

# Chapter 4

## Utilities & Community Facilities

Utilities and community facilities play an important role in the livability of a community. This is because utilities and community facilities, provided by either public or private entities, are critical for community development. Utilities include things such as electrical service, natural gas, telephone, and cable communications. Community facilities include local government buildings, libraries, educational facilities, and maintenance and storage facilities, as well as services like police, fire protection, and emergency medical services.

### Previous Plans and Studies

#### Vilas County All Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2024

This document is required for local governments to be eligible for certain disaster mitigation programs. The report looks at general conditions in Vilas County, including population, transportation, land use, and economics. An inventory of utilities, community facilities and emergency services form the background for understanding how the County might respond to a disaster. Risk assessment is at the heart of the All-Hazards Mitigation program. To mitigate the risks, it's necessary to assess their relative importance. Examples of hazards include floods, tornadoes, winter storms, drought, fire, and hazardous materials accidents. The likelihood of any given hazard occurring is estimated based on historical data, and the impact of these hazards is evaluated. The plan seeks to recommend how County government should respond to such occurrences and suggests mitigation measures to reduce the risk caused by identified hazards.

### Inventory

Utilities and community facilities provided by the City of Eagle River or by other public or private entities are inventoried and evaluated as to their present condition and adequacy to meet the current and future needs of the City. Many of the major facilities are identified on **Map 4: Utilities and Community Facilities**.

### Water and Wastewater Facilities

The City of Eagle River has a municipal water and sewer system that serves residents, commercial, and industrial customers. The City's sewer system consists of both sanitary collection and stormwater collection. Maps depicting the extents of the City's sanitary sewer system and storm sewer system are available here: <https://eagleriverwi.gov/departments/departments-of-public-works/>.

## Public Works

The City of Eagle River Department of Public Works is responsible for maintaining and repairing the City's streets, sidewalks, sanitary sewers, storm sewers, and curb & gutter systems. The Department of Public Works also conducts snow & ice removal on the City's streets, street sweeping, and mowing of right-of-ways. The Department of Public works also maintains the City's parks and beach.

## Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling Facilities

The City of Eagle River contracts with Republic Services for residential garbage and recycling disposal. Alternatively, residents have the ability to utilize the Vilas County Landfill (located on County Highway G) and private haulers for garbage and recycling purposes.

## Power and Telecommunication Facilities

Eagle River Light and Water services the City of Eagle River and the immediate surrounding area via power purchased through Wisconsin Public Power, Inc. (WPPI). The City also has a second transformer in its City Substation, which routinely supplies power to some of the Utility's customers. Having two transformers creates redundancy in the power supply and allows switching in emergency and planned maintenance power outages.

Landline telephone service within the City is provided by Spectrum Voice, AT&T, Frontier, and Nsight teleservices, while various companies provide access to cellular service.

Internet service continues to expand as an economic development necessity, and access to internet service is continuing to improve throughout Eagle River and the rest of Vilas County. According to data from the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin, there are 958 broadband serviceable locations located within the City of Eagle River. Of these 958 locations, only four are considered to be unserved by broadband, meaning that they lack access to broadband meeting current standards. Fiber and cable internet service providers in the area include Spectrum, Norvado, and Frontier. Satellite providers serving the area include Starlink, Bug Tussel Wireless, Hughes Net, and ViaSat.

The **Public Service Commission of Wisconsin** (PSC) maintains maps showing the current provision of broadband and also maintains a broadband almanac which shows data on availability, affordability, and current broadband adoption rates. Maps and the broadband almanac can be accessed at PSC's Wisconsin Broadband Office website: <https://psc.wi.gov/Pages/ServiceType/Broadband/BroadbandMaps.aspx>.

