
THE CITY *of Altoona*



Planning Director

Altoona, Wisconsin

THE COMMUNITY



The City of Altoona, Wisconsin (population 8,651– 4.7 sq. miles) is located within Eau Claire County and adjacent to the City of Eau Claire. The Eau Claire MSA population is approximately 169,000 residents and is the economic and cultural hub of Western Wisconsin. The area is along the transition zone between the beautiful driftless region to the south and the great Wisconsin Northwoods, with rolling hills, hundreds of lakes and rivers, excellent camping, hiking, cycling, and outdoor activities in all seasons. Eau Claire is home to the University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire, and the region features vibrant art, culture, music, and food scene, along with excellent K-12 schools and an affordable cost of living. Altoona is located approximately 90 miles east of Minneapolis/St. Paul and 175 miles northwest of Madison, offering easy access to professional sporting events, touring musicians and shows as well as world-class special events.



POPULATION
8,651



SIZE
4.7 sq. miles

Altoona is experiencing an unprecedented period of both residential and commercial growth that offers exciting opportunities for Altoona's next Planning Director to directly influence the complexion of our community. Altoona has experienced a 30% increase in population since 2010, the highest rate of growth for any City in Wisconsin. Permits for new homes set new records in 2019 and 2020, and growth was similar in 2021. With a full pipeline of projects with zoning entitlement or currently in process, 2022 stands to be another strong year. Growth has been mixed between redevelopment, infill, and new neighborhoods.



MEDIAN INCOME
\$55,571

Development in the past decade has resulted in an improved balance of housing and employment opportunities. In 2010, 28% of Altoona's equalized value was commercial and industrial property, a figure that increased to over 40% by 2020. This figure is especially meaningful in the context of Altoona's boom in housing.



MEDIAN HOME
VALUE
\$157,600

This growth has resulted in ongoing dialogue among elected and appointed officials concerning the character and location of growth and change in the city. These conversations are anticipated to be crystallized and given direction through the current comprehensive plan update process, which the new Planning Director will be intimately involved in.

GOVERNANCE AND ORGANIZATION

Altoona is a full-service municipality that provides a wide variety of services to its citizens and visitors. Altoona is a progressive, value-driven organization focused on providing Altoona residents with a variety of quality-of-life amenities and events to enrich their lives.

Altoona Values:

1. Effective, transparent communications in every aspect of operations.
2. Being excellent stewards of the City's finances.
3. The City's duty to care for our assets including buildings, streets, utilities, parks, rolling stock, and equipment, and pursue this duty diligently.
4. A well-trained, happy, professional workforce that provides excellent customer service to Altoona's residents.
5. Safe neighborhoods for all Altoona residents and excellent response from Altoona's public safety professionals.
6. Thoughtfully planned, sustainable, and resilient, residential, and business development.
7. Altoona's children and the importance of providing quality education to all of Altoona's youth.

The City is governed by a seven-member Council, including six council members and a part-time mayor. The Council establishes policy-level direction through the strategic planning process. Current strategic initiatives include:

- Focusing efforts on long-range planning and making sustainability and equity priorities.
- Improving public outreach and City communications.
- Implementing findings of City-wide space and facility needs study.
- Assuring the City's financial house is in order.
- Focusing on staff development and accountability to foster a high-performing work environment.
- Maximizing cooperation with other agencies and private entities.
- Evaluating technological needs and implementing solutions as identified.

The Council hires a city administrator to act as the chief operating officer that presides over daily operations; the incumbent has been in their position for the past sixteen years. The city administrator works with City staff to fulfill the mission defined by Council and provides support to department heads who are afforded a high degree of autonomy in completing the City's mission. City Departments include planning, clerks office, administrative services, public works and engineering (including roads, water, wastewater, stormwater), parks maintenance and recreation programs, fire, and police.



FULL-TIME
EMPLOYEES

40+



DEPARTMENTS

8



FY22 GENERAL
FUND BUDGET

\$7,043,481



TOTAL BUDGET

\$27,320,980

The planning department is a two-person department that includes the planning director and the building inspector. The planning department oversees all aspects of short and long-term development activities for the City of Altoona and supervises the activities of the building inspector. The planning director reports to the city administrator and works closely with members of the City's leadership team to advance city goals and initiatives.

The Planning Director fosters cooperative working relationships among city departments and with intergovernmental partners and various public and private constituent groups. The Planning Director is accountable for accomplishing planning and community development goals and objectives and for advancing other city goals and objectives within general policy guidelines. The Planning Director provides assistance to the City Administrator on a wide variety of issues.

As a key employee of a small city, the Planning Director is expected to be a well-rounded generalist with broad interests and expertise that is regularly applied across the full range of current development and long-range city planning activities. The Planning Director is active in facilitating initiatives related to housing, economic development, sustainability, transportation, and related municipal policy and operations. The Planning Director is a department head and core member of the City's Leadership Team, serves as the Zoning Administrator, supervises the building inspector, and manages consultant contracts for planning and development-related services. The successful planner will be proactive in supporting regional activities that advance the overall wellbeing of the area.

Due to the impactful and complex nature of the work, the Planning Director must exercise considerable poise, judgment, and discretion in developing policy recommendations, engaging in public dialogue, exercising administrative duties, and prioritizing the allocation of scarce time and resources. The Planning Director is trusted and expected to prepare recommendations based on disciplinary best practices, legal requirements, public welfare, code compliance, safety, life cycle, equity, political considerations, and other criteria toward City goals and objectives.



