



*** All present are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with our City's Core Values ***

OFFICIAL NOTICE AND AGENDA

of a meeting of a City Board, Commission, Department, Committee, Agency, Corporation, Quasi-Municipal Corporation, or sub-unit thereof.

JOINT Meeting:	JOINT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE AND PLAN COMMISSION
Date/Time:	Tuesday, September 1, 2015 at 5:30 p.m.
Location:	City Hall, 2nd Floor, Board Room
ED Members:	Bill Nagle (C), Tom Neal (VC), Romey Wagner, David Nutting and Lisa Rasmussen
PLAN Members:	James Tipple (C), Eric Lindman, David Oberbeck, Bruce Bohlken, Gary Gisselman and Tom Atwell

AGENDA ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION/ACTION

- 1 Discussion and Possible Action on the Economic Development Chapter of the City of Wausau Comprehensive Plan

Adjournment
Economic Development
Bill Nagle (Chair)

Adjournment
Plan Commission
James Tipple (Chair)

This notice was posted at City Hall and emailed to the media on 8/26/15

It is possible and likely that members of, and possibly a quorum of the Council and/or members of other committees of the Common Council of the City of Wausau may be in attendance at the above-mentioned meeting to gather information. **No action will be taken by any such groups.**

Please note that, upon reasonable notice, efforts will be made to accommodate the needs of disabled individuals through appropriate aids & services. For information or to request this service, contact the City Clerk at (715) 261-6620.

Other Distribution: Alderpersons, Mayor, City Departments

North Central WI Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC or “Regional Planning”) will facilitate the discussion on economic development planning. They have asked the committees to consider two key questions:

1. What are the three most important ISSUES that are keeping the city from reaching the existing comprehensive plan goal (see below)?
2. What are the three most important OPPORTUNITIES that can enable the city to reach the existing comprehensive plan goal (see below)?

The existing Economic Development goal from the Comp Plan reads as follows: *“To improve the economic well-being of Wausau through efforts that involve job creation, job retention, tax base enhancements, and other quality of life initiatives.”*

If you are able, please email your responses to these questions to Brad Lenz by Monday Aug. 31st. We will go over these questions at the meeting, as well as other discussion items, including updated economic data.

Comprehensive Plan: The City of Wausau has completed its comprehensive plan. This document was prepared as a collaborative effort between the City, Marathon County, and the Minneapolis-based consulting firm, URS. The plan is intended to serve as a guide for the City Plan Commission, Common Council, and other City officials as they make decisions about the long term growth and improvement of the community. Most of the plan is focused on the physical development of Wausau, with land use, transportation facilities, and park and recreation improvements being major areas of focus. Other important elements of the plan include intergovernmental cooperation, housing, cultural facilities, and natural resources. The Common Council adopted the plan in February, 2006. This *Conditions and Issues* volume (Volume I of II) provides extensive background information on the community including an identification of problems, issues and concerns.

Anyone wishing to comment on this volume of the plan may send an email to: planning@mail.ci.wausau.wi.us. Please note that Volume II of the plan, *Goals, Objectives, Policies & Actions*, and the supporting figures are also available for review and comment on the City website.

City of Wausau

Comprehensive Plan:

Conditions and Issues

(Volume I of II)

February, 2006

11. Economic Development

The condition of the local economy is an extremely important element in the planning process since the economy generates the wages that support the citizens and pays for the services and facilities that help define an area's quality of life. New jobs generated during strong economic periods provide opportunities for people living in the area to remain there and can also attract people from outside the area to relocate in a prosperous community. Both elements can contribute to population growth. On the other hand, without sufficient job opportunities many high school graduates will leave an area and many college graduates will not return after receiving a degree. Thus, the strength of an area's economy has a tremendous influence on its growth and stability.

This section provides some basic information about Wausau's economy and the most current projections for its future. However, most economic information and forecasts are provided for Marathon County as a unit, since a county is often the smallest area for which economic information is available. Furthermore, Wausau is not an island and thus it is important to understand the broader, countywide economic context that directly impacts the City's economy.

