota Department of Administration's "Key Findings" in May of 2024 the total population of Minnesota is projected to grow from 5.78 million in 2024 to 6.11 million in 2025.

Additionally, they note that net migration will contribute positively to population growth, albeit with modest numbers. Minnesota's over 65 population will more than double between 2024 and 2075, while the 0-19 age group shows a relatively stable but slow decline.

The Key Findings also identified Pine County as one of five counties projected to experience the most significant population decline with an anticipated loss of 5,563.

2. Pine County

The U.S. Census estimate as of July 1, 2024 reported the county's total population as 30,319. A 5% year-over-year increase from 2023 estimates, running contrary to Minnesota's Key Findings leading one to conclude that the rate of population growth in Pine County is not settled.

Population density per square mile in Pine County equals 21 people/square mile with its distribution of population by age reported as: 5% for those 5 years of age and under; 14% for those between 6 and 18; 58% aged 19-64, and 23% over the age of 65. 91% are white. As a key demographic group, veterans make up 2,154 Pine County's population (7%) a number consistent with most non-urban areas in Minnesota, with the statewide median slightly lower at 6% of the overall population.

3. City of Finlayson

The 1920 U.S. Census reported Finlayson's population at 293. One hundred years later, the population holds steady at 295. Over the course of the previous century the little burg ebbed and flowed close to the 300-mark through high and low-times.

Finlayson's resident median age is 48 years of age, older than Pine County's 46 years and Minnesota's 39 years. Almost 96% are white, higher than the Pine County average.

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D. Housing Trends

Owner-occupied housing at the rate of 83% versus 17% as renters make up Pine County's 17,509 housing units. \$226,000 home value median, considerably less than the \$340,000 Minnesota statewide median in 2024. Finlayson's rate of homeownership is 77%, slightly less than Pine County's rate and their median home value comes in lower at approximately \$175,000. Pine County's cost of ownership is \$1,600 with a mortgage, without it the cost drops to \$600 per month, with median rent rates hovering at \$900 monthly.

Pine County logged 190 home building permits issued in 2023.

In 2023 Finlayson had 143 housing units, up slightly from the 132 identified in 2004, with most being owner-occupied and built before 1970. These housing characteristics remain consistent with the nature of the city's stable population.

E. Utilities and Internet

The City of Finlayson is served by Minnesota Energy for natural gas services, Minnesota Power and East Central Electric for their electric needs.

Internet providers in Finlayson, MN include DSL services from providers like Frontier and CenturyLink, satellite options from HughesNet and Viasat, fixed wireless services from providers such as LTD Broadband and T-Mobile Home Internet, and fiber-optic options from providers like SCI Broadband and NHC.

Ninety-one percent of Minnesota households have a broadband internet subscription, compared to 85% having such a connection in Finlayson. Reliable broadband internet connections that meet the needs of rural Pine County residents, making uniform coverage a work in progress.

F. Schools and Education

The Hinckley-Finlayson District is a rural school district, located in east-central Minnesota, with an elementary and secondary school located in Hinckley, 14 miles southeast of Finlayson. To serve the community of Finlayson, the Finlayson Elementary School, known as the “School Growing in the Pines” offers K-6 grade education. The small, friendly, tight-knit school community offers a unique model meeting both the community population and educational needs with combined homerooms in Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grades; 3rd and 4th grades; and 5th and 6th grades. The school’s core subjects led by teachers providing grade-level appropriate curriculum that best suits the students’ needs and aligns with state standards. The specials classes of music, physical education, and STEAM, along with the community-building activities are received by students in their combined homerooms.

In 2020 the Hinckley-Finlayson School District in cooperation with the Minnesota Department of Transportation completed a Safe Routes to School Plan providing an opportunity for the community, school district, and related agencies to participate in safety planning related to the school, the city’s streets and facilities, the Munger Trail, and Minnesota State Highway 18.

Additionally, through a cooperative venture with Healthy Kids, Finlayson Elementary offers before and after school programs for students ages 5-12 at the school. Progress toward meeting the city’s unmet childcare needs.

The residents of Finlayson collectively have 91% who have obtained a high school diploma, with 16% holding a bachelor’s degree.

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G. Health

No healthcare providers are located within the City of Finlayson. Healthcare providers for the “Finlayson area” include Welia Health, a clinic offering family medicine and other services in Hinckley (14 miles) and Mora (35 miles), and the Essentia Health-Sandstone hospital (8 miles) for emergency and acute care. Within Pine County, it is reported that 13% have a stated disability (the statewide average is 12%) and 7% of those under 65 are without health insurance, almost double the statewide average of 3.8%.

