



CITY OF CASS LAKE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

2024



REGION FIVE
Development Commission

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The City of Cass Lake acknowledges the dedication and volunteerism of its residents in updating this plan. This plan update represents the dedication of many community members who have invested their time, thought, and energy toward the future success of the City of Cass Lake. This plan was directly developed by the following Planning Committee members, elected leaders, and city staff:

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by the Cass Lake City Council

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Vision Statement

Rediscovering our past; Guiding our future.

Introduction

The City of Cass Lake wanted to be intentional about creating a plan for making Cass Lake even more prosperous. Through community engagement, surveys, and outreach, the plan represents a shared vision for the future and a strategic map to reach that vision.

The plan provides recommendations to guide and manage growth and development. These board recommendations come in the form of goals and policies that express the city's aspiration for the future. The goals and strategies express the city's overall aspirations for the future. Efforts to implement the plan's vision, goals, and strategy began at adoption.

This living document should be used as a guide for the day-to-day activities of city officials and staff. This plan should be easily accessible to elected and appointed officials, city staff, Cass Lake residents, and visitors. Comprehensive Plans are intended to provide direction for a 10 to 15-year time horizon, however, plans are most effective when reviewed annually and updated every five years.

How to Use This Plan

The Cass Lake Comprehensive Plan Update is divided into the following broad sections:

- Housing
- Land Use
- Parks and Recreation
- Transportation
- Economic Development
- Health, Safety, Wellness
- Infrastructure
- Energy and Environment
- Intergovernmental Coordination and Communication



Each section provides background information and goals developed based on community input. These goals are intended for a wide range of audiences and end users including city staff, elected decision-makers, business owners, developers, permanent residents, season residents, tourists, and prospective residents. We have tried to streamline this document as much as possible for the casual reader while providing enough specific information for city staff. To further describe the multi-faceted nature of this plan, the following list describes each of the users and how they might use this plan:

1. GUIDE CITY OFFICIALS AND STAFF IN:
 - a. Communicating the city’s vision for the future.
 - b. Establishing regulatory changes and permitting.
 - c. Acquiring and using land.
 - d. Planning for capital improvement.
 - e. Development and infrastructure decisions.

2. GUIDE BUSINESSES, PROPERTY OWNERS, AND RESIDENTS IN:
 - a. Determining potential property use.
 - b. Understanding possible land use changes in the surrounding areas.
 - c. Establishing reasonable land use expectations.
 - d. Understanding future infrastructure improvements.
 - e. Improving and investing in property.

3. GUIDE DEVELOPERS WITH PROPERTY ACQUISITION AND THE COORDINATION OF PLANS WITH CITY GOALS, REGULATIONS, AND INFRASTRUCTURE PLANS.

4. ASSIST AND COORDINATE WITH NEIGHBORING JURISDICTIONS WITH ISSUES AND TOPICS OF MUTUAL INTEREST.

Authority to Plan

The State of Minnesota gives its communities the legal authority to adopt a Plan according to the Municipal Planning Act (Minnesota State Statute Sections 462.351 to 462.364). The Municipal Planning Act creates a single, uniform procedure that applies to all cities. The Comprehensive Plan provides the legal framework to enact land use control and other municipal actions to implement long-term growth and development regulation strategies. The City’s land use (zoning) ordinances and official zoning map should be updated to conform to the Comprehensive Plan following the adoption of this plan.



Planning Process

In March of 2023, the City of Cass Lake contacted Region Five Development Commission (R5DC) requesting a proposal for professional technical assistance to help guide the planning process and facilitate meetings to update the city's Comprehensive Plan. The proposal was presented and approved by the City Council in April of 2023.

During the spring of 2023, the R5DC Team worked with city officials to develop a local planning team tasked with guiding the planning process, attending the regular planning meetings, and providing key insights and expertise. The Team ensured that a process was implemented to gather community input and develop goals and strategies based on that input.

Public Informational Kickoff Meeting – July, 19th, 2023

A public informational kickoff meeting was held at Cedar Lake Casino & Hotel on Wednesday, July 19th, 2023, and included a presentation from R5DC staff regarding what comprehensive planning is, the purpose of comprehensive planning, how it can benefit communities and a call to action to join by being a part of the local planning team.

Local Planning Team

Following the public informational kickoff meeting, R5DC and the City of Cass Lake staff members requested volunteers to participate on the local planning team. Some members responded via this call to action, and others responded based on what they heard at the public informational kickoff meeting in July. Once the local planning team was established, this group began meeting monthly according to the timeline laid out by R5DC staff.

