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AGENDA NOTICE (9/11/2026)

THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF EAGLE RIVER WILL HOLD A SPECIAL SESSION ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2026, AT 5:00 P.M. AT CITY HALL, 525 E. MAPLE STREET IN EAGLE RIVER.

Notice is hereby given that a majority of the City Council of the City of Eagle River may be attending scheduled Planning Commission meetings either in person or via zoom. This constitutes a meeting of the City Council pursuant to State ex rel. Badke v. Greendale Village Bd., 173 Wis. 2d 553, 494 N.W.2d 409 (1993), and must be noticed as such, although the Council will not take any formal action at these meetings.

This meeting will be available by Zoom at the following link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85111695208?pwd=x5pMv8crrbsPuYwefObTYbJG0m83b3.1>

Meeting ID: 851 1169 5208

Passcode: 963936

- 1) Call to Order.
- 2) Roll Call.
- 3) Discussion and possible action on the following agenda item(s):
 - a) Comprehensive Plan, Review and Possible Modification of the Following Chapters:
 - i) Chapter 5, Transportation
 - ii) Chapter 6, Economic Development
 - a) Data Centers
 - iii) Chapter 8, Intergovernmental Cooperation
 - b) Scheduling of recurring Comprehensive Plan Special Meetings moving forward
- 4) Adjournment.

Robin Ginner, City Administrator

Please note that, upon reasonable notice, at least 24 hours in advance, efforts will be made to accommodate the needs of disabled individuals through appropriate aids and services or provide a video link for meetings. For additional information to request this service, please contact the City Clerk's Office at 715-479-8682 ext. 224, 525 E. Maple Street, P.O. Box 1269, Eagle River WI 54521.

Chapter 5

Transportation

Transportation is necessary for the effective movement of people and goods within the community. It is also essential to connect those within Eagle River with connections outside of the City. Transportation is also critical to development and land use. This chapter provides an inventory of the existing transportation facilities and services within the City of Eagle River. The **Transportation Map** identifies the transportation infrastructure within the City of Eagle River.

Transportation is a crucial component of livability and provides a basis for the formulation of policy to coordinate transportation facilities within a sustainable pattern of development. The existing network, from roads to rails needs to be coordinated to maximize efficiency for the overall system. The connection between home and work is an important part of any transportation system. A range of transportation alternatives should be supported, including walkability whenever possible.

Previous Plans and Studies

Regional Comprehensive Plan, 2025

The 2025 Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP), written by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, addresses issues of livability in the areas of housing, transportation, economic development, and land use. The RCP identifies the following issues facing transportation within the Region:

- A need for bicycle and pedestrian improvements
- Dispersed population in rural areas
- Weight limits on roads
- Rail and roadway conflicts
- Funding transportation maintenance and improvements
- An aging populations's ability to continue depending on driving
- Transporting students as school enrollment declines and school facilities consolidate

Connections 2030

This is Wisconsin's latest long-range, statewide, multimodal transportation plan. It identifies a series of system-level priority corridors that are critical to Wisconsin's travel patterns and the state economy.

Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

This 2018 plan is a region-wide effort to improve bicycling and walking across the communities. The plan assesses existing conditions related to bicycling and walking, identifying other potential trail and route user groups, identifying routes and describing policies and programs to assist local governments in improving bicycling and walking to promote connectivity between communities and destinations throughout north central Wisconsin.

State Trails Network Plan

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) created this plan in 2001, to identify a statewide network of trails and to provide guidance to the DNR for land acquisition and development. Many existing trails are developed and operated in partnership with counties. By agreement the DNR acquires the corridor and the county government(s) develop, operate, and maintain the trail.

Vilas County Countywide Bike/Ped Route and Trail Plan, 2011

This plan is intended to guide the development of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, recommendations, and policy that will create a safe and accessible network across Vilas County's various communities. It was prepared by the Vilas Area Silent Sports Association (VASSA) along with the NCWRPC.

Vilas County Countywide Shared Use Route & Trail Study, 2018

This study provides guidance to assist governmental entities, route & trail interest groups and individual trail users within Vilas County in working together to plan, develop and maintain a comprehensive and sustainable route and trail network for diverse outdoor recreation.

Locally Developed, Coordinated Public Transit – Human Service Transportation Plan, 2024-2028

Oneida and Vilas Counties developed this five-year plan that was facilitated by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. The plan analyzes service gaps and needs in public transit and human services transportation and proposes strategies to address the gaps and needs.

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act)

This current federal transportation program authorizes up to \$108 billion to support federal public transportation programs, including \$91 billion in guaranteed funding. It also reauthorizes surface transportation programs for FY 2022-2026 and provides advance appropriations for certain programs. Major goals include improving safety, modernizing aging transit infrastructure and fleets, investing in cleaner transportation, and improving equity in communities with limited transportation access. These funds will be distributed via formulas and grants to the states. Local units will be able to access the funds through various grant programs. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation will likely be the agency administering these funds.

Road Network

The road network provides for the movement of people and products within the City with connections to county, state and federal highways. US Highway 45 and State Highways 17 & 70 are the primary roads in the City, along with the numerous City streets. The jurisdictional and functional breakdown of the City of Eagle River road network is shown in **Table 16**.