H. Workforce

Approximately 654 total employers are in Pine County, with 6,860 total employments in Pine County. Fifty-seven percent (57%) of those over 16 are in the civilian workforce, traveling an average of 33 minutes to work, almost exclusively in their own vehicle. The median household income is \$70,000, with the per capita income of \$34,000. 11% are living at or below the poverty rate.

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I. Transportation

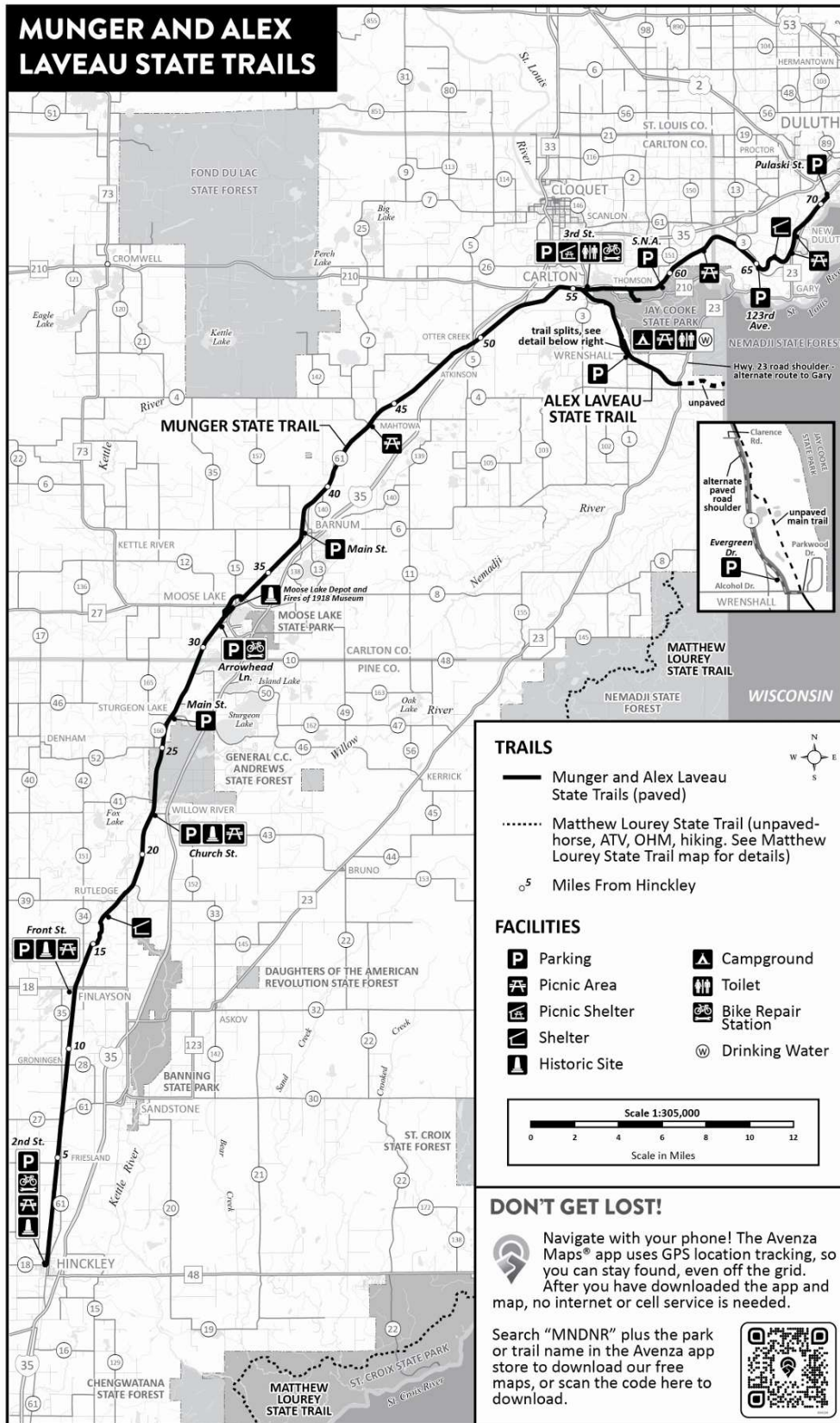
State of Minnesota Roads. Minnesota's State Highway 18 bisects the City of Finlayson from the east 4.5 miles from I-35 at Banning Junction westward 18 miles to Minnesota State Highway 65 (a major north-south roadway) or continuing on Minnesota State Highway 18 another 9 miles west beyond MN 65 to Lake Mille Lacs at Minnesota Highway 47. At Finlayson, Minnesota Highway 18 intersects with the State of Minnesota's Munger Trail.

State of Minnesota Willard Munger Trail. The Munger State Trail is a multiple-use trail between Hinckley and Duluth. This 70-mile paved trail offers opportunities for hiking, bicycling, in-line skating, and snowmobiling. A parallel grassy trail runs from Finlayson to Willow River for horseback riding.

