

City of Merrill Public Participation Plan

This plan sets forth the techniques the City will use to meet the goal of public participation. Therefore, this Public Participation Plan (PPP) forms the basic framework to inform and involve the public in the comprehensive planning process.

The creation of the Public Participation Plan is a task required in meeting the requirements of Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Legislation (State Statute 66.1001). As the planning process develops, it should be expected that deviations from the plan might occur.

I. Objectives:

The following is a list of public participation objectives the City would like to achieve throughout the development and subsequent adoption of the Comprehensive Plan:

- That residents become aware of the importance of participating in the development of the Comprehensive Plan.
- That the public participation process be designed to engage all areas of the City.
- That the public has opportunities to provide their input (both formally and informally) to the City.
- That the public has access to all technical information and any analyses performed throughout the planning process.
- That input is elicited through a variety of means (electronic, printed, and oral) in such a way that it may be carefully considered and responded to.
- That this process of public involvement strengthens the sense of community present in the City.

The goal will be to inform and involve the public and the communities throughout the planning process. Hopefully, this will help balance the issues related to private property rights.

II. Techniques:

The public participation plan for the comprehensive plan will incorporate the following:

1. All meetings for the comprehensive plan process will be posted and open to the public. An open house type meeting will be held mid-way through the process and again at the end of the process. Many of these meetings will be televised on the local public access channel.
2. Periodic press releases to the media and local counties will occur throughout the planning process. Fact sheets and/or summaries will be part of this effort.

3. A planning website will be hosted by the NCWRPC for the City of Merrill Comprehensive Plan. The website will not only display data, but also allow for comments to be submitted.
4. As each of the nine chapters (elements) is addressed, a peer review group will be identified to review them. The peer review will be used to involve additional persons in the community that have an expertise/ interest in specific areas.
5. A “comprehensive planning” display will be maintained in the lobby of City Hall that includes maps and an overview of the plan process. Comment sheets will be available as well.

Throughout the plan process, the City Planning Commission will act as the standing oversight committee. From time to time additional persons may be invited to provide information to the planning process. The Plan Commission will review the plan and recommend its approval to the City Council.

III. Distribution, Implementation & Update:

Upon completion and adoption of the Comprehensive Plan it will be distributed to all adjoining units of government, Lincoln County, the Wisconsin Department of Administration, and other interested parties. The City will make its best efforts to implement the findings of the Comprehensive plan through a variety of tools, including zoning.

As with all plans, it is critical for them to be maintained and updated on a regular basis. The Comprehensive Plan should be reviewed every five years.