



# Long Range Planning Committee

Monday, January 22, 2024 @ 3:00 PM

415 Main Street, Onalaska WI 54650

Meeting in person in Room 112 & remotely on Zoom

Members of the public wishing to attend remotely and provide public input:

Meeting Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87584188529?pwd=ggIMU97x4dtIKjWnifDbdvHTdkQNAE.1>

Phone Number: 1-312-626-6799 Meeting ID: 875 8418 8529 Password: 54650

1. Call to Order and roll call.
2. Consideration and action on minutes from the previous meeting.
3. Public Input (limited to 3 minutes per individual).

## Consideration and possible action on the following item:

4. Discussion on Live Ona 2040 Comprehensive Plan Framework & Goals.
5. Adjournment.

Notice is hereby given that members of and possibly a quorum of the Common Council of the City of Onalaska who do not serve on the Committee and members of and possibly a quorum of members of other governmental bodies may attend this meeting to gather information about a subject over which they have decision making responsibility. No action will be taken by any governmental body at the above stated meeting other than the governmental body specifically referred to above in this notice

**Notices provided to:** Long Range Planning Committee (Mayor Kim Smith, City Administrator Rick Niemeier, Ald. Steven Nott, Erik Archer, Kristin Odegaard, Kevin Schubert, Dan Wick), Common Council (Ald. Leanne Stokes, Ald. Shawn McAlister, Ald. Dan Stevens, Ald. Diane Wulf, Ald. Steven Nott, Ald. Larry Jiracek), Department Heads, City Administrator Rick Niemeier, City Attorney Amanda Jackson, Media & Applicants

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the City of Onalaska will provide reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with a disability to ensure equal access to public meetings provided notification is given to the City Clerk within seventy-two (72) hours prior to the public meeting and that the requested accommodation does not create an undue hardship for the City.

Statutory Notice Posted: 1/18/2024

**Long Range Planning Committee**

**of the City of Onalaska**

Monday, January 22, 2024

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1 The Meeting of the Long Range Planning Committee of the City of Onalaska was called to order  
2 at 3:00 p.m. on Monday, January 22, 2024. It was noted that the meeting had been announced  
3 and a notice posted at City Hall.

4  
5 Roll call was taken, with the following members present (either in person or remotely): City  
6 Administrator Rick Niemeier, Mayor Kim Smith, Ald. Steven Nott, Parks and Recreation  
7 Director Dan Wick, Erik Archer, Kristen Odegaard.

8  
9 Also Present (either in person or remotely): Planning Director Katie Aspenson, Director of  
10 Public Works Jarrod Holter, Ald. Diane Wulf, Ald. Leanne Stokes. Lakota Group was  
11 represented by Senior Planner Andy Cross, Project Manager Hannah Bader, and Senior  
12 Economic Development Strategist Josh Bloom.

13  
14 Excused Absence: City Engineer Kevin Schubert.

15  
16 A quorum of the Board of Public Works & Utilities, Common Council and Finance & Personnel  
17 Committee were present at this meeting.

18  
19 **Item 2 – Consideration and action on minutes from the previous meeting**

20  
21 Motion by Dan, second by Ald. Nott, to approve the minutes from the previous meeting as  
22 printed and on file in the City Clerk’s Office.

23  
24 On voice vote, motion carried.

25  
26 **Item 3 – Public Input (limited to 3 minutes per individual)**

27  
28 Mayor Smith called three times for anyone wishing to provide public input and closed that  
29 portion of the meeting.

30  
31 **Consideration and possible action on the following items:**

32  
33 **Item 4 – Discussion on Live Ona 2040 Comprehensive Plan Framework & Goals**

34  
35 Andy told committee members Phase 2 of the Comprehensive Plan has begun, noting Phase 1 –  
36 the “State of the City Report,” which can be found on the city’s website – has been completed.  
37 Andy said a framework has been developed for the Live Ona 2040 Comprehensive Plan, noting  
38 he had sent an email to committee members that provided initial input on the Lakota Group’s  
39 thoughts and general approach to the plan.

