

City of Wausau
2027 Comprehensive Plan
Public Participation Plan (PPP) Draft

This plan sets forth the process the City of Wausau will use to foster inclusive and equitable public participation by meeting and exceeding state comprehensive planning law. The Public Participation Plan (PPP) is a framework to inform and involve the public as the comprehensive plan is developed.

If you need translation or interpretation services, please contact wausaudevelopment@wausauwi.gov or 715-261-6009.

Peb muaj kev pab txhais lus thiab sau ntawv. Yog koj xav tau kev pab txhais lus, sau ntawv email tuaj rau wausaudevelopment@wausauwi.gov or 715-261-6009.

Si necesita servicios de traducción o interpretación en Español, por favor contáctenos wausaudevelopment@wausauwi.gov or 715-261-6009.

1. Requirement

The Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning Law, ss. 66.1001, requires that the governmental body of a local governmental unit (municipality) is engaged in comprehensive planning.

“...adopt written procedures that are designed to foster public participation, including open discussion, communication programs, information services, and public meetings for which advance notice has been provided in every stage of the preparation of a comprehensive plan. The written procedures shall provide for a wide distribution of proposed, alternative, or amended elements of a comprehensive plan and shall provide an opportunity for written comments on the plan to be submitted by members of the public to the governing body and for the governing body to respond to such written comments.”

2. Purpose

This PPP is intended to exceed the statutory guidelines established above. It outlines the strategy for encouraging City residents and others to review and provide input on the development, evaluation, and adoption of the City of Wausau Comprehensive Plan that is being prepared in accordance with Chapter 66 Wisconsin Statutes. The public participation process is intended to generate an open dialogue between all interests involved in the development of the comprehensive plan. These public participation procedures are intended to be a somewhat flexible guide except where State law requires that a specific procedure be followed to adopt, amend, or implement the plan.

The public participation process is also intended to be an ongoing and dynamic activity that can be responsive to changing social and political conditions in the community. The general nature of this public participation effort should provide the flexibility needed to adapt to changing conditions in the community while still meeting the requirements of Wisconsin’s planning law. It is intended that meaningful public participation occurs at all phases of the planning process, from its early beginnings through implementation and amendment.

3. Objectives for Public Involvement

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

- That all residents of Wausau are given an opportunity to become fully aware of the comprehensive planning process and are encouraged to participate in each stage of that process.
- That the City's public participation efforts are intended to engage people of all ages, races, ethnic backgrounds, income levels, and physical and mental abilities.
- That the public has opportunities to provide both formal and informal input to the City Plan Commission and other advisory bodies as well as to the decisions of the Wausau Common Council.
- That the public has access to technical information gathered and reports prepared as part of the plan development, implementation, and amendment processes.
- That public input is elicited through a variety of means in such a way that it may be carefully considered and responded to in a timely fashion.
- That public input is shared with other appropriate governmental units, including adjacent communities, school districts, and Marathon County, where applicable.
- That public involvement will ultimately strengthen the sense of community present in Wausau and further the vision of active and positive participation in the governmental decision-making process.

4. Communication and Outreach Strategy

Core Team

The core team is responsible for managing the process and scope of the project and producing specified deliverables and documents. The core team includes the following:

- **The City of Wausau staff** will be primarily responsible for coordination with the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWPRC), City staff departments, City Council, and Plan Commission. They will also be responsible for assisting with public engagement activities, coordinating meeting logistics, and review of drafted documents and engagement materials.
- **The North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC)** will be primarily responsible for plan development, mapping, and oversight of public engagement including development and administration of a community survey.

Plan Commission and Common Council

The Plan Commission and Common Council will serve as the primary bodies utilizing the updated Comprehensive Plan to inform and guide decision making. These groups will remain informed and be actively involved throughout the updating process. There will be touchpoints with the Plan Commission approximately every 2-3 months during their regularly scheduled meetings. They will have the opportunity to review plan chapters and review public engagement results. The Common Council will have the opportunity to review public engagement results when summarized and the draft plan in its entirety when complete.

Wausau Community

Several methods of engagement will be utilized to collect community feedback. These engagement strategies will seek to engage a wide range of stakeholders and residents on a variety of topics. An honest attempt will be made to meet people where they are using in person and virtual methods.

5. Public Participation Activities

Most of the public participation activities will center on public information and education, public input and, where appropriate, response from the City Plan Commission and City staff. Public meetings, stakeholder interviews, neighborhood groups, focus groups, newsletters, press releases, social media posts, and other opportunities will be employed to release information and allow community input on the development of the City’s Comprehensive Plan. Data gathered from public participation activities will be collected at the neighborhood level. The City’s website will be used extensively to provide the most complete and up-to-date information about the Comprehensive Plan and the planning process.