County Economic Environment

Since settlement, the Marathon County economy was historically based on forest resources and diversified agriculture. Increased population and infrastructure – railroads, roads and dams for power - enabled the area to evolve beyond simple agricultural and logging operations.

Resources that once left the area unprocessed were now transformed into finished products, providing employment opportunities and adding value in forest products and agricultural processing. A number of related manufacturing operations grew in the area, some based on forest products and agricultural products, others supplying the existing industries with fabricated metal products. As these industries progressed, so did industries such as transportation, communications, public utilities, government, trade, finance, insurance and real estate. The County now enjoys a well-diversified economy.

The 2000 Census showed that manufacturing continues to be the largest employment industry in the County, with over 25 percent of non-farm workers employed in manufacturing industries. This is significantly higher than the national average of 10-12 percent. The second leading employment sector is the education, health and social services industry, with about 19 percent of the labor force working in these service jobs; closely behind is the retail trade industry, with about 13 percent of the total jobs.

Key Economic Sectors

Key sectors of a regional economy can be identified by size, by growth or decline in employment, and by a concentration of the industry in the local area exceeding the national concentration. An industry that shows a higher concentration of employment than the national average is considered a "basic industry" and is identified by a technique called "Location Quotient" analysis. Basic industries are those sectors that export a product or service from the local community into the national or international economy. They are a critical part of the

“economic engine” for a region, affecting the growth and health of many dependent sectors of the economy such as retail trade, transportation, construction, and local services.

Table 11-1: Marathon County Top 10 Industry Groups Based on Number of Employees (March 2001)

Industry Group	Employers	Employees	Numeric change	
			1-year	5-year
Health Services	139	4,646	251	-276
Lumber & Wood Products	41	4,438	-30	253
Educational Services	22	3,792	108	243
Eating and Drinking Places	192	3,554	219	335
Fabricated Metal Products	32	3,458	-184	168
Insurance Carriers	24	3,339	-171	*
Miscellaneous Retail	120	3,142	206	1,206
Paper and Allied Products	11	2,649	4	*
Industrial Machinery & Equipment	37	2,642	41	697
Wholesale Trade – Durable	164	2,521	-89	63

*data suppressed to maintain confidentiality

Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, ES-202, December 2001

Wausau Economic Environment

Since the 1960s, the City of Wausau economy has gradually evolved into a stable and diversified system. This diversity reduces the probability that the area will experience large swings in economic conditions that can occur as a result of changes at one company or in one particular industry. For example, some communities rely upon a local mine or military base for most local jobs and income. When work at the mine or

base declines or ceases, the effect on the local economy can be devastating.

In 1998, the largest employer in the City of Wausau and Marathon County was Wausau Insurance Companies, which provided work for approximately 2,400 people. These 2,400 jobs represent only about four percent of the total wage and salary employment in Marathon County. The next two largest employers, Wausau Hospital and Kolbe and Kolbe Millwork Company, each employed approximately 1,300 people. Although employment at Wausau Insurance Companies has declined significantly from 1998, the general condition of the economy in Wausau and Marathon County remains quite strong; a tribute to the diversity of the local economy.

While the Wausau metropolitan area (and Marathon County in general) experienced the impacts of the 2001 recession, the effects here were not as dramatic as they were elsewhere in Wisconsin. Statewide, employment declined by 0.2 percent from 2000 to 2001, while in Marathon County, employment increased by 0.2 percent. This increase is significant, since most other metropolitan statistical areas (MSA’s) in Wisconsin experienced significant drops in employment. For example, employment in the Kenosha MSA declined by 1.8 percent, while Racine and Janesville had drops of 1.4 percent.

The Wausau MSA’s employment increase can be partially attributed to the area’s diversified economy.

Labor Force

The population of Marathon County grew from 115,400 in 1990 to 125,834 in 2000, an increase of 10.3 percent compared to an 8.5 percent increase in the State and 8.7 percent in the U.S. The most recent estimates show an annual growth rate of 0.7 percent in all three jurisdictions (Wisconsin Department of Administration, Demographic Services, 2002). Population growth has been concentrated in the urbanized area surrounding Wausau.