40  
41 Andy said the Lakota Group had developed a plan around a series of community pillars, telling  
42 committee members the Lakota Group’s goal has been to move away from utilizing the

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43 traditional structure of a comprehensive plan that was utilized in the 1980s, 1990s, and early  
44 2000s. The Lakota Group is approaching the Live Ona 2040 Comprehensive Plan with the  
45 following five pillars based on conversations with residents, discussions with city employees,  
46 and research conducted:

47

48 **Pillar 1 – Community:** Andy said the Lakota Group team members had heard repeatedly how  
49 much Onalaska’s citizens appreciate living here because it is a small town and a close-knit  
50 community. The pillars were broken off into focus areas, and each focus area has individual  
51 goals. Those goals will have strategies, which will be broken down into specific, implementable  
52 actions.

53

#### 54 **Community Identity and a Sense of Place**

- 55 • **Goal 1:** Create a strong sense of identity in Onalaska for residents and visitors to the city.
- 56 ○ Conceptual Strategies:
  - 57 ▪ Gateway signs at key entrance points to Onalaska.
  - 58 ▪ Additional identification of municipal boundaries/entrance points adjacent  
59 to Medary, et cetera.
  - 60 ▪ Monthly sunset celebrations at the Great River Landing (“Sunfish  
61 Sunsets?”). Local sponsorships for parking, LEO overtime for traffic  
62 management, local business participation, food vendors.
  - 63 ▪ “Sister City” program?
  - 64 ▪ Waterfront and city park clean-up day events.

65

#### 66 **Housing**

- 67 • **Goal 1:** Support new housing opportunities that provide alternatives to single-family  
68 detached residential units.
- 69 ○ Conceptual Strategies:
  - 70 ▪ Create a rental registration program to track quantity of rental units,  
71 conditions, landlord information, and improve communication with  
72 tenants and property owners.
  - 73 ▪ Expand the R-3 Zoning District in areas connected to walkable amenities.
  - 74 ▪ Monitor development in R-3 districts to determine if current bulk/setback  
75 requirements present obstacles to successful development projects.
  - 76 ▪ Create a guidebook for ADU regulations in Onalaska, a “how-to” cheat  
77 sheet for property owners.
- 78 • **Goal 2:** Provide support for the maintenance, upkeep, and improvement of aging single-  
79 family homes that are an important part of Onalaska’s residential fabric.
- 80 ○ Conceptual Strategies:
  - 81 ▪ Establish a home improvement program to assist and incentivize property  
82 owners in upkeep, maintenance, and improvement of existing household  
83 stock.

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- 84                   ▪ Partner with federal, state, and county entities to pool resources addressing
- 85                   home maintenance and rehabilitation.
- 86                   ▪ Climate-friendly home improvements (and associated grant programs)
- 87                   ▪ General information on sustainable home improvements on city website
- 88                   (windows, insulation, electric/gas/water consumption decrease)
- 89                   ▪ Rain barrels, composting bin giveaway (will evaluate partner agencies)
- 90       • **Goal 3:** Increase mixed-use and multifamily housing options in and close to downtown.
- 91           ▪ **Conceptual Strategies:**
- 92                   ▪ Establish R-3 zoning for the neighborhoods along 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Avenues east
- 93                   of downtown.
- 94                   ▪ Include additional properties in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue corridor in the Mixed Use-
- 95                   Commercial Zoning District.
- 96

### Arts, Culture, and Community Engagement

- 97
- 98       • **Goal 1:** Foster community pride among residents of all ages living in Onalaska.
- 99           ▪ **Conceptual Strategies:**
- 100                   ▪ Explore more opportunities for additional annual civic events.
- 101                   ▪ “Winter Cities” programming, embracing community over the winter
- 102                   months.
- 103                   ▪ Focus on shared assets like the street network or local history. This can
- 104                   include the “Cylovia Concept,” meaning shutting down a length of Main
- 105                   Street for bicyclists and pedestrians only for a day or weekend. It also can
- 106                   include local history articles in city newsletters, loop in history
- 107                   departments at colleges and high school to get content.
- 108                   ▪ A “Battle of the Bands” event at Dash-Park or the Great River Landing
- 109                   featuring high school or other local ensembles.
- 110       • **Goal 2:** Increase local government communication and outreach.
- 111           ▪ **Conceptual Strategies:**
- 112                   ▪ Listening sessions 3 or 4 times a year in different parts of the city.
- 113                   ▪ A city E-News email program, send out the quarterly “Onalaska
- 114                   Observer,” sign up for specific commission update/agendas.
- 115                   ▪ Publicize city’s efforts toward sustainability (i.e., rain garden planters on
- 116                   2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue).
- 117                   ▪ Bring attention to developments/projects that have incorporated climate-
- 118                   friendly elements in construction and site design.
- 119

