



Our intention is to have in-person meetings going forward. For the time being, we will hold the City Committee Meetings, Plan Commission, Council and most others at the Community Room at 933 Michigan Avenue. This in-person location will meet the legal requirement for our open meetings.

We will have a virtual option available, but the technology for the hybrid style meeting may not be reliable all of the time.

**Members**

- Mayor Wiza
- Alderperson Kneebone
- Commissioner Arntsen
- Commissioner Beacom
- Commissioner Miskowiak
- Commissioner Rice
- Commissioner Schuler

## AGENDA

### CITY PLAN COMMISSION

**Date and Time:** October 21, 2025  
6:00 PM

**Location:** Community Room  
933 Michigan Avenue, Stevens Point, WI

OR

Zoom Teleconferencing

Meeting ID: 856 0084 3927

Passcode: 901533

By Computer:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85600843927?pwd=ptQXLIG9LyS>

By Phone: +1-312-626-6799 (US Chicago)

Opening Section:

1. Roll Call

Discussion and Possible Action on:

2. Presentation and discussion on the preliminary policy direction report for the Zoning Code rewrite.
3. Discussion on project schedule - draft and refinement stage of the Zoning Code rewrite.
4. First review of draft purpose statements - Zoning, Sign & Subdivision Ordinances.

Closing Section:

5. Adjourn

**PLEASE TAKE NOTICE** that any person who has special needs while attending these meetings or needs agenda materials for these meetings should contact the City Clerk as soon as possible to ensure that a reasonable accommodation can be made. The City Clerk can be reached by telephone at (715) 346-1569 or by mail at 1515 Strongs Avenue, Stevens Point, WI 54481.

Maps further defining the above area(s) may be obtained from the City of Stevens Point Department of Community Development, 1515 Strongs Avenue, Stevens Point, WI 54481, or by calling (715) 346-1567, during normal business hours.

**PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE** that a quorum of the Common Council may be in attendance at this meeting.





## MEMORANDUM

To: Plan Commission

From: Adam Kuhn, AICP  
Associate Planner / Zoning Administrator

Date: October 21, 2025

**RE: Preliminary Policy Direction Report – Zoning Code Rewrite**

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The purpose of this Preliminary Policy Direction Report is to outline preliminary recommendations for updates to the City of Stevens Point's Zoning Code, Sign Code and Subdivision Ordinance. The preliminary recommendations below were constructed based on various community engagement events from May-October 2025 and conversations with City staff.

The preliminary recommendations below are organized into the following chapters, as outlined below:

1. Housing
2. Transportation
3. Natural, Environmental and Ecological Resource Protection
4. Site Design
5. Zoning Map
6. Signage and Subdivision Regulations
7. Miscellaneous Recommendations
8. Areas Where Direction is Needed

Within each section, policy recommendations are presented by explaining their intentions and how the recommendation aligns or fails to align with the City's Comprehensive Plan, with outreach feedback substantiating the preliminary recommendation scattered within. At the end of this document, one will find a section devoted to policy areas discussed at community engagement events where a clear consensus has not been reached. While this list is not expansive, it will be up to the Plan Commission and Common Council to provide direction within those policy areas.

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Direction is not needed during the October 21<sup>st</sup> Special Plan Commission meeting; however, direction sooner rather than later would be ideal.

Lastly, it is important to note that this report will not provide detailed recommendations (e.g., how much building setback is required for certain areas of the City, how a property is zoned, etc.). More detailed recommendations will be presented during the draft/refinement stage of the Zoning Code rewrite. This report, however, will provide a more generalized policy direction for the Commission and I to work on in the months ahead.

## Housing

### **1) Make legally established duplexes in the “R-3” Single- and Two-Family Residence District a permitted use.**

*Overview:* Currently, the “R-3” District allows duplexes so long as a minimum lot size of 8,000 square feet is provided. A number of legal nonconforming duplex uses exist within the “R-3” District that, over time, lost its legal nonconforming status due to the duplex being vacant for at least 12 consecutive months. The City should consider bringing these existing nonconforming duplex uses into conformity, but not allow new duplexes to be built unless it meets minimum dimensional standards.

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:* N/A

*Outreach Feedback:* 45% of survey respondents would like to see more duplexes allowed in the city, compared to 17% who would not like to see more duplexes allowed in the city.

### **2) Maintain the existing allowance to construct a single-family home on a nonconforming lot.**

*Overview:* Stevens Point's Zoning Code allows single-family homes to be built on lots in existence since 1979, regardless of if it meets minimum lot dimensional standards for its respective zoning designation. Under this approach, please note that minimum building dimensional standards would still need to be complied with.

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:* N/A

### **3) Consider expanding areas of the city where duplexes are a permitted land use.**

*Overview:* Duplexes are a permitted land use starting in the “R-3” District. The “R-3” District is generally applied to properties located outside of Downtown and roughly bounded by Maria Drive to the north, Michigan Avenue to the east, the Canadian National Railway to the south, and the Wisconsin River to the west. Please note that this report does not advise greatly expanding areas where duplexes are allowed – rather, targeted locations could be explored. Such locations include:

- Lots between Aspirus Hospital and Goerke Park.
- Lots bounded by Clark Street, Minnesota Avenue, Dixon Street and Michigan Avenue.
- Lots immediately adjacent to commercial land uses along Church Street.

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:* “Create zones where maximum lot sizes, smaller lots, and mixed uses would be considered as part of an overall design theme perhaps using Traditional Neighborhood Principles.” – Housing Policy A1.1

*Outreach Feedback:* Neighborhood meetings within each respective area of the city.

#### **4) Amend “R-TND” Traditional Neighborhood Overlay District building setback requirements.**

*Overview:* The “R-TND” District, required under Smart Growth legislation in the early-2000s, allows for more compact, orderly development in the older parts of the city. Presently, setback requirements for principal structures in the “R-TND” District are as follows:

- Street: 12 feet
- Side: 4 feet
- Rear: 15 feet

When amending setback requirements, considerations should be had to ensure that it meets existing development patterns in this area of the city by way of reducing nonconforming situations.

