



Strategic Plan

2026 - 2029





Acknowledgments

Adopted on 04/01/2026, this Strategic Plan represents the collective work of Mayor Jane Lang, the City Council, and leaders from all city departments and agencies.

Mayor and City Council

Jane B. Lang, Mayor

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Mark Ellis, Council District 1

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Document Acknowledgement

This Strategic Plan was developed in partnership with Innovative Public Advisors (IPA) and shaped through the insight, expertise, and lived experience of many contributors. We appreciate IPA's guidance in facilitating a thoughtful and structured planning process for the City of Neenah, and we and we extend our gratitude to Santiago Sanchez for the majority of the photography featured throughout this document, which thoughtfully captures the character and spirit of our community.

Most importantly, we extend our sincere thanks to the local businesses and community members who took the time to participate. Your perspectives, candor, and investment in Neenah's future strengthened this work in meaningful ways. The direction outlined in this plan reflects not only organizational priorities, but the voices of those who live, work, and build community here every day.

Your engagement made this a collaborative effort — and a stronger foundation for the years ahead.

City Department Leadership

Jane B. Lang, Mayor

David Rashid, City Attorney

Char Nagel, City Clerk

Michael Kading, Director of Parks & Recreation

Matthew Schroeder, Director of Information Systems

Nicole Hardina-Wilhelm, Director of Neenah Public Library

Heather Barber, Director of Human Resources & Safety

Anthony Mach, Water Utility Director

Gerry Kaiser, Director of Public Works

Kelly Nieforth, Director of Community Development & Assessment

Vicky Rasmussen, Director of Finance

Travis Teesch, Fire Chief

Aaron Olson, Police Chief





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April 1, 2026

I am pleased to present the City of Neenah's Strategic Plan for 2026-2029. The process of creating our first ever strategic plan was initially discussed in conjunction with our Culture Evaluation and Implementation which was initiated in the summer of 2022. The goal was to establish our first long-term strategic plan as the next step following that initial culture evaluation process.

After creating a request for proposal to publicly announce our intentions to establish the strategic plan, we received multiple submissions from professional organizations to assist us in this process. After thorough vetting, we chose Innovative Public Advisors (IPA) to lead this endeavor.

Our investment in choosing to have a professional outside firm develop this plan was well worth the expense. IPA established a public and internal survey, held multiple community stakeholder meetings, held public comment forums, collected a vast amount of data, and provided the city with that compiled information on which to base our plan. Our next step was the work of department heads to determine their priorities and goals to develop actionable items to make the city's first strategic plan not simply a document on a shelf but rather a blueprint for solid direction and positive progress.

The City of Neenah Strategic Plan is the culmination of a lot of thought and effort on the part of so many, and I would especially like to thank those who have been part of the team from the very beginning working on this important process. The value of this effort will be seen as we use the Strategic Plan to guide and direct decisions and direction for our great city in the years to come.

Using the input we collected from our residents and stakeholders and working together with City Council and our department heads and staff, we will now take deliberate steps forward to lead the city in a positive direction for an even brighter future.

Mayor Jane B. Lang



About the Strategic Plan

What is a strategic plan?

A strategic plan is a guide that helps a city align its leadership, resources, and day-to-day work toward a shared long-term vision. For a community like Neenah, it clarifies what matters most — shaping priorities for policy, budgeting, staffing, and investment — so that decisions are intentional, coordinated, and rooted in the needs and aspirations of our residents, businesses, and partners. It helps ensure that our efforts today support the future we want to create together.

City staff and council members participate in S.W.O.T. analysis.



ABOUT THE STRATEGIC PLAN

This strategic plan was developed over several months through broad collaboration — bringing together members of the City Council, city department leadership, local business and nonprofit leaders, and engaged residents. The planning process was grounded in research and data, and structured around open, honest discussions about emerging trends and challenges affecting growth, development, and quality of life in Neenah. From these conversations, shared priorities and goals began to take shape, but the process also made clear that ongoing community engagement would be essential — giving more Neenah citizens a voice in shaping the city's future.