Dedicated Comprehensive Plan Update Webpage

With an emphasis on public and community engagement, the local planning team (LPT) directed staff to develop a webpage that would be easily accessible and dedicated to the comprehensive plan update. Here, residents unable to attend the local planning team meetings could stay informed of the planning process and would have access to all the meeting agendas, handouts, meeting summaries, surveys, and outcomes. You can access this webpage at regionfive.org/casslake.

Community Survey

One of the Local Planning Team's (LPT) first orders of business was to draft questions for the community survey, open to the public during the fall of 2023. The LPT and R5DC staff carefully crafted a 6-question survey that yielded 89 individual respondents and provided valuable community input for the planning team.

Discussion of Issues and Barriers

After many community discussions, at the kickoff and subsequent LPT meetings, and equipped with the community survey responses, the LPT focused on identifying community issues and barriers. R5DC facilitated a few LPT meetings dedicated solely to the topic of identifying issues. The LPT spent a considerable amount of time assessing the issues and barriers to appropriately identify solutions to the challenges that they identified throughout the planning process.

Development of Goals and Strategies

After collecting as much information as possible through the public informational kickoff meeting, the development of a dedicated comprehensive plan webpage, the development of a local planning team, and the administration of a community survey, the LPT began to apply this information productively by developing goals and strategies to address the identified issues and barriers.

The LPT held a series of meetings aimed at identifying goals and strategies. The first meeting involved brainstorming to generate a wide range of ideas, resulting in a large list of projects. The second meeting focused on evaluating these projects for feasibility and actionability, leading to a shorter more practical list. Additionally, projects were categorized into topic areas like Housing and Land use. The next meetings prioritized the shortened list of actionable goals within each topic area. Through this process, the LPT developed a categorized, prioritized, and actionable plan aligned with earlier community engagement, ready to be presented to the community and city council.



Community Character

Overview

Cass Lake has a plethora of natural beauty surrounding the community, including forests, lakes, and bike trails that run through the city. There are many dedicated planning teams and groups in and around Cass Lake that support the growth and quality of life for the city.

Cass Lake is a city of 675 people. [1]

This plan seeks to use the best and most current information available. The most widely used sources in this plan include the 2020 US Census Bureau, the Minnesota State Demographers office and a variety of other local sources. The types of information gathered included general demographic information for purpose of community planning including but not limited to: General Population (current and past), age, race, ethnicity, income levels, education attainment, transportation volume, transportation costs, transportation counts among others.

It was the desired effort of the LPT to not discard past planning efforts, but rather build past planning efforts and continue where those efforts left off. Therefore, staff and the LPT emphasized the review and use of the previous comprehensive plan - 2014 to the extent possible and where it made sense. For example, a review of the past goals was conducted to determine which goals had been either accomplished, remained relevant and should be included in this update, or were determined to no longer be relevant goals.

This document is a continuation of the ongoing planning process in the City of Cass Lake. The City has used this planning process as an opportunity to evaluate and reinforce the existing growth and development policies and to evaluate previous planning efforts to update and reinforce past decisions that are still valid. A major premise of this Plan, therefore, is to utilize portions of the previous comprehensive plan whenever applicable.



History

Origins and Founding

Cass Lake is located in Cass County, Minnesota, within the boundaries of the Leech Lake Indian Reservation and is surrounded by Pike Bay Township. The two main highways in Cass Lake are U.S. Highway 2 and Minnesota State Highway 371.

The Chippewa of Leech Lake were part of the westward movement of the early 1700s. Through this movement, the Chippewa Indians encountered the Sioux Indians when arriving in Minnesota. The Sioux eventually migrated to the West in the mid-1700s. By the mid-1800s, the Chippewa Indians occupied more than half the State of Minnesota, and many continue to reside in the Leech Lake Reservation area.

European settlers first came to the area now known as the City of Cass Lake in the mid-1700s. People came to hunt, trade, and take advantage of forest and water resources. Water “highways” connected the area settlements and nourished trading posts. A major trading post was established in the area by Montreal businessman, LaMotte, prior to 1760. By 1821, this trading post was owned by Hudson Bay Company, then sold to the American Fur Company leading to additional organized settlements in the area.

The Village of Cass Lake was incorporated in 1899 consisting of 80 acres. The Village was named based on the lake of Cass Lake. The lake was originally called Upper Red Cedar Lake and was renamed in honor of Lewis Cass, Governor of the Territory of Michigan. The Village was, and still is, exclusively part of the Leech Lake Reservation and the Chippewa National Forest. The city quickly became the center within these two jurisdictions. The Village also developed around the presence of the Great Northern Railway “Box” Factory, fur trading post for the Northwest Company, and the logging industry. After its incorporation, the community matured through continued business establishments and organizational developments.