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:* “Allow for the reasonable remodeling and expansion of those older homes and garages to modern standards while at the same time protecting the rights of privacy and enjoyment of open space of neighbors.” – Housing Policy B4.1

*Outreach Feedback:* 77% of survey respondents believe that more the city’s older housing stock is being inadequately maintained.

#### **5) Rewrite the City’s Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance.**

*Overview:* In 2022, the City adopted its first ever ordinance allowing accessory dwelling units to be constructed if certain conditions are met (e.g., building setbacks, building size, separate utility connections, etc.) through a conditional use permit review. Since 2022, two conditional use permits have been granted to allow an accessory dwelling unit; however, no units have been constructed.

Residents have expressed concerns regarding the City’s existing ordinance, particularly the barriers to construct given the conditional use permit requirement and the need for the accessory dwelling unit to have separate utility connections. The City should look to amend its ordinance, considering the following:

- Allow the construction of an accessory dwelling unit as a permitted use.
- Eliminate the requirement for separate utility connections.
- Maintain the requirement that accessory dwelling units cannot be utilized as a short-term rental.
- Relax minimum lot size requirements.
- Allow building setback requirements for accessory dwelling units to be the same as building an accessory structure.

Lastly, the Commission should be aware of competing bills being discussed in the State Legislature regarding accessory dwelling units (Assembly Bill 449 & Senate Bill 473). Both bills, one introduced by a Democratic-led coalition and the other by a Republican-led coalition, would place limitations on a municipality’s ability to regulate the construction of accessory dwelling units.

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:* N/A

*Outreach Feedback:* 51% of survey respondents would like to see more accessory dwelling units be constructed in the city, compared to 26% who would not like to see more accessory dwelling units constructed and 23% who have a neutral stance.

**6) Allow cottage home cluster developments as a permitted use within higher-intensity single-family zoning districts.**

*Overview:* A cottage home cluster development would allow for smaller homes to be grouped together and share a common public space. Please note that appropriately sized lots would be needed for a cottage home cluster development, which would realistically limit the areas where cottage homes could be built in city limits.

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:* "Residential growth should be clustered, where appropriate, within walking or biking distance of everyday necessities, incorporate green space and other natural resources into its design, contain a diverse housing stock, be located near services, and less reliant on the automobile." – Housing Policy A1.3

**7) Consider amending minimum building size requirements for residential construction.**

*Overview:* Most residential zoning districts in the city, with the exception of the "R-1" Suburban Single-Family Residence District, requires principal structures to be at least 900 sq ft in size. The "R-1" District requires 1,200 sq ft. The City should consider reducing building size requirements, ensuring that it meets minimum habitability requirements as outlined in the City's Property Maintenance Ordinance and the Wisconsin Universal Dwelling Code.

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:* "Promote the availability of adequate and affordable housing for the elderly, disabled, and low income." – Housing Policy A1.2

*Outreach Feedback:* 85% of survey respondents agree or strongly agree that homes in Stevens Point are becoming too expensive. 82% of survey respondents agree or strongly agree that there are too little starter homes available for purchase.

**8) Incorporate development bonuses for the construction of affordable housing.**

*Overview:* Wisconsin communities have incorporated relaxed building and site design requirements if a certain amount of rental rates are 30% or less of a household making 80% or less of the area's median income. There is flexibility as to what development bonuses are codified into a zoning code. Examples include:

- Allowing an increase in maximum building height.
- Allow for a reduction in required off-street parking.
- Allow reduced lot size requirements.

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:* "Promote the availability of adequate and affordable housing for the elderly, disabled, and low income." – Housing Policy A1.2

*Outreach Feedback:* 66% of survey respondents disagree or strongly disagree that Stevens Point will be less desirable if there is more affordable housing.

**9) Amend conditional use permit requirements for certain multi-family housing developments.**

*Overview:* New housing developments containing three or more residential units currently require a conditional use permit. Consideration should be given to allow certain types of missing middle housing to be a permitted use (e.g., developments containing 3-8 new housing units).

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:* "The Plan Commission shall review and make a recommendation for all multiple family, commercial, and industrial development requests. This review will ensure that proposed uses are compatible with surrounding uses, giving consideration to the opinions of neighboring landowners and interests of the City in general. Impact on environmental resources shall always be a part of project review." – Land Use Policy A1.2

**10) Eliminate the conditional use permit requirement to construct more than one principal structure on the same lot.**

*Overview:* Over the last five years, there have been over a handful of housing developments brought before the Common Council for conditional use permit approval. For these housing developments, the type of housing proposed was permitted within the underlying zoning district (e.g., duplexes), however the fact that more than one principal structure was on the same lot required a conditional use permit.

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:* N/A

**11) Exempt greenhouses, pergolas and gazebos from meeting maximum size allowances for accessory structures.**

*Overview:* The City allows an unlimited number of accessory structures to be placed on a lot so long as the cumulative building size does not exceed 900 sq ft. This recommendation would exempt greenhouses, pergolas and gazebos from being counted towards maximum building size allowances. Please note that minimum building setback and maximum building height requirements would still need to be met.

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:* N/A

*Outreach Feedback:* 78% of survey respondents would be supportive of allowing greenhouses in residential areas, while 84% of respondents would be supportive of allowing gazebos in residential areas.

**12) Prioritize single-family development within fringe areas of the city and within annexed land, consistent with the City's Future Land Use Map.**

*Overview:* For areas on the outskirts of the City's corporate boundary, as well as new land that is annexed to City limits in the future, prioritization should be given to construct single-family homes. Careful consideration should be given in zoning designations for fringe areas to ensure that minimum lot dimensional standards are consistent with the surrounding area.

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:* "The City requests the County and surrounding townships to use their zoning authority and other controls to prevent premature development of lands in the City's expansion zones. The City suggests the areas remain in large residential lot sizes (an overall gross density of no more than one house per 35 acres) and prohibit commercial and industrial development in areas without municipal sewer that are intended to remain rural or that are within the projected growth area of the City. The City shall use its extraterritorial authorities to enforce these large lot requirements and land use in future City growth areas." – Land Use Policy B1.1

*Outreach Feedback:* 71% of survey respondents would like to see more single-family homes in Stevens Point, while 91% of attendees in neighborhood meetings would like to see more single-family homes in Stevens Point.

