

Sawyer County Public Participation Plan

For the Update and Amendment of a Comprehensive
Plan



INTRODUCTION

The Sawyer County Public Participation Plan (PPP) forms the basic framework for achieving an interactive dialogue between local, state and federal decision-makers and local citizens. This plan outlines the public participation strategy for the update and adoption of the comprehensive plan for Sawyer County.

Sawyer County will exercise due diligence to ensure that the spirit and intent of this PPP is upheld throughout the process; however, it should be expected that deviations from this plan may be warranted. Exceptions may include additional meetings or activities not outlined in this document or other activities based on cost, availability of personnel/guest speakers, changes to the planning process timeline or other unforeseeable factors.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS GUIDELINES

General

The main goal of the PPP is to make the citizens and land owners of the county aware of progress in the comprehensive planning process by offering the public opportunities to actively participate in the plan update process. Taken individually, the activities and actions described in this plan are not expected to reach and inform each and every resident or property owner in the county. Collectively, however, the plan activities and actions are designed to effectively and efficiently provide a broad-based dissemination of information and maximize the opportunity for citizen involvement and comment.

The majority of public participation activities will focus on public information, education, and input. Public meetings and open houses will provide opportunities for the public to openly discuss comprehensive planning issues with county committee members and local government staff. Formal public hearings will also be conducted as part of the plan adoption process to allow public testimony to be made regarding the comprehensive plan update. Every effort will be made to ensure that all public meetings are held at locations convenient and accessible. Other public participation activities will be explored to inform and receive input from residents that may not be able to attend public meetings and hearings.

Provisions for Open Discussion

Sawyer County will ensure that public meetings allow for an open discussion of the relevant issues at hand and public hearings allow for appropriate public testimony. When public meetings or hearings are held, every effort to ensure those who choose to participate have the opportunity to actually have their opinions heard. To accomplish this, the following actions will be implemented:

1. An agenda will be established that clearly defines the purpose of the public meeting or hearing, the items to be discussed, and any actions that may be taken.

2. The scheduled date, time, and place will be convenient to encourage maximum participation of residents and property owners.
3. A clearly identifiable facilitator or chair will conduct the meeting or hearing in an orderly fashion to ensure that all attendees have an opportunity to offer comments, discuss issues, or provide testimony.
4. As appropriate, an overview of documents or proposals to be considered will be discussed.
5. All persons attending the meeting or hearing that desire to participate should be allowed to do so. However, specific factors, such as the meeting or hearing purpose, number in attendance, time considerations, or future opportunities to participate may require that appropriate constraints be applied. These constraints will be clearly outlined by the facilitator or chair if the need arises.
6. All attendees will be encouraged to sign in using a provided sign in sheet.
7. Meeting summaries will be transcribed and made available as soon as possible following the meeting or hearing.
8. Special arrangements will be made under the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) with sufficient advance notice.

Opportunity for Written Comments

Detailed comments can be expressed through written format. To encourage citizens to express written comment the following steps will be taken:

1. All meeting and hearing notices will include the name, address, and e-mail address (if applicable) of the person(s) to whom written comments should be sent along with any deadlines for submitting comments, when warranted.
2. Persons speaking or testifying will be encouraged to concisely express their comments and provide specific details in written format.

Consideration of and Response to Public Comments

The various methods for involving the public and soliciting public opinions and comments are defined herein. These methods represent the initial steps for bringing public comment into the decision-making process. The following steps will be taken to ensure that public recommendations and comments are taken into consideration by decision-makers:

1. Time will be reserved subsequent to the close of a meeting, hearing, or comment deadline and prior to the actual decision or recommendation being

made to ensure that decision makers can adequately review all relevant materials or comments.

2. Decision-makers may reconvene a public hearing for the purpose of addressing public comments.
3. The record (written comments or testimony, tape recordings, or transcripts) of hearings and meeting summaries will be compiled by appointed committee members and made available to decision makers for their review and consideration.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

General Provisions

Planning Development Committee Meetings & Workshops

Regularly scheduled public meetings to discuss and compile information collected relevant to the nine elements of the comprehensive plan update will be held. Through local public meetings, residents will be able to become an instrumental part of their community's planning process. By participating in meetings and workshops, citizens can aid their elected officials and planning committee in creating a vision for the county.