In the first ten years after it was incorporated, the community grew from a population of 546 to 2109. Between 1940 and 1950 the population dropped to around 1904. This fluctuation was due to the highs and lows of the logging industry. As areas of employment started to decrease, many people associated with these industries also left.

Tourism has always been a focus in the City of Cass Lake for its economy. Accessibility to the area is adequate with the railroad and Highway 371 and Highway 2. Summer recreation opportunities such as camping, boating, fishing, hiking, trails, and resorts attract tourists to the area.

Population

This table shows the changes in population that have taken place from 2015 to the 2022 census for the city of Cass Lake, surrounding townships, Cass County, and the State of Minnesota. [2]

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
City of Cass Lake	751	752	759	754	756	678	685	685
Pike Bay Township	1,627	1,627	1,644	1,663	1,674	1,713	1,713	1,713
Wilkinson Township	405	411	416	418	421	574	574	574
Leech Lake Township	440	446	451	455	457	437	502	508
Cass County	28,519	28,633	28,810	29,022	29,268	29,462	29,917	30,066
State of Minnesota	5,484,002	5,525,360	5,569,283	5,608,762	5,640,053	5,706,494	5,717,968	5,714,300



Housing

Overview

Over time, the city has experienced a decrease in population. Housing accessibility, quality, affordability, and availability enhance the community's sense of place and strengthen the quality of life for all residents, whether they own or rent. Housing could be the single most important element in a city. Businesses look at the variety of supply of the housing stock in the community when considering relocating, expanding, or starting up. Housing is not a one-type solution. Housing needs change throughout life stages and with demographic needs.

Given this demand for housing, affordability also became a central focus of the LPT's housing discussion.

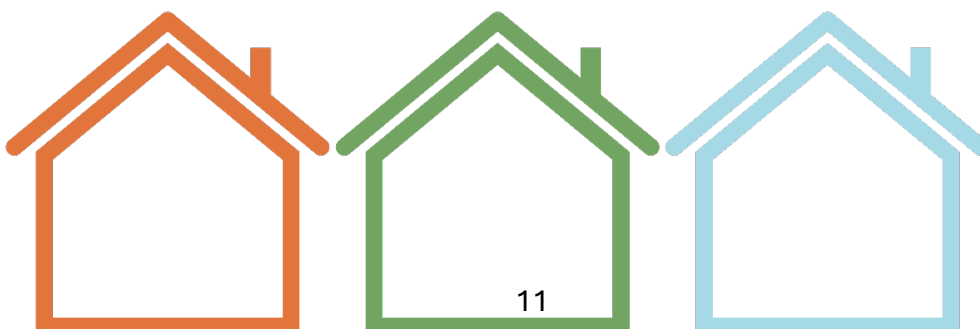
Input & Data

The housing landscape of a city and its needs can be determined by the population living in a community and the current availability of housing. Cass Lake's current housing landscape and data include:

- A median age of people in Cass Lake of 34.7 years, compared to 39.0 for the State of Minnesota. [3]
- A median value of owner-occupied units of \$54,700. [3]
- A majority of residents in Cass Lake are renters with 28.2% of the city owning their homes. [3]

As part of the public input process, the following theme was identified around the topic of housing in the community survey:

- **More housing:** The desire to reduce blighted properties and increase housing availability while exploring different housing options. The LPT identified the housing needs based off current and potential growth for the city. Housing opportunities identified were single-family market-rate housing, workforce/workforce & middle-income housing / low-income housing/apartments, and townhome options.



Goals and Strategies

1. Encourage, maintain, and support the development of housing and neighborhoods that meet the needs of all residents.

This looks like:

- a. Conduct a housing study that includes rehabilitation needs.
 - b. Providing incentives to encourage more housing options for builders and people.
 - c. Encourage energy efficient housing for people of all ages, incomes, and special needs (ex. Education on weatherization, adopt MN Housing Standards, housing retrofits, faith in action support).
 - d. Promoting the expansion of safe, healthy, and affordable home ownership and rental opportunities.
 - e. Encouraging the development of a variety of sustainable, quality, and affordable housing types that will meet the needs of current and future residents.
2. Reduce blighted properties and improve substandard housing.