## Transportation

### 1) Adopt a dark sky friendly lighting ordinance for multi-family and other non-residential development.

*Overview:* Currently, the City's Zoning Code does not have standards pertaining to maximum light intensity allowances and design standards for light fixtures. This Zoning Code rewrite should consider maximum illumination levels along exterior lot lines for multi-family and non-residential development. Additionally, the rewrite should consider design standards for new light fixtures that promotes down-lighting. One item for the Plan Commission and Council to consider in the coming months is how to incorporate dark sky friendly lighting for existing development, if at all. One option is to require it only when a parking lot is being reconstructed, while another option is to exempt existing developments from meeting this ordinance.

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:* "Land use conflicts occur when incompatible land uses are located adjacent to one another. Many of these conflicts occur when industrial or commercial uses are developed immediately adjacent to residential neighborhoods. Factors that create conflicts between residential properties and commercial or industrial uses include noise, traffic, odors, hours of operation, and lighting." – Section 8.3A, Land Use Conflicts

*Outreach Feedback:* 95% of attendees at neighborhood meetings agree or strongly agree that the City should explore adopting a dark sky friendly ordinance.

### 2) Rewrite the City's Bicycle Parking Ordinance.

*Overview:* In 2025, the City's Bicycle and Pedestrian Street Safety Commission worked on draft updates to the existing bicycle parking ordinance. The existing ordinance ([pg. 30 of the City's Zoning Code](#)) regulates the amount of bicycle parking spaces that are required for certain land use categories, as well as placing design standards for parking fixtures. The Commission's draft ordinance breaks down the amount of bicycle parking that is required by specific land uses, as well as differentiating the need for short- and long-term parking accommodations. Additionally, the Commission's draft ordinance amends design standards to better align with federal recommendations.

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:* "Implement the pedestrian and bicycle plan." – Land Use Objective D6

### 3) Explore adopting an EV-ready ordinance.

*Overview:* A 2023 change in State law, 2023 Wisconsin Act 121, now prohibits municipalities to require the installation of electric vehicle charging stations as a condition for receiving a building permit (unless agreed upon through a development agreement). Since 2023, Wisconsin communities have adopted an EV-ready ordinance. An EV-ready ordinance place requirements for new construction to have a certain percentage of parking spaces that have the necessary underground conduit and electrical capacity for future charging station installation. Should the Plan Commission pursue this further, consideration should be given as to the number of EV-ready parking spaces that are required

in parking lots, the types of charging stations that are preferred for future installations (e.g., Level 1, Level 2 or Level 3), and if EV-ready spaces should be required or encouraged.

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:* N/A

*Outreach Feedback:* 60% of survey respondents believe that electric vehicle charging stations that are provided in parking lots should be encouraged, compared to 19% who believe it should be required and 21% who believe it should neither required nor encouraged.

#### **4) Amend minimum off-street parking requirements.**

*Overview:* Resident feedback provided this year expressed concerns as to how off-street parking is required for multi-family, commercial and industrial developments. On the aggregate, residents view that not enough parking has been provided for existing multi-family developments, while an excess of parking is being provided for existing commercial and industrial developments. Currently, off-street parking spaces are determined based on land use and, for the most part, the size of the principal building on a lot. For example, an office complex would be required to provide one parking space for every 300 sq ft of floor area.

Parking reductions are built into the City's current Zoning Code by right, such as:

- Reducing parking minimums by 15% if the property is within ¼-mile of a bus stop.
- Structured parking is provided, allowing the minimum number of required spaces to be reduced by 10%.
- A car-share program is provided for residential and mixed-use developments, which allows a reduction of five required parking spaces per one car-share vehicle available.
- Up to 5% of required parking spaces can be reduced if a certain number of existing mature trees are preserved for new developments.
- The Downtown and Division Street North corridor is exempt from meeting minimum parking space requirements.

Based on resident feedback, the following are options for the Commission to explore when addressing off-street parking requirements:

- Eliminate minimum off-street parking requirements for non-residential uses in the Downtown.
- Eliminate minimum off-street parking requirements for non-residential uses. Particular emphasis should be given along the following corridors: Division Street North, Church Street, Highway 10 and Stanley Street.
- Adjust maximum off-street parking allowances. Currently, no more than 150% of required off-street parking spaces can be provided unless approved by the Common Council.
- Encourage shared parking arrangements between 2+ lots.

- Consider off-street parking reductions as an incentive for affordable housing construction (particularly if parking is not bundled with rental costs).

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:* "Review and implement parking ratio standards and change as needed." – Transportation Policy A3.1

**5) Consider requiring the submission of a traffic impact analysis as part of certain development applications.**

*Overview:* Residents have expressed concern about traffic impacts for previously approved larger developments. Currently, the City's Zoning Code does not specify when traffic studies are required – it has tended to be required during a Plan Commission meeting as either a condition of approval or as a motion to postpone action. Careful consideration should be given to determine what types of projects would warrant the need for a traffic study during the application process.

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:* "Cooperation between the City and developers to quantify the projected traffic on the road network as a result of proposed projects." – Transportation Policy A4.2

**6) Update the City's landscaping guidelines.**

*Overview:* The City's Zoning Code places landscaping requirements for new parking lots and alterations onto existing parking lots. Landscaping standards should be adopted that identifies the quantity, types of species and allowed materials, consistent with best practices. An emphasis should be given to have objective landscape standards, which some residents feel is not the case currently.

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:* N/A

**7) Identify minimum size requirements for landscape islands and the total square footage of landscaped areas that are required in a parking lot.**

*Overview:* Currently, the City's Zoning Code allows for terminal, median and internal landscape islands, as well as landscaping along the perimeter of a parking lot. However, no guidance is provided as to how much landscaped areas are required based on the size of a parking lot.