Table 16: Road Mileage by Jurisdictional and Functional Class				
Jurisdiction	Functional Classification			Totals
	Arterial	Collector	Local	
State*	3.33	0.00	0.00	3.33
County	0.00	0.17	0.00	0.17
City	0.00	5.92	18.76	24.68
Totals	3.33	6.09	18.76	28.18

Source: WisDOT & NCWRPC.

* WisDOT has jurisdiction over interstate and federal highways.

Functional Classification

A functionally classified road system is one in which streets and highways are grouped into classes according to the character of the services they provide, ranging from a high degree of travel mobility to land access functions. At the upper limit of the system (principal arterials, for example), are those facilities that emphasize traffic mobility (long, uninterrupted travel), whereas at the lower limits are those local roads and streets that emphasize access. The functional classifications are generally defined as:

- **Principal Arterials** serve corridor movements having trip length and travel density characteristics of an interstate or interregional nature. These routes generally serve all urban areas with populations greater than 5,000 or connect major centers of activity. They carry the highest traffic volumes and are designed to accommodate longer trips.
- **Minor Arterials**, like principal arterials, minor arterials also serve cities, large communities, and other major traffic generators, providing intra-community continuity and service for trips of moderate length, with more emphasis on land access than principal arterials.
- **Collectors** provide both land access service and traffic circulation, within residential neighborhoods, commercial areas, and industrial areas. The collector system distributes trips from the arterials through the area to the local streets. The collectors also collect traffic from the local streets and channel it into the arterial system.
- **Local streets** comprise all facilities not on one of the higher systems. They serve primarily to provide direct access to abutting land and access to higher order systems. Local streets offer the lowest level of mobility and high volume through-traffic movement on these streets is usually discouraged.

Jurisdiction

Roads are commonly classified in one of two ways: by ownership or by purpose. Jurisdictional responsibility refers to ownership of a particular road, while functional classification, as described above, identified the road by the level of service it provides.

Jurisdiction refers to governmental ownership, not necessarily responsibility. For example, some State-owned roads are maintained by local jurisdictions. Additionally, the designation of a public road as a “Federal-aid highway” does not alter its ownership or jurisdiction as a State or local road, only that its service value and importance have made that road eligible for Federal-aid construction and rehabilitation funds.

As previously noted, these functional classifications are generally equated with the jurisdictional divisions. In the more developed larger urban communities, this relationship may not be as rigid, whereas the local community constructs and maintains all classes of the roadway system. However, in the typical rural transportation system the jurisdictional and the functional classifications maintain a closer relationship. The greatest emphasis of traffic in rural areas is generally on non-local efficient movement, whereas local access is secondary due to relatively low population densities.

Functional classification and jurisdiction are summarized below for all major roads within the City of Eagle River.

- US Highway 45 is classified as a Primary Arterial
- State Highways 17 and 70 are classified as Minor Arterials
- County Highway G is classified as a Major Collector
- S Loon Lake Rd, Silver Lake Rd, and Illinois St are classified as Minor Collectors
- All other roads within the City are classified as local roads.

Road Maintenance

The City of Eagle River uses the Pavement Surface Evaluation Rating (PASER) system, which was designed by the Transportation Information Center of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The PASER system is the rating system used by most Wisconsin communities. The PASER system rates road surfaces on a scale of 1 to 10. This scale is broken down as follows:

- “1” and “2” = very poor condition
- “3” = poor condition
- “4” and “5” = fair condition
- “6” and “7” = good condition
- “8” = very good condition
- “9” and “10” = excellent condition

Table 17 shows a summary of pavement conditions in the City of Eagle River. Roads exhibiting a surface condition rating at or below “fair” must be examined to determine what type of reconstruction or strengthening is necessary. The roads that display a surface rating of “good” or better will only require minimal preventative maintenance to promote safe travel conditions. About eight miles of local roadways within the City are currently in need of improvement. Less than a mile of roadways in the City are gravel or unimproved roads. Asphalt roads account for the vast majority of roadways within the City.

Table 17: Summary of Pavement Conditions, 2025

	Miles	Percent of Total Mileage
Very Poor	3.39	13.8%
Poor	0.76	3.1%
Fair	3.88	15.8%
Good	7.52	30.6%
Very Good	5.02	20.5%
Excellent	3.99	16.2%
Total	24.55	100.0%

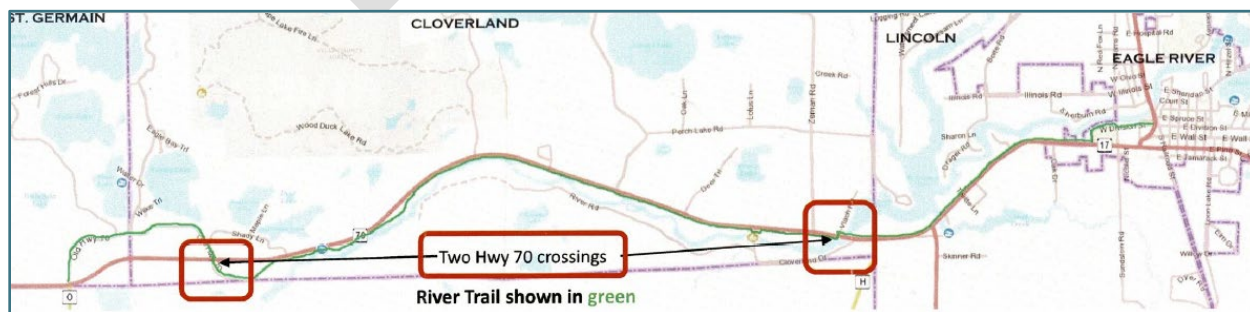
Source: WisDOT 2025

Other Modes of Transportation

Bicycle and Pedestrian

All roads except freeways are available for bicycle and pedestrian travel. The Wisconsin DOT has determined bicycling conditions on all county and state highways. Under current conditions, the entire length of US Highway 45 and State Highways 17 & 70 are considered undesirable for biking. County Highway G was identified as containing best conditions for bicycling. Additionally, the City has a sidewalk network providing better walking conditions for pedestrians.

