CITY OF
RHINELANDER

STRATEGIC PLAN
2024-2028

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Beginning in January 2024, the City of Rhinelander engaged Northspan to conduct a strategic planning process. The process began with the following planned deliverables:

- Vision Statement
- Mission Statement
- Core Values
- Environmental Scan
- SWOT Analysis
- 5-Year Strategic Directions/Goals, Actions/Strategies & Outcomes/Objectives
- Timeline
- Templates for Monitoring Success and Key Performance Indicators

During the process, a City of Rhinelander strategy committee defined the following mission, vision, core values, and strategic directions:

VISION: To be the hub of the Northwoods, inspiring the next generation of Hodags.

MISSION: We provide excellent services to foster growth and development, creating a welcoming, desirable place to thrive.

CORE VALUES:

Inclusive: We prioritize the active participation, representation, and respect of all community members, regardless of their backgrounds, abilities, or perspectives, fostering a welcoming and equitable environment for all.

Resourceful: We effectively and creatively utilize available resources to overcome challenges and achieve our goals.

Proud: We share a sense of collective achievement, identity, and appreciation for our community's heritage, accomplishments, and values. Go Hodags!

Safe: We are committed to creating an environment where all residents feel protected from harm.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS:

- Identifying and Prioritizing Revenue Sources and Uses
- Utilizing Technology for External Communication
- Investing in Training for City Staff and Officials
- Expanding Recreation Opportunities
- Matching Staffing to Support Community Growth
- Growing and Maintaining Workforce Housing

This document provides an overview of the new strategic plan, which will guide the City of Rhinelander's work for the next five years. Details on the planning process and supporting documents from that process are available in the appendices.

OVERVIEW

The City of Rhinelander is the county seat of Oneida County, Wisconsin, which is in the northeast portion of the state. It first emerged as a community in the late 1880's and has grown to over 8,000 residents. Known for its outdoor recreational activities like fishing, hunting, biking, and skiing, Rhinelander attracts visitors year-round to explore its lakes, trails, and forests. The city also celebrates its unique culture and history through the Rhinelander Hodag, a mythical creature said to inhabit the local forests. The Hodag has become a symbol of the city, embodying the community's spirit and its connection to the natural environment.

After several years of leadership changes, Rhinelander sought to create a strategic plan to foster cohesion and collaboration across city departments and the city council. In January 2024, the City of Rhinelander engaged Northspan to facilitate a 10-year strategic plan with a five-year focus. City leadership engaged the City Council and city staff members in a process to lay the groundwork for future success.

Participants in the strategy planning committee included the mayor, city administrator, seven alderpersons on the City Council, and eleven city department heads. The group's strategic planning process included a community survey, a strategic planning committee survey and city leadership interviews in February, four strategic planning workshops in March, and an opportunity for feedback and edits in early April before final approval on April 29, 2024. The new strategic plan seeks to bring together many of the city's activities behind a common vision, mission, and core values and provide concrete, measurable steps with which to make the vision a reality.
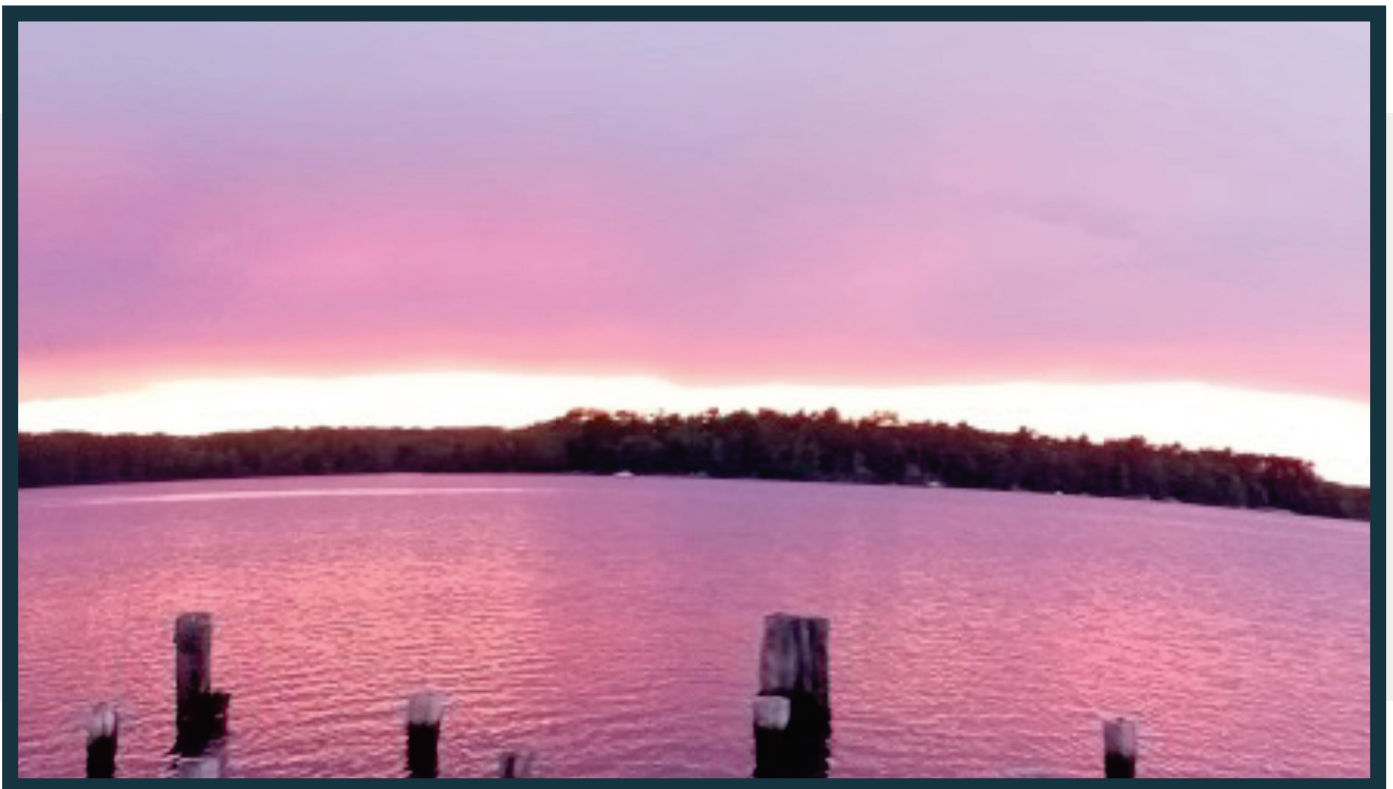
STRATEGIC PLAN

This strategic plan is the culmination of a planning process conducted from January 2024 to April 2024. The planning established a new vision, mission, core values, and strategic directions for the City of Rhinelander, which are as follows:

VISION: To be the hub of the Northwoods, inspiring the next generation of Hodags.

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Safe: We are committed to creating an environment where all residents feel protected from harm.

PRACTICAL VISION:

- Sustainable infrastructure and utilities
- Expanded recreational activities
- Affordable housing
- Improved city operations
- Flourishing local economy and workforce
- Comprehensive community support services and safety

UNDERLYING CONTRADICTIONS:

- Limited resources restrict economic growth
- Conflicts prevent effective collaboration
- Maintaining the status quo slows advancement and innovation
- Unclear direction causes apathy and confusion
- Neglected properties contribute to negative perceptions

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS:

- Identifying and Prioritizing Revenue Sources and Uses
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SD 1

IDENTIFYING AND PRIORITIZING REVENUE SOURCES AND USES

DEFINITION:

This strategic direction aims to ensure financial sustainability and responsible fiscal management by maximizing revenue generation while strategically prioritizing expenditures to address community needs and priorities. Through effective implementation, the city aims to capitalize on existing and potential funding streams to achieve its objectives and garner community backing for its initiatives.

ACTION STEPS:

1. Create template that defines services, cost, and staff time

2. Improve fee collection tools

3. Create clear processes and expectations for citizens, businesses, and staff

4. Create a workflow for special events

5. Identify and access innovative economic expansion opportunities

6. Identify and access immediate funding sources

7. Develop process for ordinance updating and maintenance

8. Create capital improvement plan for every department

OUTCOMES:

- Understand true cost of services including staff time
- Establish priority-based budgeting
- Increase revenue
- Establish consistent enforcement
- Increase grant income

SD2

UTILIZING TECHNOLOGY FOR EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

DEFINITION:

By utilizing technology for external communication, the city strives to enhance transparency, accessibility, and responsiveness in its interactions with the public, strengthening community relations and promoting informed civic engagement.

ACTION STEPS:

1. Identify applications to communicate and collect fees

2. Identify video content opportunities utilizing social media

3. Install in-person online payment option in city hall and other areas

4. Update phone system

5. All city departments on one server

OUTCOMES:

- Update and maintain technology
- Reduce in-person requirements for citizens
- Increase citizen participation on boards & commissions

SD3

INVESTING IN TRAINING FOR CITY STAFF AND OFFICIALS

DEFINITION:

This strategic direction endeavors to cultivate a workforce equipped with the latest tools, methodologies, and best practices necessary to effectively fulfill their roles and responsibilities within the city administration. By prioritizing continuous learning and skill-building initiatives, the city seeks to foster a culture of excellence, innovation, and adaptability among its staff members and city officials, leading to improved service delivery and outcomes for the community.

ACTION STEPS:

1. Create processes to train subordinates on critical tasks

2. Determine which positions require a succession plan and create them

3. Plan training with one month notice

4. Identify cross training opportunities

5. Explore local or low-cost opportunities to train incoming local officials and staff

6. Create process manuals

7. Record training sessions

8. Improve new employee orientation with technology

OUTCOMES:

- Succession plans in place for key positions
- Technology is incorporated into staff trainings

SD4

INVESTING IN TRAINING FOR CITY STAFF AND OFFICIALS

DEFINITION:

This strategic direction recognizes the value of having inclusive, accessible, and diverse recreational options that cater to the interests and needs of citizens and visitors to Rhinelander. By investing in the expansion of recreational amenities and programming, the city seeks to enhance quality of life, promote social cohesion, and attract tourism and economic growth to the area.

ACTION STEPS:

1. Create a city events calendar on website

2. Organize city family/kid events in parks

3. Budget for ADA equipment

4. Determine ways to links bike/pedestrian pathways to external city trails

OUTCOMES:

• Connect (bike/ped) to regional pathways
• Better ADA access in parks
• Better communication with citizens

SD5

MATCHING STAFFING TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY GROWTH

DEFINITION:

This strategic direction emphasizes the thoughtful allocation of human resources to effectively address emerging challenges, implement new initiatives, and deliver essential services to residents.

ACTION STEPS:

1. Post job applications on multiple sites

2. Expand and maintain annual reviews for all staff

3. Define job descriptions relative to current wage scale

4. Consider how to more equitable in benefits and wage structures

5. Conduct workload study to identify current and expected service levels per department

6. Update wage scale

7. Increase recruitment from high school and tech schools

8. Create professional development plan

OUTCOMES:

• Increase employee morale
• Get qualified candidates to apply

SD6

GROWING AND MAINTAINING WORKFORCE HOUSING

DEFINITION:

This strategic direction prioritizes policies and programs that promote sustainable growth and equitable access to housing to enhance community resilience, foster economic stability, and improve residents' overall quality of life.

ACTION STEPS:

1. Coordinate with Habitat for Humanity to reinspect habitat houses

2. Create more city clean-up events for household garbage and vehicles

3. Research short-term rental policy options

4. Explore annexation opportunities

5. Review housing ordinances and inspection programs

6. Provide and publicize incentives for housing developments

7. Create program for rental housing inspections

OUTCOMES:

- Increase housing developments for all income levels
- Stable workforce
- Increased population

APPENDICES

CITY OF
RHINELANDER

APPENDIX 1
STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The City of Rhinelander has prepared this 5-year strategic plan to guide its activities and achieve accomplishments consistent with the group's vision and mission. The strategic process steps, session dates, and agendas are included as an attachment, as are the results of the sessions that followed.

PROCESS STEPS

1. Collection of background information
2. Community-informed survey
3. Strategic planning committee survey
4. Pre-workshop interviews
5. 03.19.2024 Strategic Planning Session 1 of 2
6. 03.20.2024 Strategic Planning Session 2 of 2
7. 03.27.2024 Draft Strategic Plan Review & Feedback
8. 04.29.2024 Strategic Plan Board Presentation

COLLECTION OF BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The strategic planning process began with a series of meetings and communications with City of Rhinelander staff that provided contact information, materials detailing the organization's work and impact, and clarification over the plans for the engagement. This phase also included the collection of background demographic and economic, data from the US Census American Community survey to provide an overview of the current situation and recent trends in Rhinelander and surrounding areas. This information was presented at the first Strategic Planning Session.

COMMUNITY INFORMED SURVEY

Throughout February, members of the Rhinelander community were asked to participate in a survey to gather ideas about what they would like the city to focus on in its strategies. 302 respondents completed the survey. Participants were asked to rate the city on services and priorities, complete a SWOT analysis, and offer ideas regarding a vision for the City of Rhinelander. Full results of the survey are available in the appendix titled City of Rhinelander Community-Informed Survey Summary 03.07.2024.

