OFFICIAL NOTICE & AGENDA
REGULAR MEETING

MEETING: Sustainability, Energy & Environment Committee
DATE/TIME: Thursday, May 7, 2026, at 5:00 PM
LOCATION: Wausau City Hall — Maple Room
407 Grant Street, Wausau WI, 54403

MEMBERS:
Jean Abreu (C)
Carol Lukens
Jesse Kearns
Christine Daniels
Daniel Zinsmeister
Britnie Remer
Lauren Leitner

1 **Call to order by the presiding officer.**

2 **Public comment on agenda items and reading of the City of Wausau Public Comment Statement.**

3 **Presentations**

- **a.** Jon Schroeder - Composting Presentation

4 **Consideration of the minutes of the preceding meeting(s).**

- **a.** Approval of the March 5, 2026, meeting minutes.

5 **Discussion and possible action.**

- **a.** Approval of a sustainability plan template - Dan Zinsmeister will provide an overview on suggested sustainability plan templates.
- **b.** Approval of "Wausau Works for You" newsletter content, May 15, 2026, deadline.

6 **Discussion.**

- **a.** Update on Grow Solar and Power Hour Session, May 20, Marathon County Public Library
- **b.** Overview of 350 Wisconsin grant to facilitate stakeholder engagement between the PSC and individual communities
- **c.** Community outreach and tree planting update
- **d.** Assignment of Work Plan objectives
- **e.** UW-Extension Backyard Gardening Class update

7 **Adjournment.**

Jean Abreu, Chair

NOTICE POSTED AT CITY HALL (407 GRANT STREET) AND TRANSMITTED TO THE OFFICIALLY DESIGNATED NEWSPAPER

DATE: May 1, 2026
TIME: 10:00am
POSTED BY: Michelle Van Krey

In accordance with the requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the City of Wausau will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability in its services, programs or activities. If you need assistance or reasonable accommodations in participating in this meeting or event due to a disability as defined under the ADA, please call the ADA Coordinator at (715) 261-6622 or ADAServices@wausauwi.gov to discuss your accessibility needs. We ask your request be provided a minimum of 72 hours before the scheduled event or meeting. If a request is made less than 72 hours before the event the City of Wausau will make a good faith effort to accommodate your request.

City of Wausau
(715) 261-6500 | clerk@wausauwi.gov
wausauwi.gov

MINUTES
March 5, 2026

Members Present: Jean Abreu (C), Alder Carol Lukens, Christine Daniels, Britnie Remer, and Dan Zinsmeister

Others Present: Vincent Bonino and Carrie Edmondson

In compliance with Chapter 19, Wisconsin Statues, notice of this meeting was posted and transmitted to the Wausau Daily Herald in the proper manner.

1. **Call to order.**
   The meeting was called to order at 5:05 p.m.

2. **Public comment.**
   No public comment was received.

3. **Consideration of the minutes of the preceding meeting(s).**
   Motion/second Christine/Britnie to approve the February 5, 2026, minutes as presented, passed 5-0.

4. **Discussion and possible action.**

   a. Wausau Sustainability Award – determination on Wausau Sustainability Awards application submittal from Liz Reynolds on behalf of Kolbe Windows and Doors
   Motion/second Dan/Christine to approve the award, passed 5-0. The award will be presented at the March 23, 2026, Common Council meeting. One or two group members will attend.

   b. Mayors' Monarch Pledge – consideration and recommendation to take the annual Mayors' Monarch Pledge
   Carol provided an overview of the draft Mayors' Monarch Pledge submission. She reviewed potential interest items including a proclamation, changing mowing protocol, and adding signage for recognition.
   Motion/second to approve the Mayors' Monarch Pledge Christine/Britnie, passed 5-0.

   c. Consideration and recommendation on the Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Wausau and the Midwest Renewable Energy Association

(MREA) to partner in the operation of the Grow Solar Central Wisconsin Group Buy Program

Carrie provided an overview of the Grow Solar Central Wisconsin Group Buy Program and the proposed sponsorship agreement. Dan asked about other cities experiences in partnering with the program.
Motion/second Christine/Dan to approve the Memorandum of Understanding, passed 5-0.