There are some trails that have been developed in the Eagle River area, with efforts underway to create a trail segment that would connect the City to the Heart of Vilas County Bike Trail System. As part of these efforts, the City of Eagle River and Towns of Cloverland and St. Germain have formed a multi-jurisdictional commission to head up development of the River Trail, a proposed 10-mile-long trail connecting to the nationally recognized Heart of Vilas County Bike Trail System. This new trail would provide a safe alternative for those currently walking and riding along Highway 70.



Closeup view of the planned route for the River Trail, which would run parallel to Highway 70. Source: GHTF

Airport

Air passenger services available to Eagle River residents include the facilities in Eagle River, Land O'Lakes, and Rhinelander.

The Eagle River Regional Airport is located approximately in the northwest portion of the City. This facility provides charter services, and facilities for private and corporate air transportation. This facility is an "all-weather" facility and has a commuter service to Chicagoland Airport in Illinois.

The King's Land O' Lakes Airport (LNL) in Land O' Lakes is a general utility (GU) airport that is designed to accommodate virtually all small general aviation aircraft. Typically, these aircraft are used for business and charter flying, or for personal use.

Scheduled passenger service is available nearby from one airport located in Rhinelander, WI. This airport serves scheduled, nonstop, airline markets and routes of less than 500 miles. Delta Connection Airline now provides two daily flights between the Rhinelander-Oneida County Airport and the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, and a third flight from Minneapolis-St. Paul in the evening in route to Ford Airport in Iron Mountain Michigan. United Express Airline offers summer seasonal service to Chicago O'Hare International Airport.

Public Transportation

Northwoods Transit Connections provides public transportation in Oneida and Vilas Counties with on-demand service 5 days per week from 8:00am - 5:00pm. The Vilas County Department on Aging coordinates volunteer driver-escort service to residents of Vilas County, which includes Eagle River. Escort drivers provide transportation to elderly and disabled residents of Vilas County that qualify as a priority trip purpose such as medical appointments and grocery shopping. For rides or other info call the Vilas County Department on Aging.

Vilas County also has a local chapter of the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) that coordinates free transportation services for veterans in the area, offering free rides for veterans to the Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center in Iron Mountain, Michigan.

Trucking

US Highway 45 and State Highways 17 & 70 are long truck routes designated by WisDOT that serve the City. This corresponds with their role as Corridors 2030 connecting routes, linking to the Backbone highway system, and facilitating the movement of goods between Vilas County and the rest of the state/nation.

Local truck routes often branch out from these major corridors to link local industry with the main truck routes as well as for the distribution of commodities with the local area. Mapping these local routes is beyond the scope of this study, and local issues such as safety, weight restrictions, and noise impacts play significant roles in the designation of local truck routes.

Transportation Programs

Below is a listing of programs that may be of assistance to the City with regard to the development of the local transportation system. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation is the primary provider of programs to assist local transportation systems. A wide variety of programs are available to serve the gamut of jurisdictions from county down to the smallest town. The programs most likely to be utilized by communities such as Eagle River include:

- Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)
- Local Roads Improvement Program (LRIP)
- General Transportation Aids
- Surface Transportation Program – Local (STP-L)
- Surface Transportation Program – Rural (STP-R)
- Surface Transportation Program – Urban (STP-U)
- Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)
- Connecting Highway Aids
- Disaster Damage Aids
- Transportation Economic Assistance Program (TEA)
- Airport Improvement Program (AIP)
- Local Bridge Improvement Assistance
- Local Small Structure Improvement Program (LSSIP)
- Signals and ITS Standalone Program (SISP)

More information on these programs can be obtained by contacting the WisDOT region office in Rhinelander or at <https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/local-gov/astnce-pgms/default.aspx>.

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Goal: Provide and maintain a safe, reliable transportation network.

Objectives:

1. Utilize road standards for public and private roads in accordance with existing City standards.
2. Consider access controls in accordance with specific planned uses along roadways.
3. Develop and maintain a road plan to address long-term needs for road upgrades and new roads, including where possible parallel pathways for alternative forms of transportation, e.g., bicycle, pedestrian, snowmobile, slow moving vehicles, and transportation for the disabled.
4. Promote the development of multi-use trails, trail linkages, and sidewalks or wide shoulders on roads as part of new developments or road projects.
5. Reserve adequate right-of-way for future road linkage.
6. Identify roads and highways by function.
7. Assess and integrate local, state, and regional road or transportation plans.
8. Participate in the review for public transportation with on-going regional efforts.
9. Maintain airport safety standards in accordance with Federal Airport Administration and Department of Transportation regulations.

Chapter 6

Economic Development

The economic base of the community serves as an important driver for current and future land use. Economic characteristics include such components as the size of the civilian labor force, comparative employment growth, employment by industry, unemployment rates, and commuting patterns. Employment patterns and economic trends generally occur on a regional scale. Residents of one community often work in another. Similarly, changes in a major industry can impact jobs and growth far beyond the community where the business is physically located. It is therefore important to understand a local community's economy in light of its regional context.