STAFF AND STAKEHOLDER SURVEY

The City of Rhinelander solicited input from staff and alderpersons in a survey completed in February 2024. The survey received 14 responses. Participants were asked to rate the city on a variety of perceptions and services in a format that aligned with the community-informed survey, brainstorm ideas for the practical vision and underlying contradictions workshops within the strategic planning process, and identify the city's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Full results of the survey are available in the appendix titled City of Rhinelander Strategic Planning Committee Survey Summary 03.07.2024.

PRE-WORKSHOP INTERVIEWS

Prior to the start of the strategic planning process, Northspan conducted interviews with the City of Rhinelander's alderpersons, city administrator, and department heads. These 16 interviews drew out insights on members' roles in the strategic planning process, identified things that were going well, and identified potential issues for the community. It explored participants' perceptions on the process, their insight into the broader community, and fostered thought on training and succession planning. A complete survey summary is available in the appendix titled City of Rhinelander Pre-Workshop Interviews Summary 03.07.2024.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ANALYSIS

Northspan reviewed an array of past reports, studies, and surveys completed by the City of Rhinelander and augmented it with its own research on economic and demographic trends for the city and surrounding areas. This research was presented at the first Strategic Planning Session. Details from this section are included in the main text of this report.

STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION 1 OF 2
AGENDA | MARCH 19, 2024 | 12:00 PM – 5:00 PM

12:00	Welcome, Agenda, & Introductions
12:30	Context Presentation
1:00	Practical Vision Focused Conversation
1:20	Underlying Contradictions Focused Conversation
1:40	Strategic Directions Consensus Workshop
3:00	Develop Mission
3:30	Develop Vision
4:00	Develop Core Values
4:45	Next Steps
5:00	Adjourn

On March 19th, the strategy committee met for the first time and received a presentation on the results of the survey and broader economic and demographic trends in Rhinelander and the surrounding area. It then reaffirmed a practical vision and explored underlying contradictions for the strategic planning process. Elements of the practical vision included:

- Sustainable Infrastructure and Utilities
- Expanded Recreational Activities
- Affordable housing
- Improved City Operations
- Flourishing local economy and workforce
- Comprehensive community support services and safety

Elements of the underlying contradictions included:

- Limited resources restrict economic growth
- Conflicts prevent effective collaboration
- Maintaining the status quo slows advancement and innovation
- Unclear direction causes apathy and confusion
- Neglected properties contribute to negative perceptions

With the contradictions in mind, the participants then moved to identify six strategic directions that they believe will allow the City of Rhinelander to overcome these blocks. These strategic directions are available in the appendix in the document titled City of Rhinelander Practical Vision, Underlying Contradictions, Strategic Directions 03.20.2024.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

- Identifying and Prioritizing Revenue Sources and Uses
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Following the Strategic Directions Consensus Workshop, participants worked together to create a vision and mission for the City of Rhinelander and identify core values that represent the city's interests.

VISION:

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STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION 2 OF 2 AGENDA
MARCH 20, 2024 | 8:00 AM – 1:00 PM

8:00	Welcome, Agenda, & Introductions
8:20	Focused Implementation Workshop: Current Reality, Success Indicators, Actions, Timeline
12:40	Next Steps
1:00	Adjourn

On March 20, Northspan facilitated a final workshop with the strategy committee. In this session, participants detailed outcomes and actions that could move Rhinelander toward its strategic directions and placed these actions on a timeline.

The City of Rhinelander defined its current reality, identified success indicators, and developed actions and accomplishments that will allow the organization to move from current reality to success. These actions and the ideas that led to their creation are available in the appendix in the document titled City of Rhinelander Current Reality, Success Indicators & Actions 03.20.2024. The City of Rhinelander then further defined the strategic plan timeline, which is available in the appendix titled City of Rhinelander Strategic Plan Timeline 03.20.2024

CITY OF RHINELANDER

APPENDIX 2

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA AND ECONOMIC TRENDS ANALYSIS

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA AND ECONOMIC TRENDS ANALYSIS

In January and February 2024, Northspan completed an analysis of demographic data and economic trends in the City of Rhinelander and surrounding county. This research provides a snapshot of local economic conditions and how they have changed over time, giving some sense of what Rhinelander's future might look like.

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Population

According to 2022 US Census data, the City of Rhinelander has a population of 8,263 residents, which is an increase of 487 or 5.9% over 2012 population data. Oneida County has seen a population increase as well, with 1,770 people moving into the county over the past decade. The growth rate of both Rhinelander and Oneida County is slightly larger than the rate of the state of Wisconsin as a whole, which stands at 3.4%.

Table 1: City of Rhinelander Population Change, 2012-2022

	2012	2022	% Change
City of Rhinelander	7,776	8,263	5.9%
Oneida County	36,029	37,799	4.9%
Wisconsin	5,687,219	5,882,128	3.4%

Source: Social Explorer; U.S. Census Bureau

The majority of Rhinelander's population growth took place in the under 18 age brackets, with additional growth in the 18-34 age group. The only bracket that experienced loss between 2012 and 2022 was the 65-plus age bracket, which declined by 11.8%. Comparatively, the 65-plus age bracket increased by 22.6% across Oneida County during the same period, and the under 18 age brackets decreased slightly. 35–64-year-olds continue to be the largest age group in both Rhinelander and Oneida County.

Table 2: City of Rhinelander Population by Age, 2012-2022

	ONEIDA COUNTY				CITY OF RHINELANDER			
	2012	2022	% Change	% Total	2012	2022	% Change	% Total
Total	36,029	37,799	4.9%		7,776	8,236	5.6%	
Under 18	6,581	6,490	-1.4%	17.2%	1,523	1,740	12.3%	21%
18-34	5,665	5,759	1.6%	15%	1,775	1,975	10%	24%
35-64	15,920	15,388	-3.3%	40.7%	2,771	2,997	7.5%	35.4%
65+	7,863	10,162	22.6%	26.9%	1,704	1,524	-11.8%	18.5%

Source: Social Explorer; U.S. Census Bureau

Rhinelander's number of households declined over the decade between 2012 and 2022 by 180, or 5.1%., while Oneida County had a modest growth of 151 or 1.2%. Family size went up slightly, so fewer people are living alone. This matches the previous observation that the growth has been in the youngest age brackets. This is rare for a rural place, and counter to the general trend nationally.

Table 3: City of Rhinelander and Oneida County Household Characteristics, 2012-2022

	ONEIDA COUNTY			CITY OF RHINELANDER		
Households	**2012**	**2022**	**% Change**	**2012**	**2022**	**% Change**
Avg. Household Size	16,266	16,417	1.2%	3,516	3,336	-5.1%
Families	2.2	2.3	-4.1%	2.1	2.4	14.6%
Married Couples	8,947	8,655	-3.3%	1,242	1,236	-.05%
With 1+ Child under 18	6,313	6,308	-.1%	1,691	1,453	14%

Source: Social Explorer; U.S. Census Bureau

The City of Rhinelander is a predominantly white community. It grew somewhat more diverse over the decade between 2012 and 2022, but the only groups with high rates of growth tended to be the smallest categories, leaving them liable to large shifts due to a small sample size. The population that identified as two or more races experienced growth, as did the population that identified as Some Other Race and American Indian and Alaskan Native. Populations of Native Americans are also subject to other changes related to how tribes track and grant membership and may experience significant changes in data that do not necessarily reflect a change in the actual racial composition of the community.

Table 4: Racial Composition of the City of Rhinelander, 2012-2022

	2012	**2022**	**% CHANGE**
White Alone	96.6%	90.2%	-1.2%
Black or African American Alone	1.5%	1.0%	-24.6%
American Indian and Alaskan Native	1.0%	3.0%	212.7%
Other (Includes 2 or More Races)	0.9%	5.8%	85%

Source: Social Explorer; U.S. Census Bureau

The median household in Rhinelander had an income of $32,419 in 2012. This figure is lower than both Oneida County at $44,181 and the statewide figure of $52,627. While household income increased in the ten years between 2012 and 2022 by 47.2%, the median still lags the county and the state. The faster increase for those at the bottom of the income scale is consistent with national trends in recent years, which is a reversal of trends over previous decades in which income gaps between classes grew steadily across the country.

Table 5: Median Household Income in Rhinelander and Comparative Areas, 2012-2022

	2012	2022	% CHANGE
Wisconsin	$52,627	$72,458	37.7%
Oneida County	$44,181	$66,111	49.6%
City of Rhinelander	$32,419	$47,730	47.2%

Source: Social Explorer; U.S. Census Bureau

The poverty rate increased in Rhinelander for adults ages 18-64 and decreased for individuals in the 65+ age bracket over the decade spanning 2012-2022. Compared to the national average of 11.5%, Rhinelander has a higher rate of poverty.

Table 6: Poverty in Rhinelander and Comparison Areas, 2012-2022

	WISCONSIN			ONEIDA COUNTY			CITY OF RHINELANDER		
	2012	2022	% Change	2012	2022	% Change	2012	2022	% Change
Poverty Rate	12.47%	10.65%	-1.1%	10.8%	9.5%	-6.5%	19.4%	18.4%	-3.7%

Source: Social Explorer; U.S. Census Bureau

Like Oneida County, Rhinelander has a well-educated workforce, with very strong high school graduation rates and college attendance that surpasses statewide figures. These advantages slip somewhat among bachelor's and advanced degrees in both Rhinelander and Oneida County when compared to state data. As in most communities, education attainment has steadily increased over recent decades, climbing from a high school completion rate of 88% and bachelor's or more of 14% in 2010.

Table 7: Educational Attainment in Rhinelander and Comparison Areas, 2022

	CITY OF RHINELANDER	ONEIDA COUNTY	STATE OF WISCONSIN
Less than H.S. Degree	1.9%	4.6%	6.9%
H.S. Degree	95.1%	95.4%	93.1%

Source: Social Explorer; U.S. Census Bureau

As of 2022, there are 4,391 housing units in Rhinelander. The notable number here is the rise in "vacant" housing- likely because of seasonal and short-term rental.

Table 8: Rhinelander Housing Occupancy, 2012-2022

	CITY OF RHINELANDER				
	2012	**% Total**	**2022**	**% Total**	**% Change**
Owner Occupied	2,026	49%	2,153	49%	6.3%
Renter Occupied	1,490	36%	1,183	27%	-20.6%
Total Occupied	3,516	85%	3,336	76%	-5.4%
Vacant (including seasonal units)	616	15%	1,055	24%	71.3%
Total Units	4,132		4,391		6.3%

Source: Social Explorer; U.S. Census Bureau

Both listed and sale prices in Rhinelander are lower than Oneida County with a larger percentage of homeowners paying more than 30% of their income for mortgage costs. Also, the housing stock in the City of Rhinelander is older than housing throughout the county by 21 years.

Table 9: Owner Occupied Housing Characteristics

	CITY OF RHINELANDER	ONEIDA COUNTY
Median List Price (2024)	$287,400	$379,000
Median Sale Price (2024)	$229,300	$299,900
Median Year Built	1960	1981
Homes with a Mortgage	1,157	7,329
Mortgage more than 30% of income	319 (27%)	1,754 (24%)
Mortgage more than 50% income	134 (11.5%)	794 (10.8%)

Sources: Social Explorer; U.S. Census Bureau & Realtor.com

Rent in both Rhinelander and Oneida County is less than the national average of nearly $1,500 per month, but there are still a large number of people who are considered cost burdened, as they are paying more than 30% of their income for rent.

Table 10: Rental Occupied Housing Characteristics

	CITY OF RHINELANDER	ONEIDA COUNTY
Median Gross Rent	$867	$876
More than 30% of income	39%	17%
More than 50% of income	11%	6.5%

Source: Social Explorer; U.S. Census Bureau

ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

Occupations of Rhinelander Residents

Rhinelander is a regional hub with an economy grounded in local services, manufacturing, and the local tourism industry, providing it with a healthy mix of economic options. Like most communities, education and health care are the dominant occupation sectors, but manufacturing is its second largest, and has grown at a very healthy rate over the past decade, with the Ahlstrom paper mill serving as a regional anchor. Retail, recreation, and tourism-related industries are also significant for the area, though they have faced more challenging headwinds amid the Covid-19 pandemic and broader trends toward online shopping. Other service-related sectors, while not growing, still form a reliable core of local business, while most other industries are relatively small and employ fewer than 100 people.