### Historic Preservation/Celebration

- 120
- 121       • **Goal 1:** Continue listing properties on the National Register of Historic Places and
- 122           designating local landmarks.
- 123           ○ **Conceptual Strategies:**
- 124                   ▪ Pursue another CLG Grant to update the 2012 architectural resource
- 125                   survey.

Reviewed 1/26/2024 by Katie Aspenson

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- 126                   ▪ Have literature available on the benefits of designating a property as a
- 127                   local landmark.
- 128                   ▪ Connect with owners of homes identified as historically significant.
- 129                   ▪ Historic district/survey in downtown
- 130       • **Goal 2:** Cultivate an appreciation of Onalaska’s architectural and cultural history.
- 131           ○ Conceptual Strategies:
- 132                   ▪ HPC enabling, raise expectations with Mayor involvement, tour of homes,
- 133                   appreciation week event of historic properties, Common Council
- 134                   recognition of homeowners who preserve historic homes or other historic
- 135                   preservation achievements.
- 136                   ▪ Pursue a CLG Grant for an architectural resource survey in the downtown
- 137                   to determine feasibility of a historic downtown district.
- 138                   ▪ Have literature available on the benefits of designating a property as a
- 139                   local landmark.
- 140                   ▪ “The Greenest Building is the One That’s Already There” publication on
- 141                   HPC website.
- 142

## 143 Pillar 2 – Commerce & Development

### 144 Commercial Corridors

- 146       • **Goal 1:** Support Highway 16 as a destination for general retail for the local economy
- 147       while evolving into more mixed-use and lifestyle center concepts where visible.
- 148           ○ Conceptual Strategies:
- 149                   ▪ Consider a form-based code to bring more development cohesion to
- 150                   Highway 16.
- 151                   ▪ Promote a business development strategy that incorporates experienced-
- 152                   based businesses (dining, entertainment) to hedge against a further
- 153                   retraction of brick-and-mortar retail.
- 154                   ▪ Identity strategic public investments that can incentivize, over time,
- 155                   mixed-use redevelopment recommended in the 2019 State Road 16
- 156                   Corridor Redevelopment Study.
- 157       • **Goal 2:** Improve the Sand Lake Road corridor to serve as a neighborhood-scale
- 158       commercial destination in the heart of the city.
- 159           ○ Conceptual Strategies:
- 160                   ▪ Evaluate the Center 90 shopping center property for opportunities to
- 161                   provide a destination for cyclists, pedestrians, and increased outdoor use.
- 162                   ▪ Install a dedicated bike pathway along Sand Lake Road with lane
- 163                   markings and a physical barrier.
- 164                   ▪ Identify opportunities to assemble small properties into larger, more viable
- 165                   redevelopment opportunities consistent with the Mixed Use-Neighborhood
- 166                   Zoning District.

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- 167                   ▪ Develop a streetscaping plan to include in future rebuild/reconstruction
- 168                   work on Sand Lake Road.
- 169                   ▪ Work with commercial property owners to replace an off-street parking
- 170                   space with a bike corral on their site.