Assessment of these components of the economic base provides an important historical perspective on current land use patterns and provides insights that help to predict possible future directions and opportunities for growth of the local economy.

Previous Plans and Studies

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), 2026

Vilas County is one of ten counties included in the North Central Wisconsin Economic Development District as designated by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA). The NCWRPC is the agency responsible for maintaining that designation. As part of the designation, the NCWRPC prepares five-year CEDS updates. This report summarizes and assesses economic development activities over the past year and presents new and modified strategies to promote growth.

North Central Wisconsin Regional Recovery Plan, 2022

The purpose of this plan is to guide economic stabilization, recovery, and resiliency efforts within the North Central Wisconsin Region in the face of the current pandemic as well as future events that cause economic shocks. The goal of this plan is to develop a set of strategies that will help the Region's local economies recover from and become more resilient to economic shocks by identifying best practice strategies that help spur economic stabilization and recovery in the wake of economic shocks and that will help build local economic resilience. Helping local recovery and resiliency efforts will help the regional economy as a whole recover and grow back even stronger than before the disaster struck. A dashboard that monitors the status of economic metrics for broadband, childcare, housing, transportation, workforce and talent attraction, tourism, hospitality, economic indicators, and social indicators is found on NCWRPC's website.

Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP), 2025

The RCP's economic development chapter examines the Region's economy and compares it to statewide and national trends, followed by a series of economic development recommendations and local, Regional, State, and federal programs. The following issues facing economic development within the Region were identified:

- An aging workforce, retirements, and the need for a skilled and flexible workforce
- Unpredictable weather impact on agriculture, outdoor recreation, tourism, and financial resiliency
- The need for broadband expansion
- Childcare availability and affordability
- Unknown future of the forest products industry
- Limited access to active rail lines
- Artificial Intelligence (AI), automation, and their unknown future impact on the economy
- The increase in flexible, hybrid, and remote work and its impact on commercial real estate, local businesses, community facilities, and job recruitment strategies
- Inflation's impact on businesses, County and municipal budgets, household finances, and growing wealth gaps between households of different income levels

ALICE: A Study of Financial Hardship in Wisconsin, 2025

This report, developed by the United Way, described the 35 percent of households in Vilas County that are living in poverty or are experiencing financial hardship, making them "ALICE" households (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed). These households are largely employed but do not earn enough in wages to meet the "household survival budget," which does not allow for any savings. The report states that many ALICE households provide vital services, such as retail, health care, childcare, and security, but cannot make ends meet on the income provided from these jobs.

- The ALICE report shows that 45 percent of City of Eagle River households are either below the federal poverty level or are considered ALICE households, indicating that the average household in the City of Eagle River is more likely to face financial hardship than the average Vilas County household at-large. This is based on 2023 data, so affordability is likely a larger challenge as housing prices and inflation have increased since then.

Vilas County Comprehensive Plan, 2023

The Vilas County Comprehensive Plan analyzes labor patterns, the economic base, employment projections, and existing facilities. The plan outlines the following goals:

- Encourage a variety of economic development opportunities appropriate to the resources and character of Vilas County.
- Enhance career opportunities and living wage jobs in an economy that is compatible with our natural resources and reflects the needs of the entire community.
- Enhance and diversify the economy consistent with other Vilas County goals and objectives.

Economic Environment

Local Economic Environment

Tourism and outdoor recreation are major drivers of the local economy in both Eagle River and Vilas County. Both the City and County are known for its lakes, extensive trail systems, and winter sports, attracting year-round visitors for activities like boating, fishing, snowmobiling, biking, and hiking. Additionally, there are many small, locally owned shops, restaurants and service providers that form the backbone of the local economy. Many of these businesses both support and are supported by tourism and outdoor recreation. This is evidenced by the fact that two of the largest industry sectors by employment within Eagle River are the Retail Trade and Accommodation and Food Services sectors.

Economic Sectors

Table 18 details employment by sector for the City of Eagle River and Vilas County. In 2024, there were 660 persons employed in the thirteen basic economic sectors in the City. In 2024, the leading industry sectors for City of Eagle River in terms of employed residents were the Education, Health, and Social Services; Retail Trade; and Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation and Food Services sectors.

Overall, there were 10,532 persons employed in the basic economic industry sectors in Vilas County in 2024. The County’s employment growth was in contrast with the decrease in employment experienced in the City of Eagle River, as employment within Vilas County increased by about eight percent between 2010 and 2024. The leading industry sectors within Vilas County in 2024 were the Education, Health, and Social Services; Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation and Food Services; and Retail Trade industry sectors.

Between 2010 and 2024, there were several dramatic shifts in employment throughout industries within Vilas County. Nine sectors experienced growth within the County during this time, while the other four sectors – Construction; Retail Trade; Information; and Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation and Food Services - experienced declines within the County during this time.