**Table 11: Occupations of Rhinelander Residents, 2011-2021**

	2011	2011 Pct. TOTAL	2021	2021 Pct. TOTAL	CHANGE, 2011-2021	% CHANGE
Educational & Healthcare	703	18.3%	799	22.3%	96	14%
Manufacturing	545	14.2%	670	18.7%	125	23%
Retail Trade	618	16.1%	617	17.2%	-1	0%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation, & Food Services	469	12.2%	370	10.3%	-99	-21%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	171	4.4%	232	6.5%	61	36%
Professional Services, Management, & Administration	328	8.5%	224	6.2%	-104	-32%
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	229	6.0%	222	6.2%	-7	-3%
Wholesale Trade	127	3.3%	91	2.5%	-36	-28%
Construction	318	8.3%	85	2.4%	-233	-73%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting & Mining	24	0.6%	84	2.3%	60	250%
Information	97	2.5%	83	2.3%	-14	-14%
Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities	129	3.4%	63	1.8%	-66	-51%
Public Administration	85	2.2%	46	1.3%	-39	-46%
Total	3843		3586		-257	-7%

Sources: American Community Survey and Social Explorer

COMMUTING PATTERNS

The City of Rhinelander is a regional center in northern Wisconsin. It attracts workers from surrounding areas, pulling in a net of over 5,500 commuters a day from other nearby communities while losing just over 2,000, yielding a net influx of 3,644 workers on the average day. 1,558 of the city's 3,708 residents who are currently employed work in the city itself, a figure that is higher than those in some comparable communities, but nonetheless means over half of employed Rhinelander residents work outside its boundaries. These data points show the interconnectedness of Rhinelander with area communities.

Communities that send the most workers to Rhinelander include Tomahawk, Wausau, Crandon, Merrill, and Three Lakes. The most common places of employment for Rhinelander residents after Rhinelander itself include Wausau, Madison, Eagle River, Tomahawk, and Stevens Point; some of the more distant locations on this list, such as Madison, may indicate remote employees or employees of organizations that are based in Madison but have local branches. Census measurements of these trends are evolving, particularly in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent move toward greater remote work.
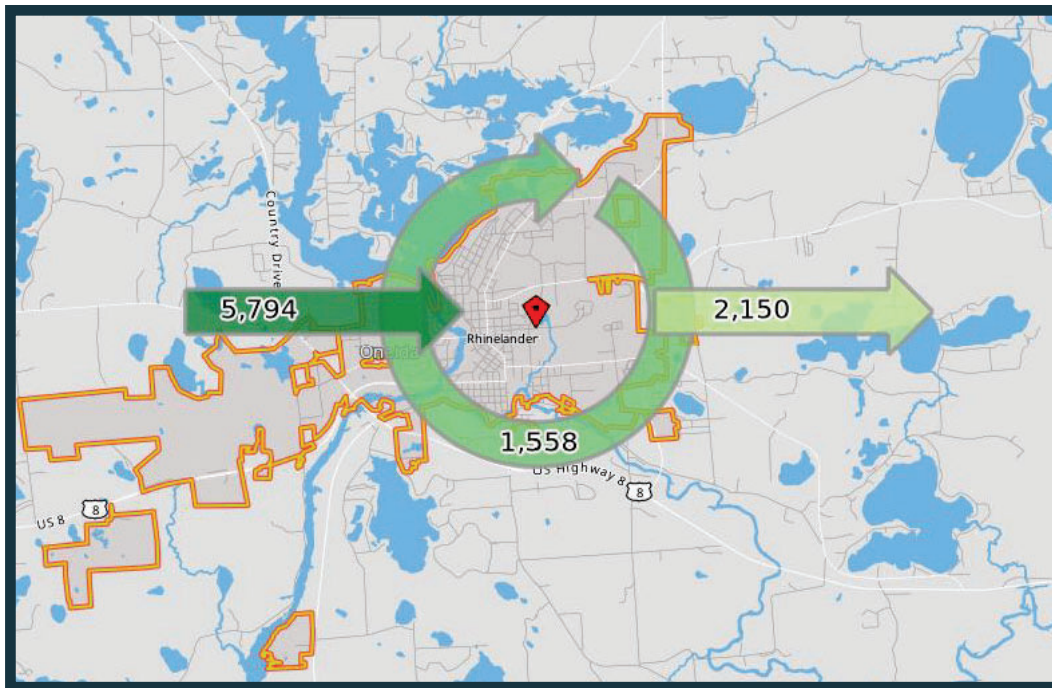
Source: US Census Bureau OnTheMap

LABOR FORCE DATA

The 2021 American Community Survey identifies 3,643 Rhinelander residents, or just over 55% of the population, as participants in the labor force. Given the interrelationships between the city and its surrounding communities identified in the commute pattern data, labor force figures for Oneida County also provide valuable context on the local labor market.

Table 12: Oneida County Labor Force Data, 2012-2022

	2012	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Educational & Healthcare	19,109	17,897	18,020	18,086	17,815	18,146
Manufacturing	17,473	17,163	16,707	17,299	17,226	17,556
Retail Trade	8.6%	4.1%	7.3%	4.4%	3.3%	3.2%

Source: Job Center of Wisconsin

Oneida County's labor force declined over much of the 2010s. At the start of the decade, it faced high unemployment as it emerged from the Great Recession, and while unemployment dropped by more than half over the long economic expansion that followed, employment numbers nonetheless shrank as the county population grew by only a small margin and a large cohort of Baby Boomers moved toward retirement. Although the economic shock created by the Covid-19 pandemic briefly drove up unemployment, the labor force grew in 2020 and, after a momentary regression in 2022, has shown signs of modest growth since. While a longer time horizon will provide more meaningful conclusions over the sustainability of and reasons for these changes, it does suggest a potential influx of residents amid Covid era desires for more space and access to nature, the relative safety of smaller communities, and the benefits of remote work. Unemployment in Oneida County fell to a historic low of 3.2% in 2023, a figure that reflects an exceptionally tight labor market.

ECONOMIC BASE ANALYSIS

This report provides a brief overview of the Oneida County economic base. (This analysis is better conducted at the county level than at the city level, both for data quality and to ensure a broader understanding of the local economy and its opportunities.) It begins by calculating the location quotient (LQ) of each major industry group. A location quotient shows the relative concentration of employment in an industry relative to a larger comparison area. This analysis compares Oneida County to the state of Wisconsin. Location quotients over 1 indicate a relative strength and concentration of employment in an industry, while those under 1 show a relative lack of employment.

A shift-share analysis is a method that subsequently analyzes how a county's location quotients have changed over time. Such an assessment of Oneida County shows that manufacturing, education, finance and insurance, administrative professions, and accommodation and food services are sectors in which its comparative advantage has grown over the past decade. The largest declines in location quotient, meanwhile, occurred in agriculture and forestry, retail trade, real estate, construction, and other services. Most other location quotients saw relatively few shifts over the decade or took place in industries with a relatively small number of employees.

Table 13: Location Quotients and Shift-Share Analysis of Oneida County Industries, 2012-2022

INDUSTRY	2012 LQ	2022 LQ	SHIFT SHARE
Retail Trade	2.0	1.7	-12%
Accommodation & Food Services	1.3	1.6	17%
Utilities	1.1	1.4	32%
Manufacturing	0.5	1.4	153%
Educational Services	0.8	1.3	74%
Public Administration	1.1	1.3	13%
Health Care & Social Assistance	1.2	1.1	-7%
Construction	1.3	1.1	-10%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	1.5	1.1	-24%
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	1.3	1.1	-11%
Information	0.9	0.9	-1%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1.0	0.9	84%
Finance and Insurance	0.5	0.9	84%
Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	0.6	0.8	30%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	1.3	0.8	-39%
Transportation & Warehousing	0.7	0.7	-1%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0.8	0.7	-11%
Wholesale Trade	0.6	0.7	22%
Administrative & Support & Waste Management & Remediation Services	0.6	0.7	21%

Identification of location quotients and their trends allows for the completion of an economic base analysis that sorts the major industry clusters into four categories:

Economic Base: industries with high and growing location quotients

Transforming: industries with high, but declining, location quotients

Emerging: industries with low, but growing, location quotients

Declining: industries with low and declining location quotients

TRANSFORMING	ECONOMIC BASE
Retail Trade	Health Care
Construction	Accommodation & Food Services
Real Estate, Rental, and Leasing	Manufacturing
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting	Public Administration
	Utilities
DECLINING	**EMERGING**
Other Services	Educational Sales
Transportation and Warehousing	Wholesale Trade
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	Admin & Support
Information	Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services
Management of Companies and Enterprises	Finance & Insurance

CONCLUSIONS

This analysis gives a general sense of the state and trajectory of the local economy. Oneida County's regional centers and somewhat older population lead to a strong concentration in health care, and accommodation and food services, which trades on the region's woods, lakes, and natural beauty, are foundational to its economic success, showing resilience even amid the Covid era disruptions. The growth in manufacturing is also an encouraging sign, showing strength and adding over 100 jobs over the past decade even amid a more complex outlook in other parts of the state and country. The county's healthy mix of growth in both newer and legacy industries offer a solid foundation that Rhinelander and neighboring communities can cultivate.

Retail trade, long central to the region's economy both as regional centers for shopping and through more niche shops targeting tourists, faces significant headwinds amid a changing retail environment. The construction and real estate sectors, likely hampered by high construction costs, rising interest rates, and limited work force have the potential to hold back growth in other sectors and further growth in the hospitality industry, which could be a warning sign for the region's longer-term outlook. The struggles in agriculture and forestry reflect some challenges in the national wood products industry and limited market size for certain recreational activities, even if they remain relative strengths for Rhinelander and its surrounding area.

Emerging industries in Oneida County tend to be service based, meaning they are generally subject to overall population trends and are unlikely to benefit from sustained economic development attention. The decline and general weakness in arts, entertainment, and recreation jumps out as a potential opportunity given strength of recreation and tourism to the local economy. There may also be opportunities within manufacturing supply chains to support more transportation-related industry in the area.

Photo by RoyalBroil

CITY OF
RHINELANDER

APPENDIX 3

COMMUNITY-INFORMED SURVEY SUMMARY
03.07.2024

CITY OF RHINELANDER
COMMUNITY INFORMED SURVEY SUMMARY

CITY OF RHINELANDER

The City of Rhinelander contracted with Northspan to survey community members as part of the strategic planning process. The survey was distributed via SurveyMonkey and was open from February 1, 2024, through March 17, 2024. A total of 302 respondents completed the survey.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Questions #1 through #5 asked respondents to share information on demographics, social characteristics, residence status in Oneida County/the City of Rhinelander, and length of time in the city, if applicable.

#1. What is your age?

Under 18	0%
18-24	3%
25-34	21%
35-64	58%
65+	19%

#2. Which of the following groups do you identify with? Please select all that apply:

White/Caucasian	98%
Member of the LGBTQ2S+ community	5%
Veteran	5%
Person with a disability	5%
American Indian or Native American	3%
Hispanic/Latinx	1%
Two or more races	1%
Person who uses a wheelchair	0%
Black or African American	0%
Asian or Pacific Islander	0%
Person who uses a communication device or an alternative method of communication	0%

#3. Are you a resident of Oneida County?

Yes	97%
No	3%

#4. Are you a resident of the City of Rhinelander?

Yes	66%
No	34%

#5. If yes, how long have you lived in the City of Rhinelander?

Less than 1 year	1%
1-5 years	19%
6-10 years	11%
Over 10 years	68%

CITY OF
RHINELANDER

COMMUNITY SERVICES AND PRIORITIES

Questions #2 through #6 on the survey asked participants to rank statements related to their satisfaction with the City of Rhinelander, the quality of city services and staff, and priorities they hope to see city leadership take action on in the next 10 years.

#6. On a scale of 1 (very dissatisfied) through 5 (very satisfied), how would you rate the City of Rhinelander as a...

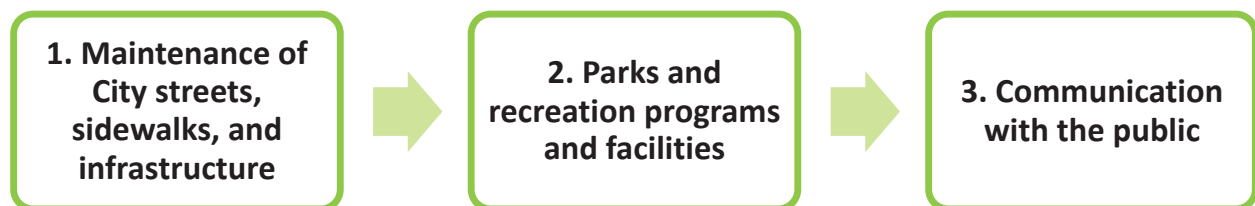|	1	2	3	4	5
Place to live	3%	8%	32%	42%	15%
Place to raise children	3%	10%	29%	41%	17%
Place to work	7%	13%	33%	35%	12%
Place to retire	4%	7%	25%	33%	31%
Place to visit	6%	10%	27%	32%	25%
Place that is accepting of diversity	14%	24%	34%	19%	9%
Place you are proud to call home	4%	9%	23%	39%	26%
Community that is moving in the right direction	7%	13%	35%	31%	15%

#7. For each item listed below, please rate your satisfaction on a scale of 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied) with the overall quality of the City of Rhinelander's...