## Recreation

The City of Eagle River provides a wide variety of recreational facilities. The City maintains five parks with an assortment of amenities as well as other recreational facilities, while Vilas County manages several other parks and recreational facilities both within and nearby the City. The locations of parks and other recreational facilities located within the City are shown in **Map 5: Recreation**. Nearby parks and recreational facilities are described below:

- **Riverview Park** is a 3.9-acre City-owned park located on Division Street along Eagle River. Riverview Park contains a recently updated ADA-compliant playground, pickleball courts, picnic tables, benches, restrooms, band shelter, pavilion, and boat docking facility.
- **Riverside Park** is a County-owned park nestled between W Division St and Eagle River. The Vilas County Fairgrounds are located across W. Division Street.
- **Forrest Street Boat Landing** is located at the end of Forrest Street adjacent to Riverside Park and provides access to the Eagle River. Boat docking and fishing access is also available via a dock that parallels the shore. Limited parking is available along the river while more parking is available in and around Riverside Park. Across the street from this boat landing are the tennis courts at Forrest and Division Streets.
- **Silver Lake Beach** is a 2.1-acre park located on Silver Lake Road. It has a swimming beach with a beach house, playground, picnic area, restrooms, and fishing pier.
- **T-Docs & Dyer Park** is a 1.25-acre park on Hirzel Street that is located along the Eagle River. The T-Dock is used for fishing, sitting, docking and launching a boat to the Eagle River Chain of Lakes. A picnic area, boat landing, fishing pier, and restrooms all exist here. Picnic and restroom facilities are ADA-accessible.
- **Kiwanis Miller Memorial Park** is a 1.2-acre park located on Minnesota Stret. Facilities include playground equipment and basketball courts. This park experiences flooding stemming from drainage issues when significant rain events occur.
- **Gremban Park** is a 2.2-acre park that is fully ADA-accessible located at City Hall. Park amenities include a T-ball area, skateboard rink, picnic tables, playground, and football field. Restrooms are available during business hours in City Hall.
- **Eagle River Municipal Golf Course** is a four-star rated 18-hole golf course providing premier golfing to the Northwoods. The course is owned and operated by the City of Eagle River with approximately 110 acres.
- **Cross Country Ski Trails** – During the winter months the Nordmarka Ski Club grooms approximately 4 miles of cross-country ski trails throughout the Eagle River Golf Course and behind the Northland Pines School Campus.

- **Trees for Tomorrow** – Trees for Tomorrow is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) natural resources specialty school accredited to place people of all ages in direct contact with the natural resources that humans depend on. Trees for Tomorrow’s Interpretive Trail is on the west side of campus almost directly across from the Education Hall and is open to the public and free to visit.
- **Rotary Square** – The City of Eagle River, in conjunction with Eagle River Revitalization Program and the Eagle River Rotary Club, transformed a previously vacant large corner lot in the downtown area into an inviting and vibrant community gathering and green space. The Rotary Square has been enhanced with artificial turf and offers shaded picnic tables, benches, a pet waste station, ashtrays, trash/recycling containers, portable planters, and seasonal decorations. The site is also available for special events on occasion.
- **Dr. Oldfield Memorial Park** is approximately one acre in size. It is located next to the Wisconsin River on County Highway G. Park amenities include a picnic area with tables and grills, along with a pathway and boat dock that meet ADA standards.
- **Vilas County Fairgrounds** – The Vilas County Fairgrounds are located across Division Street from Riverside Park and host the annual Vilas County Fair. The County Fairgrounds contain four restrooms, two pavilions, three exhibit buildings, a band stand, and four tennis courts.
- **Oldenburg Sports Park** – Oldenburg Sports Park is a 54-acre sports complex located three miles west of Highway 45 on County Highway G. This complex is on County land. There are three baseball fields that are leased to and maintained by Eagle River Baseball. There are also eleven U10 to U14 soccer fields that are leased to and maintained by the Eagle River Club of Headwaters Youth Soccer Association. The complex contains a shared pavilion, concession stand and restrooms.
- **Eagle Lake Park** is approximately 16.5 acres in size and is located on the north shore of Eagle Lake, just off of Chain O’ Lakes Road. Park facilities include a swimming beach, a boat landing, restrooms, picnic tables, grills, a fire ring, and a pavilion.