Table 18: Employment by Industry Sector						
	Eagle River			Vilas County		
	2010	2024	Change	2010	2024	Change
Ag., Forestry, Fishing, Hunting & Mining	17	4	-76.5%	222	304	36.9%
Construction	35	44	25.7%	1,113	1,036	-6.9%
Manufacturing	50	25	-50.0%	512	699	36.5%
Wholesale Trade	10	20	100.0%	164	252	53.7%
Retail Trade	126	162	28.6%	1,517	1,402	-7.6%
Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities	17	34	100.0%	357	486	36.1%

Information	101	4	-96.0%	243	100	-58.8%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Leasing	17	4	-76.5%	633	764	20.7%
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative & Waste Mgmt Services	30	26	-13.3%	600	860	43.3%
Education, Health and Social Services	103	166	61.2%	1,684	2,314	37.4%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation and Food Services	79	114	44.3%	1,791	1,230	-31.3%
Public Administration	48	21	-56.3%	468	583	24.6%
Other Services	31	36	16.1%	460	502	9.1%
Total	664	660	-0.6%	9,764	10,532	7.9%

Source: U.S. Census and American Community Survey (2020-2024)

Labor Force Analysis

Labor force is defined as the number of persons, sixteen and over, employed or looking to be employed. **Table 19** compares the labor force of the City of Eagle River with that of Vilas County. Between 2010 and 2024, the City of Eagle River experienced a 1.4 percent decrease in the labor force, as the City's labor force decreased from 704 residents in 2010 to 694 residents in 2024. The decrease in the City's labor force during this time is in contrast to the slight increase experienced in Vilas County during the same time period. With a labor force consisting of 10,971 persons in 2024, Vilas County's labor force has increased by 2.4 percent since 2010, when the County's labor force consisted of 10,718 persons.

While the City's labor force slightly decreased between 2010 and 2024, it is important to note that the City has actually increased in population during this time. This discrepancy is mainly due to the large proportion of residents entering retirement and no longer participating in the labor force.

Table 19: Labor Force						
	City of Eagle River			Vilas County		
	2010	2024	% Change	2010	2024	% Change
Population 16 years and over	1,331	1,299	-2.4%	18,439	20,344	10.3%
Labor Force	704	694	-1.4%	10,718	10,971	2.4%
Employed	664	660	-0.6%	9,764	10,532	7.9%
Unemployed	40	34	-15.0%	951	435	-54.3%
Unemployment Rate	3.0%	2.6%	-13.3%	5.2%	2.1%	-59.6%
Participation Rate	52.9%	53.4%	0.9%	58.1%	53.9%	-7.2%

Source: U.S. Census and American Community Survey (2020-2024)

Unemployment

Unemployment is defined as the difference between the total civilian labor force and total persons employed. Stay-at-home parents, retirees, or persons not searching for employment are not considered

unemployed because they are not considered part of the labor force. In 2010, the City of Eagle River had 3.0 percent unemployment. By 2024, the City's unemployment rate had decreased to 2.6 percent. The City's unemployment rate was lower than both Vilas County (2.1%) and the State of Wisconsin (2.1%) in 2024.

Workforce Participation

Workforce participation is a measure expressed in terms of a percentage of persons actively seeking employment divided by the total working age population. People not participating in the labor force may not seek employment due to a variety of reasons including retirement, disability, choice to be a homemaker, or are simply not looking for work. The City of Eagle River had a 53.4 percent labor force participation rate in 2024, slightly higher than in 2010. Both the City of Eagle River and Vilas County had a lower participation rate than the State (65.3%).

Laborshed

A laborshed is an area or region from which an employment center draws its commuting workers. In 2023, there were 1,596 jobs located within the City of Eagle River. Residents of Eagle River held 129 of these jobs, while the remaining 1,467 jobs were held by workers who live outside of the City's boundaries. In contrast, there were 429 workers who live within the City that commuted to locations outside of the City for work, as shown in **Figure 7**. This indicates that the City's laborshed extends beyond its municipal borders.

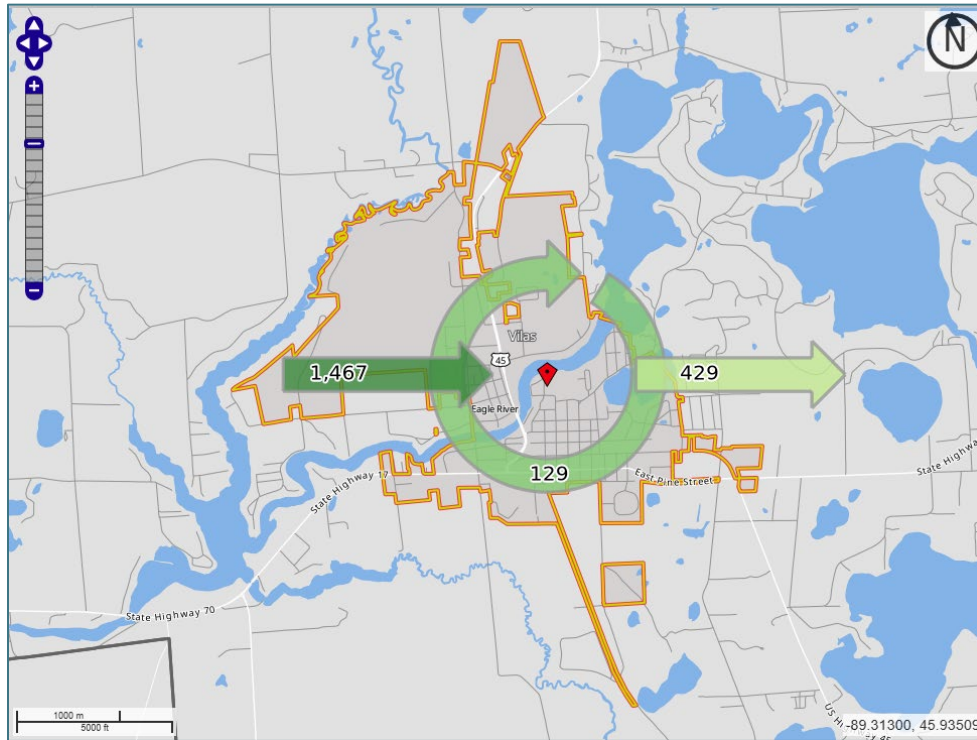
In-Migration

The majority of workers that commute into the City for work live in close proximity to the City, with many of these workers either living within Vilas County or in neighboring Oneida County.