	1	2	3	4	5
Public safety (police, fire, EMS)	6%	4%	16%	37%	37%
Snowplowing	7%	13%	26%	30%	24%
Maintenance of city streets, sidewalks, and infrastructure	18%	16%	34%	22%	10c
Flow of traffic and congestion management in the city	7%	11%	26%	40%	16%
Parks and recreation programs and facilities	7%	11%	27%	34%	21%
District library	3%	3%	21%	33%	40%
Airport	3%	4%	20%	41%	31%
Golf course	7%	6%	43%	30%	13%
Enforcement of city codes and ordinances	9%	16%	40%	31%	5%
Solid waste services (trash, recycling, yard waste, etc.)	2%	5%	27%	38%	28%
Water and sewer services	8%	7%	32%	34%	19%
Communication with the public	14%	16%	35%	26%	8%
Customer service from city employees	10%	8%	32%	32%	17%

CITY OF RHINELANDER

Respondents were asked to select which **three** categories of city services listed should receive the most emphasis from city leaders in the next 10 years. Top-ranked choices showed support for core city services such as maintaining infrastructure, parks and recreation, and communication with the public. Some respondents also indicated other services, including housing, tourism, diversity initiatives, and school and youth programs.

#8. Which 3 categories listed above should receive the most emphasis from City leaders in the next 10 years?

Maintenance of city streets, sidewalks, and infrastructure	21%
Parks and recreation programs and facilities	16%
Communication with the public	11%
Enforcement of city codes and ordinances	7%
Public safety (police, fire, EMS)	6%
Flow of traffic and congestion management in the city	6%
Water and sewer services	6%
Snowplowing	4%
District library	3%
Other - Housing	3%
Other - Economic and workforce development	3%
Customer service from city employees	3%
Other - Misc.	2%
Other - Tourism	2%
Other - Acceptance of diversity	1%
Other - Schools and youth/family programs	1%
Golf course	1%
Airport	1%
Solid waste services (trash, recycling, yard waste, etc.)	1%

1. Maintenance of City streets, sidewalks, and infrastructure → **2. Parks and recreation programs and facilities** → **3. Communication with the public**

Respondents were then asked to rate their overall satisfaction with community priority topics for the City of Rhinelander. Responses indicated that top-rated priorities from community members were the overall quality of the services provided by the city, crime prevention, flood prevention and stormwater management, and overall quality of life. Low-rated items included affordable housing, diversity of housing options, public transportation, and the variety of restaurants available.

#9. Please rate your satisfaction with the following community priority topics for the City of Rhinelander using a scale of 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied):

	1	2	3	4	5
Overall quality of services provided by the city	4%	7%	38%	42%	9%
Flood prevention and stormwater management	2%	7%	33%	41%	17%
Quality and drivability of city streets	13%	22%	32%	25%	7%
Integration of biking lanes and trails	17%	20%	33%	22%	8%
Crime prevention	6%	9%	27%	41%	17%
A balanced city budget	7%	12%	43%	29%	9%
Vibrant business districts	13%	20%	36%	22%	8%
Variety of restaurants	21%	30%	26%	16%	6%
Variety of retail stores	15%	25%	31%	21%	8%
Availability of parking near amenities	8%	11%	29%	34%	18%
Diversity of housing options (rent, buy, single-family, multi-family, etc.)	42%	29%	14%	9%	7%
Affordable housing	45%	25%	16%	7%	7%
Environmental preservation	10%	23%	35%	23%	9%
Arts and cultural amenities	8%	15%	42%	25%	11%
Green space	10%	16%	27%	35%	14%
Historic preservation	8%	10%	33%	36%	13%
Overall quality of life	3%	6%	35%	39%	16%
Walkability of sidewalks and trails	6%	19%	26%	36%	13%
Welcoming and inclusion initiatives	13%	21%	38%	20%	8%
Public transportation	31%	27%	27%	12%	3%

CITY OF RHINELANDER

SWOT ANALYSIS: STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, & THREATS

For questions #10 through #13, participants were asked to complete a SWOT Analysis, identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats as related to the City of Rhinelander. Responses were grouped based on themes and are listed below in the order of frequency, with answers of 10% or more listed in bold.

#10. Strengths – *Internal factors that give the City of Rhinelander an advantage over others*	#11. Weaknesses – *Internal factors that place the City of Rhinelander at a disadvantage relative to others*
• **Natural environment and outdoor recreation**	• **Inadequate affordable housing and rental options**
• Variety of businesses and stores	• Local politics and city officials
• Friendly and engaged community members	• Limited variety of restaurants and retail shops
• College, schools, and youth programs	• Closeminded attitudes and resistance to change
• Safety and responsive emergency services	• Road and infrastructure maintenance
• Rich history, mascot, and community identity	• Lack of accessible transportation options
• Events, activities, and tourism	• Low wages, few employment options, and limited workforce
• Organizations, non-profits, and community groups	• Downtown curb appeal, blight, and littering
• Local economy, workforce, and potential for growth	• Financial management, zoning, and development strategies
• Public services and city administration	• Activities and support for the needs of different age groups
• Hodag Dome and sports facilities	• Lack of diversity and diversity initiatives
• Small town appeal	• Limited access to quality, comprehensive healthcare
• Medical and healthcare facilities	• Water contamination and environmental concerns
• Library	• Not embracing or promoting tourism
• Arts and culture	• Crime, substance abuse, and safety concerns
• Northwoods industry hub location	• School funding and access to quality education
• Broad appeal and support for diverse residents	• High cost of living, taxes, and poverty
• Accessibility and affordability	• Limited entertainment options
• Airport	• Underdeveloped outdoor recreation areas
• Downtown area	• Traffic control and pedestrian safety
	• Inadequate child care
	• Mismanagement of municipal facilities
	• Internet and cell phone infrastructure

#12. Opportunities - *External factors that the City of Rhinelander could capitalize on to our advantage*	#13. Threats – *External factors that could create challenges for the City of Rhinelander*
Capitalize on natural resources, parks, and outdoor recreation **Support new business development** - Actively encourage tourism - Offer events, activities, and community spaces for all ages - Foster community partnerships, engagement, and receptiveness from city officials - Prioritize quality of schools and child care options - Invest in biking and pedestrian infrastructure and public transportation - Promote, expand, and repurpose existing facilities - Increase affordable, quality housing stock and provide resources for residents - Continued downtown revitalization, repurposing vacant buildings, and new development - People's growing desire to move to small towns can attract new residents - Explore and pursue grant funding - Diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives - Reevaluate city ordinances, policies, and revenue streams - Market and promote mascot and city identity - Utilize hub status and encourage job creation - Public infrastructure and utility improvements - Improve access to quality healthcare	**Crime and substance abuse** - Affordable housing shortage - Perceptions of discrimination, lack of diversity, and resistance to change - Lack of local economic diversity and job market impacts - Local politics and eroded trust in city officials - Pollution and environmental concerns - Brain drain and inability to attract or retain younger residents - Economy and rising cost of living - Inconsistent or unreliable funding - Climate change and reliance on weather - Losing tourists to competing areas - Corporate businesses threatening small, local business options - Gentrification and loss of small-town charm - National and state-level political divides - Insufficient and aging infrastructure - Aging population and strain on services - Declining quality of schools and lack of access to child care - Healthcare system changes and retention issues - Reduced volunteerism and lack of key social resources - Media coverage and bias

PRACTICAL VISION

The last section of the survey asked participants to consider the question: *"What do you want to see in place in 10 years as a result of the City of Rhinelander's strategic planning actions?"*

Responses covered a variety of topics, with the top responses indicating a desire to see improved infrastructure and utilities maintenance, housing, a greater variety of age-inclusive events, and expanded retail and restaurant options. A total of 492 practical vision ideas were submitted and were categorized into high-level buckets below.

#14. "What do you want to see in place in 10 years as a result of the City of Rhinelander's strategic planning actions?"

Sustainable Infrastructure and Utilities	33%
Expanded Recreational Activities	30%
Affordable housing	13%
Improved City Operations	8%
Flourishing local economy and workforce	5%
Comprehensive community support services	4%
Increased sense of safety	4%
Welcoming and inclusive community identity	3%

CITY OF
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APPENDIX 4

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE SURVEY SUMMARY
03.07.2024

The City of Rhinelander contracted with Northspan to survey members of its Strategic Planning Committee as part of the strategic planning process. The survey was distributed via SurveyMonkey and was open from February 1, 2024, through March 17, 2024. A total of 14 respondents completed the survey.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Questions #1 through #5 asked respondents to share information on demographics, social characteristics, residence status in Oneida County/the City of Rhinelander, and length of time in the city, if applicable.

#1. What is your age?

Under 18	0%
18-24	0%
25-34	8%
35-64	92%
65+	0%

#2. Which of the following groups do you identify with? Please select all that apply:

White / Caucasian	92%
Hispanic / Latinx	8%
American Indian or Native American	0%
Black or African American	0%
Asian or Pacific Islander	0%
Two or more races	0%
Member of the LGBTQ2S+ community	0%
Veteran	0%
Person who uses a wheelchair	0%
Person with a disability	0%
Person who uses a communication device or an alternative method of communication	0%

#3. Are you a resident of Oneida County?

Yes	77%
No	23%

#3. Are you a resident of the City of Rhinelander?

Yes	15%
No	85%

#4. If yes, how long have you lived in the City of Rhinelander?

Less than 1 year	0%
1-5 years	0%
6-10 years	50%
Over 10 years	50%

CITY OF
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COMMUNITY SERVICES AND PRIORITIES

Questions #2 through #6 on the survey asked participants to rank statements related to their satisfaction with the City of Rhinelander, the quality of city services and staff, and priorities they hope to see city leadership take action on in the next 10 years.

#6. On a scale of 1 (very dissatisfied) through 5 (very satisfied), how would you rate the City of Rhinelander as a...

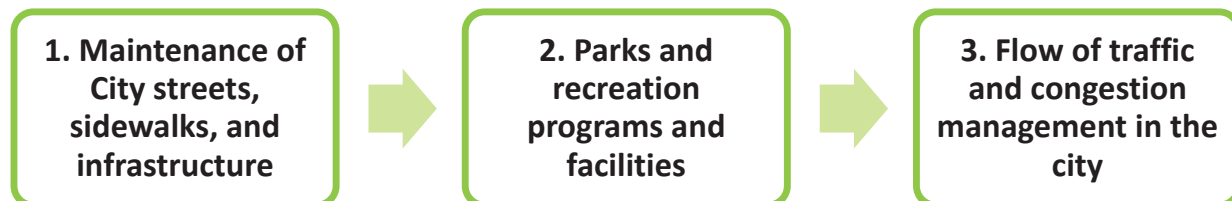|	1	2	3	4	5
Place to live	0%	17%	33%	33%	17%
Place to raise children	0%	0%	33%	25%	42%
Place to work	0%	17%	25%	50%	8%
Place to retire	8%	0%	33%	42%	17%
Place to visit	8%	8%	33%	25%	25%
Place that is accepting of diversity	0%	8%	50%	33%	8%
Place you are proud to call home	9%	9%	27%	9%	45%
Community that is moving in the right direction	0%	0%	75%	17%	8%

#7. For each item listed below, please rate your satisfaction on a scale of 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied) with the overall quality of the City of Rhinelander's...

	1	2	3	4	5
Public safety (police, fire, EMS)	8%	0%	15%	46%	31%
Snowplowing	0%	8%	31%	62%	0%
Maintenance of city streets, sidewalks, and infrastructure	0%	31%	31%	38%	0%
Flow of traffic and congestion management in the city	0%	31%	15%	46%	8%
Parks and recreation programs and facilities	8%	0%	31%	38%	23%
District library	0%	15%	23%	46%	15%
Airport	0%	15%	31%	15%	38%
Golf course	15%	15%	38%	31%	0%
Enforcement of city codes and ordinances	15%	31%	31%	23%	0%
Solid waste services (trash, recycling, yard waste, etc.)	8%	8%	31%	54%	0%
Water and sewer services	0%	8%	31%	38%	23%
Communication with the public	0%	8%	31%	46%	15%
Customer service from city employees	0%	0%	23%	54%	23%

CITY OF
RHINELANDER

Respondents were asked to select which **three** categories of city services listed should receive the most emphasis from city leaders in the next 10 years. Top-ranked choices showed support for core city services such as maintaining infrastructure, parks and recreation, and management of traffic flow and congestion in the city. Some respondents also indicated other services, including economic development and technical advancements.

#8. Which 3 categories listed above should receive the most emphasis from City leaders in the next 10 years?

Maintenance of city streets, sidewalks, and infrastructure	23%
Parks and recreation programs and facilities	21%
Flow of traffic and congestion management in the city	13%
Enforcement of city codes and ordinances	8%
Golf course	8%
Public safety (police, fire, EMS)	8%
Water and sewer services	5%
Airport	3%
Communication with the public	3%
Customer service from city employees	3%
District library	3%
Other - Economic development	3%
Other - Technical advancements	3%
Snowplowing	0%
Solid waste services (trash, recycling, yard waste, etc.)	0%

1. Maintenance of City streets, sidewalks, and infrastructure → **2. Parks and recreation programs and facilities** → **3. Flow of traffic and congestion management in the city**

Respondents were then asked to rate their overall satisfaction with community priority topics for the City of Rhinelander. Responses indicated that top-rated priorities from community members were the overall quality of the services provided by the city, crime prevention, flood prevention and stormwater management, and overall quality of life. Low-rated items included affordable housing, diversity of housing options, public transportation, and the variety of restaurants available.