Meeting/Hearing Notices

Official meeting notices will be prepared for any public meeting or hearing conducted. The County Clerk or other staff will place meeting notices at the county's designated posting location(s). It is recommended that meeting notices be posted at least one week prior to the meeting. All public hearings will follow the same public notice recommendations except all public hearings will be published under the Class II notice requirements. Final plan adoption hearing will be posted under a Class I notice.

Civic and Community Presentations

Representatives responsible for the update of the comprehensive plan may meet with local civic and community organizations to discuss the development of the comprehensive plan. Information may be collected at the civic and community functions as it pertains to the update of the comprehensive plan.

Mailing Lists

As public participation proceeds, interested citizens will have opportunities to place their name on a mailing list to receive information regarding the planning process via direct mail or e-mail where applicable. The planning committee/commission will compile and maintain this mailing list. Names to be included on the mailing list will originate from meeting and hearing sign-in sheets, written correspondence, as well as through individual requests. This list will also be used for newsletter circulation, special mailings, and notices as appropriate.

Planning Document Dissemination

Documents that contain or describe the proposed plan update policies, maps, or recommendations will be made available for public review. Documents may be disseminated as follows:

1. Digital versions will be posted on the county website.
2. A digital copy will be provided to local libraries.
3. A digital copy will be provided to each county elected official and/or key staff.
4. A digital copy will be distributed to LCO and each adjoining local unit of government.

Public Hearings

Once the final draft of the Sawyer County Comprehensive Plan Update is complete, a minimum of one public hearing to receive public comment on the proposed plan and ordinance will be held. Additional hearings may be held at the discretion of the appropriate committee

Hearing Notices

Sawyer County will place legal notice of hearing in its official newspaper(s). Hearing notice will be published in compliance with state requirements set forth in §66.1001, Wis. Stats.

Prior to enacting an ordinance approving the comprehensive plan, a hearing shall be conducted preceded by a Class 1 public notice that is published at least 30 days before the hearing is held. The county may also provide notice of the hearing by any other means it considers appropriate. The Class 1 notice shall contain at least the following information:

1. The date, time, and place of hearing.
2. A summary of the proposed comprehensive plan or amendment to such a plan.
3. The name of an individual employed by the county who may provide additional information regarding the proposed ordinance.
4. Information relating to where and when the proposed comprehensive plan ordinance may be inspected before the hearing and how a copy of the plan may be obtained.

Sawyer County Comprehensive Plan Update Adoption Process

Sawyer County will follow the procedures for adopting the updated comprehensive plan as listed in §66.1001.

KEY PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES

Planning Committee Meetings

The public will be encouraged to attend scheduled meetings of the Sawyer County Comprehensive Plan Update Committee. Time will be allocated during each meeting for the general public to address the committee or to ask questions about the planning process. At a minimum, the requirements of §19.31 pertaining to public meetings and notification will be met. The County Clerk or other staff will place meeting notices at the county's designated posting location(s). It is recommended that meeting notices be posted at least one week prior to the meeting.

Sawyer County Towns Association Meetings

Representatives of the county may attend meeting of the Sawyer County Towns Unit/Association to provide updates on plan update progress, share and gather plan-related information and discuss key planning topics.

Draft Plan or Amendment Presentation

Once a draft version of the updated comprehensive plan or amendment has been produced, the county will host an "open house" event to allow the public to review the plan and comment on plan materials. Notification will be placed in local media and on the county web site.

Public Viewing of Plan-related Materials

Narrative, maps and other educational materials and documents will be made available for public viewing at the Sawyer County UW-Extension Office, Sawyer County Government Center, during regular business hours. Where possible, these materials will also be available for public viewing and download on the county web page. Meeting minutes or other applicable project records will also be made available to the public and published on the county web page.

Milestone Forums and Other Planning Informational Meetings

During the plan update process and at times when amendments may be considered, the respective committee/board may hold milestone forums or informational meetings to share plan development progress or amendment proposals. Various media outlets (print and air) will be informed of the meeting, press releases developed and information posted on appropriate websites.