Out-Migration

The most substantial group of outbound commuters (those who live in the City but work outside of the City) travel to the City of Rhinelander for work. Other common work destinations are mainly other communities located within Vilas and Oneida Counties.

Figure 7: City of Eagle River Laborshed



Source: U.S. Census On the Map

Occupations

As shown in **Table 20**, most residents in the City of Eagle River were employed in Management, business, science, and arts occupations. The second sector most represented was the Sales & Office occupation group, followed by Service occupations. From 2000 to 2024, the most significant increase in employment were seen in Management, Professional & Related occupations.

Table 20: Occupation of Employed Workers

Occupation	Eagle River		Vilas County	
	2000	2024	2000	2024
Management, Professional & Related	126	205	2,338	3,954
Service	109	148	1,901	2,058
Sales & Office	143	157	2,608	2,234
Natural Resources, Construction, and Maintenance	75	66	1,460	1,226
Production, Transportation & Mineral Moving	81	84	961	1,060
Total	534	660	9,268	10,532

Source: U.S. Census and American Community Survey (2020-2024)

Tourism & Seasonal Residents

Tourism is a major component in Vilas County's economy, as thousands of visitors travel to the area to take advantage of more than 1,300 lakes, large public forest lands, and diversity of recreational resources. Accommodations such as motels, resorts, campgrounds, and other lodging facilities generate an influx of visitors and business to Vilas County, including in Eagle River.

Economic Development Programs

There are a number of economic development programs available to businesses and local governments in Vilas County. A partial list of those programs is provided below:

Local:

Eagle River Revitalization Program

The Eagle River Revitalization Program, Inc. (ERRP) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization committed to preserving the unique Northwood charm of Eagle River while fostering economic growth and community vitality. ERRP is dedicated to creating a vibrant and welcoming environment for residents and visitors alike. ERRP offers a variety of grants and programs to assist business owners in Eagle River. ERRP's projects and programs rely on the involvement of passionate volunteers, the generosity of donors, and the support of the business community.

Tax Increment Financing

In 2004, the WI State Legislature enacted changes to the State's Tax Increment Financing statutes. One significant change involved allowing townships to establish tax increment districts for specified economic development projects. Tax Increment Financing has been employed by numerous communities throughout the state to promote redevelopment in blighted areas and finance new industrial development.

County:

Economic Development/Tourism Committee

There is a standing Economic Development/Tourism Committee at the county level that deals with economic development related issues. In addition, county planning staff work with development prospects and serve on the Board of Directors for Grow North (economic development organization for Forest, Langlade, Lincoln, Oneida, and Vilas Counties) and the North Central Advantage Technology Zone (a group that recommends tax credits for technology business expansion).

Vilas County Economic Development Corporation

The Vilas County Economic Development Corporation (VCEDC) is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization that promotes overall economic development and works with new and existing businesses

in Vilas County. The VCEDC also assists with employee development, attraction, and retention. Since 2000, the VCEDC has led the County's broadband initiative.

Regional:

Grow North

Grow North is a non-profit organization whose mission is to assist area counties and communities in their efforts to recruit and retain businesses, stimulate new job creation and to foster an environment conducive to entrepreneurial growth. Grow North was created in 2004 to foster cooperation among economic development partners and foster economic growth efforts in Forest, Langlade, Lincoln, Oneida, and Vilas Counties.

North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

The City is a member of the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, as are all local governments in Vilas County based on county membership. Membership brings with it a variety of planning benefits and service. Benefits include participation in the Economic Development District, including eligibility for a variety of grants administered by the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA). In addition, resulting in membership with the NCWRPC, the County is a member of the Central Wisconsin Fund which manages a revolving loan fund designed to help businesses address a gap in private capital markets for long-term, fixed-rate, low down payment, low interest financing.

Central Wisconsin Development Fund

The Central Wisconsin Development Fund (CWED) provides accessible financing to help businesses start, expand, and innovate. By filling lending gaps, CWED empowers entrepreneurs to create jobs and strengthen the local economy. CWED currently offers three funding programs: the Gap Financing program, the Micro Loan program, and the Startup Fund program.

The **Gap Financing** program fills the funding gaps when your bank can provide most—but not all—of what you need. CWED participates alongside your primary lender, covering up to 40% of total project costs. This program is ideal for businesses with strong banking relationships who need additional capital to make their expansion, equipment purchase, or real estate acquisition possible. <https://cwedfund.com/loan-programs/gap-financing>.

The **Micro Loan** program provides smaller-scale financing for entrepreneurs and businesses that need capital quickly. Unlike Gap Financing, no bank participation is required—CWED is your direct lender. This program is ideal for early-stage businesses, entrepreneurs without established banking relationships, or small projects that need flexible, accessible financing. <https://cwedfund.com/loan-programs/micro-loans>.