#9. Please rate your satisfaction with the following community priority topics for the City of Rhinelander using a scale of 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied):

	1	2	3	4	5
Overall quality of services provided by the city	0%	8%	15%	69%	8%
Flood prevention and stormwater management	0%	0%	38%	46%	15%
Quality and drivability of city streets	0%	38%	38%	23%	0%
Integration of biking lanes and trails	0%	38%	8%	46%	8%
Crime prevention	8%	23%	8%	38%	23%
A balanced city budget	8%	0%	38%	23%	31%
Vibrant business districts	8%	23%	23%	46%	0%
Variety of restaurants	31%	23%	38%	0%	8%
Variety of retail stores	15%	46%	15%	15%	8%
Availability of parking near amenities	8%	15%	31%	31%	15%
Diversity of housing options (rent, buy, single-family, multi-family, etc.)	23%	62%	15%	0%	0%
Affordable housing	31%	46%	23%	0%	0%
Environmental preservation	0%	15%	62%	23%	0%
Arts and cultural amenities	0%	8%	54%	38%	0%
Green space	0%	15%	31%	38%	15%
Historic preservation	0%	15%	31%	54%	0%
Overall quality of life	0%	0%	31%	62%	8%
Walkability of sidewalks and trails	0%	23%	23%	38%	15%
Welcoming and inclusion initiatives	0%	23%	38%	38%	0%
Public transportation	23%	23%	38%	15%	0%

CITY OF
RHINELANDER

SWOT ANALYSIS: STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, & THREATS

For questions #10 through #13, participants were asked to complete a SWOT Analysis, identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats as related to the City of Rhinelander. Responses were grouped based on themes and are listed below in the order of frequency, with answers of 10% or more listed in bold.

#10. Strengths – *Internal factors that give the City of Rhinelander an advantage over others*	**#11. Weaknesses** – *Internal factors that place the City of Rhinelander at a disadvantage relative to others*
• **Natural environment and outdoor recreation** • **Unique history, mascot, and community identity** • **Local economy and potential for growth** • Safety and low crime rate • School system and youth programs • Engaged, welcoming community members • Facilities for sports and events • Northwood industry hub location • Small town appeal • Quality of public services and city staff • Downtown • Environmental stewardship • Medical and healthcare facilities • Seasonal events • Variety of retail and dining options	• **Not enough affordable housing options** • **Limited variety of restaurants and retail shops** • **Low wages, few job options, and aging workforce** • **Inability to communicate and collaborate effectively** • Stagnation and resistance to change • Dilapidated buildings and lack of code enforcement • City debt and limited revenue streams • Road, infrastructure, and facility maintenance • Lack of investors and land for community development • Limited all-ages and youth activities • Poor leadership and lack of vision • Contaminated water supply • Limited rural internet access • Minimal diversity • Public transportation

#12. Opportunities - *External factors that the City of Rhinelander could capitalize on to our advantage*	**#13. Threats** – *External factors that could create challenges for the City of Rhinelander*
• **Industry, workforce, and economic opportunities** • **Proximity to nature, parks, and outdoor recreation** • **Support new business, restaurant, and retail options** • Community events and entertainment facilities • Encourage tourism • Expand city limits and public services • Explore and pursue grant funding • Growing population and interest in living in the area • Create higher education opportunities that support community improvements • Develop more affordable housing • Marketing based on the Hodag mascot and city identity • Quality of schools and explore child care options • Promote small businesses and buy-local initiatives • Improved political outreach • Utilize Northwoods hub status	• **Insufficient or unreliable funding** • **Water supply concerns** • Crime and public safety • Low-paying jobs and inability to attract workforce • Political stagnation, corruption, and ineffective leadership • Rising costs, inflation, and supply chain issues • Climate change and weather • Housing shortage • Aging population • Conflict and lack of communication with townships • Deteriorating roads and city appearance • Land shortage and restricted growth • Large-scale government disorder and power imbalances • Reliance on paper mill

PRACTICAL VISION

The next section of the survey asked participants to consider the question: *"What do you want to see in place in 10 years as a result of the City of Rhinelander's strategic planning actions?"*

Responses covered a variety of topics, with the top responses indicating a desire to see improved infrastructure and utilities maintenance, expanded entertainment, recreation, and restaurant options, and plans for more housing. A total of 55 practical vision ideas were submitted and were categorized into high-level buckets below.

#14. "What do you want to see in place in 10 years as a result of the City of Rhinelander's strategic planning actions?"

Sustainable Infrastructure and Utilities	27%
Expanded Recreational Activities	24%
Improved City Operations	20%
Affordable Housing	15%
Flourishing local economy and workforce	15%

UNDERLYING CONTRADICTIONS (BLOCKS)

Next, respondents were asked to answer the question: *"What may be blocking us or holding us back from moving toward your practical vision?"*

Participants identified a range of underlying contradictions (blocks) that may be preventing the City of Rhinelander from realizing their practical vision, including funding and resource constraints, differing agendas, the status quo, lack of direction, and the city's appearance. A total of 45 underlying contradiction responses were received and are clustered below based on their theme.

#15. "What may be blocking us or holding us back from moving toward your practical vision?"

Limited resources restrict economic growth	36%
Conflicts prevent effective collaboration	18%
Maintaining the status quo slows advancement and innovation	18%
Unclear direction causes apathy and confusion	16%
Neglected properties contribute to negative perceptions	13%

VISION, MISSION, & VALUES
The last section of the survey sought to lay the groundwork for the City of Rhinelander's vision, mission, and values. Participants were asked to consider their aspirations and dreams for the City and how things might change if they were realized. The responses received are listed in full below without edits.

#16. What are your aspirations or dreams for the City of Rhinelander?
- For the City of Rhinelander to be sought out as a place to live rather than just to visit.
- Higher paying jobs
- Providing opportunities for the younger generations (live here, stay here)
- Stability of City Admin position so there is commitment and follow through on the ideas brought forward during this process. Someone needs to stick around to nurture and massage this plan to completion.
- To continue to grow the community and the services we offer.
- Togetherness with government, employees and citizens.
- A thriving city with options for dining, shopping, and housing.
- Have a clean City with nice restaurants and plenty of things to do.
- Continue to grow and be a vacation destination.
- Safe and healthy environment with opportunities for all ages
- The Hub for All Things Northern Wisconsin
- Rhinelander being the destination that people want to come to
- I'd like Rhinelander maximize and optimize its geographic footprint, such that blighted buildings and vacant spaces are nonexistent

#17. How would things be different if your aspirations and dreams came true?
- There would be an increase in population and possibly more funding opportunities to support that growth.
- People could afford housing and spend more in our community
- Younger enthusiasm would keep us moving towards bigger goals.
- All comes down to funding and its limitations as already listed
- The housing would be improved, and the sports complexes/parks would match communities surrounding us.
- Our city would flourish.
- The city would be a destination instead of a pass through.
- People would feel better about their community and themselves.
- Bigger tax base for projects and PRAT growth.
- Less crime, health and mental health issues with healthier diet and active lifestyle opportunities for all ages
- Economic Prosperity, Quality of Life, People STAY HERE long-term.
- The city would be cleaner, better designed, traffic flow would be smooth, and there would be opportunity.
- The city itself would have a much larger population and tax base, and be more inviting and welcoming

The final question of the survey asked respondents to consider the culture and values of the City of Rhinelander. Participants were instructed to brainstorm three words that they feel, or hope, are associated with the City of Rhinelander. The 37 responses received are shown below based on the frequency each word appeared.

#18. Please write 3 words you feel, or hope, embody the City of Rhinelander.

Response	Count
Sustainable	6
Friendly/Inviting	6
Safe	5
Pride/proud	4
Growing/Successful	3
Recreation/recreation activities	2
Beautiful/Vibrant	2
Cohesive	1
Community participation	1
Culture	1
Enthusiasm	1
Generous	1
Home	1
Humbled	1
Local	1
Ownership	1

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APPENDIX 5

PRE-WORKSHOP INTERVIEWS SUMMARY
03.07.2024

Prior to the strategic planning sessions, Northspan conducted interviews via Zoom with city staff and alderpersons to gain further knowledge and capture their hopes around change management & maturing the organization including strategic planning feasibility and insight into the broader environment.

During February and March 2024, seventeen (17) interviews were completed. Those interviewed included alderpersons, city administrator, and city department heads.
- 12 Staff Members
- 5 Elected Officials

YOUR ROLE
Participants were asked what aspects of their job they enjoyed, and which aspects felt like a heavy burden, or a challenge. Top responses to what aspects interviewees enjoyed included advocating for constituents and working with other staff members. Burdens or challenges were most likely to include comments about interpersonal and interdepartmental relationships, lack of training, and budget concerns.

What part of your job do you really enjoy doing?
- Advocating for constituents and the community
- Talking to people and getting out into the community
- Influencing how we care for the community
- The mental challenges
- Camaraderie of the department
- Researching and asking questions
- Helping to create a positive culture
- Variety of the job
- Feeling like I have influence

What part of your job feels like a heavy burden or a challenge?
- Working with officials can be difficult
- Navigating the union
- Budgeting is always a challenge
- Working with other people who have differing ideas
- Hiring and finding qualified people
- Lack of training
- Inter-personal relationships
- Inter-departmental challenges
- Balancing wants vs. Needs

Interviewees were asked to share about the role they play in the city and if they feel their skills are valued. Participants responded in a variety of ways, including:
- At times. I hold a lot of credentials and the city doesn't recognize all of them since they were from the private sector. Pay needs to still be worked on to be comparable. Not apples to apples for the title versus the job.
- I do. Sometimes doing things not in job description but they are good things for the community.
- Yes, I do. I get feedback and appreciation.
- Yes and No
- For the most part
- Yes, by other employees. Not as much by administration.

Interviewees were asked to describe what is going well in the city and what complaints or issues they may have. Comments regarding what is going well included business growth and a sense of progress, while remarks regarding complaints or issues centered around a lack of housing and workforce difficulties.

What is going well?
- A lot is going well in Rhinelander. The city runs better, compared to several years ago. The community is moving forward. There is more transparency and efficiency. Residents have a healthier view of the city.
- We are on the right path to grow the city. We are starting to get the word out that we are ready to grow. The day to day functioning of the city is going well. We recently updated ordinances, so that's a good thing.
- One Nation One Project is going really well. We have a location and are just working out some final details. The city website was recently improved, which helps a lot with communication between the community and the city. We have a new City Administrator and I haven't heard any negative feedback, so I think that's going well.
- We do very well with ambulance responses. 2-4 minutes, pretty great, best in WI. We had a balanced budget last year; got it under control. Core staff are so great stepping up to the plate.
- Improving parks
- There is a lot of construction happening in Rhinelander. The population went up over the past few years, which is nice to see. There are a lot a additions happening- the dome on the high school, for example. People seem engaged in the community.
- People get along better right now. A few years ago was really bad, lots of conflict, media attention. Have tamed that, more respectable, higher levels, more togetherness.
- Watching department heads flourish, both new and existing staff members growing into their roles. Seeing everyone work together.
- New city administrator is very collaborative
- Dome has been a huge impact, we can have these tournaments, renting it, even college softball.

What complaints or issues do you have?
- I don't feel like the council's views are always respected. There have been times when items have been taken off the agenda, even though they need to be discussed.
- Going through administrators and public works directors. Economy and finding workers has been hard. Finding workers that want to work. Lots of training, no experience and no credentials. When no one understands the behind-the-scenes, it is hard to attract the right staff.
- Housing
- Not a lot of tourism or grant dollars to work with
- Difficulty in finding adequate staffing
- Departments each have their own needs
- Lack of diversity in local government- would like to see more younger people get involved
- Need more one-on-one time to understand each other and get to the root of problems

BROADER ENVIRONMENT
The next section of the interview asked about the broader environment including staff transitions, training needs, and succession planning.

How is your work evolving, and what does that mean for the type of people and skills that the City of Rhinelander needs?

- The council is asked to do more financial management, for example TIF- regarding business development
- We need more police officers and a new facility for PD, FD, and City Hall in one place. We need more marketing to bring people to the city.
- Different world compared to 1990.
- Business is booming here. In the past few years, several businesses have moved in to Rhinelander, including several hotels, a Starbucks, L & M, and others.
- Talent pool to pick from has dwindled.
- EMT and paramedics are having to do more with less
- Evolving - parks are getting more and more popular, need to maintain, keep them clean, keep the facilities up to date.
- Council meetings have gotten shorter, which is good and bad. Sometimes it seems like councilors do not want to take the time to do their due diligence and simply want to rush through decisions. No one wants to be part of committees anymore, they want to do all committee work during the meeting, but there isn't enough time to do all of it in shorter meetings.
- Good city staff members who seem like they are planning to stick around.
- Lack of training for city staff members
- Providing continuity and stability for a change.
- Need larger employee base
- New website has helped a lot

How is the community changing, and what does that mean for the type of people and skills that the City of Rhinelander needs?