Unemployment data for April, 2003, show that the state of the economy in Marathon County is better than that of Wisconsin or the United States in general. The unemployment rate for Marathon County stood at 4.6 percent, compared to a statewide rate of 5.4 percent. Nationally, the unemployment rate stood at 6 percent in 2003.

The City of Wausau can be considered the “employment capital” of Marathon County since over 47 percent of Marathon County’s employed residents worked within the Wausau city limits in 1990. Employment in the City of Wausau is especially high for several of the smaller communities in close proximity to Wausau. Over 60 percent of the workers living in the Towns of Rib Mountain, Stettin and Wausau work in the City of Wausau. In 1990, the U.S. Bureau of the Census found that there were 27,057 people who worked at jobs located within the Wausau city limits. Only 48 percent of these people, however, were City residents; the remaining 52 percent of people working in Wausau reside in other parts of Marathon County. Thus, the City of Wausau is the place of employment for a very large commuter population.

Table 11-2 illustrates population and employment information for the City of Wausau. In 2000 there were 27,342 jobs at businesses located in the City of Wausau. A breakdown by employment sector indicates a high number of jobs in the Service sector, followed by the Commercial and Manufacturing sectors. The high service employment reflects the importance of the health care and insurance industries to the local economy.

Table 11-2: Population and Employment by Sector, 2000

POPULATION	38,426
EMPLOYMENT:	
Commercial	7,010
Manufacturing	5,042
Service	10,219
Other	3,264
Self-Employed/Farm	1,807
TOTAL	27,342

Source: Marathon County 2030 Population and Employment Projections Methodology Report, NCWRPC, 6/10/03

According to a Wisconsin Department of Revenue report published in August, 2002, the economic outlook for the Wausau MSA is forecast to be quite good from 2002 through 2006. Of the eleven MSAs in the State, Wausau is anticipated to have the third highest growth in employment, at 7.2 percent, from 2001 to 2006. This is significantly higher than the overall Statewide employment growth forecast of 4.2 percent. The Department of Revenue summarizes existing and forecast conditions in Wausau as follows:

“Employment in the area has been quite stable despite the economic slowdown. In 2001, non-farm employment grew by

0.2 percent and is expected to decline slightly by 0.4 percent in 2002. From 2001 to 2006, employment is expected to increase by 7.2 percent, with the major contribution coming from the service and trade sectors.”

Overall, the economic outlook for the Wausau MSA is very good in absolute terms as well as when compared to the State as a whole and certain other metropolitan statistical areas in Wisconsin. More importantly for the City of Wausau is the fact that Wausau is such a large part of the economic base of Marathon County. Positive forecasts for Marathon County in general have a greater impact on the City since such a huge percentage of the total economic activity of Marathon County occurs within the Wausau municipal boundaries.

Major Employers

As noted above, Wausau Insurance Companies is one of the largest employers in the City and the County overall, providing over 2,500 jobs locally. Some other major employers in the City include:

- Wausau Hospital/Aspirus
- Wausau School District
- Eastbay
- Wausau Benefits
- North Central Health Care (NCHC) Facility
- Marathon County Government
- Northcentral Technical College (NTC)
- Wausau City Government
- Kolbe & Kolbe Millwork
- Fiskars

In addition to individual employers, the downtown area and industrial parks contain clusters of businesses, both large and small, that contributed to overall employment in the City.

Central Business District (CBD) – Downtown Wausau is one of the most successful central business districts in Wisconsin. It is a major employment center, with a diversity of retail stores, professional services, entertainment and recreation venues, and a growing residential environment. City leaders continue to champion downtown revitalization efforts, reflecting support expressed by community residents and businesses that place a high value on a thriving downtown environment.

The importance of the Wausau CBD is emphasized in the *Wausau CBD Master Plan*, which was adopted by the Common Council in January, 2000. The vision statement in this document emphasizes the economic, cultural, and social importance of a healthy downtown:

“Downtown Wausau is the heart of the City and surrounding region. It is the nerve center of retail trade, financial transactions and governmental activities in the region. Downtown Wausau gives our community and those who identify with Wausau a strong sense of place. More than any other part of the City, downtown defines Wausau as a community. City officials, business leaders and residents from throughout the Wausau Urban Area recognize the importance of downtown to our heritage and to our future. They are vitally interested in strengthening the social, cultural and economic position of downtown for the betterment of everyone.