The **Startup Fund** is designed specifically for businesses in their first 1-3 years of operation. With lower interest rates and built-in mentorship requirements, this program helps new ventures launch strong with both capital and guidance. This program is ideal for entrepreneurs just getting started who need startup capital and would benefit from the support of a local economic development mentor. <https://cwedfund.com/loan-programs/startup-fund>.

State:

Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation

The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) is the State's primary department for the delivery of integrated services to businesses. Their purpose is to 1) foster retention of and creation of new jobs and investment opportunities in Wisconsin; 2) foster and promote economic business, export, and community development; and 3) promote the public health, safety, and welfare through effective and efficient regulations, education, and enforcement. WEDC manages a variety of programs intended to assist businesses and communities. These include:

- Brownfield Program
- Capacity Building Grants (CB)
- Certified Sites
- Historic Preservation Tax Credit
- Business Opportunity Loan Fund
- Workforce Training Grants
- Idle Industrial Sites Redevelopment Program
- The Industrial Revenue Bond (IRB) Program
- Community Development Investment (CDI) Grant Program

Wisconsin Fast Forward Program

The objective of the Wisconsin Fast Forward (WFF) grant program is to award funds to businesses from all Wisconsin industry sectors that reimburse the costs of customized occupational training for unemployed, underemployed, and incumbent workers. Grant awards range from \$5,000 to \$400,000 per grantee.

Rural Economic Development Program

This program administered by the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) provides grants and low interest loans for small business (less than 25 employees) start-ups or expansions in rural areas. Funds may be used for "soft costs" only, such as planning, engineering, and marketing assistance.

Wisconsin Small Cities Program

The Wisconsin Department of Administration provides federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to eligible municipalities for approved housing and/or public facility improvements and for economic development projects. Economic Development grants provide loans to businesses for such things as: acquisition of real estate, buildings, or equipment; construction, expansion or remodeling; and working capital for inventory and direct labor.

University of Wisconsin Extension Office

The Center for Community Economic Development, University of Wisconsin Extension, creates, applies and transfers multidisciplinary knowledge to help people understand community change and identify opportunities.

The Wisconsin Innovation Service Center (WISC)

This non-profit organization is located at the University of Wisconsin at Whitewater and specializes in new product and invention assessments and market expansion opportunities for innovative manufacturers, technology businesses, and independent inventors.

Wisconsin Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

The UW SBDC is partially funded by the Small Business Administration and provides a variety of programs and training seminars to assist in the creation of small business in Wisconsin.

Transportation Economic Assistance (TEA)

This program, administered by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, provides immediate assistance and funding for the cost of transportation improvements necessary for major economic development projects.

Federal:

Economic Development Administration (EDA)

As the only federal government agency focused exclusively on economic development, the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) plays a critical role in facilitating regional economic development efforts in communities across the nation. The Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance programs are EDA's most common funding programs.

EDA's **Public Works** program helps distressed communities revitalize, expand, and upgrade their physical infrastructure. This program enables communities to attract new industry, encourage business expansion, diversify local economies, generate local investment, and create or retain long-term jobs through land acquisition, development, and infrastructure improvement projects that establish or expand industrial or commercial enterprises. The **Economic Adjustment Assistance** (EAA) program is EDA's most flexible program; it provides a wide range of technical, planning, and public works and infrastructure assistance in regions experiencing adverse economic changes that may occur suddenly or over time. EDA utilizes EAA investments to provide resources that help communities experiencing or anticipating economic dislocations to plan and implement specific solutions to leverage their existing regional economic advantages to support economic development and job creation.

US Department of Agriculture – Rural Development (USDA – RD)

The USDA Rural Development program is committed to helping improve the economy and quality of life in all of rural America. Financial programs include support for such essential public facilities and services as water and sewer systems, housing, health clinics, emergency service facilities, and electric and telephone service. USDA-RD promotes economic development by supporting loans to businesses through banks and community-managed lending pools. The program also offers technical assistance and information to help agricultural and other cooperatives get started and improve the effectiveness of their member services.

Small Business Administration (SBA)

SBA provides business and industrial loan programs that will make or guarantee up to 90 percent of the principal and interest on loans to companies, individuals, or government entities for financing in rural areas. Wisconsin Business Development Finance Corporation acts as an agent for the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) programs that provide financing for fixed asset loans and for working capital.

DRAFT

Goals, Objectives & Policies

Goal: Maintain, enhance, and diversify the local economy.

Objectives:

1. Encourage new opportunities for local employment of Eagle River citizens.
2. Explore possibilities to increase and support commercial business, tourism related business, and light industrial growth within the planned commercial areas.
3. Encourage business and light industrial development which strengthens and diversifies the economic base; creates family wage jobs; develops and operates in a manner that protects the environment; and uses our natural resources efficiently.
4. Accommodate home-based businesses which do not significantly increase traffic, noise and odor or detract from the character of the surrounding area.
5. Consider opportunities to work with economic development activities with the local Chamber of Commerce, Eagle River Revitalization Program/Main Street Program, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC), Vilas County Economic Development Corporation, Grow North, and other applicable agencies and organizations that are involved in growth management.
6. Assess and evaluate each expansion request of the City limits through annexation.
7. Increase land acreage available for business development in Eagle River

Goal: Enhance and develop year-round recreational opportunities in the City of Eagle River while minimizing user conflicts.