- Business development, town is getting older and yet young families seem to be moving in, water system needs to evolve and improve
- Community is changing in that there are more younger people and young families.
- Ready for change.
- Housing is a big issue. With new businesses, we need places to house them. We recently hired new staff for code-enforcement, so I'm hopeful that housing can move ahead a little better.
- Ebb and flow so much. We still have a group that wants to stay small but most are seeing that the growth is positive for the community as a whole.
- Way behind in residential capacity.
- We are a more transparent government than we've ever been and it's appreciated.
- Deeper appreciation for the municipal workers now.
- Rhinelander is slowly growing, we have to do a lot more work on the outskirts of town plus everything we've been doing for 20 years.
- More sidewalks etc., more snow removal, going to need more people to meet the demand
- There is sometimes a feeling of hopelessness; I'd like to see more of a can-do attitude.
- People in the community are getting older.
- It's still relatively expensive to live here and the wages aren't high enough, so young people tend to leave.
- Young people aren't as involved in civic activity like city government.
- There is a shortage of affordable housing.

- Communication.
- Keeping younger community members involved in things like this so they see value and want to stick around. Making sure the youth are involved.
- City needs to start catering to tech, know in process of how to make people pay for resources, not have to drive across, fill out applications.
- We're doing very well. Growing, but don't have the housing to support that growth.
- Tons of green space, outdoor activities, much more going on than in my community, lots of rec.
- Trying to keep up with growth, keeping our ability to manage that.
- Have to look at safety of the city, PD and FD may need to grow as we grow.
- Going through a phase - significant, sudden growth

Do you see any current or potential future gaps in City of Rhinelander staffing?
- Possibly in the public works
- Leadership gaps
- Nothing major other than many departments not having the staff that they need.
- As an Alderperson, I really only work with department heads, so I'm not sure. I would like to see a city staff directory developed so I know who works for the city.
- Grant writer, think we might have someone at the library that can do this.
- Some departments have open positions.
- Probably need to be looking at a community development and grant writer position.
- Needing a mechanic for a while, almost 2 years, some of those jobs have been really hard to fill, street department needing good staff and that department has shrunk, need more over there
- Some planned and unplanned retirements always come up.
- Street department paying attention to be sure they can get skilled up. How can we pay for training and skilling up our hires?
- We have several gaps coming up - planned retirements, etc. but we have a plan to fill those. I would like to see fully-staffed police and fire departments, and they are trying to fill open slots in those departments.
- We're seeing it's very hard to get firefighters, PD. Just not many people interested in the line of work, pool has diminished, used to line up out the door and that has gone by the wayside.

Are you aware of succession plans that are in place for future staff transitions?
- A number of people have retired in the past few years, but I don't know of any coming up. I would like more clarity around the city's policy of succession
- Lots of turnover in the last two years, lots of new people or people who have been promoted, lots of responsibility change but progressing.
- Not a lot right now
- No, sometimes we know in advance, but most often there isn't time to plan properly.
- I am not. Not a lot of people in that 5 year retirement space, more in their 20-50s.
- Yes, we have several plans in place to address staffing changes in the next few years.
- Some departments like Police, Fire, etc. are probably looking at succession planning in the future.

What types of training does the City of Rhinelander need to provide to ensure staff develop the skills the organization needs?
- Financial planning for local governments
- Conflict resolution training
- Leadership training
- I would like to see new elected officials complete a civic training before starting on the council. It would help them understand the process and learn the language.

- Safety training
- Management and personnel training
- HR related would be good. FMLA, FLSA training etc. HR team is new department and figuring out how to build it out.
- Getting along with the public, getting the work done, when in the public's eye how to portray a positive proactive attitude.
- Customer service mindset.
- Maybe more police and medic training
- CDL, driver training, we should be paying for it when we hire so that new hires don't have to on their own. HR does a lot of scheduling for our safety trainings for everyone so each department doesn't have to do it separately.
- I want to see staff go to lots of conferences, workshops, do leadership training, interpersonal skills training, conflict resolution, teamwork exercises, etc.
- Really pressed for leadership development training.
- Ethics training
- Software training

STRATEGIC PLANNING
The next section of the interview focused on the strategic planning process. While most comments indicate a positive expectation, several expressed skepticism and confusion about the process.

Interviewees were asked, What's the mood as we enter this strategic planning process? Excitement? Frustration? Why?

Answers include:
- Long overdue
- Looking forward to setting goals and advancing the agenda
- Hopeful, excited
- Waiting to see
- Semi-excited
- Skeptical
- Confused
- It might be waste of time and resources
- Very positive
- Very beneficial
- Relief

Have you been a part of past processes, at City of Rhinelander or elsewhere? If yes, what made them successful or unsuccessful?
- Yes, I've been part of planning processes and the most successful have resulted in identified priorities
- Yes, success depends on strong leadership and making sure we don't get caught up in the process. Keep moving forward.
- Yes, some have been successful in planning for the future but some processes have dragged out too long and focused too much on team building rather than creating a feasible plan for the city.
- No, never done this before.
- Yes, in other forms like a business. Open communication is key
- Never been successful in the past, sat on a shelf
- Yes, but they have never met the goals.
- I've been part of a few processes but they never seem to go anywhere.
- Yes, success depends on having a shared vision and getting people talking

Participants were asked how they will know if this process was successful. Most comments indicated a need for a clear vision and a solid plan.
- One, we have a clear vision that we can refer to on a regular basis, and two, we have continuity regardless of who is in the seats of council and mayor
- This will be successful if we get 2 or 3 clear objectives with measurables.
- There will be buy in from all the council members. We will have a plan to present to the community. Each alderperson will have at least one thing checked off their 'want' list so they feel invested in the project.
- Need to see ideas come to fruition. Short term wins. Spending time together really matters here! This will be great.
- Coming out with a solid plan is the number one priority.
- With administration turnover, can't go hard right and then hard left. Leadership team really matters, so how are we organized for longevity.

- If it opens up lines of communication and relationships across departments, would be a success.
- If we set reasonable goals and get to them, moving the city forward.
- It would be nice to have some kind of plan that we can make known to the community to garner support.
- Things continue on even if leadership turns over. Many hands in the process. The biggest thing is keeping council involved. Prioritize funding. How can we be sure the product can be handed to new people coming in. Really dissecting the feedback from the community and USING them!
- Know the city is reaching out and wants to know is nice. Confused why there's a public survey, hope all staff get to participate. If it's for all staff they need a voice.
- The immediate effect will get people talking together. Relationships will be better between and among staff and city council members. Everyone will understand the role they play.
- Buy-in. Everyone needs to feel like they contributed, understands, things that won't be on the top of one person's list but we all understand why it's all there and we've all provided value. It's a collaborative plan.
- Sounds easy, but...we have a plan! Agreed upon subset of goals, achievable, have steps to get there. Have something we can present to the city, this is what we've heard from everyone, what can we all agree on.

Are there any resources that you or the city needs to make this process successful?
- Grant writer
- We could use more education about how plans are made. We need a full-time grant writer
- Money is always the king, depends on goals. Find grants, get a grant writer, poverty is prevalent and lots of renters, hard to clean it up, landlords need to be onboard, incentives for the community to buy in.
- Some of the outside stakeholders
- One big hold-up is golf course. Holds us back in growth, and in other areas.
- A little overview of why we're doing this.
- Explain the process, get the buy-in and folks involved in the 2 sessions, would expect there are things that will pop up, will need some additional materials or support.
- Interested in summary of public survey, the one to staff - will be very beneficial.
- What would help: education on what the concept is to staff and councilors.

Participants were asked, if you could share one key insight about the city with the strategy team in preparation for this process, what would it be?

Answers included insight regarding the community and specific concerns about water capacity, elections, and budgets.
- There are many competing interests, sometimes it's a popularity contest, we struggle to communicate with each other and the community, people can be quick to judge.
- Most people want to see the city succeed and grow, but there are always a faction of people who are resistant to change and disagree with everything.
- The next water capacity issues.
- To be vulnerable and take a step of faith and engage in the process. Trust the process.
- There is an election coming up in April, so the city council might change with new people coming on and experienced people leaving.
- Employee longevity at the department head levels.
- Communicate, honest conversations.
- Need to know that the city budget is not equal.

- There is still some of the past disgruntlement in the community regarding the city government due to dysfunction on the council and city administrator positions in the past few years.
- Invest in staff members
- If done incorrectly or people feel pressed, they will become passive aggressive. Make sure everyone is involved and be aware of strong-willed people.
- Variables in personalities
- Budget concerns

Participants were asked if there was anything else they'd like to share while we have this time together today?
- That we all look at ourselves in the mirror and what role are we going to play to move forward! Making sure paper mill and Printpack stays put. Sustainable jobs and careers. Northstar steel etc. living wages to stay put.
- Excited for it. We don't have a lot of these opportunities to get on the same page.
- Lots of space to grow this in our community!
- Made the right decision and stayed when I had chance to leave...people just need to hang in there. Need to get our priorities straight. Really good to have all employees provide input.
- This is a great time for the strategic planning
- Great place to live, love the variety in work

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APPENDIX 6

PRACTICAL VISION, UNDERLYING CONTRADICTIONS, STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS 03.20.2024

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STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS | *What do you want to see in place in 10 years as a result of the City of Rhinelander's strategic planning actions?*

1. Identifying and Prioritizing Reveue Sources and Uses
2. Utilizing Technology for External Communication
3. Investing in Training for City Staff and Officials
4. Expanding Recreation Opportunities
5. Matching Staffing to Support Community Growth

PRACTICAL VISION | *What do you want to see in place in 10 years as a result of the City of Rhinelander's strategic planning actions?*

1. Sustainable infrastructure and utilities
2. Expanded recreational activities
3. Improved city operations
4. Affordable housing
5. Flourishing local economy and workforce
6. Comprehensive community support services and safety

UNDERLYLING CONTRADICTIONS | *What is blocking us from moving toward our Practical Vision?*

1. Limited resources restrict economic growth
2. Conflicts prevent effective collaboration
3. Maintaining the status quo slows advancement and innovation
4. Unclear direction causes apathy and confusion
5. Neglected properties contribute to negative perceptions

Strategic Directions

Identifying and Prioritizing Revenue Sources and Uses

- Expand city border (annexation)
- Capital Improvement Planning
- Priority-based budgeting
- Industrial park revitalization
- Infrastructure and utility condition study

Utilizing Technology for External Communication

- Technology
- Continuing technology implementation
- Posting plow routes on city website
- Public education on department operation
- Enhancing community education
- Increase communication

Investing in Training for city Staff and officials

- Internal communcations app
- Engaged city officials
- Increase involvement between aldermen & departments
- Invest in training and your employees
- Pursuing short-term achievable goals

Expanding Recreation Opportunities

- Centralized sports complex (outdoor)
- Increase indoor recreation facilities
- Recreation Department/ District
- Coordinating with community groups for activities and events

Matching Staff to Support Community Growth

- Add more police/fire
- Staff grant writer
- Developing partnerships with high school and tech schools
- Community Development Director

Growing and Maintaining Workforce Housing

- Bridge gap for development
- Create rental housing inspection program

Limited resources restrict economic growth	Conflicts prevent effective collaboration	Maintaining the status quo slows advancement and innovation	Unclear direction causes apathy and confusion	Neglected properties contribute to negative perceptions
• Fuding - lack of accountablity for years of golf course	• Priorities of the decision makers	• No forward thinkers (status quo mentality)	• Not thinking ahead	• Perception of a poor community
• inconsistent funding sources	• Attitudes	• Lack of creative ideas	• Inconsistent city management over past years	• Cleaner neighborhoods.
• Funding - lack of economic growth	• Everyone has different ideas	• Closed minded (do not like or want change)	• Unclear (objectives) vision and direction	• Better City facilities.
• Funding - expenditure restraint	• Infighting Among Stakeholders	• Being too comfortable with status quo	• Turnover in City Government/ Administration	• neglected park shelters & buildings
• Funding - levy limits	• Personal agendas	• Stagnation, Apathy, or Maintaining Status Quo	• Public understanding on how things operate	• Recreation area near Norwood.
• Funding	• Uncoordinated agendas	• Culture of austerity	• Unclear future focus	• Heal creek development.
• tightly restricted budgets	• Conflicting goals	• limited technical advancements	• Motivation	
• Business growth (lack of revinue)	• Lack of accountability for bad actors	• Outdated attitudes on governance		
• Lack of funding opportunities				
• Lack of use on Grant applications (Free money)				
• Annexation of townships				
• Housing renovation block grants				
• Misaligned priority of projects and funding				
• Putting all eggs in one basket				
• Limited space and resources				
• Annexation of townships				