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:* N/A

## Natural, Environmental and Ecological Resource Protection

### 1) Incentivize native plantings when meeting minimum landscaping requirements.

*Overview:* As mentioned above, there are limited guidelines as to what types of landscaping is preferred or prohibited (the exception being that plantings must be drought- and salt-tolerant). Native plant species have been identified by residents as a type of planting that ought to be encouraged for parking lot projects. Incentives should be considered when a certain percentage of landscaped areas are accommodated with native plantings, such as reducing minimum off-street parking requirements or pavement setback requirements.

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:* "The City enjoys a diverse natural environment. It is a goal of the City to preserve these assets and to prevent harm to public resources through zoning, acquisition, implementation of the Stevens Point Park Plan, and development regulations. Resources include the aquifer City residents rely upon for drinking water, surface waters of the Plover and Wisconsin Rivers, Moses Creek, wetlands, floodplains, and forested areas." – Land Use Goal F

*Outreach Feedback:* 65% of survey respondents believe that it should be required to incorporate native plant species and pollinator plants into landscape plans, compared to 31% who believe it should be encouraged and 4% who believe it should be neither required nor encouraged. During neighborhood meetings, a majority of residents preferred that native plant species should be encouraged as part of an incentive-based ordinance.

### 2) Adopt an impervious surface ordinance.

*Overview:* Communities across Wisconsin, primarily as an effort to address stormwater management, have adopted ordinance provisions restricting the amount of a lot that can be covered with impervious surfaces (e.g., buildings, driveways, parking lots, etc.). Considerations when drafting an impervious surface ordinance include:

- A focus on areas of the city with a high water table.
- Having impervious surface caps that are consistent with Portage County through their Zoning Code rewrite.

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:* "Significant storm water infiltration areas should be identified and protected from development to allow natural infiltration and groundwater recharge." – Public Utilities and Service Policy 3E

*Outreach Feedback:* 58% of survey respondents believe that there should be a requirement to reduce impervious surfaces on lots, compared to 28% who believe it should be encouraged and 14% who believe it should be neither required nor encouraged.

**3) Promote the use of permeable surfacing materials for driveways by eliminating certain regulatory barriers.**

*Overview:* The City allows the use of gravel and granite for residential driveways so long as certain setback requirements are met, that edging is installed along the perimeter of the surface area, and that underlayment matting is installed. Setback and edging requirements are commonplace among municipal zoning codes and should be retained in the City's Zoning Code. However, the City could look to remove the underlayment matting requirement for gravel and granite driveways.

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:* N/A

*Outreach Feedback:* Small group and one-on-one stakeholder meetings.

**4) Refine the City's shoreland, wetland and floodplain ordinance provisions to comply with State standards.**

*Overview:* Existing ordinance provisions regulating shoreland, wetland and floodplain areas need refinement, particularly to be compliant with Wisconsin Statutes. The Commission should consider using template ordinances offered through State agencies.

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:* "The City should continue working with the Towns and County to periodically evaluate zoning patterns in the extraterritorial area to ensure compatibility with the City's current zoning goals, policies, and practices. Specific issues that should be periodically evaluated include utilizing zoning to protect lakes, streams, shorelands, and wetlands." – Land Use Objective B1

## Site Design

### 1) Establish screening requirements from mechanical equipment for multi-family and non-residential land uses.

*Overview:* The City's Zoning Code seeks screening from mechanical equipment only as a review standard for conditional use permit requests. Besides this one review standard, the current Zoning Code does not express the need for screening and does not specify what type of screening is desired. The Zoning Code rewrite should adopt screening requirements for refuse areas, loading areas and areas where mechanical equipment is visible from a public right-of-way.

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:* "The City should encourage safe and attractive development; ensure that the development site is physically suited to the proposed use; and apply sound site design and landscape principles in the planning, layout and construction of new development. "Buffering" techniques should be incorporated as a means of promoting compatibility between land uses and diminishing the potential for land use conflicts." – Land Use Objective B3

### 2) Address screening requirements between incompatible uses.

*Overview:* Although not desired through modern planning practices, there are instances in Stevens Point where there are incompatible land uses that abut one another. Examples include a single-family home next to auto-centric commercial use, a single-family home next to a vehicle repair shop, etc. In those rare instances, the City's Zoning Code should identify specific screening requirements to buffer incompatible land uses. Fencing and landscaping should be considered, along with minimum size requirements.

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:* "The City should encourage safe and attractive development; ensure that the development site is physically suited to the proposed use; and apply sound site design and landscape principles in the planning, layout and construction of new development. "Buffering" techniques should be incorporated as a means of promoting compatibility between land uses and diminishing the potential for land use conflicts." – Land Use Objective B3

*Outreach Feedback:* On average, 72% of attendees at neighborhood meetings believe that more efforts should be taken to screen incompatible land uses from each other. 88% of survey respondents believe that shrubs, plants and trees are aesthetically better for screening than a fence.

### 3) Retain the ability for the Zoning Administrator to grant minor amendments to parking lot design standards.

*Overview:* The current Zoning Code allows the Zoning Administrator to grant administrative variances to parking lot design standards, such as pavement setbacks, aisle widths, stall dimensions, etc. The current ordinance provision is shown below.

*Alternative parking and landscaping standards may be approved by the Administrator only where the required parking and landscaping in this Zoning Code cannot be physically met on the site for one of the following reasons described below. Such alternative standards shall be the least aggressive possible.*

- *Redevelopment of an existing site requires parking or landscaping to be added, but a building, pavement or stormwater facility already exists; or*
- *Redevelopment of an existing site would reduce the number of stalls below the required number for the use or reduce aisle widths below the recommended standard; or*
- *The existing site has lost area from landscaping due to adjacent road widening or other right-of-way infrastructure improvements; or*
- *A parking facility addition would be inconsistent with the layout or setback of the existing parking facility to the extent where it would significantly change the configuration of the existing facility to meet current standards. Such addition shall not exceed more than 50 percent of the existing parking facility area.*

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan: N/A*

#### **4) Amend regulations for privacy fencing located near an alley.**

Overview: Privacy fencing that exceeds six feet in height is required to be set back ten feet from both the street and alley right-of-way line. Existing conditions show a majority of privacy fencing near an alley are located on the right-of-way line. The Commission should consider either eliminating or reducing the ten-foot setback requirement.