The picturesque scenery and rich history along the trail where portions of it follows the railroad route that saved many lives in the historic Hinckley fire of 1894.

The trail travels near Banning and Moose Lake state parks through Finlayson and the towns of Willow River, Moose Lake, Barnum and Carlton, and through General C.C. Andrews State Forest and Jay Cooke State Park. The trail is also part of the 315-mile North Star/U.S. 41 Bicycle Route.

The Munger State Trail is part of the larger Willard Munger Trail System named after a legendary lawmaker known for his environmental legislation and support of Minnesota's state bike trail system.



J. Climate

A continental climate offers Finlayson a severe winter season with November through March registering mean temperatures all falling well below 32 degrees Fahrenheit with January's mean temperature of 8 degrees Fahrenheit the lowest. Snowfall averages six "plowable" days in East Central Minnesota.

K. Existing Land Use

The City of Finlayson takes in approximately 1,764 acres of land. A classification system sorts the land masses depending on their use. Agriculture land makes up about 40% of the land, followed by residential at 30% with the remaining 30% consisting of tax exempt, commercial, and recreational parcels. A complete land use map is located in the Appendix.

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L. Water Systems

Finlayson has a number of lakes and waterways within the city, creating a significant amount of land that is not suitable for agricultural or residential uses. Lakes and marshes are abundant in the northern half of the St. Croix Valley where surface drainage systems are poorly developed. This portion of the St. Croix Valley includes most of southern and all of northern Pine County. Topography is characterized by glacial scoured bedrock and glacial till that provide a kettle and knob topography recognizable by its bump and depression landscape that contains many lakes.

Forest-bordered lakes are numerous throughout this section. Vegetations is characterized by mixed northern hardwood and coniferous stands with conifer bogs interspersed throughout. Fish Lake, Mud Lake, and Clear Lake, exist in or near the city limits, along with a number of other lakes that are located in the adjacent townships. In addition, there are several “low-ground” areas that are unsuitable for building or non-public sewer systems, creating some growth limitations in certain areas of the city.

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M. Historic Preservation Efforts

The recently formed Friends of Historic Finlayson, a not-for-profit group focused on preserving and restoring the community's historically significant buildings. The organization fills the role of historical society within the community, working to capture local stories and make historic sites available to the public.

At the time of the writing of this document, the all-volunteer group's first project of restoration of the Northern Pacific Depot was well underway. Other sites identified as potential future projects include the Finlayson Jail House and the Co-Op Creamery.

The organization has a social media presence that offers information and updates on how to be involved and ways to follow their work.

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N. Faith Community

Peace Lutheran and Finlayson United Methodist churches located within the city limits of Finlayson, along with St. John's Free Lutheran Church (located just beyond the city's western boundary) provide spiritual offerings and add a multitude of community-based services that fill gaps prevalent in small communities such as socialization, hunger, and counseling.

O. Business Community

The following is a listing of current businesses operating within Finlayson: Finlayson Ag Center, d'ears, Splitrock Storage, Finlayson Deep Rock, Town and Country Insurance, Finlayson Municipal Liquor Store and Bar, Petry's Bait, Studio Lumen Salon, Mane Attractions Family Hair Care, Crazy Mary's Café, East Central Energy, Northview Bank, Ooh La La Lash, Table Talk Outreach, Okun Property Services, and Dependable Solutions. Along with the businesses, a co-located United States Post Office and City Hall round out the small diverse commercial area of the city.

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III. GOALS AND POLICIES

This section of the comprehensive plan sets forth a unified group of basic goals, policies, and general plans which will enable the city council, planning and zoning commission, and the citizens to review current and future development issues and proposals in light of what has been decided as the most desirable plan for the future physical development and character of the City of Finlayson.

The goals and policies are broken down into sections relating to different land uses. A key feature of the comprehensive plan is that it treats all of these many land uses individually since all of these uses together determine the makeup of the city.

A goal is a desired result or purpose. The Planning and Zoning Commission has developed a list of goals that in a general yet achievable way address identified issues in the City, both positive and negative.

A policy is a general principle or plan that guides the actions taken by a person or group. These policies then become the means to achieve the stated goals, and specific actions the city will take to accomplish the goals outlined in this section.