5. Discussion

a. UW-Extension – Beginning Vegetable Gardening for Everyone – discussion of marketing plan.
Carrie noted that she had created a press release and City Facebook post. She also printed flyers for the group to distribute to area establishments. She and Janell have a radio interview scheduled with WXCO. The MCPL is advertising on their social media and Janell has shared with Master Gardeners and Wausau Yards and Gardens Facebook group. Britnie created half sheets with information about SEEC to hand out at the classes.
b. Earth Day Initiatives – discussion of potential committee involvement with various Earth Day initiatives
The group discussed Earth Day and noted there are a lack of events in the Wausau area.
c. Work plan prioritization activity
The group continued the work plan discussion including prioritization and creation of goals statements, including the following:

- The SEEC Committee will oversee the creation of a five-year climate action/sustainability plan, present it to the City Council, and attain adoption by the Council by April 1, 2027.
- The SEEC will educate the community by engaging our neighbors, youth, residents & businesses through sustainability-focused programming and providing opportunities for involvement culminating in Earth Week, April 2027.

Dan agreed to bring various climate action/sustainability templates forward for discussion.

6. Adjournment.
Motion/second to adjourn Carol/Britnie to adjourn, passed 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Date: March 23, 2026

To: Sustainability, Energy, and Environment Committee

From: Carrie Edmondson, AICP, Assistant City Planner

RE: Wausau Climate Action/Sustainability Plan

Over the past few months, the Sustainability, Energy, and Environment Committee has been discussing creating a plan to bring to the Common Council for adoption. The plan would likely include a public engagement component including a survey.

Through technical assistance with Great Plains Institute, a five-year climate action template is being explored as one option for a template. In the fall, SEEC arrived at consensus to move forward with this document. Dan Zinsmeister has requested that other plan templates be explored including:

City of Eau Claire Sustainability Chapter
City of Edgewater Sustainability Plan
Fraser, Colorado Sustainability Plan

Staff has recently contracted with the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) to begin work on a Comprehensive Plan update. This plan has an 18-month creation horizon which includes extensive community engagement including a survey component. Sustainability will be one of the most notable changes since the last update, since it intersects with most, if not all, of the other plan elements. One approach would be to complete the Comprehensive Plan first, with the expectation that it would include a recommendation to develop a standalone Sustainability Plan afterward.

However, staff recommends proceeding with the development of a five-year plan, using the Great Plains Institute template being created side by side with the Comprehensive Plan. This approach would allow the City to establish clear sustainability goals, policies, and action items in the near term, while still integrating sustainability into the broader planning effort. The Committee would provide guidance throughout the five-year plan development process, and staff can incorporate relevant elements from other plan examples as capacity allows.

GREAT PLAINS INSTITUTE

This template was developed by the Great Plains Institute with funding from the Metropolitan Council and the McKnight Foundation.

City of [Your City]

Climate Action Work Plan

2021-2026

[City image here]

CAWP Template Information

This document was developed with funding from the Metropolitan Council and the McKnight Foundation. The purpose of this document is to provide cities with a template to help guide short-term climate action planning in their community.

How to use this document

1. Review city greenhouse gas, travel, energy, and waste information on the Met Council's website.
2. Instructional text is denoted by blue italics
3.

Introduction

The introduction page generally includes basic information about the city and provides a brief summary of how the climate action work plan fits into the context of the city. It also gives a high-level overview of the CAWP: the goals included, the three main sections of the CAWP (existing conditions report, GHG inventory, and 5-year workplan), and the decision-makers involved in the process.

Paragraph explaining CAWP: There are three main sections of the CAWP: the existing conditions report, the greenhouse gas inventory, and the five-year work plan based on the community's priorities. An existing conditions report was previously completed for the city and incorporated into its 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The existing conditions included in this CAWP provide updated information for current demographics, building energy use, travel data, waste amounts, as well as available renewable energy resources. The greenhouse gas inventory uses data from the Metropolitan Council for time period and forecasts emissions to goal year.

Paragraph with context (as necessary): The City Council adopted the CAWP on DATE. Finally, the CAWP is and should be treated as a living document, which will benefit from an annual review process overseen by the Sustainability Commission.