Sustainable Infrastructure and Utilities

- Ordinances about snow removal to actually be implemented for those who do not clear the snow
- Reduced hydrocarbon dependence
- Transition to clean energy
- Better integrated hiking and biking trails using abandoned tracks
- Safe bike routes to and thru the city
- Improved transit/walkable areas
- More urban trails
- More foot and bicycle paths
- Pedestrian traffic, separated from vehicle traffic
- Bike friendly city
- More biking trails and safe bike lanes that protect the biker from a car
- Better public transportation
- Public transportation
- more public transit that isn't just a taxi or a small bus that only runs certain days
- Biking paths and roads
- Increase walkability, including in winter, among major sections
- Connected trails to Townships
- Finally put in a connected biking/park system
- Pedestrian and bicycle safety.
- Connected walking/bike paths and lanes
- More walking and biking trails . Look at how Saint Germaine , Boulder junction , Eagle River made all the bike trails
- Bike trail system
- Interconnected Ped bike trail system started

Sustainable Infrastructure and Utilities

- Better interconnectivity of sidewalks
- Walking/running/biking paths
- Create more bike lanes and trails
- Invest in walk and bike ability throughout city
- Trails connecting CAVOC to city to other communities
- Paved off-street bike trails connecting schools, shopping, parks
- Local professional city bus routes for elderly/handicapped/youth
- Walking/biking paths that bring people in
- Make the city more walkable
- Paved pedestrian and bike trail of length
- more hiking/biking trails to promote health
- Bike trails so there's less car traffic.
- Promote biking/ better bike lanes/ reduce traffic
- A great trail system for hiking, biking, snowmobiling
- Let snowmobiles in town
- public transit
- More walking and biking trails
- Better public transportation
- walking routes in town with ample signage
- Build connector trails and bike paths
- Bike path Hodag Park to County W
- expand airport & shuttle accessibility
- create more bike trails by funding with grants
- Connected walkways/sidewalks
- Interconnected walking/biking paths with good maps
- Fewer potholes

Sustainable Infrastructure and Utilities

- Turn our downtown into something that has what corporate Rhinelander doesn't
- Downtown centralization / market zone development
- Provide better handicap parking for downtown area
- Rid downtown of the bumpout mentality and terrible parking
- Strong downtown
- Adding more business to our downtown- not bars
- Continued revitalization of downtown areas
- Building facade downtown fixed up
- A Downtown Did with an Arts District
- Continue revamping downtown
- Downtown area with shops, restaurants, small businesses
- Old parking style on brown st
- Have a downtown Rhinelander continuing improvement plan.
- Chamber needs to do more to support downtown businesses
- Better options for business downtown
- Landscaping, road maintenance, and light construction to make our city beautiful again
- green spaces in the middle of town
- Tree Planting
- Create group to help pick up litter downtown and in parks
- Involve local businesses to help improve curb appeal and maintain sides walks and plants in front of their buildings
- A more vibrant downtown area

Sustainable Infrastructure and Utilities

- Replace trees in city!
- More green space
- More green space downtown
- Continue improving the city with trees and bushes
- Beauty/maintenance
- Fund street tree replacement
- Downsize unused impermeable surfaces, parking areas.
- Plant more trees!
- More parks and green spaces (pocket parks?)
- beautification of city neighborhoods and streets
- Clean up the litter
- beautification group – help owners beautify with a plan not just the grant money but actual planting and painting etc.
- Adopt a building appearance code
- Encourage removal/upgrading of blighted buildings
- Do not cut trees
- Plant trees
- Plant more trees
- New city hall
- New city building
- New fire department building
- Redevelop former dump for rec complex
- Utilizing the landfill space.
- Repurposing of state theater in downtown
- Repair existing facilities before new buildings

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Sustainable Infrastructure and Utilities	Sustainable Infrastructure and Utilities	Sustainable Infrastructure and Utilities	Sustainable Infrastructure and Utilities
• A plan for fixing/rebuilding dilapidated structures • Better City facilities • Modernization of Local Amenities • Become more technologically advanced • Continued street improvements • Improve roads • A plan/design for growth - transportation infrastructure • PFAS...Treatment of Existing Wells • Water Capacity Issues • Water and Sewer utility replacement with projects • WWTP ugrades • Municipal building (City Hall, Fire, Police)	• More timely completion of road projects • Snow diverter plows for driveways • Continue improving streets • Better roads • Continue to update infrastructure, especially water • Roads • Better roads • Street light/path light outages reported by police so they are not out for over 1 year • Clear snow from all sidewalks on business routes in town. It's too heavy for property owners. • Fund sidewalk repair, perhaps with cost sharing with owners • Better timed stop lights, keeps traffic moving • Round-abouts, no more stop lights • Roads • Better roads • Establish scenic/Rustic Road routes near Rhi • Lobby for state and federal PFAS funds • Better roads--Fix them • Better water. Our water is gross! • Road diet on Lincoln/Courtney • Maintain roads • Potholes addressed more timely • Cleaner Neighborhoods • Incentives for people to renovate properties. • Keep city limits cleaner. (mowing, snow removal, sweeping)	• Restructuring our public services • Sand the icy streets • Enforce sidewalk shoveling rules • Deal with pfas • Continued street and utility improvement • Environmental Protection/PFAS • Invest in infrastructure • More round a bouts and fewer traffic lights • Side roads fixed • Fix City Sidewalks • Re-align or re-time many of the traffic lights to improve traffic flow • Replace lead pipes, address PFAS situation • Fix traffic flow issues • Road repair on cycle that keeps up • Update a few of the stop lights so that they sense motorcycles so I'm not sitting at the stoplight for minutes on end • repairing of all side streets and utilities • Better city water / PFAs issues addressed • More affordable water/utilities for city residents • Aggressively address PFAS Co tamination • Take care of roads and hold those accountable • Stop harassing home owners and commercial owners when you don't fix your own streets • Maintenance on the roads and city • Fixing/maintaining our Streets	• Better road and infrastructure maintenance • Less potholes • Redesign existing Street, sewer and water to prevent freezing in known problem areas • Fix the city streets before new buildings • Solve Pfas pollution problems • More up to date technology • Maintenance of roads • Clean drinking water • Roads/wayfinding • City Lead Zero Waste Initiatives • PFAS remediation • Better roads • Clean water • Better maintenance of streets/Overall infrastructure in general • Invest in city infrastructure by raising taxe • More led street lights • More lighted crosswalk signs • hold businesses accountable for PFAS • Fix the roads • All sidewalks should terminate at a street. • filtration of PFAS out of drinking water • Street repairs city wide • Fix the damn streets • Infrastructure infrastructure infrastructure not stupid items by the city council • Better utilities and infrastructure

Expanded Recreational Activities

- Community focused events that are FUN and aimed towards those under 45
- Summer outdoor movies at Hodag Park
- More diverse Recreational options for adults/youth
- Stuff for teenagers to do
- Bring in kids activities in some way. PLEASE.
- Support for activities that draw people in
- More recreational opportunities for youth
- All age community events
- Create more quality community events
- Spaces for young people
- Opportunities for younger generations
- Continue skating rinks in town.
- Silent 4th of July light show (drones)
- Indoor pet park
- Splash pad
- A music venue for all genres and people
- Skate park
- Art programs
- Movies downtown...perhaps art or second-run
- Respect and encourage youth participation
- Continue developing youth-based infrastructure
- Solidify the Rhinelander Oneida County Fair
- More community youth programs
- More playgrounds
- Entertainment/Events
- More music

Expanded Recreational Activities

- Skate park for young people
- Social activities/programs along the river in downtown
- Youth-empowered skate park
- Indoor playground/children's museum
- Splash pad
- City funded recreation programs for kids
- Family friendly initiatives-parks, concerts
- Give the farmers market a permanent, weather friendly place
- Trampoline Park
- More for kids to do
- Children's museum
- Turn the old wicks lumber building into an indoor mini golf family fun center and go-kart track
- Balanced, affordable outdoor & indoor activities
- Affordable & fun for young, single people.
- Promote recreational and social. oppurtunities for the citizenry of all ages|
- More activities and programming for kids
- An aquatic center
- Diversity celebrations and alternative music festivals
- More development for youth/family
- Bigger and better Farmers market
- More things for Children/young adults
- Expand on arts and festivals
- Inside concert venue in city....like The Grand in wausau
- Programs/activities that attract families
- Develop gaming challenges for kids

Expanded Recreational Activities

- Expansion of the fair
- Family friendly water park area at Hodag
- Splash pad
- Skate park
- Improved parks
- Using parks/green space to fill potential
- Outdoor activity spaces
- Upgrade West Park
- Create accessible kayak/canoe launches
- Renovate public beach
- Better Water access to pelican river in more locations
- Increase recreation opportunities (public rentals etc)
- Continuing investing in parks
- More lake and River options
- Revitalization of Hodag beach & bath house
- Modern, clean accessible bathrooms in parks.
- New Public Baths in our parks
- Camping near Perch Lake for trail users
- Unified trail maps for hiking, paddling, biking, etc
- The growth of Heal Creek. This is a potential gold mine for the community. Take advantage of it.
- Aditions to Hodag park
- Use of Hodag Park and the lake front
- UTV trail system
- All season restrooms at parks
- Year-round restrooms at parks
- Utilize our natural Northwoods resources for entertainment

Expanded Recreational Activities

- Fair should be at Hodag Park
- Better use of Hodag Park
- Continued investment in parks and recreation
- Improved facilities at Hodag Park
- Better us of Hodag park
- Park improvement
- Better parks
- A Regional Parks district
- Best City Recreational Infrastructure in the Northwoods - integrated trails, skatepark, etc
- Do not touch Hodag Park
- Support our local parks/green spaces
- Use of Heel Creek park
- Save natural resources.
- Plans to protect natural resources with climate changes
- Stop spearing
- Stop wake boats.
- Provide free fishing licenses for veterans
- Fabulous Heal Creek mountain biking crosscountry skiing
- Increased environmental concern
- Protect our envionment
- Protected natural resources and historical buildings
- Variety of restaurants
- More shops and restaurants
- Proactively recruit retailers and restaurants
- This city doesn't need Starbucks and carwashes

Affordable housing

- More affordable housing options for all
- Creating affordable housing
- lower housing options for people
- More housing development
- Encourage more housing through incentives
- keep living here as affordable as possible
- Focus on our housing crisis
- More housing
- increase of housing available
- More housing
- More affordable housing
- Housing
- Housing for tech college
- Increase ranges of housing
- More housing
- More affordable housing
- better tourist house ordinances
- Look at landlords in the city
- More housing options for low income
- Increased housing options for middle/ lower income
- More and better vacation rentals (pet friendly)
- Less building restrictions e.g. # of structures on property
- Enact a license for landlords to achieve better quality
- Make land lords accountable for poor living conditions. Clean up exteriors
- Housing informational meetings to rebuild and knock down old houses

Affordable housing

- Affordable rental housing options
- Look at waussu for housing ideas
- Affordable housing
- More affordable housing
- Affordable housing
- A better housing market
- More affordable housing
- Building of more homes
- Increased housing
- One to two new apartment complexes
- Address affordable housing
- More housing options
- At least two to three new housing areas around the city of Rhinelander (like housing blocks)
- Create an agency that supports renters
- Housing
- More diverse low income housing
- Strong practical protections for affordable housing
- More affordable housing.
- Housing
- Provide housing at old hospital site.
- Quality mixed-income housing @ old hospital site
- Housing
- Cheaper rent
- Adding more affordable housing options
- Invest in clean, affordable housing
- Increase affordable housing
- additional housing

Expanded Recreational Activities

- Expand the city limits to attract businesses.
- Need another grocery store!!
- More clothing stores
- More food variaty
- More restaurants
- More industry
- Increased business opportunities/jobs
- Help business owners start up and stay up
- New business
- More gas stations down 8
- Drawing in more businesses/ Industry / restaurants/stores
- Increased eateries
- Greater choices in grocery shopping locations
- Better variety of places to shop and eat
- Get more different restaurants
- Less bars!!!!
- Better local newspaper
- More opportunities for local business owners
- Increased indoor entertainment options and restaurants.
- More restaurants
- Better July 4th music
- Sports complex like other communities
- Heathier restaurants
- Making Pioneer Park more useful. (River access)

Expanded Recreational Activities

- This is difficult without knowing what is all ready in place. Funding to help businesses
- Better retail options-Target, Costco
- More restaurants
- Two to three new restaurants (maybe a chain restaurant). A Sit-down type one.
- More independent & clothing stores, no more boxstores.
- More restaurants options
- Panda express
- Jimmy Johns
- TJ Maxx
- Promote small businesses not corporate
- Encouraging more businesses to come to Rhinelander
- 2 to 4 more department stores
- offer incentives to business/industry to come to Rhinelander
- Find ways to bring in more quality restaurants into the city
- Bring in more mainstream businesses
- Better clothing store options so I'm not always having to drive to Wausau
- More diverse kinds of big businesses.
- Low-key & varied night life.
- increase in stores and entertainment
- New retail options
- more diversity of restaurants
- increase in resturants
- New restaurants
- More Shopping retail and groceries
- More quality restaurant options and nightlife

Flourishing local economy and workforce

- Increase in living wage employment
- Higher paying jobs to keep people around here to live
- Career diversity
- Attract young adult workers to the area
- Improved schools and housing to attract more teachers and medical professionals
- Cater to the younger population/ young professionals
- Attract employees to area
- Keep the manufacturing we have
- Expand career training at tech college
- Develop "apprenticeship" programs in every industry
- Production-based economic growth
- A big Hodag back on the fire chiefs truck
- Put Hodags back on city owned vehicles
- The city, not any organization needs to "own" an event. Something that stays Not just to bring people to Rhinelander - marketing
- Make PPHC director a permanent position in charge of marketing the city for tourists. Don't leave it just to the Chamber or county
- List ski/bike trails on Trip advisor, etc
- Promote Pelican R forest
- History trail of Rhinelander including Courthouse and homes of early settlers
- Give the Hodag even more love
- Promote opportunities we already have
- Define rhinelander as a destination city... City of XYZ. Not the hodag

Improved City Operations

- Better communication
- Actively seek more competent city and county board members that have business and growth as a top priority
- Hire better leadership instead of incompetent people with criminal backgrounds to run our city
- Brain-storm with surrounding communities- keeping people here
- Accessible involvement in local government.
- better communication from officials
- More communication from the city to it's residents
- Treat residents better than non
- Have more appreciation days for police and fire departments
- Aldermen sending or texting there views on current issues
- Communication with it's citizens
- More community engagement events
- Ask the people
- Avoid complex ideas before asking residents
- Better/More communication from city leaders to the public
- Annex portions of townships in to increase tax base.
- City engagement with investors
- Balanced Budget
- Buy/sell businesses downtown that aren't pulling their weight.
- city not to own golf course-too much $
- Golf Course solution.