6. Engagement Strategies and Tasks

Strategy	Details	Roles
Project Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A project page will be maintained on both the City website and the NCWRPC website. • All updates including draft chapters, public engagement information, and survey documents will be made available. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City staff will maintain the City website. NCWRPC staff will update the NCWPRC website.
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Website updates • Press release (1 for draft plan review, 1 for adoption) • Social media posts – when public engagement opportunities arise • Public meeting notices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City staff and NCWRPC to update their respective websites. • City staff to create press releases and social media posts. • Public meetings are noticed and open to the public.
Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A public survey will be created and made widely available to the public in digital and written format with translation available upon request. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCWRPC will be responsible for creation of the survey, will City staff assisting with dissemination.
Meeting in a Box	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City staff will create a package that can be picked-up at City Hall or downloaded from the project page. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City staff will develop materials under the advisement of the Plan Commission. Results will be collected by City staff.
Pop-Ups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City staff will facilitate survey push-out, display of maps/materials and/or Meeting-in-a-Box responses at up to 3 pop-ups which are smaller stands at existing events throughout the City. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City staff will assemble materials and host the pop-up meetings.

<p>Stakeholder Interviews</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders could be real-estate representatives, business owners, Alders, Committee Chairs, non-profit leaders, community group leaders, or others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NCWPRC will assemble a stakeholder list and conduct stakeholder interviews.
<p>Neighborhood Groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an overview of the Comprehensive Plan and information about engagement strategies including surveys, Meeting-in-a-Box, and other opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff will coordinate with neighborhood contacts and offer to attend neighborhood meetings and provide a 10-15 minute presentation including a Comp Plan overview and Q & A.
<p>Focus Groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus groups are meetings of about 10 people to have deep discussions. Up to 5 total focus group meetings will be hosted during this process. Topics could include the following and will be selected in partnership with the Plan Commission. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historical/cultural resources Downtown Economic Development Housing Transportation Parks/community facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NCWRPC will assist with assembling the Focus Group teams and creating talking points. City staff will facilitate the discussion. NCWRPC will assemble the results.
<p>Public Involvement Summary</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A summary of public engagement results will be prepared and will be included as an appendix to the Comprehensive Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NCWRPC staff will prepare the summary document.

Throughout the plan process, the Plan Commission will act as the standing oversight committee. The Plan Commission will review the plan and recommend its approval to the Common Council.

7. Timeline, Distribution, Implementation, & Update

The following page features a tentative schedule for the entire comprehensive plan update process, which is subject to change as needed. Upon completion and adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, it will be distributed to all adjoining units of government, Marathon 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.

CITY OF WAUSAU
407 Grant Street, Wausau, WI 54403

Resolution from the Plan Commission Approving Adoption of the Public Participation Plan for the City of Wausau Comprehensive Plan.

Committee Action: Approved 7-0

File Number: 01-0907

Date Introduced: May 12, 2026

FISCAL IMPACT SUMMARY

	<i>Budget Neutral:</i>	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
COSTS	<i>Included in Budget:</i>	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Budget Source:</i>
	<i>One-time Costs:</i>	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Amount:</i>
	<i>Recurring Costs:</i>	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Amount:</i>
	<i>Fee Financed:</i>	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Amount:</i>
	<i>Grant Financed:</i>	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Amount:</i>
SOURCE	<i>Debt Finance:</i>	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Amount:</i> <i>Annual Retirement:</i>
	<i>TID Financed:</i>	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Amount:</i>
	<i>TID Source:</i>	<i>Increment Revenue <input type="checkbox"/> Debt <input type="checkbox"/> Funds on Hand <input type="checkbox"/> Interfund Loan <input type="checkbox"/></i>		

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the City of Wausau is required to prepare and adopt a Comprehensive Plan as outlined in Wisconsin Statutes; and

WHEREAS, the State of Wisconsin requires that Comprehensive Plans be updated no less than once every ten years; and

WHEREAS, the most recent City of Wausau Comprehensive Plan was updated in 2017; and

WHEREAS, the State of Wisconsin requires that written procedures be adopted that are designed to foster public participation during the comprehensive planning process; and

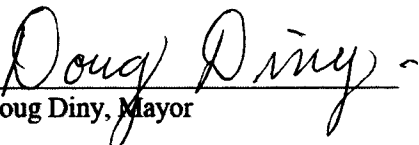
WHEREAS, public participation, community engagement, and stakeholder outreach are essential to any meaningful planning process; and

WHEREAS, City Council of the City of Wausau believes that regular, meaningful public involvement in the comprehensive planning process is important to ensure that the resulting Comprehensive Plan reflects the desires and expectations of the public to the maximum extent practicable; and

WHEREAS, the Plan Commission of the City of Wausau did review the Public Participation Plan at their regular meeting on April 21, 2026, found that it includes a purpose, objectives for public involvement, a communication and outreach strategy, public participation activities, and a timeline for implementation, and did therefore, recommend approval to the City Council.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Wausau does approve and authorize the Public Participation Plan as presented.

Approved:



Doug Diny, Mayor