

Appendix A

Public Participation Program

Task 3.0: Public Engagement and Communication

This section describes the major tasks to be completed in preparing the Comprehensive Plan Update and describes the roles of the City Council, Plan Commission and Citizens Advisory Committee.

The planning process consists of two stages:

1. Understanding the issues and questions that should be discussed, debated and resolved.
2. Preparing more detailed plans for land use, transportation, parks, utilities and other remaining plan elements.

These stages correspond to the two major planning tasks. For each task, specific participation strategies will be implemented to communicate with the public about the planning process and to encourage public participation. The following chart identifies the approximate timeline for each of the two tasks as well as the project schedule for the participation strategies to be implemented during the course of the project.

The following public participation elements are suggested in a preliminary fashion and could be revised based on what is learned during the diagnostic interviews.

Meetings with the Citizens Advisory Committee

It is proposed that the City enlist members for the Citizens Advisory Committee from the numerous committees and commissions that presently exist and other as needed in Eau Claire. The Advisory Committee would provide input and reaction to the work of the staff and consultants throughout the planning process.

Citizens Advisory Committee Meetings 1 through 4: Review the Assessment of Conditions and Issues

The first meeting with the Advisory Committee should occur in September 2014. At this meeting, the consultant will distribute the draft Assessment of Conditions and Issues Report in advance and review it with the committee. Provide large prints of the maps. Review two or more planning subjects at each meeting. Present a short PowerPoint summary of each subject then engage the committee in discussion, leaving plenty of time for the committee to voice their ideas.

At the initial meeting, use the nominal group process to work with the Citizens Advisory Committee to refine, amend and expand the issues previously identified by the consultant and City staff. Ideas would be recorded on cards and displayed on the wall. Participants would be asked to suggest ways to cluster the cards by commonality. Then they would be asked to suggest “root” ideas. Staff would save the cards by cluster for transcribing.

Also, committee members would be asked to submit digital photos of positive and negative features of the city that will be used for discussion at the urban design issues meeting of the committee.

Advisory Committee Meetings 5 through 10: Review and Refine the Plan Elements

Conduct approximately 6 meetings (or as many as needed) to review and refine the draft plan chapters with members of the Advisory Committee.

Meetings with Plan Commission and City Council

Help the City staff brief members of the Plan Commission and City Council on the work program and the progress of the project, and solicit their ideas about issues, needs and opportunities. Meet with these groups near the beginning of the process and before the completion of Task 2.0, Explore Alternatives and Sketch the Desired Future.

Individual Interviews

Conduct individual meetings with key persons from across the community. Those interviewed may include members of the Common Council, Plan Commission, Parks Commission, business organizations, neighborhood organizations, civic boosters, local activists, land developers and builder. These should be conducted sequentially at City Hall. The City will be responsible for scheduling the time with the participants at 30 minute intervals.

Neighborhood and other Interest Group Meetings

Help the City staff conduct neighborhood and other small group meetings by providing a PowerPoint show that summarizes the Assessment of Conditions.

Community Forums

The community forums will be opportunities for citizens to learn about the draft plan elements, discuss the ideas with the planners and the members of the Advisory Committee and to voice their opinions in a receptive setting.

Forum #1: Assessment and Issues

Community Forum #1 could be Saturday morning affair in a large meeting room. This event might include:

- Large maps of all the assessment materials on the walls with “docents” to explain and answer questions
- A slide show and visual preference survey
- A PowerPoint presentation explaining the assessment of conditions
- Comment cards for citizens to record their thoughts
- Pastries, coffee and juice (provided by the City)
- Elected and appointed officials and senior staff available to hear comments

Forum #2

Facilitate Community Forum #2 to present and explain the draft plan and receive comments. Structure this forum similar to Community Forum #1. This meeting could be on a week night, a Saturday morning or both.

Television Coverage

Record a discussion between the consultant’s project manager and the City Planner about the assessment of conditions. This could be broadcast many times to the community. The City will seek

to gain coverage from the local cable TV provider and the local broadcast stations of any and all of the meetings and public events associated with this plan.

A page on the City’s Web Site

Provide written and graphic materials describing the project for City staff to use on a page on the City’s Web site.

Facebook Page

Create a Facebook page where the project manager could post announcements that lead viewers to the project page on the City’s Website and where citizens could post questions and comments and initiate discussions.

Newspaper Interviews

Meet with reporters from the *Eau Claire Leader-Telegram* and *Volume One* to provide information for news and editorial stories. This should occur during each of the three major phases of the project.

Key Participation Roles

The public participation and communication campaign for the Comprehensive Plan will be executed primarily through the City Council, the Plan commission, a citizens advisory committee and City staff. The roles of each group will be as follows:

City Council

The City Council is authorized by state law to adopt the Comprehensive Plan by ordinance of a majority of the Council. There will be regular meetings with the Council during the planning process to keep the Council updated on the progress of the project, to provide opportunities for additional public comment, and to ensure that the project is moving in the right direction. At least one member of the Council should be on the citizens advisory committee.

Plan Commission

The Plan Commission is authorized by state law to prepare the Comprehensive Plan and to recommend by a majority vote its adoption by the Council. As with the Council, there will be regular public meetings with the Plan Commission during the planning process to ensure that the project is moving in the right direction. The Plan Commission will have on its agenda a discussion item for the Comprehensive Plan during the entire planning process to allow planning staff and the Commission members to exchange information on the progress of the project. Members of the Plan Commission will be encouraged to be on the citizens advisory committee.

Citizens Advisory Committee

This group will be appointed by the Plan Commission for the purpose of advising the Plan Commission, the City staff and the consultant on the preparation, discussion and review the plan. The advisory committee will send to the Plan Commission a draft comprehensive plan. Members may include people from the Plan Commission and City Council. The planning team needs an advisory committee that remains together throughout the process, participates in key explorations and learns from them, and is able to offer informed feedback that is representative of the diverse interests of the

community. The committee should also function as a liaison to the community and to interested stakeholder groups and organizations.

Early in the planning process, the planning consultant will conduct interviews and focus group discussion to enable them to advise the City on the composition and size of this group, its roles and operating procedures, and the frequency of its meeting. The citizens advisory committee contribution can be significant if their time is used well through teamwork between the City staff and consultant.

Meeting will be held with the advisory committee at approximately monthly intervals from September 2014 through May 2015. The City will advertise these meetings and public will be encouraged to attend.

The planning consultant and the City staff will spend the first 3 months reviewing the Assessment of Conditions and Issues report so that when the citizens advisory committee begins meeting in September, they will receive complete drafts of each subject before each meeting.

Committee meetings will be conducted efficiently to respect people's time, and there will be plenty of time allotted to discuss issues, analysis and policies, and to obtain the committee's input.

The meetings should be held in a comfortable room with good conditions for presentations. Refreshments should always be served, and some time should be spent on socialization so that people feel comfortable discussing topics in a group setting.

The planning consultant will advise the City as to what segments of the population the committee should attempt to represent and how big it should be (no larger than 40 people).

City Staff

The City staff will conduct neighborhood meetings as needed to address geographically specific issues.

The City staff, especially the Director of Community Development, will be involved in all phases of the planning process. Communication will occur almost daily on all facets of the plan development. Information will first be communicated through City staff then through technical and other groups.

The City staff should facilitate or conduct some of the public participation and communication meetings such as presentations to neighborhood and civic groups outside the scheduled committee meetings. The planning consultant will provide a series of PowerPoint presentations and printed maps that the staff could use for this purpose.