## Sports

Eagle River is recognized as the Snowmobile Capital of the World due to its rich history of snowmobiling, the area’s extensive snowmobile trail system, and the annual World Championship Snowmobile Derby. Eagle River has close proximity to 500-600 miles of groomed and well-marked snowmobile trails that connect to larger regional systems. Eagle River is also recognized as the ATV/UTV & Hockey Capitals of Wisconsin. The World Championship Derby Complex is located east of State Highway 32 and is home to the annual World Snowmobile Derby world championships. Snowmobile, ATV/UTV, and other recreational trails are shown in **Map 5 Recreation**.

The Eagle River Recreation Association provides excellent youth hockey and figure skating programs and their hockey and figure skating schools rank among the best in the Midwest. The Eagle River Recreation Association hosts a summer hockey school, the Crazy 8 Hockey Camp, and has an assortment of youth teams. The Historic Eagle River Sports Arena located just east of the City Limits on State Highway 70 hosts hockey and figure skating and is home to the Wisconsin Hockey Hall of Fame.

The Eagle River Pickleball Association (ERPA) is an active group of adults who enjoy playing pickleball year-round. The ERPA promotes provides free clinics and lessons, and hosts scheduled social play and tournaments. The outdoor play schedule starts May 1 and ends October 15, while the indoor play schedule starts Oct 15 and ends April 30.

Other sports that play an important role in the City's history include fishing and other water sports, cross-country skiing, golfing, biking, hunting and other team sports such as baseball and soccer.

### Eagle River Chain of Lakes

Eagle River is home to the World's Largest Chain of Freshwater Lakes. This Chain of Lakes consists of 28 connected lakes between Eagle River and Three Lakes and offers abundant recreational opportunities. The Chain is a major source of tourism as it is one of the most desirable systems in northern Wisconsin among anglers and recreational users. Popular activities on the Chain include fishing, boating, jet skiing, kayaking, water skiing, paddling, and swimming.

### Events

As mentioned earlier in **Chapter 2**, Eagle River hosts a significant number of community events throughout the year. Notable events include Cranberry Fest, a 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade, the annual Vilas County Fair, the Performing Arts Concert Series, weekly Farmer's Markets in the summer, the annual World Championship Snowmobile Derby, the annual USA Hockey Long Drink Pond National Championships, and an annual Winter Driving Experience (currently sponsored by Subaru). A full listing of events is available in **Appendix D**.

### Education

The City of Eagle River is in the Northland Pines School District, but the Wisconsin Open Enrollment program allows children to attend other nearby school districts, provided that the district has the necessary space to accept the student. The Northland Pines School district has satellite elementary schools located in Eagle River, Land O' Lakes, and St Germain that serve students located throughout the district. Additionally, Northland Pines Middle and High School is located in Eagle River. In addition to public schools there are several private K-8 schools located within the Eagle River area.

## Libraries

The City of Eagle River is home to Olson Memorial Library where visitors and residents can borrow books and other media as well as checkout other books and reference materials from other libraries through the interlibrary loan program. The library also has many local, regional, and national newspapers and magazines that visitors to the library can read or just browse through too. The library can also be used by residents and visitors who need access to the library's conference rooms.

## Cemeteries

There are two cemeteries located within the City, Saint Peter the Fisherman Cemetery and Eagle River Cemetery. The Eagle River Cemetery Association is a 501(c)(13) nonprofit organization that oversees the maintenance and operations of the Eagle River Cemetery, while St. Peter's Church oversees maintenance and operations for the Saint Peter the Fisherman Cemetery. Minimum acreage requirements exist for cemeteries established on or after November 1, 1991, unless the cemetery is owned by a religious association, or the City enacts an ordinance allowing new cemeteries of less than 20 acres to be constructed.

## Emergency Services

Police protection in the City of Eagle River is provided by the Eagle River Police Department. The Eagle River Police Department had five full-time police officers, a police chief, and an office manager in 2025. Additionally, the Vilas County Sheriff's Department is located within the City, and they patrol all county roads and respond to 911 calls. In addition, the Wisconsin State Patrol has statewide jurisdiction on all public roads.