For downtown Wausau, the next 20 years will not simply be a continuation of the past. There will be dramatic changes in many of the elements that help define our downtown. Redevelopment of the riverfront for open space and public purpose and connecting this area to the commercial core will enhance the area's appeal to all visitors. Expansion of civic, cultural and entertainment spaces and programs will help create renewed business and visitor interest in downtown.

Downtown Wausau's unique architectural and physical character will have renewed vibrancy. People from throughout the region will recognize downtown's uniqueness and gather here to work, shop and enjoy the many available social, cultural and entertainment options. The physical improvements made to the downtown and the heightened activity in the central area will help generate new employment opportunities and stimulate interest in living downtown."

Industrial Parks – The Wausau West Business and Industrial Park has been a vital component of the City's economic development strategy. The existing 450-acre park is located adjacent to the STH 29 corridor and has highway access from 72nd Avenue. The first phase of the industrial park was developed in the late 1960s and comprised about 80 acres of industrial sites. Subsequent expansions of the industrial park occurred in 1978, 1993, and 1999. In 2001 there were over 50 businesses located within the industrial park, employing approximately 3,500 people.

Since it was created, the City, County, and surrounding communities have experienced the benefits of the industrial

park. In addition to the large amount of employment it provides, in 2001 industries had a combined equalized value of over \$100 million and paid over \$3 million in total property taxes in 2002 to the Wausau School District, Marathon County, NTC, and the City of Wausau.

Three tax incremental finance (TIF) districts have been created in the industrial park to help pay for the infrastructure needed to accommodate new enterprises. The objectives of these economic development efforts, as stated in the TIF district plans, are to:

1. Increase the employment opportunities available in the community;
2. Increase the per-capita income in the community;
3. Increase the industrial property tax base for all taxing jurisdictions, including Marathon County, NTC, Wausau School District, and the City of Wausau;
4. Increase the availability of properly-located, adequately-served industrial sites;
5. Accommodate new industries and the expansion of existing industries in the industrial park by extending and upgrading the needed infrastructure; and
6. Identify feasible and appropriate means of installing and financing the improvements necessary to market the industrial parkland.

Table 11-3 describes the business/industrial parks located in the Wausau urban area. The Wausau West Industrial Park encompasses 551 acres, making it the second largest in the urban area. It is also the oldest industrial park in the area. With about 200 acres remaining to accommodate new industrial development and assuming future development occurs at about the same rate as in the past, there appears to be enough land to meet development demand for another 18 years. The Wausau West Industrial Park has more building area and a higher building-to-land ratio than all other industrial parks in the area. With building coverage averaging about 24 percent, density is slightly below what industry site location professionals and private business park developers typically look for, which is an initial building coverage of 25-30 percent, which will typically allow a company to double in size on site.

Table 11-3: Urban Area Business Park Summary

Industrial Park	Year opened	Total acres	Acres sold	Average Annual Absorption	Acres Remaining	Est. Years Remaining	Building sq. ft.	Building to Land Ratio
Wausau West	1970	551	351	11.0	200	18.2	3,681,500	24%
Central WI Bus Park - Mosinee	1990	186	136	11.3	50	4.4	1,262,800	21%
Schofield Industrial Parks	1972	833	827.6	27.6	5.5	0.2	2,627,800	7%
Weston Business Park	1998	160	80	20.0	80	4.0	378,500	11%
Rothschild Business Park	1992	196	51	5.1	145	28.4	N/A	N/A
All urban business parks	1970	1,915	1,435	44.8	480	10.7	11,641,100*	19%*

Source: Prepared by Economic Development Services based on information provided by the Wausau/Marathon County Chamber and contacted communities (1st Quarter 2003)

** Totals do not include Rothschild due to lack of available data*

Income

Income in Marathon County has historically lagged behind the nation, but has recently taken an upswing. Information from the U.S. Department of Commerce indicates that in 1996 the County per capita income was \$21,865. This income level ranked the area as 165th in the United States and was 89 percent of the national average per capita income of \$24,436. However, ten years earlier, in 1986, the area's per capita income was considerably lower when Marathon County ranked 212th in the United States. The average annual growth rate in

per capita income for Marathon County from 1986 through 1996 was 5.4 percent, while the average annual growth rate in per capita income for the nation was only 4.9 percent. Thus, while the County still ranks behind the national average in per capita personal income, in the last ten years it has been experiencing a growth rate which exceeds that of the nation.