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan: N/A*

*Outreach Feedback: One-on-one meetings with residents.*

## Zoning Map

### 1) Establish a parks zoning district.

*Overview:* Currently, City parks are either zoned "R-2" Single-Family Residential, "R-3" Single- and Two-Family Residential or "R-5" Multi-Family II Residential. Having parks be classified under a residential zoning district has posed challenges for certain building projects and the installation of signage. Most communities in Wisconsin have a parks zoning classification, and it is important for park land to be differentiated from a conservancy district (as the latter is reserved for environmentally sensitive land).

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:* "To develop a park and recreation system that will provide sites with equal accessibility for all, encourage sites which are properly maintained while reducing the conflicting uses of recreation lands and surface waters." – Recreation and Open Space Objective 2B

*Outreach Feedback:* Stakeholder meeting with the City Parks Director.

### 2) Establish an institutional zoning district.

*Overview:* Institutional land uses, such as municipal buildings, cemeteries and churches, are currently zoned either "R-2" Single-Family Residential, "R-3" Single- and Two-Family Residential or "R-5" Multi-Family II Residential. Like the last recommendation, challenges exist as residential zoning districts tend to be the most restrictive for signage and other small-scale improvements to a property. Similar to a parks zoning district, institutional zoning districts are typically found on municipal zoning maps.

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:* N/A

*Outreach Feedback:* One-on-one stakeholder meetings.

### 3) Establish an agricultural zoning district.

*Overview:* The City does not have an agricultural zoning district within its Zoning Code. As land annexed into City limits may not immediately become developed, an agricultural zoning district would be most appropriate to keep land held within its undeveloped state before development plans are approved.

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:* "Develop an Agricultural Zoning District to apply to future annexations, where appropriate, to allow the land to be held in its undeveloped state prior to approval of the detailed plans for the lands' development, and its rezoning to accommodate the development." – Agricultural, Natural & Cultural Resources Policy 1.1A

*Outreach Feedback:* One-on-one stakeholder meetings.

### 4) Consolidate repetitive zoning districts that are currently not widely used.

*Overview:* Of all the zoning districts that the City has adopted, the two least used are the "B-2" Central Business Transition District and the "R-5" Multi-Family II Residence District. The "B-2" District is primarily found on the northern end of

Downtown between Centerpoint Drive and Portage Street, while the “R-5” District is primarily found on the southern end of Downtown and by Goerke Park. Given the small number of lots that have a “R-5” and “B-2” designation, it can be absorbed under another comparable zoning district.

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:* N/A

**5) Align existing neighborhood commercial land uses under a neighborhood commercial zoning district.**

*Overview:* Existing neighborhood serving business range widely for how they are zoned. Some are currently applied with a more intense commercial zoning designation, while others have a residential zoning designation. As part of this Zoning Code rewrite, the City should explore which lots are more appropriate under a neighborhood commercial zoning designation. Additionally, performance standards for a neighborhood commercial zoning district should promote walkability by reducing minimum street setback requirements.

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:* “To plan for “mixed-use” residential areas where appropriate, with guidance and participation by neighborhood residents and alderperson to assist the Planning Department in establishing specific neighborhood densities, zoning districts, and zoning boundaries.” – Housing Policy A1.4

**6) Establish infill residential development standards to ensure that new construction does not negatively impact the existing neighborhood.**

*Overview:* Some residents during community engagement sessions expressed concerns with how previous infill development projects were not complementary with the surrounding neighborhood. Some communities have adopted gentle density development standards for infill development. For example, the City of Eau Claire considered the following standards:

- Retain existing building height, street setback and side yard setback requirements.
- Require sloped roofs.
- Require a front porch.
- Retain existing off-street parking requirements.
- Prohibit parking in front of a building, and enhance screening from parking areas.
- Limit the number of entry doors allowed on a front façade.

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:* “Maintain or improve the quality and integrity of existing housing and neighborhoods. The result will be residential neighborhoods which are safe and pleasant, where property values are protected, and which are free from incompatible land uses and traffic volumes.” – Housing Goal B

*Outreach Feedback:* During neighborhood meetings, a common complaint raised by residents was that recent infill housing development projects do not adequately mesh with the surrounding neighborhood. Residents are generally

aware that a slight change in density allowances may be needed for certain types of infill housing developments; however, more work can be done to ensure that the design and exterior appearance is similar to adjacent homes.

## Signage and Subdivision Regulations

### 1) Adopt a new Sign Code that is Reed compliant.

*Overview:* In 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court decided on the case *Reed v. Town of Gilbert, Arizona*. The *Reed* case concluded that municipalities must have a content-neutral ordinance and not a content-based ordinance. For example, if the Sign Code Administrator has to read a sign to determine what type of sign it is and the regulations that govern it, that is a content-based ordinance. The City's Sign Code is not content-neutral and thus will need to be updated to be enforceable.

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:* N/A

### 2) Consider sign bonuses for non-residential land uses along Interstate 39.

*Overview:* Currently, sign size and height standards are based on how a property is zoned. Wisconsin communities that have an interstate run through their community, such as the City of Oshkosh, establishes increased size and height standards for lots abutting an interstate.

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:* N/A

### 3) Encourage projecting signs within pedestrian-oriented developments.

*Overview:* Projecting signs are allowed within properties outside of the Downtown so long as the building is set back no more than ten feet from a street lot line. For buildings that meet this setback requirement, the current Sign Code does not address other requirements for projecting signs (e.g., size, how tall it can be from grade, illumination, etc.). The City should amend Sign Code regulations to encourage the installation of projecting signs for areas with higher pedestrian traffic.