ENERGY GOALS

If the city has energy goals, this is a section to include the goals and any progress made toward those goals. This can also include information on participation in renewable energy and energy efficiency programs.

Figure showing participation in renewable energy and conservation programs (Figure 2:Participation in Renewable Energy and Conservation Programs. Source: Utility Report)

Existing Conditions

Existing conditions include demographic information as well as information about buildings, transportation, waste, renewable energy resources, and existing planning and policy context. This section includes existing conditions in the community to set a baseline that can be used to compare progress over time and to inform community decisions for how the city chooses to prioritize climate actions. The data for existing conditions comes from Metropolitan Council, the Department of Energy State and Local Energy Data (SLED) and Low-Income Energy Affordability Data (LEAD) tool, and the United States Census Bureau.

Demographic Snapshot

The demographic information included in Table 1 comes from the American Community Survey five-year estimates from 2017. These data provide a snapshot of income, age, race, physical ability, language, and energy assistance eligibility in CITY. This information can be used to inform how initiatives can be designed to be accessible, beneficial, and equitable for all residents.

This section is typically presented as a table, and includes the following community metrics: income, race, age, mobility/ability, households and tenure, percent below poverty, language, and energy assistance eligibility.

Table 1: City Demographics. Source: American Community Survey, five-year estimates for 2017

Energy Consumption and Buildings

Energy is used for space and water heating and cooling, ventilation, and the operation of lighting and appliances in buildings. Heating a building's space and water comes most often from natural gas, while electricity is typically used for operating appliances, lighting, and cooling. City Utility is the main electric and natural gas energy provider for City residents, businesses, and institutions.

ENERGY USE IN CITY

This section includes data on energy consumption broken up by electricity and natural gas and residential and commercial users for at least three years. An explanatory paragraph accompanies a graphic of the information, including the following: breakdown of fuel consumption as a percentage of total building energy use, trends in consumption over the year period, explanation of suppressed data, and annual average spending on electricity and natural gas bills.

Figure showing energy consumption by fuel and sector (Figure 1: Energy Consumption by Fuel and Sector. Source: Metropolitan Council)

ENERGY BURDEN AND ENERGY SECURITY

Energy burden is the proportion of household income that is used to pay for energy utility bills – both electric and natural gas. The average energy burden for all City residents in year was XX%. This proportion is consistent/higher/lower than the average energy burden in Minnesota households, which is 3.5%.

This section may also include any further analysis of how energy burden effects households of different incomes.

Figure showing energy costs and energy burden by income and tenure (Figure 3: Average Annual Energy Costs and Energy Burden. Source: U.S. DOE LEAD (Low-Income Energy Assistance Data) for 2016)

Transportation

Transportation energy is almost entirely attributed to surface travel from cars and trucks and is estimated by the vehicle miles traveled (VMT) within the city boundaries, regardless of through traffic. Energy for vehicle travel primarily comes from liquid fuels like gasoline and diesel, though electric vehicles are increasingly a part of the vehicle mix. Other forms of in-boundary transportation include public transit, biking, walking, and wheeling (e.g., scooters, wheelchairs, or other mobility devices).

Figure of VMT in-boundary over time (Figure 4: Vehicle Miles Traveled from YEAR to YEAR. Source: Metropolitan Council (YEAR-YEAR).)

TRANSPORTATION USE IN CITY

Vehicle miles traveled (VMT) is a measurement of distance driven in a vehicle within city boundaries. *This section will then describe transportation data and trends in that data, including: vehicle miles traveled over time, fuel source composition of vehicles, total number of vehicles, and commuting characteristics. It may also include information on relevant policies and programs related to transportation, and electric vehicle infrastructure.*

Figure of commuting characteristic graphics (Figure 5: Commuting Types and Rates. Source: ACS five-year estimates for YEAR commuting behavior; note, total does not include all modes of transportation and therefore does not equal 100%.)

Waste

Solid waste consists of post-consumer materials including food waste, plastics, paper, metals, construction debris, and other materials. The data collected do not consider the manufacturing and usage of the product being discarded, but rather the volume of waste generated and the breakdown of how waste is processed, including recycling, composting, and resource recovery.