171

### 172 **Downtown Onalaska**

- 173       • **Goal 1:** Foster an environment in downtown Onalaska that supports entrepreneurship,
- 174       investment, and redevelopment – and that differentiates downtown, economically and
- 175       physically, from other commercial districts and corridors in the city.
- 176           ○ Conceptual Strategies:
  - 177               ▪ Establish a downtown management program, like a Main Street
  - 178               organization, that is dedicated to revitalizing the downtown area with
  - 179               marketing and events programming, visual and streetscape improvements,
  - 180               and business development.
  - 181               ▪ Organize downtown’s economic development around an outdoor sporting
  - 182               an adventure strategy, with a deliberate emphasis on retail and service
  - 183               businesses that connect to the river, bike trail, and other outdoor
  - 184               attractions.
  - 185               ▪ Incentivize new business development by establishing a façade
  - 186               improvement grant program and/or a vanilla box grant to help make
  - 187               storefronts occupant-ready.
  - 188               ▪ Design and install a new comprehensive wayfinding system that directs
  - 189               visitors to downtown from other parts of the city and helps them navigate
  - 190               within the downtown environment.
  - 191               ▪ Support new senior housing development, particularly in mixed-use
  - 192               design, to allow people to age in place and live a walkable lifestyle.
  - 193               ▪ Establish an incubator space to test business concepts in a downtown
  - 194               storefront by offering short-term lease agreements.
  - 195               ▪ Consider incentives targeted at restaurant development such as
  - 196               commercial kitchen subsidies to facilitate expansion of sit-down options.
  - 197               ▪ Collaborate with First Lutheran Church to utilize its parking lot for public
  - 198               events such as an art fair, relocated/additional farmers market, or “Taste of
  - 199               Onalaska” event.
  - 200               ▪ Repair/maintain rain garden tree planters on 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue so they function
  - 201               as intended.

202

### 203 **Future Land Use Planning**

- 204       • **Goal 1:** Foster an active, mixed-use downtown and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue that provides a variety of
- 205       shopping, dining, gathering, and living opportunities.
- 206           ○ Conceptual Strategies:

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- 207                   ▪ Revisit the B-1 and B-2 zoning districts to determine how adequately they
- 208                   facilitate achieving the community’s vision for the downtown (setbacks,
- 209                   parking, permitted/conditional uses, sign code, design standards)
- 210                   ▪ Update Future Land Use Map to reflect vision in the Downtown
- 211                   Redevelopment Study.
- 212                   ▪ Inventory off-street parking facilities in the downtown.
- 213                   ▪ Survey the usage/occupancy of off-street parking facilities to determine
- 214                   the level of vacancy and potential for reuse/shared parking alternatives.
- 215                   ▪ Proactively enforce property maintenance regulations to reduce impacts of
- 216                   vacant and underutilized properties.
- 217           • **Goal 2:** Support Onalaska’s industrial districts.
- 218                   ○ Conceptual Strategies:
- 219                   ▪ Maintain existing zoning districts while facilitating relocation of industrial
- 220                   sites within the city.
- 221                   ▪ Ensure adequate buffering to mitigate impacts on adjacent properties.
- 222                   ▪ Enforce property maintenance regulations on sites in industrial use.
- 223

### Opportunity Sites

- 225           • **Goal 1:** Explore opportunities to develop hotel and hospitality uses by the Omni Center.
- 226           • **Goal 2:** Facilitate the redevelopment of the Mayo Clinic site into a multiuse development
- 227           that meets community needs.
- 228           • **Goal 3:** Facilitate the redevelopment of the Center 90 Shopping Center into a multiuse
- 229           destination in the center of the city.
- 230           • **Goal 4:** Redevelop the city’s waterfront into an impactful open space and gateway for the
- 231           community to enjoy and appreciate the Black River.
- 232           • **Goal 5:** Facilitate the redevelopment of the Nicolai properties to provide additional
- 233           housing and commercial opportunities for the community.
- 234

### Built Form/Design Review

- 235
- 236
- 237           • **Goal 1:** Achieve a high level of innovative and impactful design in the downtown and
- 238           along key corridors in Onalaska.
- 239                   ○ Conceptual Strategies:
- 240                   ▪ Incorporate a formalized design review process for new developments.
- 241                   ▪ Create design standards or guidelines to establish community expectations
- 242                   for a high level of building and site design in Onalaska.
- 243                   ▪ Review sign code for opportunities to improve sign quality and design
- 244                   throughout the community.
- 245                   ▪ Require or incentivize green building technologies, techniques, and best
- 246                   practices in new developments.

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- 247                   ▪ Permeable paving, solar panels, recognized “green building” certification,
- 248                   rain gardens/bioswales, on-site, non-motorized transit accommodations,
- 249                   parking reductions for proximity to public transit, framework for off-site
- 250                   parking allowance, ensure parking regulations allow for EV charging
- 251                   spaces, require/encourage EV charging infrastructure in new
- 252                   developments.