On a Statewide basis, an analysis prepared by the Wisconsin Department of Revenue indicates that during the 1986 to 1996 period Marathon County was the sixth fastest growing county in the State in terms of personal income growth. During this time, inflation-adjusted per capita income increased by approximately 15 percent in Wisconsin, while in Marathon County, it increased by 19.5 percent. This high rate of growth in per capita income is another very good indicator of Marathon County's economic well-being.

Earnings of persons employed in Marathon County increased from approximately \$1 billion in 1986 to approximately \$1.9 billion in 1996, an average annual growth rate of 6.7 percent. The industry sector experiencing the slowest growth in earnings during this 10-year period was transportation and public utilities, which increased at an average annual rate of 4.3 percent. The fastest growing sector was finance, insurance, and real estate, which increased at an average annual rate of 9.8 percent. In addition, personal income in the Wausau MSA is projected to grow by 25.7 percent from 2001 to 2006 compared to a statewide increase of 23.7 percent.

Economic Development Trends

As discussed earlier, the five-year economic forecasts for Marathon County, prepared by the Wisconsin Department of Revenue in August, 2002, are extremely positive. Between 2001 and 2006, both job opportunities and personal incomes are expected to grow substantially in Marathon County, and are expected to exceed Statewide growth. Because the City of Wausau is such an important part of the County's overall economy, much of the employment and income growth projected for the County should occur within the City.

Employment Projections

Information on employment in Marathon County is gathered separately for non-farm and farm employment. The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) collects data on non-farm employment. The DWD estimated non-farm employment in Marathon County to be 49,407 in 1990 and 65,630 in 2000. This represents about a 33 percent increase over ten years. Data on farm employment is collected by the Census of Agriculture and consists of hired farm labor and operators. In 1987, farm employment in Marathon County was estimated to be 11,643 and in 1997 it was estimated to be 8,298. This represents a decrease of almost 29 percent.

The North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) computed employment projections based on the assumption that the historical growth rates described above would continue through 2030. These projections, for the City and County, are shown in Table 11-4.

Table 11-4: Employment Projections, 2000-2030

Total Employment by Year							
	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Wausau	27,342	28,839	30,335	31,831	33,328	34,824	36,321
County	72,508	75,625	78,742	81,859	84,976	88,093	91,210

Source: Marathon County 2030 Population and Employment Projections Methodology Report, NCWRPC, 10/29/03

The projections above are based on an assumed moderate growth rate of 33 percent. The NCWRPC also calculated projections based on a lower growth rate of 28 percent and a higher growth rate of 38 percent. The resulting employment growth is shown in Table 11-5. It is noted that the average growth rates for Marathon County as a whole are slightly different than those in the Highway 51 planning sub-area. Average growth rates for the County were assumed to be 21 percent (low), 26 percent (moderate) and 35 percent (high).

Table 11-5: Percent Change in Employment, 2000-2030

	Change in Employment by Growth Rate		
	Low Growth	Moderate Growth	High Growth
Wausau	7,615	8,979	10,346
County	87,999	91,210	96,805

Source: Marathon County 2030 Population and Employment Projections Methodology Report, NCWRPC, 10/29/03

Economic Development Opportunities

Future opportunities for economic development will likely involve both redevelopment of existing obsolete properties as well as new “green field” development on the City’s edge or in areas that may be annexed in the future. Some areas the City has and will likely continue to investigate for potential development opportunities include:

- **Riverfront** – There are several old industrial uses along the riverfront that may provide opportunities for redevelopment with other uses. The City continually watches for these opportunities. However, redevelopment of the riverfront will be a long-term endeavor given potential property contamination, the need to relocate existing businesses, and consolidation of adequately sized parcels.
- **Wausau Iron Works** – The area around Wausau Iron Works may present opportunities for new development and/or provide for expansion of Marathon Park.
- **CTH X/Camp Phillips Road** – With the proposed improvements to CTH X/Camp Phillips Road to create an “east bypass” arterial, demand for development in this corridor will likely increase, particularly after the Ministry Health Care complex opens in the Village of Weston. While CTH X is currently outside the City limits, future City boundaries will likely extend further east and the City should proactively explore opportunities to tie into and coordinate with future development in this corridor.