This looks like:

- a. Update or develop a municipal property maintenance ordinance.
 - b. Create a vision for redevelopment and encourage the rehabilitation of substandard housing.
 - c. Encourage the demolition of properties if the condition is such that it is warranted.
 - d. Identify and secure funding for redevelopment.
 - e. Encourage multi-use properties.
3. Work with local and regional partners to develop strategies that increase the available workforce, to support the development of affordable housing options.

This looks like:

- a. Seek ways to encourage housing industry-related opportunities through education in housing-related trade skills locally.
 - b. Establish a financial assistance fund for assistance in purchasing.
4. Promoting the expansion of safe, healthy, and affordable home ownership and rental opportunities.

This looks like:

- a. Inventory lots within city limits that could be combined to encourage housing development.
- b. Establish and maintain an owner-occupied / renter-occupied rehab fund.

Land Use

Overview

Tourism is a central part of the economy in North Central Minnesota [4] and keeping our natural environment clean and providing excellent outdoor recreation activities is critical to maintaining that strong tourism base.

Input & Data

Water

The City of Cass Lake is part of the Leech Lake River (LLR) Watershed which consists of approximately 1,335 square miles or 854,659 acres in the northern part of the Upper Mississippi River Basin. The LLR has about 277 total river miles and contains over 750 lakes totaling 166,374 acres, the land is largely forested, with about 46% of the land privately held, with the remaining portion of land state, county, or federal public land, or held by tribal landowners. Biodiversity within the LLR Watershed is notable, and among other wildlife, the entire watershed is highly prized for recreation, yet experiencing increased pressure due to development, loss of shoreline and aquatic habitat, and invasive species. [5]

Existing Land Use

Understanding the existing land use patterns provides insight and further analysis opportunities on the leading development types, as well as possible deficiencies. Cass Lake's existing land use consists of residential housing, commercial, industrial, and shoreland. (ENTER IMAGE OF ZONING MAP HERE)

As part of the public input process, the following theme was identified around the topic of Land Use in the community survey:

- **Clean up the city:** The LPT and community members recognized that they would like to see the city cleaned up and rid of the excess garbage, unlivable homes, vehicles and the superfund site which make it difficult to attract businesses and residents to the area.



Goals and Strategies

1. Encourage the city of Cass Lake and Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe to create a joint enforcement policy on land use, zoning, and ordinances.

This looks like:

- a. Utilize the joint resolution and mediation development plan
 - b. Encourage regular meetings between the City of Cass Lake and Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe.
2. Update the city's zoning and ordinances to promote clean residential properties.

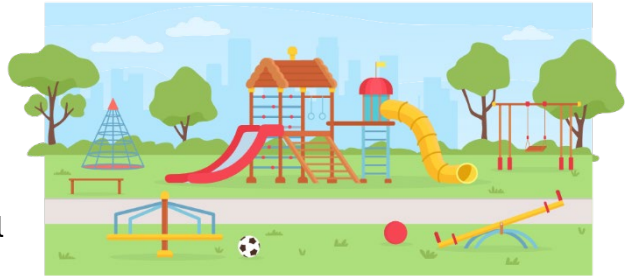
This looks like:

- a. Provide incentives to residents to keep their properties free of debris.
- b. Encourage a city-wide clean-up day in coordination with Pike Bay, Cass County, and Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, accepting tires, cars, motor oil, and other hazardous waste.
- c. Increase recycling and reduce waste.

Parks and Recreation

Overview

Cass Lake, enveloped by the Chippewa National Forest, offers abundant opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts. Visitors and residents enjoy fishing, boating, and swimming in the lake, as well as exploring biking trails and partaking in ATV riding and snowmobiling.



As part of the public input process, the following theme was identified around the topic of Parks and Recreation in the community survey:

- **Activities:** The community members and members of the LPT identified the need for more activities in the community including activities for youth including but not limited to better parks for toddlers and youth, indoor ice rink, community splash pad, family-friendly places within walking distance, engaging facilities for children and young adults to spend time at, and more community events.

Goals and Strategies

1. Cass Lake will maintain a quality park system that meets the recreational needs of its residents and visitors.

This looks like:

- a. Add green space and public plazas in a manner that makes them conveniently accessible to all residents and prioritizes function and aesthetics.
 - b. Enhance the natural environment throughout the community.
 - c. Collaborate with landowners, developers, and other partners to link parks, neighborhoods, and public spaces with a network of greenways and multiuse trails.
2. Cass Lake will seek to collaborate with local community partners to maximize the value and impact of the park system.