253

### 254 **Pillar 3 – Nature & Recreation**

255

#### 256 **Onalaska’s Park System**

- 257       • **Goal 1:** Maintain and improve Onalaska’s network of city parks and recreation facilities.
- 258           ○ Conceptual Strategies:
  - 259                   ▪ Reinvest in the city’s “Adopt a Park Program.”
  - 260                   ▪ Revisit public open space requirements associated with new single-family
  - 261                   residential development.
  - 262                   ▪ Pursue implementation of Onalaska’s Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation
  - 263                   Plan.

264

#### 265 **Regional Bike Trail Network**

- 266       • **Goal 1:** Capitalize on the Great River Bike Trail’s presence in the city.
- 267           ○ Conceptual Strategies:
  - 268                   ▪ Install pavement painting, lines, and physical barriers along the on-street
  - 269                   portion of the Great River Bike Trail in Onalaska.
  - 270                   ▪ Strengthen signage for the bike trail throughout the city.
  - 271                   ▪ Update and enhance the Self-Guided Bike Trail publication with colorful
  - 272                   maps and destinations.

273

#### 274 **Onalaska’s Waterfront and Great River Landing**

- 275       • **Goal 1:** Create an accessible waterfront that provides a recreation asset for the entire
- 276           community.
- 277           ○ Conceptual Strategies:
  - 278                   ▪ Pursue a waterfront study to identify the most viable location for
  - 279                   waterfront access.
  - 280                   ▪ Utilize Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources grants to explore a
  - 281                   recreational boating facility.
  - 282                   ▪ Complete the remaining phases of the Great River Landing Project.

283

#### 284 **Bluffland Preservation**

- 285       • **Goal 1:** Expand the amount of protected natural area and bluffland in and around
- 286           Onalaska.
- 287           ○ Conceptual Strategies:



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- 288                   ▪ Initiate a park program focused on conservation, sustainability, and
- 289                   environmental stewardship. This could involve tree planting, clean-up
- 290                   campaigns, or educational activities about preserving natural resources.
- 291                   ▪ Collaborate with WDNR.
- 292                   ▪ Establish conservation easements with landowners.
- 293                   ▪ Seek grant funding and financial incentives for land conservation.
- 294                   ▪ Develop green belts and buffer zones.

295

## 296 **Pillar 4 – Connectivity**

297

### 298 **Streets for All**

- 299           • **Goal 1:** Strengthen Onalaska’s network of bike-friendly routes, on-street bike lanes, and
- 300           bike trails.
  - 301           ○ Conceptual Strategies:
    - 302           ▪ Revisit and refine the city’s “Complete Streets Policy.”
    - 303           ▪ Ensure a high level of pedestrian safety and comfort at key intersections.
    - 304           ▪ Study the feasibility of implementing dedicated or shared-use bicycle
    - 305           facilities between key destinations for recreational and everyday
    - 306           transportation needs to reduce dependence on the automobile.
    - 307           ▪ Explore tactical mobility enhancements.
    - 308           ▪ Replace several on-street parking places with dedicated bike corrals,
    - 309           ideally along the Great River Trail route.
- 310           • **Goal 2:** Guide visitors and residents to key destinations.
  - 311           ○ Conceptual Strategies:
    - 312           ▪ Establish and implement community wayfinding.
    - 313           ▪ Update the Bicycle Route Map.

314

### 315 **Main Street Corridor**

- 316           • **Goal 1:** Enhance Main Street to further establish this key east/west linkage through
- 317           Onalaska.
  - 318           ○ Conceptual Strategies:
    - 319           ▪ Coordinate with La Crosse MTU to install bus shelters at high-ridership
    - 320           transit stops.
    - 321           ▪ Provide enhanced pedestrian accommodations such as high-visibility
    - 322           crosswalk striping and rectangular rapid-flashing beacons.
    - 323           ▪ Establish a dedicated bike lane along Main Street between Highway 53
    - 324           and Highway 35/Great River Road.
    - 325           ▪ Study the feasibility of burying the electrical utility lines and installing
    - 326           ornamental street lighting east of 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue North to match what is
    - 327           existing to the west.
- 328           • **Goal 2:** Leverage the upcoming improvements by WisDOT along Main Street between
- 329           5<sup>th</sup> Avenue South and U.S. Highway 53.