Primary Job Duties Include:

- **Directs the generation, review, revision and implementation of long-range policy plans for the City, including the Comprehensive Plan, Housing Action Plan, Parks Plan, Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, and other functional policy documents.**
- **Administers the city's zoning and subdivision codes, including proposal of amendments.**
- **Completes review of development applications including site plans, civil review, conditional uses, rezoning applications, variance appeals, plats, and certified survey maps. Interpret and analyze technical reports, drawings, and illustrations prepared by architects, engineers, and other professionals to ensure consistency with Altoona Municipal Code and advancement of City plans and policy objectives.**
- **Manages activities relating to the Planning Commission and the Zoning Board of Appeals; provides guidance, advice, and recommendations on all matters relating to planning, zoning, and subdivision.**
- **Advises the City Administrator in economic development activities, including tax increment financing, business recruitment, property acquisition and development, and coordination with partnering organizations.**
- **Serves as Principal Planner for land use, housing, parks and public space, economic development and transportation programs.**
- **Coordinates the development review team that includes the City Engineer, Building Inspector, Police and Fire Chiefs (as needed).**
- **Consults with developers, citizens, and outside agencies regarding development proposals; drafts correspondence regarding development proposals to explain development goals, policies, and how to meet compatibility with the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code.**
- **Contributes to the city's leadership in pursuing sustainability, social and racial equity, democratic governance values and goals.**
- **Coordinates citizen participation into planning and quality of life issues. Organizes, conducts, and attends meetings with government officials, public and private agencies, citizens groups and other groups as deemed appropriate to discuss and explain plans.**
- **Coordinates the development and ongoing maintenance of the city's GIS platforms**
- **Serves as the Code Enforcement Officer and coordinates related activities between departments.**
- **Represents the City in regional community planning and development initiatives.**
- **Integrates planning and development concepts and best practices into all aspects of City policy and operations.**

Altoona is currently engaged in several high-profile and mission-critical community planning activities. The next Planning Director will be expected to get up to speed and contribute quickly to these efforts:

- The City has contracted with a consulting firm to support city staff in creating a new Comprehensive Plan, see www.AltoonaCompPlan.com
- The City has purchased 80 acres of property on the easterly border of Altoona and is in the process of master planning the property with support from a consultant.
- The City is engaged in or anticipates beginning, multiple annexation proceedings for new neighborhoods in the near future.
- The City has budgeted to partner with Xcel Energy to create a Climate and Energy Action Plan, budgeted for 2022, building upon activities undertaken in recent years.
- The City is engaged with a UW-Madison student through their landscape architecture capstone course to complete a Downtown Framework Development Plan.
- The City has received a \$1.4 M grant from the State of Wisconsin to build a container park in downtown Altoona. This project offers the incoming Planning director the opportunity to work on a unique and transformative project and to have direct input into how the project will be designed and programmed.
- Housing Study - the City of Altoona is a contributor to a multi-jurisdiction collaboration to complete a regional housing needs assessment.

Ideal Candidate

The ideal candidate will be a professional, dedicated and enthusiastic leader who can guide a vision for the City and regards challenges as opportunities for improvement.

This candidate will have an ability to understand current planning and development process details and the nuances of meeting community goals and developers' needs. Candidate will be able to effectively interpret local, state, and federal building and zoning codes, regulations, and laws to make sound and timely decisions. These winning technical capacities, combined with effective abilities to communicate with elected officials and the public will lead to success for the selected candidate. Ideal candidate will also demonstrate emotional intelligence, a desire to improve the planning functions, efficient management of the day-to-day department functions, timely review of development applications, and the ability to achieve the Council's goals.

Work-Life Balance

The City is committed to balancing employees' work obligations with the need to meet family obligations, spend quality time with family and friends and generally enjoy life. The City recognizes that happy employees are productive employees. To that end, the City offers a flexible work schedule with the possibility of working four ten-hour days, and the ability to work from home some of the time. The City also offers the opportunity to grow through paid on-the-job training and memberships to trade associations.

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

- Graduation from a four-year college or university with coursework in political science, geography, urban planning, or a related field. Graduate degree and AICP credential preferred.
- Supervisory experience preferred.
- Two years of experience in community development, municipal planning, and project administration.
- An equivalent amount of education and job experience will be considered.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

The City of Altoona offers a competitive salary range of \$69,076 - \$88,816. The City of Altoona offers its employees an outstanding benefits package including health, life, disability and dental insurance. The City also contributes \$2,000 for a single, or \$4,000 for a family, to employees' health reimbursement accounts. The City has the flexibility to offer vacation leave commensurate with previous experience and vacation accrual and offers eight hours of sick leave per month. A retirement plan is offered through Wisconsin PERS and the City currently provides a 6.5% match of the employee's contribution of 6.5%.



APPLICATION PROCESS

For more information on this position contact:
Mike Golat, City Administrator
michaelg@ci.altoona.wi.us
715-839-6092

City of Altoona, Wisconsin is an Equal Opportunity Employer and values diversity in its workforce. Applicants selected as finalists for this position will be subject to a comprehensive background check.

For application materials, please visit www.ci.altoona.wi.us and click on the CAREERS tab.

RESOURCES

City of Altoona, Wisconsin
www.ci.altoona.wi.us

SOCIAL MEDIA