This looks like:

- a. Provide opportunities to partner with public and private entities to enrich the lives of residents, visitors, and students.
 - b. Provide opportunities to partner with wellness providers to utilize the park system and encourage active living to improve community health.
 - c. Seek out ways for the existing park's facilities to be used by the community for events to promote history, culture, and community.
3. Seek ways to expand event programming for each park to highlight each neighborhood's unique qualities.

This looks like:

- a. Work with area artists to integrate public art into neighborhood parks.
 - b. Ensure all public parks and spaces are kept clean, free of garbage, and properly maintained.
 - c. Expand outdoor programming and tailor it to the demographic needs of the neighborhoods.
 - d. Enhance and expand sports facilities and/or programming.
 - e. Enhance and expand year-round recreation activities, including active and passive options for all ages and abilities.
4. Seek to provide a high-quality experience and equal access to recreation opportunities for all residents and visitors.

This looks like:

- a. Promote year-round recreational activities.

- b. Prioritize recreational opportunities that would serve all users and ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
 - c. Continue to ensure our community has adequate park administration, staffing, governance and funding.
 - d. Continue to seek funding to develop trailhead staging areas as trails are constructed.
 - e. Seek opportunities to promote and enhance Cass Lake’s recreational amenities.
5. Promote quality natural areas, scenic corridors, and open spaces to meet the community’s existing and future needs.

This looks like:

- a. Continue to maintain and enhance existing recreational assets and opportunities.
- b. Seek innovative ways to enhance features such as low-impact pedestrian infrastructure through wetlands and green or open spaces in and around Cass Lake.
- c. Create a meaningful and inviting network of trails and pathways through inviting, non-intrusive connections to local and regional natural areas and recreation facilities.

Transportation

Overview

Transportation has always been an important part of Cass Lake. One of the area’s primary transportation features is the intersection of Minnesota Highway 371 and Minnesota Highway 2 within the city. These highways provide excellent visibility for visitors passing through and offer convenient access to downtown, the casino, and the Chippewa National Forest. They also offer a scenic route to and from the city. In addition to these highways, the city boasts several trails that are ideal for outdoor enthusiasts, including the Heartland Trail and the Migizi Trail.



Input & Data

As in most cities, the network of roads is a partnership between several jurisdictions, including the State of Minnesota, Cass County and the City of Cass Lake. When discussing highways and roads, functional classification is the grouping of streets and highways into classes or systems according to the character of service they are intended to provide. Basic to this process is the recognition that most travel involves movement through a network of roads. Functional classification defines the role that any road or street plays in serving the flow of trips through an entire network.

Federal, State and Local Programs, Plans and Planning

The Statewide Multimodal Transportation [Plan](#) is Minnesota's highest-level policy plan for transportation. It is a 20-year plan based on Minnesota GO, a vision of a transportation system that maximizes the health of people, the environment, and our economy. The plan is for all types of transportation and all transportation partners. It covers more than just roadways and applies to more than just the Minnesota Department of Transportation. It evaluates the status of the transportation system, what is changing, and how we will move forward over the next twenty years. *The Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan was updated as of January 2017.* You can read the plan at <https://minnesotago.org/final-plans/smtp-final-plan-2017>

10-Year Capital Highway Investment Plan (CHIP)

The 10-year Capital Highway Investment [Plan](#) details MnDOT's capital highway investments for the next ten years on the state highway network. The CHIP is updated yearly to remove projects that are being constructed, adjust the timing of existing planned projects, and add new planned projects. The primary purpose of the document is to communicate programmed and planned capital highway projects over the next 10 years. The document serves as a check to ensure that MnDOT is meeting the investment levels and performance outcomes identified in MnDOT's 20-year State Highway Investment Plan, MnSHIP, and explains any change in direction or outcomes from the investment direction. [6]

4-Year Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

The STIP is a federally required public document that lists Minnesota's four-year transportation improvement program. The STIP includes all state and local transportation projects that are using federal highway and/or federal transit funding along with those state transportation projects which are using 100% state funds. Information contained within the STIP includes the cost, schedule, and funding sources for the identified projects. The STIP is developed on an annual basis, and it is updated throughout the year to reflect significant

changes in the program. In addition to federal highway and transit projects, the STIP includes rail and port projects for informational purposes. [7]

Trails

For many, trails provide an opportunity to experience the outdoors, engage in recreation, and exercise. Others rely on trails simply for transportation. Increasingly, communities and individuals are realizing the benefits of increased connectivity to trails. By their very nature, many trails serve a dual purpose of transportation and recreation.