Reviewed 1/26/2024 by Katie Aspenson

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- 330 ○ Conceptual Strategies:
- 331     ▪ Study converting Main Street to a three-lane roadway section.
- 332     ▪ Study reconfiguring the intersection at Main Street and 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue South
- 333     to be more pedestrian friendly while still maintaining efficiency for
- 334     automobiles.
- 335     ▪ Install additional curb bump-outs similar to those found at Main Street's
- 336     intersections with 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue South and 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue South.
- 337

### Regional Connectivity/Intergovernmental Cooperation

- 339 ● **Goal 1:** Ensure Onalaska's plans for growth and development will complement plans in
- 340 neighboring municipalities and the broader region.
- 341 ○ Conceptual Strategies:
- 342     ▪ Revisit border agreements to ensure they address ongoing growth and
- 343     capacity issues.
- 344     ▪ Discuss EV charging infrastructure planning with adjacent municipalities
- 345     to create a continuous network.
- 346 ● **Goal 2:** Pursue partnerships with neighboring municipalities and agencies to continue to
- 347 increase multimodal mobility and transit accessibility throughout the region.
- 348 ○ Conceptual Strategies:
- 349     ▪ Coordinate with the La Crosse Area Planning Committee to update the
- 350     2035 Coulee Region Bicycle Plan adopted in 2010.
- 351     ▪ Partner with the La Crosse MTU to study the feasibility of increasing the
- 352     frequency of Route 9 – Onalaska.
- 353

### Routes to Success

- 355 ● **Goal 1:** Leverage transportation infrastructure to catalyze investment, boost sales and
- 356 property values, as well as further broad community objectives related to mobility and
- 357 quality of life.
- 358 ○ Conceptual Strategies:
- 359     ▪ Maintain a balance of parking to support businesses along the State
- 360     Highway 16 corridor while exploring the use of underutilized parking lots
- 361     for economic development opportunities.
- 362     ▪ Enhance biking/walking accommodations to/from and within downtown,
- 363     as well as along the Great River/La Crosse River State Trails to provide an
- 364     active transportation environment that supports businesses, institutions,
- 365     and residents.
- 366 ● **Goal 2:** Manage parking assets and establish new parking policy and design guidelines to
- 367 support the success of businesses while right-sizing supply.
- 368 ○ Conceptual Strategies:
- 369     ▪ Update city parking ordinances.
- 370     ▪ Review parking lot design standards.
- 371     ▪ Implement a bicycle parking ordinance.

Reviewed 1/26/2024 by Katie Aspenson

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- 372 • **Goal 3:** Prepare for future mobility options.
- 373 ○ Conceptual Strategies:
- 374 ■ Draft an Electric Vehicle Readiness Plan for Onalaska.
- 375 ■ Establish an emerging transportation technologies task force.
- 376

## 377 **Pillar 5 – City Services**

378

### 379 **Public Utilities**

- 380 • **Goal 1:** Public utility infrastructure will have the capacity to serve potential growth areas
- 381 in Onalaska.
- 382 ○ Conceptual Strategies:
- 383 ■ Evaluate sewer and water capacity connecting residential growth areas to
- 384 the city’s utility network.
- 385

### 386 **Public Safety**

- 387 • **Goal 1:** Public safety departments will have adequate staffing and resources to serve the
- 388 population over the next 10-15 years.
- 389 ○ Conceptual Strategies:
- 390 ■ Monitor the Onalaska Fire Department’s annual call volume to ensure
- 391 staffing levels are meeting community needs.
- 392 ■ Evaluate the need for a second fire station in Onalaska, finding land to
- 393 develop it.
- 394 ■ Provide adequate EMS training and resources for the Onalaska Fire
- 395 Department.
- 396 ■ Allocate funding for equipment, training, and personnel for the Onalaska
- 397 Police Department that ensures a high level of efficiency and
- 398 effectiveness.
- 399