WASTE IN CITY

This section includes information on where residential and commercial waste is delivered for processing and the process of waste collection in the city. It also includes the disposal breakdown of waste by recycling, incinerator/landfill, compost, etc. over time as well as policies and programs related to waste in the city.

Figure of City's Waste Generation by processing type and year (Figure 6: Waste Generation. Source: XXX County Solid Waste Division for years XXX, XXX, and XXX. Accessed YEAR)

Renewable Energy Resources

SOLAR RESOURCE

A community's solar resource is the amount of sunlight that can be captured and converted to electricity. Using the solar suitability app from the University of Minnesota, the solar resource was calculated for rooftops in City. The total capacity of the economic rooftop solar resource in City xx MW, equal to approximately xx% of all the electricity consumed in the city (note: this is an upper limit and does not consider individual site limitations due to roof structure, ownership, or local regulations that might limit solar installations). Additional solar could be captured through ground-mount systems, green power purchase programs (e.g., Renewable*Connect) or community solar gardens.

Figure of solar resource potential in the community (Figure 7: City of XX Solar Resource Potential. Source: University of Minnesota U-Spatial Solar Raster Data (2008 – 2013), figure and calculations by Great Plains Institute)

Table 2 breaks down the solar potential for all of City, for building rooftops, and for the top 10 building rooftops in the city by both the potential capacity of installed panels, as well as the generation likely associated with that installed capacity.

Table of solar resource potential with panel capacity and generation (Table 2: Solar Resource Potential by Type. Source: University of Minnesota U-Spatial Solar Raster Data (2008 – 2013), figure and calculations by Great Plains Institute)

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory (2 pages)

A greenhouse gas inventory includes emissions that result from building energy use, vehicle travel, and waste within the community. For City, building energy use emissions means the greenhouse gases (GHGs) that result from electricity consumption and natural gas use in commercial and residential buildings, as well as industrial processes. Travel emissions come from combustion vehicles, such as cars and trucks that run on liquid fuels. Waste emissions are generated through the disposal process and captured at the final destination — often landfills or incinerators.

In 2018, the total community-wide emissions in City amounted to XXX,XXX tonnes of CO2 equivalent (XX tonnes/person). The largest share of emissions came from building energy use (natural gas and electricity), which make up XX% of City's total emissions. The travel sector makes up the next largest source of emissions with XX% of total emissions while waste makes up X% of total emissions attributed to the community. This inventory only accounts for post-consumer waste; emissions generated in the production and distribution of goods is much greater and should be a consideration in waste strategies.

Figure of proportion of greenhouse gas emissions by sector – wedge diagram (Figure 9 Greenhouse Gas Emissions *City* Source: Metropolitan Council, year)

Building energy emissions can be further broken down by energy type and by sector. Electricity makes up XX% of building energy emissions and natural gas makes up XX%. Divided by sector, XX% of building emissions come from commercial/industrial buildings, while XX% come from residential buildings.

In homes, the largest energy users are typically space and water heating systems. In Minnesota, the majority of homes are heated using natural gas furnaces and boilers. Electric appliances, like refrigerators and televisions, also account for large amounts of energy use.

Many of the same energy uses occur in commercial buildings, but typically on a greater scale than residential buildings. Industrial facilities tend to have higher energy intensity for various processes as compared to commercial uses. In some cases, the manufacturing processes at industrial facilities (e.g. production of cement) can also generate emissions.

Decarbonizing buildings requires minimizing or eliminating fossil fuel inputs. This can be done through generating electricity with low- or no-carbon sources (e.g., renewable energy), deep energy efficiency retrofits, and alternatives to natural gas (e.g., fuel switching, other thermal technologies). Finding clean solutions for space heating in an extremely cold climate and for industrial processes are among the greatest challenges to building energy decarbonization in the Midwest.

Travel emissions account for XX% of total community-wide emissions in City, with approximately XX,XXX tonnes of CO2e — or XX tonnes per person — generated annually. These emissions come from on-road combustion vehicles like cars, trucks, and buses. Emissions are calculated using the vehicle miles traveled within the boundary of the community and the make-up of vehicles on the road. Opportunities to reduce emissions from vehicles include increasing mode-shift alternatives through improved public transportation and changes to land use that better accommodate biking and walking; electrifying vehicles; and increasing vehicle fuel efficiency.