Economic Development Issues

- **East Side Industry** - The lack of an industrial park on the east side of the City has hindered the growth of manufacturing and other industrial employment in this area. As part of the City’s long-range growth and development plan, an area in the vicinity of the proposed “east arterial” (CTH X) intersection with 41st Street could be considered for creation of an east side industrial park.

- **High Tax Rates** - The property tax rate in the City of Wausau is considerably higher than in other communities in the Wausau urban area. This can discourage some commercial and industrial development activity, new home construction and, in some cases, annexation.
- **Reduced Shared Revenue** - Proposed cuts in State shared revenue for 2003-2005 could severely reduce the level of public services and facilities the City can provide, which could reduce the economic attractiveness of the community and the City's financial capacity to engage in tax base and job creation activities.
- **Health Care Costs** - Rising health care costs are consuming a higher percentage of the City's budget, which reduces the amount of money available for needed infrastructure and other economic development activities.
- **Construction Constraints** – Steep slopes and high bedrock conditions in certain parts of the City can greatly increase development cost, in turn making portions of Wausau less attractive for economic development ventures.
- **Regional Competition** - Competition between communities in the urban area for jobs and other economic development activities may not result in benefits to any of the urban area communities. Such economic competition can lead to political disagreements and significant financial costs for the “winning” community.
- **Limited Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) Capacity** - The City does not have adequate tax increment financing capacity to create new Tax Increment Finance Districts (TIF) to encourage development and redevelopment activities. As a result, some projects have been abandoned or delayed.
- **Tax Rate Disparity** - An increasing property tax rate disparity between the City and surrounding communities can negatively affect the desirability of the City to newcomers – both residents and businesses – looking to locate in the metro area.
- **County Leadership** - Marathon County has not taken a leadership role in ongoing economic development activities in the City nor in other parts of the County. This has resulted in significant local competition for the available economic development opportunities and minimal County investment into job and tax base creation activities.

Comprehensive Plan: The City of Wausau has completed its comprehensive plan. This document was prepared as a collaborative effort between the City, Marathon County, and the Minneapolis-based consulting firm, URS. The plan is intended to serve as a guide for the City Plan Commission, Common Council, and other City officials as they make decisions about the long term growth and improvement of the community. Most of the plan is focused on the physical development of Wausau, with land use, transportation facilities, and park and recreation improvements being major areas of focus. Other important elements of the plan include intergovernmental cooperation, housing, cultural facilities, and natural resources. The Common Council adopted the Plan in February, 2006. This *Goals, Objectives, Policies & Actions* volume (Volume II of II) recommends that the community take over 160 actions which are intended to maintain Wausau's stature as a truly great city. These actions also address many of the concerns and issues identified in Volume I of the Plan.

Anyone wishing to comment on this report plan may send an email to: planning@mail.ci.wausau.wi.us. Please note that Volume I of the Plan, *Conditions and Issues*, is also available for review and comment on the City website.

City of Wausau Comprehensive Plan: Goals, Objectives, Policies & Actions

(Volume II of II)

February, 2006

Economic Development

One of Wausau's strengths is its diverse economic base, including manufacturing, construction, retailing, banking, insurance and health, legal, accounting, engineering, and other professional services. This diversity is in part due to our central location and long-standing tradition of being North Central Wisconsin's economic hub. Over the past twenty years, the population, labor force, and number of jobs have grown. Forecasts of additional growth show that the future holds promise for continued economic stability.

As we move through the 21st century, changes will continue to take place at the local level. Wausau's economy is increasingly more regional and national with a glimpse into global. This presents both promise and compromise: the hope for growing and expanding local companies, but business increasingly subject to, and dependent upon, shifts in large scale economics.