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:* N/A

### 4) Adopt landscaping requirements for the installation of new freestanding signs.

*Overview:* Lots zoned "B-5" Highway Commercial currently require landscaping to be installed at the base of freestanding signs. A revised Sign Code should look to expand the landscaping requirement within other commercial and industrial areas.

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:* N/A

### 5) Incorporate cluster subdivision design standards in the City's Subdivision Ordinance.

*Overview:* Cluster subdivisions are when residential lots are grouped together on a portion of a development pad to preserve the remainder of the lot as open space. Cluster subdivisions have grown in popularity across the country due to it being more environmentally friendly. Incentives should be considered to promote the development of new cluster subdivisions, such as preserving so

much open space in return for a relaxation of lot dimensional standards, building height allowances, etc.

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:* "Residential growth should be clustered, where appropriate, within walking or biking distance of everyday necessities, incorporate green space and other natural resources into its design, contain a diverse housing stock, be located near services, and less reliant on the automobile." – Housing Policy A1.3

**6) Identify in the Subdivision Ordinance when sidewalks and multi-use paths are preferred.**

*Overview:* Over the last few years, multi-use paths have gained popularity in site development in lieu of sidewalks. For assisting City staff, the Subdivision Ordinance should better explain scenarios when a multi-use path is preferred over a sidewalk and vice versa.

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:* "Review existing standards for different classes of roadway including, but not limited to, road width, need for sidewalks, curb radii, and traffic calming techniques." – Transportation Policy B1.1

## Miscellaneous Recommendations

### 1) Establish situations where the Zoning Administrator can approve minor deviations from Zoning Code requirements.

Overview: Currently, there are a few examples where the Zoning Administrator can grant administrative variances. Such examples include parking lot design standards, minimum driveway width requirements, etc. While the option to consider administrative variances should be allowed sparingly, it is a way to bypass a hearing before the Zoning Board of Appeals.

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan: N/A*

### 2) Determine variance scenarios that should be considered by the Plan Commission & Common Council versus the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Overview: While most area and use variance requests go before the City's Zoning Board of Appeals for consideration, a few variance scenarios go before the Plan Commission and Common Council. Such examples include driveway and fence variances, sign variances, and certain parking lot exceptions. Variance scenarios brought before the Plan Commission and Council should be used sparingly to not diminish the statutory responsibilities of the Zoning Board of Appeals.

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan: N/A*

### 3) Rewrite the nonconformity section of the City's Zoning Code.

Overview: Municipalities in Wisconsin are required to adopt a nonconforming situations ordinance which, in part, outlines the types of improvements that are permitted to occur on legal nonconforming structures. The City's ordinance, admittedly, is quite rigid. Outside of cosmetic changes (e.g., new windows and doors, new paint, etc.), the ability to perform work on nonconforming structures is limited. The City should explore ordinance provisions to maintain compliance with State statutes and consistency with other communities.

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan: "Allow for the reasonable remodeling and expansion of those older homes and garages to modern standards while at the same time protecting the rights of privacy and enjoyment of open space of neighbors." – Housing Policy B4.1*

### 4) Update the definitions section of the Zoning Code.

Overview: For most codes of ordinances, the definitions section is commonly referred to. Definitions should be incorporated that are necessary, address modern practices, and are consistent with definitions used in the Universal Dwelling Code, the International Existing Building Code and State Statutes.

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan: N/A*

## Areas Where Direction is Needed

### 1) Building Design Standards

Overview: As shown below, the City currently has architectural oversight of new construction when considering conditional use permit requests.

*The exterior architectural appeal and functional plan of any proposed structure will not be so at variance with either the exterior architectural appeal and functional plan of the structures already constructed or in the course of construction in the immediate neighborhood or in the character of the applicable district, as to result in a substantial or undue adverse effect on the neighborhood.*

Outside of the City's historic districts and the Division Street North corridor, the City does not have specific building design standards to reference for development proposals. During community conversations this Summer, residents overwhelmingly stated that they valued the appearance of new construction and its harmony with the surrounding area. However, there is disagreement as to the best approach for achieving building design objectives.

Some residents argue that building design standards should be considered for all non-residential and multi-family development, while others argue that the same should apply to only targeted areas of the city in need of reinvestment. A third subset of participants argued that building design standards should only be optional, but certain development incentives are provided if design standards are met (e.g., lesser landscaping requirements, increased building height allowances, reduced building setback requirements, etc.). A fourth subset of participants, the smallest of the four groups, argue that the status quo should remain – meaning that there are no building design standards build into a Zoning Code. Before proceeding with this topic, the Plan Commission will need to provide guidance as to which of the four tracts that they recommend pursuing.

### 2) Increased size allowances for accessory structures.

Overview: The City allows an unlimited number of detached accessory structures (e.g., detached garages, sheds, carports, etc.) that can be built on a lot, so long as the cumulative size does not exceed 900 sq ft. According to an online poll, there is a proportional split for whether the cumulative size of accessory structures allowed should be more than 900 sq ft – 1/3 of respondents argue that the number should increase, 1/3 of respondents argue it should stay the same, and 1/3 of respondents have a neutral stance.

Similar to accessory structures, a poll question was raised as to if the City should allow attached garages to be more than 1,200 sq ft. 1,200 sq ft is the maximum size that an attached garage can be. 38% of survey respondents argue that the maximum size allowance for attached garages should be increased, 34% of survey respondents argue that the maximum size allowed should remain the same, and 26% of respondents have a neutral stance. The Plan Commission will need to provide guidance as to if the City should amend maximum size allowances for attached garages and accessory structures.

### 3) Idealized land use pattern along the following corridors:

- Church Street between the Canadian National Railway and Heffron Street.
- Patch Street between Church Street and McDill Pond.
- River View Avenue between the Wisconsin River and Echo Dells Avenue.

Overview: Simply put, the zoning designations that exist along the three aforementioned corridors vary considerably. The Church Street corridor listed above has a range of auto-centric commercial uses, office uses, institutional uses, and single-family homes. The Plan Commission will need to consider if this section of Church Street should have a similar zoning designation as what will exist south of Heffron Street, or if it should serve as a transition between low-intensity land uses to the north and high-intensity land uses to the south.