The Eagle River Area Fire Department is operated by a joint municipal fire commission which is comprised of the City of Eagle River and the Towns of Cloverland, Washington and Lincoln. There is one representative from each municipality and one representative from the fire department who serves as the chairperson. **The Eagle River Area Fire Department and St Germain Volunteer Fire Department have a joint service agreement in place.**

Ambulance service is primarily provided by Aspirus MedEvac in Eagle River, with Conover, St. Germain and Plum Lake also providing service. The nearest medical facility is Aspirus Eagle River Hospital located within the City. The nearest full service medical facilities are Howard Young Medical Center in Woodruff, Marshfield Medical Center in Minocqua, and Aspirus Rhinelander Hospital in Rhinelander.

## Other Government Facilities

The local road system is the most significant public facility maintained by the City and is covered in the **Transportation Chapter**. Both the Eagle River Police Department and City Hall are located at 525 E. Maple Street. The Vilas County Courthouse and the County's main offices are located at 330 Court Street.

## Utilities and Public Facilities Programs

Providing public infrastructure – roads, sewer and water service, schools, police and fire protection – is one of the major functions of local government. In addition to these public services, both public and private entities provide electricity and telephone service as well as such specialized services as child-care, health-care and solid-waste disposal. Taken together these constitute the utilities and community facilities that represent much of the backbone of modern life. Beyond what these facilities do for us, they also represent a huge investment of public and private resources.

The efficient utilization of these resources is one of the basic principles of comprehensive planning. Already in-place infrastructure is a public asset that must be safeguarded for the future, both to conserve and protect environmental values and to maximize the benefits of economic growth. Development that bypasses or ignores existing infrastructure resources is wasteful of the public investment that they represent.

Both the state and federal governments offer programs that assist communities with the development of critical infrastructure and facilities. These programs are listed in more detail in the **Economic Development Chapter** of this plan.

# Goals, Objectives, and Policies

**Goal:** Guide future development of infrastructure, utilities and community facilities in accordance with the Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

## Objectives:

1. Develop overall comprehensive facility planning documents that will be updated and reviewed on an ongoing basis to meet the overall infrastructure needs of the community for current and future service and economic development purposes.
  - a. Capacity, Management, Operations & Maintenance (CMOM) Comprehensive Plan for the Sanitary Sewer Plant, Lift Stations and conveyance system.
  - b. Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for the Public Streets and right-of-way to safely and efficiently move traffic and economic activity throughout the community and connecting the community to the region.
  - c. Stormwater Management Plan for the community to manage and control storm water runoff issues for Eagle River's neighborhoods and environment.
  - d. Water Facility Plan to provide safe and reliable potable drinking water to Eagle River homes and businesses within the community. The plan also addresses maintaining proper water pressures throughout the community to ensure Fire Flow demand is met for Fire protection purposes.
  - e. Electric Facility Plan to provide reliable electricity needs to the residents and businesses within the City of Eagle River including future load growth as the community grows.
2. Explore potential expansion of the City's sewer and water treatment facilities.
3. Develop associated cost estimates for the planning documents and seek grants/funding to assist with implementing the plans.

**Goal:** Enhance and develop year-round recreational opportunities in the City of Eagle River while minimizing user conflicts.

**Objectives:**

1. Promote common sense regulations to coordinate the use, access, and opportunity of land or water recreational vehicles.
2. Consider enhancing recreational facilities that provide multi-use recreation opportunities.
3. Maintain participation in the Vilas County Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan to direct improvement projects and maintain eligibility for WI DNR recreational program and facility grants.
4. Support existing work and work toward providing additional snowmobile, hiking, skiing and biking trails.
5. Explore opportunities to develop integrated, multi-use trail systems.
6. Encourage connection of multi-use trails to other Vilas County communities, if possible.
7. Pursue state and federal funding programs which can aid in the development and acquisition of parks, trails, scenic and environmentally significant areas.
8. Recognize the need to accommodate all age groups and abilities in recreational pursuits.
9. Evaluate the need, conditions, and maintenance requirements of public access to waterways.
10. Continue to work with, support and cooperate with service clubs and organizations related to the maintenance and development of recreational facilities and activities.