### 400 **Community Facilities**

- 401 • **Goal 1:** City-owned facilities will be maintained and upgraded to provide a high level of
- 402 service to Onalaska residents over the next 10-15 years.
- 403 ○ Conceptual Strategies:
- 404 ■ Invest in upgrades and maintenance for the Onalaska Community Center
- 405 to meet the needs of seniors in Onalaska.
- 406 ■ Invest in maintenance and improvements to the Omni Center to meet the
- 407 needs of the community, and to serve as a regional venue for athletic
- 408 events and gatherings.
- 409 ■ Lead by example and identify opportunities to reduce the carbon footprint
- 410 and resource consumption of city-owned facilities.
- 411

412 Andy addressed the bullet items that are highlighted in green and told committee members many  
413 comprehensive plans will have a chapter that addresses sustainability and captures all the  
Reviewed 1/26/2024 by Katie Aspenson

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414 climate-friendly goals, strategies, recommendations, policies, and objectives that a community  
415 wants to have. Andy said he does not believe they belong in their own standalone chapter;  
416 rather, they should be intermixed with every part of the comprehensive plan. Andy said, “It  
417 really reflects the culture of the community. It’s not just check the box [and say] yes, we  
418 recycle. There is so much more you could do on a daily basis or just on a policy level that  
419 stretches into all parts of the community’s outreach and general activities. ... It’s just small  
420 things that can be implemented into so many parts of this comprehensive plan. It’s our goal to  
421 really get them in there.”

422

423 Ald. Nott told the Lakota Group team he likes the way in which they have organized the Live  
424 Ona 2040 Comprehensive Plan framework, and he also told them he agrees with the  
425 interconnectivity of how they are looking to organize the plan. However, Ald. Nott also raised  
426 the following points:

427

- 428 • Regarding Pillar 1 – Community, Ald. Nott noted the pillar statement reads, “*a tight-knit,*  
429 *family-focused community,*” and he said he does not see under the “focus” area where the  
430 family focus comes in. Ald. Nott suggested listing examples such as children’s outdoor  
431 park activities and child center to stork and nature programs, and he said they could fall  
432 under Pillar 3 – Nature & Recreation. Ald. Nott said, “The bottom line is I 100 percent  
433 agree that our community is family focused, and that a lot of us would like it to stay that  
434 way. But I’d like to see it somehow included inside of the comprehensive plan  
435 framework too.”
- 436 • Regarding the conceptual strategies under Goal 2 of Pillar 1, Ald. Nott noted it states,  
437 “*Establish a home improvement program to assist and incentivize property owners in*  
438 *upkeep, maintenance, and improvement of existing household stock,*” and he said he  
439 wants to know what that would look like.
- 440 • Ald. Nott next addressed the climate focus in the plan and said, “[It is] potentially a  
441 positive. But as we go into more detail, I want to make sure that we balance it because  
442 these are going to be give-and-takes. The big one on that is I know the EVs pop up time  
443 and again in here as potentially getting in the future. I know this isn’t going to shock any  
444 of the other elected officials or staff who go to the meetings, I have a huge warning on  
445 that. I think that is a dying program. I guess to support my premises there, I would say  
446 that the largest domestic automobile manufacturer – or if not the largest, one of the two  
447 largest – has already announced they’re cutting back by 50 percent on some of their EV  
448 production. [Also], one of the largest rental car companies in the United States is going  
449 to sell 20,000 of their EVs and replace them all with fuel. These are indicators of market  
450 pressures. I don’t want us to go down a path where we focus so much on sinking into a  
451 money pit when this person thinks this is a fad that is coming and is already on its way  
452 down. I’m sure we all read about what happens to cars in subzero temperatures [such as]  
453 in Chicago just this last week – they become parking bricks. There’s just too many  
454 problems with these to include environmental.”

