

Public Participation Strategy for Comprehensive Plan Update

Section 1: Introduction

Wisconsin's comprehensive planning legislation, Section 66.1001 of Wisconsin Statutes, requires the City of West Allis adopt, by resolution, written procedures designed to foster public participation when updating and amending the comprehensive plan. The written procedures must provide for a wide distribution of proposed plan amendments, an opportunity for the public to submit written comments on the plan, and an opportunity for the Common Council to respond to such comments. This document, which outlines the procedures to be followed when amending the City's Comprehensive Plan, meets the statutory requirement.

Section 2: Background

Wisconsin's comprehensive planning legislation requires cities, counties, and other local units of government to enact a comprehensive plan every 10 years. Comprehensive plans, which cover a 20-year planning period, are intended to act as a guide for development and decision making related to land use, housing, transportation, utilities, economic development, agriculture, and intergovernmental relationships. The City of West Allis adopted the West Allis Comprehensive Plan 2030 in February of 2011. The 2030 Plan focused on identifying and supporting redevelopment opportunities throughout the city, as well as promoting sustainable development practices.

With the ten-year mark approaching, City staff and elected officials have been reflecting on a decade of accomplishments, as well as looking forward to planning and visioning for the next 20 years. As part of this reflection process, we have acknowledged that the timeline for updating the City's Comprehensive Plan is not well aligned with the release of decennial Census data, which allows for a more accurate and robust planning process.

As such, the City's approach to updating the Comprehensive Plan is intended to be conducted in two phases. The first phase will take place immediately and include minimal updates to existing plan elements, as required to meet statutory requirements. The second phase will take place over the next several years and will include a full overhaul of each plan element, including extensive public involvement in the planning and visioning process. This two phased approach will allow the City to fully engage the public in the planning process, and will provide for the use of more current data as we reevaluate each plan section, not only for the upcoming comprehensive plan but for all comprehensive plans in the decades that follow.

Section 3: Public Participation Strategy Goals

The goals of this Public Participation Strategy include:

1. Provide opportunities for members of the public to participate in the comprehensive planning process.
2. Ensure a broad range of interests are considered in the comprehensive planning process.
3. Meet both the letter and the spirit of Wisconsin's comprehensive planning legislation.
4. Utilize the Plan Commission to guide the plan update process.
5. Recognize that the previously stated goals must be balanced with the need to complete the comprehensive plan updates within a reasonable timeframe and budget.

Section 4: Public Participation Strategy

The City will, at a minimum, use the following techniques to obtain public input during its comprehensive plan update process:

- All Plan Commission and Common Council meetings to consider, discuss, and adopt the comprehensive plan amendments will be open to the public, and noticed as required by State Statutes and open meeting regulations.
- The opportunity for public comment will be provided at all public meetings held on the comprehensive plan, which may include meetings intended specifically for collecting public input or more traditional public comment periods at the beginning or end of existing committee/council/board/commission meetings.
- At least one formal public hearing will be held on the proposed comprehensive plan amendments prior to adoption. All members of the public will have an opportunity to present testimony and offer comments at the public hearing. The public hearing will be noticed and held per the requirements in Section 66.1001 of Wisconsin Statutes.
- Copies of draft plan materials will be available on the City website, as well as at City Hall and the Library during normal business hours.
- The City will provide copies of the draft and final plan amendments to every governmental body that is located in whole or in part within the City, the clerk of every municipality that is adjacent to the City, the department of administration, the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, the West Allis Public Library, and members of the participating public, as requested. The City may charge for copies at an amount equal to the costs of time and material to produce such copies.
- Specifically for the Phase II update, expanded public participation opportunities will be undertaken, such as key stakeholder focus group meetings and input sessions, presentations before neighborhood groups, local clubs or other relevant community organizations, and individual or small group meetings and input sessions with public officials and other community leaders.
- At any point during the plan update process, written comments on comprehensive plan updates may be delivered, mailed, or emailed to Steve Schaer, Manager of Planning & Zoning at 7525 W. Greenfield Avenue, West Allis, WI 53214 or at sschaer@westalliswi.gov. City staff will respond to all written comments via mail, telephone, email or meeting.