A. GENERAL GOALS apply to all zoning areas throughout the city.	
GOAL A1	Sustain local control of land use policy and its administration and build trust in the actions of local government through conscientious adherence to public comment processes, policy goals, and administrative procedures including uniform enforcement.
POLICY	
A1a	Respect landowners' and citizens' rights and responsibilities.
A1b	Develop consistent land use policies, procedures, and practices to be used by all parties within the city.
A1c	Provide that land use and development decisions are subject to the approval of the city council or their authorized delegates.
GOAL A2	Encourage clustering (developing closely together) land use groupings that share similar service and access requirements that will result in the more efficient use of land.
POLICY	
A2a	Work with owners of the existing non-conforming properties to make consistent with current zoning regulation or to relocate them to more appropriate sites.

A2b	Require all properties to obtain a permit and site plan (a plan of a development or parcel detailing information such as setbacks, parking, lighting, screening, etc., consistent with current zoning regulations) approval before allowing a new use to begin.
A2c	Accompany any intensification of land use activity and development with appropriate and corresponding increases in related support and service facilities.
A2d	Prevent undue scattering of commercial, industrial, and residential development. Provide for orderly, guided, and contiguous growth and development of remaining undeveloped land within the community through a coordinated program of public service extensions and current zoning regulations.
GOAL A3	Develop or redevelop properties that utilize city streets and utilities. This “in-fill” development (structures erected between two existing buildings) is not only cost-effective but will help to revitalize the older parts of the community.
POLICY	
A3a	Encourage in-fill development that demonstrates compatibility with and sensitivity to neighborhood characteristics, in terms of quality, density, building height, placement, scale and architectural character according to current zoning regulations.
A3bb	Encourage in-fill development to occur on vacant or underutilized land within the city’s boundaries.
GOAL A4	Prepare and adopt a land use plan that designates land use areas and guide development to appropriate areas in order to ensure desirable land use patterns and minimize conflicts.
POLICY	
A4a	Define density—the amount of a structure/structures per area of land (examples: lot coverage, height and setback restrictions, minimum lot sizes) and intensity—the type of use allowed on a property (examples: industrial, residential, commercial) standards for the city.
A4b	Review and update design and performance standards.
A4c	Review and update processes for all zoning uses as well as conditional uses.
A4d	Develop a Capital Improvements Plan (a plan that delineates capital improvements in the city over a specified period of time, which includes for example, sewer/water infrastructure improvements, new community-owned properties) to maintain community facilities and identify areas of improvement.
B. ADMINISTRATIVE GOALS relate to management of city services and facilities.	

GOAL B1	Continue to be a full-service city.
POLICY	
B1a	Maintain all government buildings and structures at acceptable standards to serve as examples for public and private development. In case of reuse, analyze the need to maintain the closed facilities for future use.
B1b	Strive for full utilization of investments in public facilities and services prior to making new public investments.
B1c	Evaluate the needs for acquisition of property by the city for future use.
GOAL B2	Encourage city residents to become more active in city activities, increase attendance at regular and special meetings, and convince more people to run for city offices.
POLICY	
B2a	Continue to solicit and encourage citizen input.
B2b	Require public hearings that provide a public forum on city development.
C. INTERGOVERNMENTAL GOALS relate to the entire community and involve relationships and communication with surrounding jurisdictions, i.e. county governments.	
GOAL C1	Continue to participate in the design (capacity and aesthetics), maintenance, and placement of utilities.
POLICIES	
C1a	Coordinate and cooperate with Pine County, the surrounding townships, cities, sewer districts, and public utility companies in providing municipal services and facilities to areas where possible future city jurisdiction may occur.
C1b	Uniformly locate easements for utility systems, provide easy access for maintenance and repair service vehicles and allow for minimal disruption of other activities or areas.
C1c	Plan and anticipate long-range future needs with surrounding jurisdictions to formalize current and/or new development.
GOAL C2	Collaborate with other governmental jurisdictions concerning infrastructure planning and development.
POLICY	
C2a	Maintain a compatible working relationship and open communications with neighboring jurisdictions.
C2b	Work with surrounding jurisdictions and Pine County to jointly plan and coordinate land uses where the jurisdictions border.
D. TRANSPORTATION GOALS relate to the entire community that involve developing and maintaining systems that move people and goods. This includes both road	