Improved City Operations

- Fiscal responsibility by the city
- Public-serving communication policies
- Follow through on plan ideas generated in the past
- Service hours that align with people's jobs
- Hire people with people skills
- Overall just friendliness in the city workers
- City council needs to look to future not the pass
- Leverage government in fixing housing and childcare crisis
- Fiscal responsibility. Don't build more than we can afford.
- New mayor
- Lower taxes
- Visibility - in laymans terms
- More communication from city leaders. What's going on? Most people don't sit and read city agenda or meeting minutes.
- Better attitudes from those who "protect and serve"
- Less spending
- More respect - stop pointing fingers and deflecting questions, be responsible
- Better city government
- Lower taxes
- evolve with technology as it evolves
- Better golf course management
- Continually evaluate and utilize existing assets.
- Model Eagle River, Three Lakes and Minoqua
- Create City of Rhinelander Public Planning Committee.

Affordable housing

- Housing informational meetings to rebuild and knock down old houses
- Clean up run down areas in rhinelander give people grants to repairs houses.
- Incentives for homeowners to maintain properties
- Restore and open old buildings
- Landlord maintaining their property inside & outside
- updated housing
- Better housing stock - Pride in ownership
- Incentives to renovate old buildings
- Incentives for city home beautification/ updates
- Tear down dilapidated houses
- Up keep of historic buildings and houses
- Condemn and raze more houses
- houses rehabbed or torn down & replaced
- Housing development for all income levels
- Increased housing.
- A plan/design for growth - affordable housing
- Coordination with Developers for Affordable Housing
- A feasible housing plan
- Adequate and Affordable Housing
- Better housing
- Sell of City properties for housing.

Flourishing local economy and workforce

- Keeping our community fresh and modern while staying true to our roots and heritage.
- "Best of" awards for businesses not just chamber awards
- promote RHI as educational hub
- Keep the small town feel
- Attract aviation enthusiasts w/hangars and better GenAviation
- Community Development
- Maintain Economic Growth with Environmental Conscious
- Industial park business growth.
- Annexation of nearby lake residents/townships
- better support for local business community
- Retaining younger demographic.
- Relevant higher education programs in-line with local opportunities
- more coordinated tourism and marketing strategy

Comprehensive community support services and safety

- More mental health services available to us.
- more and better medical care
- more healthcare options
- More quality healthcare with Doctors.
- New nursing home that will take Medicaid
- Invest in schools
- Litter boxes out of school
- Quality Schools and teaching staff
- financially rewarding the best teachers
- Strong school system
- childcare options
- affordable, high quality child care
- Additional childcare facilities
- Homeless intervention/job placement
- Additional AODA services to address addiction issues
- Library support
- Expand the library's facilities and services
- Remodel District Library interior, entrances, accessibility.
- Update, expand library
- Expand the library!
- Safety meeting with cops & schools safety patrols for cross walk cops cars w lights on during school crossing
- Focus on violent crimes over morality crimes
- Put more emphasis on drug enforcement not just dui
- Increase support and respect for law enforcement, gratitude for them keeping us safe

Comprehensive community support services and safety

- Increase support and respect for law enforcement, gratitude for them keeping us safe
- More training opportunities for public safety groups.
- More street and personal visibility of police
- Less drugs
- Police department that truly serves the people
- More city police on bicycles
- Harsher punishments for crimes
- Safe spaces for youth and families
- Ensure Rhinelander is a safe place.
- Walking policeman downtown as ambassador/crime deterrent
- Beat cops downtown
- Better enforcement of traffic laws
- Stronger focus on drug enforcement.
- Better drug control
- Crime prevention
- Stress that Rhinelander is a welcoming community
- Less stereotyping and prejudice
- Work with Nicolet college on cultural experiences
- More diversity
- Inclusivity
- Include neighboring communities-compete for visit us at Fair
- Be an all inclusive community
- welcoming initiatives to encourage diversity
- Growth of external partnerships
- A city DEI committee with proactive initiatives that also sponsors outside initiatives like Pride

Comprehensive community support services and safety

- Increase diversity/inclusion initiatives
- Community that welcomes diversity
- Bill of rights ordinance
- Tourist planning for more events/festivals
- Be more welcoming and flexible to tourism
- Tourism
- Friendly to tourism

CITY OF RHINELANDER

APPENDIX 7
CURRENT REALITY, SUCCESS INDICATORS & ACTIONS
03.20.2024

Current Realities, Success Indicators, & Actions/Accomplishments

Current Reality: Description of the current situation as it relates to the Strategic Direction.
Success Indicators: Explains what will be different in 5 years if the organization mobilizes around and gets behind the Strategic Direction.
Actions/Accomplishments: Considers and answers "What are our specific, measurable, and achievable accomplishments for the next 5 years?"

SD1. Identifying and Prioritizing Revenue Sources and Uses
Current Realities
- Building & reviewing budgets
- Grant writing has been successful
- Not the same level of knowledge across departments about grants
- Utility rates have increased
- Rate studies are happening
- Seeking out inefficiencies
- Not clear what is in each department's budget
- Not understanding the cost of services
- Collection system not set up well
- Licensing process not enforced
- More consistent collaboration

Success Indicators
- Understand true cost of services including staff time
- Establish priority-based budgeting
- Increase revenue
- Establish consistent enforcement
- Increase grant income

Actions/Accomplishments
1. Create template that defines services, cost, and staff time
2. Improve fee collection tools
3. Create clear processes and expectations for citizens, businesses, and staff
4. Create a workflow for special events
5. Identify and access innovative economic expansion opportunities
6. Identify and access immediate funding sources
7. Develop process for ordinance updating and maintenance
8. Create capital improvement plan for every department

SD2. Utilizing Technology for External Communication
Current Realities

- Updated website
- Use social media (YouTube, Facebook)
- Trying to move away from Laserfiche public portal
- Permitting software
- Better job at communicating and more transparency
- Maintaining hard copies at local paper
- Phone system lacking

Success Indicators

- Update and maintain technology
- Reduce in-person requirements for citizens
- Increase citizen participation on boards & commissions

Actions/Accomplishments

1. Identify applications to communicate and collect fees
2. Identify video content opportunities utilizing social media
3. Install in-person online payment option in city hall and other areas
4. Update phone system
5. Unite all city departments on one server

SD3. Investing in Training for City Staff and Officials
Current Realities
- No training incoming elected officials
- Police & FD solid training
- Streets/water have training
- Information asymmetry
- Lack of succession training
- Archaic orientation techniques
- Lack of staff impairs training
- Lack of local training

Success Indicators
- Succession plans in place for key positions
- Technology is incorporated into staff trainings

Actions/Accomplishments
1. Create process to train subordinates on critical tasks
2. Determine which positions require a succession plan and create them
3. Plan training with one month notice
4. Identify cross training opportunities
5. Explore local or low-cost opportunities to train incoming local officials and staff
6. Create process manuals
7. Record training sessions
8. Improve new employee orientation with technology

SD4. Expanding Recreation Opportunities
Current Realities
- Have parks
- Have library
- Have ped/bike path (10% of path in city)
- Have ArtStart
- Public/private partnerships
- Hodag Dome

Success Indicators
- Connect (bike/ped) to regional pathways
- Better ADA access in parks
- Establish Parks, Recreation, Building & Grounds Department
- Up-to-date maintenance schedule

Actions/Accomplishments
1. Create a city events calendar on website
2. Organize city family/kid events in parks
3. Budget for ADA equipment
4. Determine ways to links bike/pedestrian pathways to external city trails

SD5: Matching Staffing to Support Community Growth
Current Realities

- Understaffed to support current services
- Unqualified candidates
- Low retention
- Wage scale doesn't reflect responsibilities

Success Indicators

- Increase employee morale
- Get qualified candidates to apply

Actions/Accomplishments

1. Post job applications on multiple sites
2. Expand and maintain annual reviews for all staff
3. Define job descriptions relative to current wage scale
4. Consider how to more equitable in benefits and wage structures
5. Conduct workload study to identify current and expected service levels per department
6. Update wage scale
7. Increase recruitment from high school and tech schools
8. Create professional development plan

SD6: Growing and Maintaining Workforce Housing
Current Reality
- Housing related to income is not equal
- Stock shortage
- Age of stock
- Rodeway Inn apartments
- Townhomes built- high end
- Lack of homeownership

Success Indicators
- Increase housing developments for all income levels
- Stable workforce
- Increased population

Actions/Accomplishments
1. Coordinate with Habitat for Humanity to reinspect habitat houses
2. Create more city clean-up events for household garbage and vehicles
3. Research short-term rental policy options
4. Explore annexation opportunities
5. Review housing ordinances and inspection programs
6. Provide and publicize incentives for housing developments
7. Create program for rental housing inspections

CITY OF
RHINELANDER

APPENDIX 8
STRATEGIC PLAN TIMELINE 03.20.2024

	2024		2025				2026				2027	2028
	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
SD1: Identifying and Prioritizing Revenue Sources and Uses												
A1. Create template that defines services, cost, and staff time	START	END										
A2. Improve fee collection tools		START	END									
A3. Create clear processes and expectations for citizens, businesses, and staff		START	END									
A4. Create a workflow for special events			START									END
A5. Identify and access innovative economic expansion opportunities			START									END
A6. Identify and access immediate funding sources			START									END
A7. Develop process for ordinance updating and maintenance			START									END
A8. Create capital improvement plan for every department			START									END
SD2: Utilizing Technology for External Communication												
A1. Identify applications to communicate and collect fees			START			END						
A2. Identify video content opportunities utilizing social media					START	END						
A3. Install in-person online payment option in city hall and other areas							START			END		
A4. Update phone system							START			END		
A5. Unite all city departments on one server							START			END		
SD3: Investing in Training for City Staff and Officials												
A1. Create mandatory training for subordinates	START											END
A2. Determine which positions require a succession plan and create them	START									END		
A3. Plan training with one month notice		START										END
A4. Identify cross training opportunities		START	END									
A5. Explore local or low-cost opportunities to train incoming local officials and staff			START									END
A6. Create process manuals			START									END
A7. Record training sessions				START								END
A8. Improve new employee orientation with technology							START					END
SD4: Expanding Recreation Opportunities												
A1. Create a city events calendar on website	START											END
A2. Organize city family/kid events in parks					START							END
A3. Budget for ADA equipment							START					END
A4. Bike/Pedestrian pathways would be linked to external city trails							START					END
SD5: Matching Staffing to Support Community Growth												
A1. Post applications on multiple sites	START											END
A2. Expand and maintain annual reviews for all staff	START											END
A3. Define job descriptions relative to current wage scale	START	END										
A4. Consider how to be more equitable in benefits and wage structures		START	END									
A5. Conduct workload study to identify current and expected service levels per department			START			END						
A6. Update wage scale				START								END
A7. Increase recruitment from high school and tech schools					START							END
A8. Create professional development plan					START							END
SD6: Growing and Maintaining Workforce Housing												
A1. Coordinate with Habitat for Humanity to reinspect habitat houses	START	END										
A2. Create more city clean-up events for household garbage and vehicles	START											END
A3. Research short-term rental policy options		START				END						
A4. Explore annexation opportunities		START										END
A5. Review housing ordinances and inspection programs			START									END
A6. Providing/publicizing incentives for housing developments				START								END
A7. Create program for rental housing inspections					START							END

APPENDIX 9

PRIORITY WEDGE 03.20.3024

SD6 A4: Explore annexation opportunities

SD3 A2: Determine which positions require a succession plan and create them

SD5 A4: Consider how to be more equitable in benefits and wage structures

SD1 A1: Create template that defines services, cost, and staff time

SD2 A1: Identify applications to communicate and collect fees

SD3 A5: Explore local or low-cost opportunities to train incoming local officials and staff