Goal: To improve the economic well-being of Wausau through efforts that involve job creation, job retention, tax base enhancements, and other quality of life initiatives.

Objectives:

1. Initiate a program with Marathon County to prepare a Countywide economic development plan.
2. Create tax increment finance districts to provide some of the financial assistance needed to pursue the City's economic development goal.

3. Encourage Marathon County government leaders to partner with the City on some of Wausau's economic development activities that have broad, regional impacts. An area suitable for development as an industrial park should be identified, if possible, within the long-term growth area on the City's east side. An industrial park in the vicinity of the Eastern Arterial (CTH X) would have good transportation linkages.
4. Work to reduce the City's property tax rate to ensure it is not a barrier to new development, business activities, or property ownership.
5. Coordinate economic development activities between the City of Wausau, Marathon County, and other communities within the urban area to assure there is not a duplication of economic development services and to minimize the creation of competing publicly-funded economic development activities.
6. Provide an environment that encourages expansion and retention of existing businesses through networking and making resources available to foster growth. Economic development staff should remain as networked in the community as possible, making personal visits to local businesses on a regular basis.
7. Promote the City of Wausau as an ideal location for establishing new residential, commercial, and industrial development projects because of its low cost of living, extensive infrastructure and services, and high quality of life for employees and business owners. Marketing tools, including the City's economic development web site, trade publications, newsletters to real estate site selectors, and

attendance at trade shows should be utilized.

- 8. Maintain existing and create new private/public partnerships to demonstrate the community’s commitment to, and support for, economic expansion.
- 9. Support economic revitalization of downtown by encouraging diverse economic activity, including government and professional offices; insurance and financial services; convention, lodging, food/beverage, and entertainment; education and training; retail trade; and high-density residential uses.
- 10. Identify issues and opportunities facing key industry groups and take actions to enable them to continue operation and to expand in the City of Wausau
- 11. Encourage the incubation of new local firms and support entrepreneurs with technical, collaborative, and administrative services through the Wausau Business Development Center.

Policies:

- 1. The City will continue to invest in efforts aimed at enhancing the quality of life in the community, which is a critical element to marketing Wausau as a great place to live, work, and play.
- 2. The City will continue to make revitalization and redevelopment of downtown Wausau, the Wisconsin River waterfront, and the Stewart Avenue/US Highway 51 corridor a high priority.
- 3. The City supports and encourages efforts to stimulate private

investment and reinvestment in Wausau and the creation of jobs for an expanding work force.

- 4. The City will continue to work cooperatively with Marathon County and other area municipalities to coordinate regional marketing efforts and encourage economic development that benefits the entire Wausau urban area.

Strategies/Actions:

- 1. Work with Marathon County to prepare a countywide economic development plan.
- 2. Identify and prioritize areas where tax increment financing (TIF) can be used to facilitate economic development.
- 3. Develop and maintain an up-to-date database of vacant and underutilized commercial and industrial land and buildings. The database should include in-depth information on properties that are available for private development.
- 4. Consider developing revitalization plans for select commercial corridors, such as Grand Avenue, First Avenue, Third Avenue, Sixth Street, Thomas Street, and Merrill Avenue.
- 5. Identify barriers and competitive disadvantages affecting the City and develop a plan to mitigate these issues.
- 6. As part of a business retention program, economic development staff will continue to make regular, personal visits to local businesses.
- 7. Evaluate and routinely update the City’s marketing tools to

make sure they remain current.

8. Routinely evaluate and modify, if necessary, the City's list of target markets.
9. Continue to use Unified Development District zoning in the Central Business District and other commercial areas to encourage and facilitate high quality, mixed use development that is acceptable to neighboring property owners.
10. Coordinate development regulations and provision of infrastructure needed to establish downtown Wausau as an important center for retail, office, government, high-tech business, residential, cultural, entertainment, and recreational uses.
11. Continue to seek outside sources of revenue to fund many of the facilities and services that reach a larger population base than just Wausau residents.
12. Continue to market vacant land and buildings in Wausau West Business and Industrial Park