and off-road structures and their amenities for vehicular traffic, bicyclists, wheelchairs, pedestrians, and others.	
GOAL D1	Preserve and enhance the quality of roads in the city.
POLICY	
D1a	Create a long-term street maintenance and construction program.
D1b	When possible, install curb and gutter on every street in the community.
D1c	To protect the existing transportation system, institute according to existing zoning requirements appropriate land use, density, building setback, and access controls as to not exceed the capacity or reduce the function or safety of the system.
D1d	Participate in planning with MnDOT and the county highway department in developing road standards that are in keeping with the rural character of the city.
D1e	Require that the construction of new development, which may impact city roads include the cost to repair such roads in the total project cost.
D1f	Require those who cause excessive wear and tear on the city roads and alleys to be responsible for the cost to repair and restore those roads.
D1g	Establish a process for an annual review and maintenance for city roadways, that may include allocating of funds for the annual maintenance of city roadways in conjunction with Capital Improvement Plans.
GOAL D2	Serve the community by providing a transportation system that moves people and goods safely and efficiently.
POLICY	
D2a	Identify all traffic safety hazards within the city and establish a phased program to improve hazardous and poorly designed intersections and access points to increase the safety to both motorized and non-motorized traffic.
D2b	Design roadways in the city to prevent unregulated pedestrian and bicycle crossings and protect pedestrian and bicycle movement paralleling vehicular traffic.
D2c	Plan street improvement projects to include the provision of all necessary facilities for other travel modes.
D2d	Develop all additional elements of the street system (sidewalk, lighting, landscaping, etc.) adhering to design and construction standards, giving due consideration to abutting land uses and overall transportation goals and policies.
D2e	Coordinate street improvements with adjacent townships, county, and state agencies.
D2f	Support development of paths and trails for pedestrians and bicyclists.
GOAL D3	To Enhance the right-of-way (areas on either side of the road that are owned by a government entity) of the public roads.

POLICY	
D3a	Require minimum setbacks for the centerline of streets, through zoning and subdivision.
D3b	Require right-of-way dedication for existing easement roads and future streets whenever land is subject to city approval.
D3c	Establish controls for city roads to protect and preserve the right-of-way.
D3d	Require permitting for excavation in the road right-of-way.
D3e	Require the removal of all hazards from the road right-of-way, including but not limited to junk and debris.
GOAL D4	Design roadways to reduce traffic conflicts.
POLICY	
D4a	Study ways to improve area access for all modes of transportation.
D4b	Require right angle intersections whenever possible to avoid hazards and odd-shaped lots.
D4c	Connect local streets in developing areas to the existing local network and reflect its character and design.
E. COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL GOALS relate to those areas of community where commercial or industrial business is the primary use of the land.	
GOAL E1	Encourage the development of a strong, diversified, and growing economic base and create a favorable climate for economic development and ongoing business activities.
POLICIES	
E1a	Promote and encourage quality commercial development in the city through the support and cooperation of the city council, business organizations, and community leaders.
E1b	Actively promote development and redevelopment within the community with particular emphasis on attracting and supporting businesses that provide stable full-time employment.
E1c	Strengthen and maintain a diverse retail base through the support of the city council and other community stakeholders.
E1d	Promote and encourage environmentally sound commercial and industrial development through design standards and good site planning.
E1e	Work with other county, city, and local community organizations to provide and enhance special area events and attractions.
E1f	Restrict industrial development according to city zoning standards.
GOAL E2	Identify the function of downtown and other commercial areas and improve the economic viability of these districts.
POLICY	
E2a	Retain and attract additional business activity in commercial areas. Encourage new retail and service development and cooperate with existing

	business groups in determining the types of goods and services that the community identifies as important and necessary.
E2b	Promote adequate parking for commercial and industrial areas.
E2c	Support and expand community services in the downtown area.
E2d	Encourage the use of Federal, State, local, and other financial resources to promote expansion, reinvestment, and rehabilitation in the community.
E2e	Encourage local business people to become involved in the planning process.
E2f	Develop strategies to stimulate the redevelopment of underutilized sites and the development of vacant land and buildings within commercial areas. Additionally, the city will work to provide appropriate zoning and public improvements consistent with maintaining and improving the viability of commercial areas.
E2g	Enact and uniformly enforce building maintenance codes to ensure proper upkeep of the buildings in commercial areas.
GOAL E3	Plan for the orderly and efficient growth of commercial and industrial development in the city.
POLICY	
E3a	Locate and design commercial and industrial developments to provide good road access and roads that are adequately-sized and well-designed, while avoiding the routing of traffic through residential neighborhoods.
E3b	Through zoning and efficient land use planning, encourage commercial and industrial development, both existing and future, to develop and expand in areas designated as suitable for commercial growth.
E3c	Encourage all commercial developments to be on public sewer and water.
GOAL E4	Create minimum commercial and industrial development standards.
E4a	Ensure that adequate services, off-street parking, and off-street loading facilities are available prior to all commercial and industrial development.
E4b	Require commercial and industrial development to utilize signage, landscaping, berming, screening, sound, odor, or other controls through its zoning ordinances to protect adjacent areas from adverse impact by commercial and industrial issues.
F. RESIDENTIAL GOALS relate to areas of the community where single-family homes exist, usually on smaller, in-town lots serviced by municipal sewer/water.	
GOAL F1	Encourage housing of in a manner consistent with the city's land use goals.
POLICY	
F1a	The city will consider alternative housing types.
F1b	The city will encourage in-fill development (development that occurs in vacant lots existing between already developed lots) and renovation of existing homes.