As part of the public input process, the following theme was identified around the topic of Transportation in the community survey:

- **Safer crossings:** The LPT and the community members had a similar vision of the need for a safer pedestrian crossing at the intersection near Star Island and across Highway 2.
- **Connection of trails:** The need for expanding trail networks and increasing access to the main trails in the city were important to the community and LPT.

Goals and Strategies

1. Encourage Cass Lake to work with MnDOT to improve Trunk Highway 2 and 371, as gateways to the community, with an emphasis and priority on connecting the community in meaningful ways including safety, bicycle and pedestrian access, and mobility, while providing adequate consideration for commercial and freight users.

This looks like:

- a. Identify and enhance pedestrian crossings to promote safety and walkability.
- b. Improving and expanding bicycle lanes, sidewalks, crosswalks, and multi-use trails.

2. Work with other government entities (Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, MnDOT, and Cass County) to promote more opportunities for public transit including gaining adequate access for all users.

This looks like:

- a. Continue to be involved in Regional, County, and City-wide discussions regarding transit (Regional Transportation Coordinating Councils).

3. Develop a wayfinding path that defines a clearly marked bicycle and pedestrian network that enables users to easily navigate the community, highlighting the

community's neighborhoods, amenities, commercial areas, and recreation destinations.

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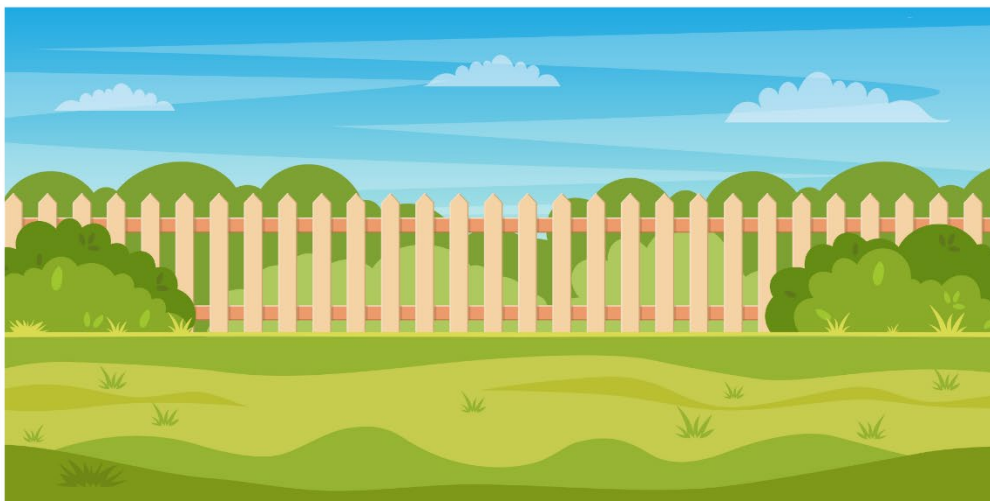
- a. Consider innovative designs and signage to ensure productive mobility and reduce congestion.
 - b. Consider the development of a Complete Streets Policy that addresses all transportation modes including streetscaping, aesthetics, and parking.
4. Continue to plan and conduct regular maintenance of the city's transportation infrastructure and consider expansion of the city's transportation network to enhance the safety circulation, mobility, and access of all users while meeting any future capacity expansion needs.

This looks like:

- a. Continue to sustainably grow the local road network as needed to accommodate community growth.
 - b. Expanding the local road systems strategically and sustainably where growth and demand dictate.
5. Seek safe, sustainable, and effective ways to integrate the city's multimodal transportation system with the LLBO, surrounding Townships, Cass County, and MnDOT.

This looks like:

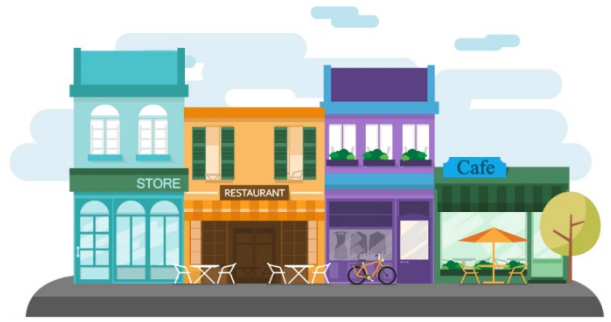
- a. Seek innovative transportation solutions including expanding the EV charging grid for hybrid and electric vehicles.
- b. Ensuring environmental standards are upheld when planning and constructing transportation projects.



