

Public Participation Plan

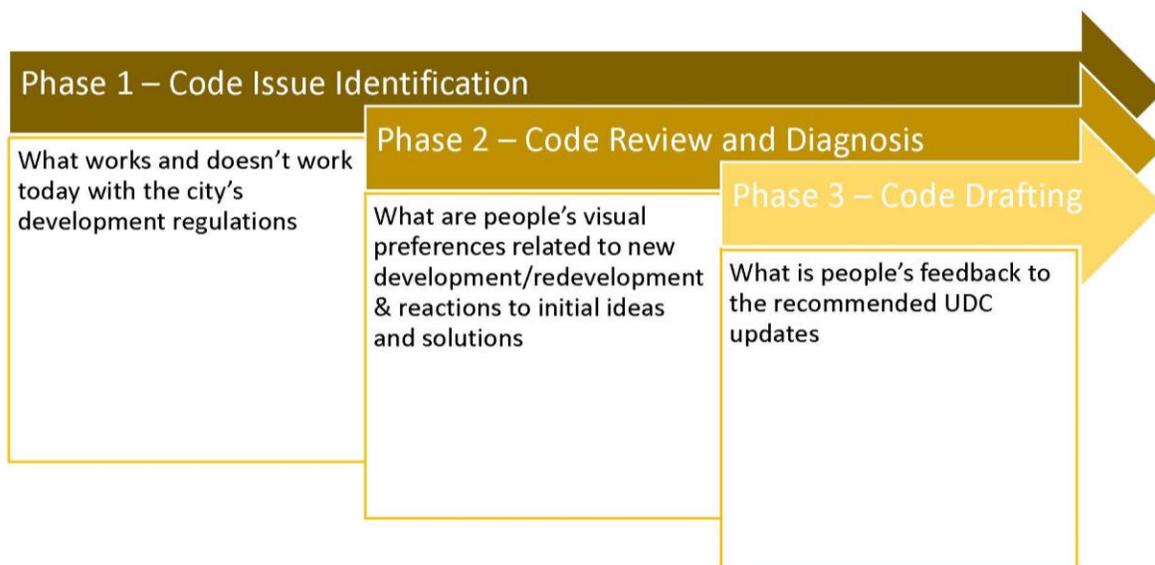
Onalaska's UDC (Unified Development Code) Update Project

Project Description

The City of Onalaska is undertaking a comprehensive update of its Unified Development Code (UDC) to make the UDC easier to administer and support high quality development in the community. The update is intended to make the UDC easier to use and understand, including the addition of graphics and tables that better communicate the city's development requirements. As the first comprehensive update since the city's zoning code was originally adopted in 1969, the update process will ensure that the city's regulations are consistent with current State Statutes and any outdated standards are rewritten to reflect contemporary development market practices. The process will also implement recommendations from the 2016 Comprehensive Plan, including managing growth to preserve community character, promoting quality urban design, revitalizing downtown and the waterfront, and enhancing transportation corridors.

Purpose of the Public Participation Plan

The purpose of the Public Participation Plan is to define the community engagement process that will be used to facilitate the UDC Update Project. The Public Participation Plan is centered on an inclusive process that encourages everyone to participate, including reaching out to people that typically may not participate in community input processes. An effective community engagement process addresses the needs of various stakeholders in the community in order to provide meaningful outcomes for decision makers. Community engagement during the UDC Update Project is intended to help identify what works and what doesn't work currently with the city's development codes; identify people's visual preferences related to new development/redevelopment; solicit input on the project team's initial ideas and solutions; and review and evaluate recommended updates to the UDC. The following figure shows the three phases of community engagement anticipated.



Stakeholders

Stakeholders are defined as all individuals who may have an effect on, be affected by, or perceive that they will be affected by the UDC Update Project. Stakeholders include elected and appointed public officials, community residents, community business owners and employees, community organizations, and others in the community. It is important to remember that not all stakeholders will be affected to the same extent or have the same level of interest in a project. Understanding generally who the project's stakeholders are will impact the choice of what engagement techniques to pursue, as the effectiveness of specific engagement methods can vary considerably from one audience to another. For example, younger audiences may want to communicate through social media outlets. Major groups to engage and techniques of engagement most likely to be successful are listed in the following table.

Public Participation Techniques								
Groups to Engage	Website/ Press Releases/ Email Blasts	Info Displays	Attendance at Regularly Scheduled Meetings	Pop-Up Display in Community or at Events	Online Surveys	Focus Group/ Stakeholder Meetings	Open Houses	Individual Contacts
	Residents	X	X		X	X		X
Businesses	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Clubs/Organizations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builders Association • Rotaries • OABA 	X	X	X		X	X	X	
Adjacent Communities			X			X		X
Public/Private Schools	X					X		X
Advisory Boards and Commissions	X		X			X	X	

Public Participation Techniques

A variety of techniques will be used to encourage public participation in the UDC Update Project. The techniques will be used as identified in the table above to encourage participation in the process by the identified stakeholder groups. An overview of each technique is provided below.