GOAL F2	Work to improve substandard housing.
POLICY	
F2a	The city will encourage quality housing for its residents by creating minimum standards for dwellings such as zoning regulations.
F2b	Encourage rehabilitation or where necessary, redevelopment of substandard units, using available state and federal programs, as well as private development or public action.
F2c	Where unable to rehabilitate housing, remove substandard units incapable of being improved to prevent the spread of deterioration and blight.
GOAL F3	Proactively encourage housing and property maintenance to enhance stable neighborhoods and maintain property values.
POLICY	
F3a	The open storage or accumulation of materials, equipment, or vehicles shall be limited to prevent nuisances, to prevent a depreciative effect on adjacent properties, and enhance the health, safety, and welfare of the community.
F3b	The city will give high priority to maintaining, improving, and providing public services such as utilities, streets, lighting, parks, etc. in established residential areas.
GOAL F4	Assure the development or redevelopment of substandard properties in a manner that does not alter the character of existing residential neighborhoods.
POLICY	
F4a	Ensure that residential additions, remodeling, and reconstruction fit within the neighborhood context.
F4b	Encourage design standards for residential areas to include placement of easements, utilities, setbacks, sidewalks, trees, garages, etc.
GOAL F5	Plan for the orderly and efficient growth of residential development in the city.
POLICY	
F5a	Continue to guide residential growth in an orderly and compact manner so that new developments can be effectively served by public improvements and that the character of the city's existing neighborhoods can be maintained and enhanced.
F5b	Encourage well-designed residential subdivisions and developments in areas adjacent to moderate density developments.
F5c	Encourage new residential developments to be on public sewer and water.
F5d	Encourage the incorporation of a system of trails and open spaces in new residential developments.
F5e	Follow existing subdivision ordinances and procedures.

GOAL F6	Allow for home occupations and home-based businesses that do not alter the residential character of the zone.
POLICY	
F6a	Develop flexibility in ordinances to allow appropriate uses for home occupations and home-based businesses.
F6b	Create home-business standards. Set performance standards for home businesses including a cap on daily vehicle traffic, noise, lighting, waste generation, and air emissions. Determine prohibited uses in residential areas.
G. HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL goals relate to areas of the community where multi-family housing exists, served by municipal sewer and water. Multi-family housing includes duplexes, apartment houses, condominiums, etc.	
GOAL G1	Encourage housing of various types in a manner consistent with the city's land use goals.
POLICY	
G1a	The city will encourage alternative housing types consistent with ordinances.
GOAL G2	Restrict urban-style residential development and densities, including multiple family residences and manufactured home parks to higher-density residential areas, which provide adequate water and sanitary sewer services.
POLICY	
G2a	Permit high-density housing only where direct access is available to streets or highways capable of carrying the traffic that these higher densities generate.
G2b	Match land use intensity with adequate infrastructure.
G2c	Promote efficient use of land by establishing minimum as well as maximum density requirements for high-density residential areas.
GOAL G3	Allow for home occupations and home-based businesses that do not alter the residential character of the zone.
POLICY	
G3a	Develop flexibility in ordinances to allow appropriate uses for home occupations and home-based businesses.
G3b	Create home-business standards. Set performance standards for home businesses including a cap on daily vehicle traffic, noise, lighting, water, generation, and air emissions. Determine prohibited uses in residential areas.

H. RURAL RESIDENTIAL GOALS relate to areas of Finlayson that are not currently and unlikely to be serviced by municipal sewer/water and comprise larger tracts of land but whose primary purpose is not agricultural-related.	
GOAL H1	Maintain the rural residential character and overall low-density in rural residential zoning areas.
POLICY	
H1a	Development is limited to single-family homes in those areas designated as rural residential. Locate higher-density (such as apartments, condominiums, etc.) residential developments in areas adjacent to moderate developments.
H1b	Encourage land uses consistent with the rural character of the rural residential zone.
GOAL H2	To identify suitable areas where development will be allowed. Establish land uses and development patterns appropriate to the level of services and facilities.
POLICY	
H2a	Permit only those defined commercial or industrial uses in the rural residential zone including home occupations, permitted by ordinance.
H2b	Require a minimum buildable area (area on a property that is suitable for building a structure or structures of 2.5 contiguous building acres according to applicable zoning ordinances.
H2c	Require a minimum of 300 feet of frontage on a public street for all lots in order to provide adequate separation of houses to preserve the rural atmosphere and limit the number of driveways onto collector streets to ensure safe access and traffic.
H2d	Require each applicant for a building permit to demonstrate that there is sufficient area on the lot within all setback requirements to construct a house and all allowable accessory structures.
GOAL H3	Allow for home occupations and home-based businesses that do not alter the residential character of the zone.
POLICY	
H3a	Develop flexibility in ordinances to allow appropriate uses for home occupations and home-based businesses.
H3b	Create home-business standards. Set performance standards (zoning regulations relating to the use of the business) for home businesses including a cap on daily vehicle traffic, noise, lighting, waste generation, and air emissions. Determine prohibited uses in residential areas.
I. HISTORIC PRESERVATION GOALS relate to structures, areas, and artifacts that are considered historically, archaeologically, architecturally, or culturally important to the rituals and events in the city.	