Economic Development

Overview

The economic vitality of a community is critical to its long-term success. Good-paying jobs and a solid tax base are keys to providing adequate funding for roads, schools, parks, snow removal, and other services and amenities that retain and attract business and residents. Cass Lake actively pursues economic growth, development, and redevelopment opportunities that enhance the community's economic, natural, and social vitality to sustain a high quality of life.



Input & Data

Nearly 56% of Cass Lake's population are in the workforce and with that it is estimated that Cass Lake has a median household income of \$39,732. [2] When looking at options for childcare, healthcare, broadband, and transportation improvements in a community, it can affect who lives and works in that community.

As part of the public input process, the following theme was identified around the topic of Economic Development in the community survey:

- **More local businesses:** The LPT and community residents all agree that the City of Cass Lake wants more local and small businesses to be located within the downtown area to attract the travelers that pass through the city on Highway 371 and Highway 2. The residents agree that bringing on businesses including a Kwik-Trip on HWY 371 and HWY 2, local restaurants, coffee shops, and local boutiques will assist with the unemployment rate in the city.

Goals and Strategies

1. Develop a qualified local workforce that meets the demands of the present in the community (housing, trades, childcare, etc.).

This looks like:

- a. City to offer or work with external sources to offer workshops and training to enhance employability.
 - b. Establish partnerships with non-profit organizations focused on employment and skill development.
2. Inspire others to view Cass Lake's identity as an opportunity to reinvent its image, through increased community involvement, investment, and changing perceptions.

This looks like:

- a. Create a committee to envision the future of Cass Lake and emphasize positive community aspects to increase community engagement.
 - b. Engage Cass Lake youth in productive new ways that offer year-round recreational and educational opportunities.
 - c. Develop and implement programs to assist individuals in obtaining a job.
3. Identify and invest in unique economic opportunities only Cass Lake can provide.

This looks like:

- a. Conduct U of MN Extension Market Area Analysis to determine market demand and opportunity in the city.
- b. Create and develop plans to highlight the city's unique characteristics.

Health, Safety, Wellness

Overview

The city of Cass Lake values the quality of life for the people of Cass Lake. The LPT views health, safety, and wellness as high priorities, especially healthcare access, outdoor recreational activities, and community safety initiatives. Because recreation is covered under the recreation section, some aspects of that section are not included in this section.



As part of the public input process, the following theme was identified around the topic of Health, Safety, and Wellness in the community survey:

- **Community Safety:** The LPT and community residents have a common goal of keeping the community safe. Implementing projects such as Good Neighbor, Citizen Watch program, and safe houses are of primary importance.
- **Citizen Well-Being:** The LPT and community residents feel the importance of promoting citizen well-being, focusing on substance recovery, mental health services, recreation activities, and a community garden for physical health.

Goals and Strategies

1. Develop and maintain community safety programs to promote a safe community.

This looks like:

- a. Set up a youth program to help with the Good Neighbor Program that participates in wellness checks.
 - b. Encourage residents to participate in Citizen Watch to help create a sense of community and safety.
 - c. Create a safety program (First Aid, CPR, Fire Safety) available to the community and youth.
2. Encourage a high safety standard for the local emergency service departments to maintain within the community.

This looks like:

- a. Encourage the city and emergency services to enforce a curfew to keep the youth safe
 - b. Create and implement a plan to increase lighting on the streets and alleys for night safety.
3. Create accessibility to health care services in Cass Lake.
 4. Promote healthy living both physically and mentally.

This looks like:

- a. Promote a community garden and farmers market free for the residents.
- b. Promote more outdoor recreational activities for the community of all ages.



Infrastructure

Overview

Infrastructure provides the foundation for every community. Without adequate infrastructure, the development of communities is hindered. This section focuses on municipally owned facilities and infrastructure. However, certain services and infrastructure are provided through the private sector, such as natural gas, propane, electricity, and broadband fiber for the Internet. Because transportation and energy infrastructure are covered under the transportation and energy sections, some aspects of those sections are not included in this section.



Input & Data

Water

Water is a precious resource often taken for granted, especially in the Land of 10,000 Lakes where it seems like the resource is limitless. Not only do we need water for drinking, we also need it for agriculture, manufacturing, and more. In the Cass County Local Water Management Plan for 2017 – 2027, the three top priority concerns identified include: surface water, ground water, and aquatic invasive species. Conservation of water helps reduce costs and also preserves these precious resources for future generations. [8]

As part of the public input process, the following theme was identified around the topic of Infrastructure in the community survey:

- **Wastewater Ponds:** Wastewater ponds are nearing capacity, which has a direct impact on the availability of building in the city of Cass Lake which is identified as an issue with the LPT and community residents.