Similarly, the Patch Street corridor has a range of different land uses and zoning designations. Specifically, the Plan Commission will need to consider if the Patch Street corridor east of Minnesota Avenue ought to be viewed as a commercial corridor or an industrial corridor.

Lastly, the River View Avenue corridor is scattered with zoning designations of "C" Conservancy, "R-2" Single-Family Residential and "M-2" Heavy Industrial. While some land along the River View Avenue corridor is undevelopable due to wetlands and floodway protections, there are areas where future development could occur. The Plan Commission will need to consider what appropriate land uses could occur along the River View Avenue corridor.

### 4) Resurfacing of Nonconforming Driveways and Parking Lots

Overview: In the City's Zoning Code, most nonconforming improvements are required to meet current regulations when there is a request to replace said improvement. For example, if a property owner seeks to rebuild a structure that fails to meet minimum street setbacks, new construction would be required to meet current setback requirements.

Areas in the City's Zoning Code where nonconforming improvements can be re-done like-for-like are parking lots and driveways. If an existing parking lot does not meet minimum pavement setback requirements and the property owner seeks to perform a mill and overlay, they are allowed to pour asphalt in the same footprint. Similarly, nonconforming residential driveways are allowed to be reconstructed like-for-like.

While this practice for nonconforming driveways has been enforced, the one exception is driveway width allowances as part of street reconstruction projects. The City's Zoning Code permits a maximum driveway width of 24 feet at the street lot line, and the City's Public Works Department permits aprons to be a maximum of 24 feet in width. When streets are reconstructed, the City's internal policy is to truncate driveways aprons greater than 24 feet in width down to the 24-foot maximum.

For this topic area, the Plan Commission will need to consider if the status quo should remain or if certain parking lot and driveway improvements would require compliance with existing zoning regulations.



## MEMORANDUM

To: Plan Commission

From: Adam Kuhn, AICP  
Associate Planner / Zoning Administrator

Date: October 21, 2025

**RE: Project Schedule – Draft and Refinement Stage of the Zoning Code Rewrite**

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**Overview:** As the City has approached the end of the first public engagement phase for the Zoning Code rewrite, we will now proceed with drafting and refining new code sections. As a zoning code covers a variety of different topic areas, it will be helpful for Commission members and members of the public to observe a tentative timeline of what ordinance sections will be covered when.

Below you will find a rough order of sequence for which ordinance sections will be covered when. Please note that these ordinance sections do not provide a specific month for when it will be reviewed – when it will be reviewed by the Plan Commission will be based on how fast the previous sections are reviewed.

During the review of draft ordinance sections, how it is presented will be based on how much changes are proposed. Some draft ordinance sections will require only slight variations from what it existing. Under this scenario, I plan to red line the existing ordinance with what revisions are being proposed. For draft ordinance sections that are being completely rewritten from what is existing, I will include a copy of the existing ordinance for reference.

In the months ahead, please do your due diligence in reviewing draft ordinance sections and provide comments when applicable. Ultimately the best final product will require ample review and revisions from all parties involved.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

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<b>Project Schedule – Draft &amp; Refinement of the Zoning Code Rewrite</b>	
<b>Phase</b>	<b>Topics Covered</b>
1) General Standards	
	Title
	Purpose & Intent
	Authority
	Severability & Conflicting Provisions
	Building & Site Numbering
	General Development Standards
	Floodplain, Shoreland & Wetland Provisions
	Fencing Standards
2) Zoning Map	
	Establish Zoning Districts & Corresponding Purpose Statements
	Creation of Zoning Map
3) Zoning District Standards	
	Establish Performance Standards for Zoning Districts
4) Access & Mobility Standards	
	Driveway Standards
	Parking & Landscaping
	Bicycle Parking
	Sidewalk, Trails and Pedestrian Walkways
5) Sign Standards	
6) Subdivision Standards	
7) Review Standards	
	Conditional Use Permit, Rezone, Site Plan Review, Planned Development Districts, Sign Variance, Annexation, Ordinance Amendments, Etc.
8) Administrative Procedures	
	Zoning Administrator
	Enforcement
	Variances & Administrative Appeals
	Nonconformities
	Interpretations and Measurements
	Definitions



**MEMORANDUM**

To: Plan Commission

From: Adam Kuhn, AICP  
Associate Planner / Zoning Administrator

Date: October 21, 2025

**RE: Review of Purpose Statements – Zoning, Sign & Subdivision Ordinances**

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**Overview:** The first draft ordinance section for your review is the purpose statements for the Zoning, Sign and Subdivision Ordinances. A purpose statement serves as the foundation for its respective ordinance. It identifies the 'why' for why Stevens Point has laws regulating land use, site improvements, signage and the platting of land. As an exercise of local police power, State Statutes identifies broad statements on the purposes of zoning as identified below.

Wis. Stats. 62.23(7)(am)

*Grant of power. For the purpose of promoting health, safety, morals or the general welfare of the community, the council may regulate and restrict by ordinance, subject to par. (hm), the height, number of stories and size of buildings and other structures, the percentage of lot that may be occupied, the size of yards, courts and other open spaces, subject to s. 66.10015 (3) the density of population, and the location and use of buildings, structures and land for trade, industry, mining, residence or other purposes if there is no discrimination against temporary structures. This subsection and any ordinance, resolution or regulation enacted or adopted under this section, shall be liberally construed in favor of the city and as minimum requirements adopted for the purposes stated. This subsection may not be deemed a limitation of any power granted elsewhere.*

Beyond what is identified above, municipalities have adopted purpose statements that reflect specific areas of interest, or value and of prioritization when reviewing future

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land use and development requests. Simply put, purpose statements can be narrowly tailored to what a community aims to achieve.

The draft purpose statements on the succeeding pages are completely rewritten from what is existing. Draft purpose statements were rewritten to achieve the following:

- Make it more visually appealing to achieve.
- Eliminate redundancy.
- Eliminate statement areas where Stevens Point are statutorily obligated to fulfill (e.g., preserve burial sites as defined in Wis. Stats. 157.70(1)(b)).