GOAL I1	Preserve, protect, enhance, and support the historic, archeological, architectural, and cultural resources within the city.
POLICY	
I1a	Ensure that the city's land use, housing, transportation, and economic development policies are consistent with and facilitate history preservation.
I1b	The character of historic buildings shall be protected from encroachment or incompatible uses.
I1c	Preservation planning shall be integrated with other city planning, such as zoning, economic development, public works, and due consideration to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other public safety requirements.
I1d	The city may develop regulations to preserve the integrity of contributing historic buildings and ensure new construction is compatible with historic buildings.
I1e	The city will partner with community organizations to develop a comprehensive, city-wide assets inventory that identifies all historical, archeological, architectural, and cultural resources, and the results will be made available to city officials and the general public.
GOAL I2	The city supports programs that increase public and private involvement in the preservation, protection, enhancement, and support of historic, archeological, architectural, and cultural resources.
POLICY	
I2a	The city will work with for-profit and not-for-profit organizations to help defray the cost of preserving historic, archaeological, architectural, and cultural resources.
I2b	The city will increase public awareness that parks, landscapes, and gardens may constitute historic resources.
GOAL I3	Secure public support and awareness for historic preservation and/or conservation efforts.
POLICY	
I3a	The city will make accessible, educational materials on the preservation of historic, archeologic, architectural, and cultural resources.
I3b	The city will work with state and local governmental organizations and other interested parties to promote historic preservation.
I3c	The city will develop and maintain a list of historic properties that are threatened by demolition and/or by neglect.
J. PARKS AND OPEN SPACES GOALS relate to the entire community and involve any areas that are considered maintained parks or where no development exists.	
GOAL J1	Provide and maintain adequate community parks and open space to meet the future needs of the community.
POLICY	

J1a	Define, develop, and improve the city's parks and open space areas to meet the changing needs of the community, taking advantage of natural community features.
J1b	Require that plans for each new residential subdivision include provisions for the reservation of sufficient open space to serve the needs of the anticipated population, either through park dedication or cash-in-lieu of land (money that is paid to the city when a developer is unable or unwilling to provide park/open space in a development and is usually used to maintain or expand existing parks/open space to accommodate the growth in use caused by the new development).
J1c	Encourage a high level of maintenance and improvements of the city's new and existing parks, open spaces, and trail facilities with due consideration to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.
J1d	Actively solicit citizen participation in planning and maintaining the existing recreation system and future recreational needs.
J1e	Utilize collected park funding to develop, maintain, and acquire parks and open spaces.
GOAL J2	Encourage city residents to become more active in city activities, increase attendance at regular and special meetings, and convince more people to run for city offices.
POLICY	
J2a	Continue to solicit and encourage citizen input.
J2b	Require meetings that provide a public forum for parks and open space development.
K. ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES GOALS relate to the entire community and all zoning areas that focus the environment including air, water, soil, wetlands, recycling, scenic areas, drainage, and ground water areas, etc.	
GOAL K1	To protect and preserve the natural resources of the city.
POLICY	
K1a	Encourage all areas of development to be served by public facilities.
K1b	Promote sedimentation and erosion control techniques during development and redevelopment projects.
K1c	Promote the management of storm water runoff in accordance with local and state requirements.
GOAL K2	To protect, preserve, and enhance the city's unique environmental, scenic areas.
POLICY	
K2a	Require all development to be located to preserve the natural features of the site, avoid areas of environmental sensitivity and minimize negative impacts and alteration of natural features.