Goals and Strategies

1. Consider updating the cities Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

This looks like:

- a. Utilize the services of Sonmar Consulting and MN Rural Water-Asset Management to assist with this.
2. Successfully resurface 2nd Street.
 3. Consider renovations and upgrades for the Senior Center Building.

Goals and Strategies

1. Beautify the city of Cass Lake

This looks like:

- a. Expand annual no-cost clean-up days.
- b. Establish a community composting site.
- c. Conduct recycling education through newsletters and mailers.

2. Identify and build a community garden and provide education on gardening.

This looks like:

- a. Create an ordinance on pesticide use within city limits.
- b. Create an ordinance around native planting within city limits.

3. Demolish abandoned buildings within city limits and redevelop them.

This looks like:

- a. Establish and maintain partnerships with Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, EPA, MN DEED, and others to assist.

4. Solar Development for the City

This looks like:

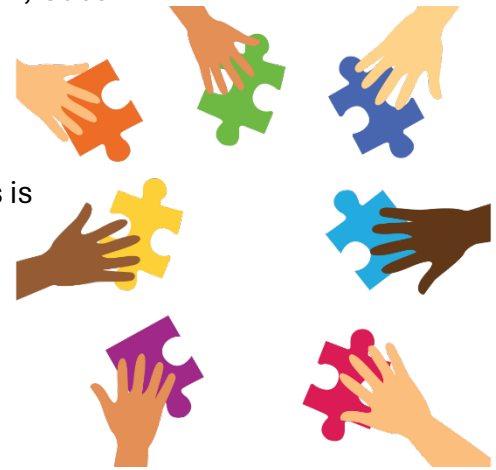
- a. Expand deployment of solar electric systems for the city buildings by applying for grants and increasing awareness of rebate programs with power companies.

Intergovernmental Coordination / Communication

Overview

The city of Cass Lake and its residents interact with many types of local government agencies while driving on a state highway, attending public school, utilizing the services of the LLBO, visiting the Chippewa National Forest, and much more. This section is intended to find ways to keep lines of communication open between the state of MN, Cass County, the city of Cass Lake, the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, and Pike Bay Township.

The LPT and community residents all agree that keeping lines of communication open and creating policy around this is important.



Goals and Strategies

1. Create a shared vision for the redevelopment of Cass Lake.

This looks like:

- a. Create and develop a joint resolution or memorandum of agreement (M.O.A.) between Pike Bay Township, Cass Lake, and LLBO.
- b. Set and maintain regular meetings with the city and LLBO to keep lines of communication open.
- c. Bring in cities and other local tribes that have working relationships with each other to learn from each other.

2. Resolve Jurisdictional Issues

This looks like:

- a. Coordinate redevelopment with all units of government.
- b. Develop a plan for LLBO-owned properties in the city limits.

3. Update the zoning ordinance and map

This looks like:

- a. Ensuring a suitable buffer
- b. Exploring incentives to help meet zoning goals
- c. Providing enforcement of building codes and zoning regulations

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Survey Results

Q1: How are you connected to the Cass Lake area?

Live – 55

Work - 8

Vacation - 6

Other – 15

Q2: Do you live in the area?

Yes – 82

No – 3

Q3: If you answered “No” for question 2 – would you move to Cass Lake

Yes - 12

No – 5

Q4: Please Select your age range.

<19 years: 4

20 to 39 years: 45

40 to 59 years: 18

60 to 79 years: 10

80+: 1

Q5: If you could live somewhere else, would you?

Yes - 27

No - 24

If yes, why? - Not enough opportunities, more programs, my children would thrive better elsewhere, jobs, bigger city, not much in the area for careers, drugs & more things for youth to do, more jobs and resources, too much crime in the city, warmer climate, need more family friendly places, better schools, less depression, less drug use, would like to live in the woods, economy.

Q6: What makes the Cass Lake area great?

People, nature, family, small town community, the community X36, cost of living, community engagement, friends and family, the school X8, lakes and forests, everything, the lake, sports, beautiful area, the culture, know everyone, fishing, historical family connections, the tribe.

Q7: What improvements could be made in the area / where do you see the greatest need?

Roads/Transportation - 4

Youth activities / events – 28

Housing – 6

Drug Use – 5

Clean the city – 3

Businesses – 6

Policy / Safety – 2

Q8: Those interested can participate in visioning sessions?

Yes – 23

No – 14