Elements of the Plan

Guiding Vision

Core Values

Strategic Goals & Commitments



City stakeholders working together to guide Neenah's long-term direction.



Guiding Vision & Core Values

What is a guiding vision?

A guiding vision is a shared picture of the future the community is working toward, helping inform priorities and decisions along the way.

What are core values?

Core values are the shared principles that shape how the community approaches decisions, relationships, and its work.

CITY OF NEENAH VISION

Neenah is a thriving, welcoming community where people and businesses grow together—connected by trust, innovation, and pride in our shared future.

Safety

Recognized as Neenah's highest priority, representing the community's deep commitment to public well-being and trust in its services.

Integrity

Highlighted as a cornerstone of leadership and decision-making—acting with honesty and ethical responsibility in all matters.

Communication

Promoting openness, transparency, accessibility, and the timely sharing of information across all levels of the organization and with the public.

Accountability

Taking ownership for actions and outcomes—maintaining honesty, reliability, and follow-through in service to the community.

Respect

Emphasizing professionalism, inclusion, and civility in every interaction between City leaders, staff, and residents.

Innovation

Reflecting a willingness to embrace new ideas, technologies, and approaches to improve City operations and community quality of life.

Fiscal Responsibility

Underscoring the City's history of prudent budgeting and its ongoing commitment to efficiency and stewardship.

Fairness

Ensuring that policies and decisions are equitable, consistent, and guided by principle rather than convenience.

Community

Acknowledging Neenah's culture of connection, volunteerism, and collective pride.

Leadership

Inspiring trust and collaboration by example—empowering others, encouraging innovation, and guiding the organization toward a shared vision for Neenah's future.



Strategic Goals & Commitments

What are strategic goals and commitments?

Strategic goals and commitments identify the outcomes the City strives to achieve and the principles that guide our work. Together, they reflect both what we aim to accomplish and how we commit to serving our community.

Strategic Goals

A Unified Path Forward

These strategic priorities and action steps represent the culmination of extensive public input and leadership collaboration. They reflect Neenah's enduring strengths—its people, pride, and partnership—and provide a clear direction for continued growth and excellence. The City's strategic plan will translate these priorities into measurable goals and commitments, ensuring that Neenah continues to thrive as a community that honors its past, embraces innovation, and builds a strong, connected future.

- 1 Engage and Inspire the Community
- 2 Ensure Fiscal Stability & Long-Term Resilience
- 3 Foster Smart Growth & Economic Vitality
- 4 Maintain a Safe, Clean, & Welcoming Environment
- 5 Empower and Align the Organization
- 6 Invest in Infrastructure and Sustainability

1 Engage and Inspire the Community

STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

Enhance intentional communication

Expand civic engagement opportunities

Promote partnerships and collaboration

Celebrate community identity

2 Ensure Fiscal Stability and Long-Term Resilience

STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

Implement long-range financial planning

Pursue grants and alternative funding

Review and update financial policies

Invest in efficiency and technology

3 Foster Smart Growth and Economic Vitality

STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

Advance housing diversity

Support business retention and attraction

Revitalize key corridors

Leverage downtown and waterfront assets

4 Maintain a Safe, Clean, and Welcoming Environment

STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

Sustain public safety excellence

Promote neighborhood vitality

Enhance environmental stewardship

Create welcoming public spaces

5 Empower and Align the Organization

STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

Strengthen internal communication

Invest in professional growth

Explore a city administrator/manager form of government

Clarify governance roles

Promote organizational culture

6 Invest in Infrastructure and Sustainability

STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

Prioritize infrastructure investment

Integrate sustainability into planning

Modernize technology and connectivity

Plan for the future

Appendix A: 2026-29 Strategic Plan Public Engagement Report

<https://www.ci.neenah.wi.us/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/City-of-Neenah-SP-Public-Engagement-Report-002.pdf>





For more information about the City of Neenah Strategic Plan
please visit www.Neenahwi.gov.