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- 455 • Ald. Nott next referred to Goal 3 – specifically, to draft an Electric Vehicle Readiness  
456 Plan for the city – under Pillar 4 – Connectivity, and said that while the city might need  
457 one, he also pointed out that Toyota claims that by 2030 it will have a perfectly  
458 marketable and sellable line of vehicles that will run on hydrogen. Ald. Nott said that  
459 while Toyota does not yet have anything, he also said, “They’re confident it’s going to  
460 happen. That is something that is going to resolve pretty much every issue that [EV]  
461 batteries and everything else brings as far as [the] environmental [aspect]. That is a  
462 future that we need to be looking at too: What happens if within the next three or four  
463 years, hydrogen vehicles are what is the future. Let’s look at maybe including something  
464 in that. Maybe it will have to be in the next comprehensive plan, but I would like to get  
465 out in front of it.”
- 466 • Regarding the first goal under Pillar 3 – Nature & Recreation, Ald. Nott asked if perhaps  
467 a commitment to a permanent improvement maintenance and replacement plan for the  
468 city’s park system can be taken under consideration in place of an annual budget  
469 afterthought. Specifically, the city would attempt to commit to either improving,  
470 maintaining, or replacing two parks per year.
- 471 • Ald. Nott said the city must balance bicycle paths, walking paths, bicycle parking, and  
472 automobile parking, and he stated, “This truly is a finite resource. We aren’t going to be  
473 able to move structures to where we can make our streets longer or wider. I just  
474 encourage that as we move forward, we don’t lose focus that it has to be a balance for all.  
475 People aren’t going to give up their cars any time in my lifetime. We need to be more of  
476 a bicycle-friendly city; there is no doubt about that. It’s just, how do we balance that?  
477 And, do we want to make sure we commit to having accessible and free parking for all,  
478 whether it be bikes, cars – you name it. Right now, it is. I know [the City of La Crosse]  
479 has decided [it is] going to go to charging for parking. I’ve actually read multiple studies  
480 on this over the years. I think it is going to have a huge negative impact on their  
481 downtown area, and we’re trying to revitalize ours in this comprehensive plan. We want  
482 to encourage people to come in, so I don’t know if that’s something we want to consider  
483 as well. If we discourage people coming in, then anything we plan is going to have  
484 limited benefit.”

485  
486 Erik addressed the “Sunfish Sunsets” suggested under Pillar 1, noting there already are many  
487 positive things such as summer concerts that are happening at Dash-Park. Erik said he is  
488 interested to learn how those events would move the city forward compared to what is already  
489 occurring in the city. Erik said, “I sense there are a lot of things that we do in that respect. [For  
490 example], ‘National Night Out’ is something that’s down my street, and it is exceptionally well-  
491 attended. Some of those examples that would be educational for me is how they’re different or  
492 accelerating versus more of what’s being done.”

493  
494 Erik also inquired about the rain barrels and composting stated in the plan, stating, “I wonder  
495 what sensors and indicators we have of need. [This is] just anecdotally, but when I knocked on  
496 doors [when I was running] for [the Onalaska] School Board, there were very conservative

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497 opinions across the city, and I think we could probably speak to that – the people in the room  
498 especially. I would just want to know that we’re meeting needs that are stated and specified.”  
499 Erik concluded by addressing historic preservation and said it is something that is important to  
500 him. Erik said, “Let me be naïve: I’m just not aware of the historic presence that we have in the  
501 city. Part of that pillar might just be educating people to create that sense of pride in the first  
502 place.”

503  
504 Andy addressed the next steps, telling committee members the Lakota Group will finalize what  
505 is before them today and provide conceptual designs for the opportunity sites that were identified  
506 and highlighted in the “State of the City” report. Andy said he and the Lakota Group team will  
507 work closely with city staff, and that “we’ll get all these presentation-ready.” Andy said Phase 2  
508 will include another community open house that will address how the Lakota Group envisions  
509 addressing the issues, concerns, and thoughts that were seen in the Comprehensive Plan. Andy  
510 said, “The second open house is a chance to really test the waters for the ideas, solutions, and  
511 approaches that we are proposing here in this framework.” Andy told committee members he  
512 would like to schedule the next open house for late February at the Omni Center, after which the  
513 Lakota Group will begin to draft a comprehensive plan.

514  
515 **Adjournment**

516  
517 Motion by Ald. Nott, second by City Administrator Niemeier, to adjourn at 3:31 p.m.

518  
519 On voice vote, motion carried.

520  
521  
522 Recorded by:

523  
524 Kirk Bey