K2b	Require gravel pits to be restored to a usable, safe, and appropriate end condition.
GOAL K3	To provide for the protection of the city's residents and property from natural and man-made hazards.
POLICY	
K3a	Work with the County to ensure that public health is protected by requiring that on-site sewage systems conform to State requirements.
K3b	Restrict development that would have an adverse impact on wetland functions, such as storm water storage, natural drainage systems, nutrient removal, plant and animal habitat, and ground water recharge areas.
K3c	Discourage development in areas subject to flooding or areas that would contribute to flooding, erosion, or sedimentation.
K3d	Assure that any development that may occur in the city in the future will be compatible with the capability and limitations of the land.
K3e	Encourage the spreading of animal waste in an environmentally sound manner.
GOAL K4	Assure an adequate water supply, promote clean surface and groundwater supply and protect ground water recharge areas.
POLICY	
K4a	Promote and encourage the preservation of wetlands, encourage wetland setbacks, and other means of preserving or enhancing water quality.
K4b	The quality and quantity of surface water and groundwater resources should be preserved by the appropriate regulation of all development activities which have the potential of impacting the water resource of the area.
K4c	Protect surface water by preserving shorelands, wetland, water bodies, floodplains, streams, and rivers.
K4d	Natural drainage systems and ground water recharge areas should be preserved and alterations prohibited to these systems and areas which adversely affect the natural runoff and infiltration of water.
K4e	Preserve and protect all drainage ways.
K4f	Cooperate with all applicable governmental watershed management organizations to improve ground water quality regardless of the jurisdictions involved and their limits.
GOAL K5	Protect air quality.
POLICY	
K5a	When not preempted by the state, protect the residents from poor air quality, so that people are not confined indoors or forced to leave their homes due to odors or air pollution caused by another.
K5b	Update and/or enforce noise pollution ordinances.

L. AGRICULTURAL GOALS apply to areas of the community that are engaged in farming, farming-related activities, including raising crops, raising livestock, in some cases hobby farms, gravel, and similar resources, etc.	
GOAL L1	To preserve the rural character of the city.
POLICY	
L1a	Assure that agricultural development is consistent with policies that preserve the rural character of the city.
L1b	Assure that all development, including agriculture, will not adversely affect the environment, or create a nuisance, or be injurious to the public health, safety, comfort, and general welfare.
GOAL L2	Encourage the preservation and maintenance of agricultural lands.
POLICY	
L2a	To encourage the conservation of prime agricultural soils, Class I, II, and III soils currently used agriculturally and delineate an agricultural zone or zones.
L2b	Assure agricultural uses remain the dominant use whenever new residential uses are introduced into an agricultural area.
L2c	Preserve agricultural land, open spaces, and wetlands using existing and new methods of conservancy.
L2d	Encourage transfer of land and development rights to preserve agricultural usage.
GOAL L3	Use all available means to retain existing productive agricultural lands and encourage the use of such lands for a variety of agricultural uses (which includes without limitations row crops, fruit and berry crops, nurseries, pasture lands, etc.).
POLICY	
L3a	Discourage high-density feedlots.
L3b	Encourage community supported agriculture and other forms of affordable agriculture.
GOAL L4	Resist development pressures, which tend to create sprawl.
POLICY	
L4a	Establish zoning for the area that is consistent with agricultural and open space preservation.
L4b	Residential use of a parcel will not set a precedent for granting residential use of another parcel of related physical type in the agricultural zones.
L4c	In areas where agricultural and non-agricultural uses interface, the non-agricultural developer is responsible for any desired screening, which must not interfere with the agricultural use.

L4d	To devise a growth management strategy that includes regulatory and incentive measures to preserve valuable agricultural land and protect the agribusiness community from development encroachment.
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IV. IMPLEMENTATION

The comprehensive plan creates a vision for the City of Finlayson and guides land use and infrastructure improvements so that the City can meet the needs of the community in the future. The vision of the plan can only be realized if the plan is used. Tools to implement the plan will vary in that some will be reactive, such as zoning and subdivision ordinances that guide private developments, and others will be proactive, such as a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for undertaking public improvement projects.

City zoning codes regulate land use to promote the health, safety, order, convenience, and general welfare of all citizens. They regulate location, size, use and height of buildings, the arrangement of buildings on lots, and the density of population within the City. The City's zoning districts should effectively guide development in the City.

Zoning ordinances should be in compliance with the comprehensive plan. Any change in the community vision as a result of comprehensive plan updates should also be incorporated into the zoning ordinance. To ensure compliance with this 2025 Comprehensive Plan, the current zoning ordinances will need to be reviewed for compatibility.

Capital improvement projects are major projects that benefit the City, including the construction or reconstruction of roads and sidewalks, sewer and water utilities, trails, and park and recreation facilities, as well as the purchase of new or replacement equipment and buildings. A capital improvements program (CIP) is a budgeting plan which lists future years of needed capital improvements, their order of priority, and means of financing. The City of Finlayson may wish to establish a CIP.

To keep the comprehensive plan current, it may be necessary to make amendments from time to time. As a foundational document guiding development, most amendments should occur through a comprehensive effort to address changes to the community over time.

The provisions of the zoning ordinance will be maintained and preserved through the term of the comprehensive plan, unless formally amended. Amendments to the local zoning ordinance will be consistent with the comprehensive plan.

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V. APPENDIX. Community Survey Results

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