When drafting the attached purpose statements, careful review was taken towards its applicability to 2017 Wisconsin Act 67. Act 67, as Commissioners know, was a highly significant piece of legislation that governs the issuance of conditional use permits under general zoning enabling laws. Specifically, Act 67 states that if a Plan Commission seeks to place conditions onto a conditional use permit request, said condition "must be related to the purpose of the ordinance and be based on substantial evidence" and "must be reasonable and to the extent practicable, measurable." In my opinion, the draft purpose statements generally reflect past conditions placed on land use and development requests.

Please review the draft statements and be prepared to provide comment.

**Existing Purpose & Intent – Zoning Code:**

The purpose of this ordinance is to promote the health, safety, morals, prosperity, aesthetics and general welfare of this community. It is the general intent of this ordinance to regulate and restrict the use of all structures, lands and waters; regulate and restrict lot coverage, population distribution and density, and the size and location of all structures so as to: lessen congestion in and promote the safety and efficiency of the streets and highways; secure safety from fire, flooding, panic and other dangers; provide adequate light, air, sanitation and drainage; prevent over-crowding; avoid undue population concentration; facilitate the adequate provision of public facilities and utilities; stabilize and protect property values; further the appropriate use of land and conservation of natural resources; preserve and promote the beauty of the community; and implement the community's comprehensive plan or plan components. It is further intended to provide for the administration and enforcement of this ordinance and to provide penalties for its violation.

**Proposed Purpose & Intent – Zoning Code:**

The purpose of this Chapter is to:

1. Protect the health, safety, and general welfare of the public;
2. Implement goals and policies of the City's Comprehensive Plan;
3. Regulate the location, construction, reconstruction, alteration, and use of buildings, structures, and land;
4. Provide adequate light and air; prevent the overcrowding of land; secure safety from fire, panic, and other dangers;
5. Control and lessen congestion in the streets;
6. Promote an efficient and economic use of land;
7. Facilitate adequate provisions for transportation, water, sewerage, schools, parks, and other public facilities; and
8. Ensure orderly development that is complementary and harmonious to the surrounding area.

**Existing Purpose & Intent – Sign Code:**

The purpose of these sign regulations are: to encourage the effective use of signs as a means of communication in the City of Stevens Point (hereinafter referred to as the City); to maintain and enhance the beauty and unique character and enhance the aesthetic environment of the City by eliminating visual blight; to enhance the City's ability to attract sources of economic development and growth; to protect pedestrians and motorists of the City from damage or injury caused or partially attributable to the distractions and obstructions which are hereby declared to be caused by improperly sized or situated signs; to minimize the possible adverse effect of signs on nearby public and private property; to promote the public safety, welfare and convenience, and enjoyment of travel and the free flow of traffic within the City; and to provide a uniform sign ordinance between the City of Stevens Point, Village of Plover and Portage County.

**Proposed Purpose & Intent – Sign Code:**

The purpose of this Chapter is to adopt standards for the fabrication, erection, and use of signs to:

1. Ensure that signage meets appropriate traffic and visibility conditions for all road users;
2. Identify the location of public services such as schools and hospitals;
3. Maintain and enhance the aesthetic environment of the city by eliminating visual blight;
4. Promote the public health, safety and general welfare, and enjoyment of travel and the free flow of traffic within the city;
5. Enhance the special character of particular areas within the city;
6. Promote public order through the proper maintenance of signs; and
7. Provide uniform sign regulations between the City of Stevens Point, Village of Plover and Portage County.

**Existing Purpose & Intent – Subdivision Code:**

The purpose of this ordinance is to regulate and control the subdivision of land within the corporate limits and extraterritorial plat approval jurisdiction of the City of Stevens Point. These regulations are designed to protect and provide for the public health, safety, and general welfare of the municipality, lessen congestion in the streets and highways; to further the orderly layout and use of land; to secure safety from fire, panic, and other dangers; to provide adequate light and air; to prevent the overcrowding of land; to avoid undue concentration of population; to facilitate adequate provisions for transportation, water, sewage, storm drainage, schools, parks, playgrounds and other public requirements; to facilitate the further re-subdivision of larger tracts into smaller parcels of land, to encourage the orderly and beneficial development of the community through appropriate growth management techniques assuring the timing and sequencing of development, to assure proper urban form and open space, to protect environmentally critical areas, to protect areas from premature urban development, to ensure that public facilities and services are available concurrent with development and will have sufficient capacity to serve the proposed subdivision, to provide the most beneficial relationship between the uses of land and buildings and the circulation of traffic throughout the municipality having particular regard to the avoidance of congestion and accommodating anticipated traffic. These regulations are made with the reasonable consideration, among other things, of the character of the City with a view of conserving the value of the buildings placed upon land, providing the best possible environment for human habitation and for encouraging the most appropriate use of land. These regulations are formulated to facilitate enforcement of development standards as outlined in the Building Code, Zoning Code, and to guide the future growth and development of the City in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan and Official Map of the City of Stevens Point in general, residential subdivisions will be encouraged to provide generous distances between building sites and existing industries and between building sites and high capacity streets, highways, and expressways and freeways to act as buffers against noise and noxious fumes. Residential subdivisions will also be discouraged from locating too close to existing or proposed airport approach zones.

**Proposed Purpose & Intent – Subdivision Code:**

The purpose of this Chapter is to:

1. Regulate and control the division of land within the City's corporate limits and extraterritorial jurisdiction to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare of the community;
2. Ensure the orderly layout and use of land;
3. Prevent the overcrowding of land, high concentration of population, and urban sprawl development patterns;
4. Provide adequate light and air; secure safety from fire, panic, and other dangers;
5. Promote development with sewer, water and other public services;
6. Protect groundwater from potential contamination;
7. Facilitate adequate park land and open space, as well as the conservation of land and natural resources; and

8. Enforce development concepts and policies as outlined in the City's Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Code, Comprehensive Outdoor & Recreation Plan, and other relevant long-range plans.