Waste is the smallest emissions category, comprising X% of total community-wide emissions. These emissions primarily come from the landfilling and incinerating processes. Opportunities to reduce waste from emissions include, increased recycling rates, availability of composting, and strategies to shrink the waste stream.

Community-wide emissions can also be viewed at the individual level by dividing total emissions by the population of City. Figure 10 illustrates the per-person emissions for YEAR through YEAR. Per-person emissions increased by about XX tonnes of CO2 in YEAR. *Add any other relevant explanation*

Individuals can use this information to consider taking action to decrease personal carbon footprints. Most individuals will be able to impact their travel and home emissions through personal actions and decisions, while other emissions will need to be addressed through community-wide strategies and policies.

Figure of greenhouse gas emissions by sector per capita– wedge diagram (Figure 10 City of XX Per Capita Greenhouse Gas Emissions Source: Metropolitan Council, year)

Using projected population and job growth, as well as the utility resource plan and anticipated building code energy requirements, community-wide emissions can be forecast to understand future emissions. Figure 11 depicts the GHG emissions forecast for City. The solid line across the top represents the business-as-usual (BAU) scenario. The BAU assumes no changes are made that impact emissions between now and 2040, and emissions would remain relatively flat. However, Xcel Energy has announced a plan to be carbon free by 2050 and updates to the energy code will impact new construction. These factors will impact both the carbon intensity of electricity and the efficiency of buildings. These anticipated reductions are reflected in dashed line. The remaining emissions will come from travel (XX% of remaining emissions), natural gas (XX%), electricity (X%), and waste (X%).

Figure of greenhouse gas emission projections by sector – wedge diagram (Figure 11 City of XX Greenhouse Gas Emissions Source: Metropolitan Council)

Five-Year Work Plan/Strategies

The following work plan is intended to get CITY started on a series of initiatives that will enable the city to begin to make community-wide emissions reductions over the next five years. There are five strategies to reduce emissions across building energy use, transportation, and waste. Each strategy has at least two initiatives for the city to implement in this time frame, as well as target emissions reductions and co-benefits. There is an additional strategy for city operations. This strategy supports both internal emissions reductions as well as sharing resources and communicating progress externally. Implementing this work plan is aimed at reducing community-wide greenhouse gas emissions X% over the next five years. When combined with the impact of Xcel Energy's changing electricity grid mix and ongoing code enforcement for new construction, the reduction totals XX%.

Each strategy will include the following.

Strategy #: Strategy Name

- Context paragraph on how the strategy is related to GHG emissions

Initiative #: Initiative Name

- Description of the initiative
- Lead department or decision-making body
- Timeline
- Actions related to the initiative
- Emission reduction estimates
- Additional co-benefits related to the strategies

GROW SOLAR
CENTRAL WISCONSIN

SOLAR POWER HOUR

Learn the basics of solar energy, how it can lower energy bills and how a group buy program can make it more affordable.

Date
Wednesday, May 20

Time
5:30pm

Location
Marathon County Public Library - Wausau Branch

Co-Host
City of Wausau

WAUSAU SUSTAINABILITY

mrea
midwest renewable energy association

Date: April 2, 2026

To: Sustainability, Energy, and Environment Committee

From: Carrie Edmondson, AICP, Assistant City Planner

RE: 2026 Work Plan – Next Steps

Over the past couple of months, the Sustainability, Energy, and Environment Committee has been continuing to iterate its overarching work plan to guide work over the next twelve months. At the March meeting, the committee identified the following two goal statements:

- The SEEC Committee will oversee the creation of a five-year climate action/sustainability plan, present it to the City Council, and attain adoption by the Council by April 1, 2027.
- The SEEC will educate the community by engaging our neighbors, youth, residents & businesses through sustainability-focused programming and providing opportunities for involvement culminating in Earth Week, April 2027.

Next, committee members will identify a short two-to-three-word summary of each goal statement to include on upcoming agendas. Additionally, opportunity will be given to determine how each member would best like to move these goals forward. In other words, the focus now is turning the work plan into action.