Website/Press Releases/Email Blasts

The City of Onalaska will prepare project-related press releases and maintain a dedicated project webpage. Project updates and information will be posted at regular intervals on the project webpage and the News & Announcements tab to inform the public of upcoming meetings, milestones during the project, and ways to be engaged. City staff will post to the city's social media and email updates to

interested parties throughout the project. City staff will provide will provide an interactive comment form on the project webpage to provide people the opportunity to submit feedback on any information posted on the webpage. Email addresses will be collected on sign-in sheets at project outreach events and online. Interested parties who contact the city will also be added to the email list.

Informational Displays at Public Places

Posters with project information may be displayed throughout the community to share information about the project and to direct those interested to the project website for more information, to an online survey to provide input, or to announce upcoming open houses. Locations that will be considered include City Hall, Library, OMNI Center, Community Center, and potentially at Gundersen Health and Mayo Clinic facilities.

Attendance at Regularly Scheduled Meetings

To make public participation easier, it can be helpful to attend meetings in the community that are already scheduled. These meeting opportunities could include attending a monthly meeting for a club or organization such as a Rotary Club or Builders Association. It could also include an elected or advisory board or commission meeting in Onalaska or in an adjacent community. Attending a regularly scheduled meeting can be beneficial at the beginning of the process to build awareness of the project and in the middle to seek input on visual preferences or input on potential approaches being explored.

Pop-Up Displays in Community or at an Event

Similar to attending a regularly scheduled meeting, popping up with project information in a community location or at a community event can be helpful to reach audiences that may not normally be aware of the project or come to an open house. The project team will seek to coordinate engagement with community events as feasible throughout the process as opportunities arise. Depending on the timing of the event in the planning process, the engagement could include a booth with project information and questionnaires, a brief presentation by a project team member, handouts, a poster displayed with project information, etc.

Potential Events and Approximate Number of Attendees

March 2019

- March 8-9th: La Crosse Area Home Builders/Garden Show (Friday night is “date night” lots of couples re-doing homes – 3,000 people).
- March 24th: Coulee Parenting Connection (families, games, etc. – 1,500 people)
- March 30th: WIS Sport /Military Show (Gun Show – 3,000 people)

May 2019

- May 17-18th: La Crosse County Visitors and Convention Bureau (Silent Sports Event – 2,500 people)

June 2019

- June 21-22: Celebrate Onalaska (June 22 – early evening before Fireworks – 7,500 people)
- Potentially another event on June 15th (Onalaska Community Days – hosted by the American Legion)

Online Surveys

Online engagement is expected to focus initially on the community’s thoughts on general, easy-to-understand development concerns. At the mid-point of the planning process the emphasis will shift to

gaining feedback on visual preferences related to new development/redevelopment and reactions to initial ideas/solutions. Then, near the conclusion of the code updating process, it will focus on obtaining specific comments on draft sections of the updated UDC.

Focus Group/Stakeholder Meetings

Focus groups and stakeholder meetings seek to bring people with similar backgrounds, experiences, or interest areas together to discuss the project. Potential groups could include advisory boards and commissions, community organizations and clubs (such as chamber of commerces, rotary clubs, realtor associations, builders associations), and non-profits or social service organizations. Working with city staff and the Planning Commission, the following stakeholder groups were identified: Long Range Planning Committee, La Crosse Area Builders Association, La Crosse Area Realtors Association, Rotary Clubs (3), Centering Onalaska, major developers, non-profit and social service organizations. An initial round of stakeholder meetings will occur early in the process to provide information about the code updating process and to ask general questions about existing code issues and needs for the update process. A second round of meetings will be explored once potential approaches or specific sections of the UDC have been identified for major updates.

Open Houses

Two community open houses will be held during the UDC Update Project. The open houses may consist of a combination of large group presentations, small group activities, informational handouts, paper questionnaires, display boards, and staff and consultants available for discussions. The first open house would occur in phase two to confirm the issues identified and explore potential approaches. The second open house would occur in phase three to present the proposed draft code.

Individual Contacts

Input from some stakeholders may be solicited best through individual contacts such as phone calls, emails, and meetings. These stakeholders may include individual businesses, public and private schools, and adjacent communities. Outreach to these stakeholders will occur as needed throughout the project to inform them about the project, solicit input on issues and needs, and seek input on potential code sections. These personal contacts will also be used to inform stakeholders of opportunities to participate in focus groups/stakeholder meetings and open houses.