Objectives:

1. Promote common sense regulations to coordinate the use, access, and opportunity of land or water recreational vehicles.
2. Consider enhancing recreational facilities that provide multi-use recreation opportunities.
3. Maintain participation in the Vilas County Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan to direct improvement projects and maintain eligibility to compete for WDNR recreational program and facility grants.
4. Support existing and work toward providing additional snowmobile, hiking, skiing, and biking trails.

5. Explore opportunities to develop integrated, multi-use trail systems.
6. Encourage connection of multi-use trail to other Vilas County communities, if possible.
7. Pursue state and federal funding programs which can aid in the development and acquisition of parks, trails, scenic and environmentally significant areas.
8. Recognize the need to accommodate all age groups and abilities in recreational pursuits.
9. Evaluate the need, conditions, and maintenance requirements of public access to waterways.
10. Continue to work with, support and cooperate with service clubs and organizations related to the maintenance and development of recreational facilities and activities.

Chapter 8

Intergovernmental Cooperation

The issue of intergovernmental cooperation is increasingly important; since many issues cross over political boundaries, such as watersheds, labor force, commuter patterns, and housing. Communities are not independent of each other, but rather dependent on each other. The effects from growth and change on one spill over to all surrounding communities and impact the region as a whole.

Wisconsin Statute s.66.30, entitled “Intergovernmental Cooperation”, does enable local governments to jointly do together whatever one can do alone. Unfortunately, there is little public policy in Wisconsin law that encourages, let alone requires, horizontal governmental relationships. The result is that towns, villages, cities, and counties often act more as adversaries than as partners.

Background

Overview

As mentioned earlier, Eagle River is the only City within Vilas County and serves as the county seat. The City of Eagle River is encompassed by the Town of Lincoln. Other nearby municipalities include the Towns of Washington, Cloverland, and Conover within Vilas County, as well as the Towns of Sugar Camp and Three Lakes in Oneida County. These are important intergovernmental relationships for the City. Efforts should be made to maintain good working relationships with the surrounding towns and the County.

Statewide, Wisconsin has over 2,500 units of government and special purpose districts. Having so many governmental units allows for local representation, but also adds more players to the decision making process. In general terms, intergovernmental cooperation is any arrangement by which officials of two or more jurisdictions coordinate plans, policies, and programs to address and resolve issues of mutual interest. It can be as simple as communication and information sharing, or it can involve entering into formal intergovernmental agreements and sharing resources such as equipment, buildings, staff, and revenue.

Benefits

There are many reasons intergovernmental cooperation makes sense. Some examples include:

- **Trust:** Cooperation can lead to positive experiences and results that build trust between jurisdictions. As jurisdictions communicate and collaborate on issues of mutual interest, they become more aware of one another's needs and priorities. They can better anticipate problems and work to avoid them.

- **Cost Savings:** Cooperation can save money by increasing efficiency and avoiding unnecessary duplication. Cooperation can enable some communities to provide their residents with services that would otherwise be too costly.
- **Consistency:** Cooperation can lead to consistency of the goals, objectives, plans, policies, and actions of neighboring communities and other jurisdictions.
- **Address Regional Issues:** Communicating and coordinating their actions, and working with regional and state jurisdictions, local communities are able to address and resolve issues, which are regional in nature.

The major beneficiary of intergovernmental cooperation is the local resident. They may not understand, or even care about, the details of a particular intergovernmental issue, but residents can appreciate their benefits, such as costs savings, provision of needed services, a healthy environment, and a strong economy.

Tools

Shared Service Agreements

Wisconsin Statute s.66.0301 enables local governments to jointly do together whatever one can do alone. Intergovernmental agreements prepared using this statute, are the most common form of agreement and have been used by communities for years, often in the context of sharing public services such as police, fire, or rescue. This type of agreement can also be used to provide for revenue sharing, determine future land use within a subject area, and to set temporary municipal boundaries. Shared service agreements are utilized to allow this type of cooperation.

Boundary Agreements

Under Section 66.0307 of the Wisconsin Statutes, municipalities may prepare cooperative boundary plans or agreements. Cooperative boundary plans or agreements involve decisions regarding the maintenance or change of municipal boundaries for a period of 10 years or more. The cooperative plan must include a plan for the physical development of the territory covered by the plan; a schedule for changes to the boundary; plans for the delivery of services; an evaluation of environmental features and a description of any adverse environmental consequences that may result; and the need for safe and affordable housing. Upon adoption by the participating communities and approval by the Wisconsin Department of Administration, the cooperative plan has the force and effect of a contract.

Extra-territorial Jurisdiction Zoning

Any city that has a plan commission may exercise extraterritorial zoning power in the unincorporated areas surrounding the city, under Wisconsin Statute 62.23. The extraterritorial zoning power may be exercised in the unincorporated areas located within 1 ½ miles of a fourth-class city (Eagle River). Using this tool involves lengthy process and requires strong communication with the surrounding towns.

Extraterritorial Subdivision Review

Wisconsin Statute, 236.10, allows a city or village to exercise its extraterritorial plat review authority in the same geographic area as defined within the extraterritorial zoning statute. The purpose of extraterritorial plat approval jurisdiction is to help cities and villages influence the development pattern of areas outside their boundaries that will likely be annexed to the city or village. This helps cities and villages protect land use near its boundaries from conflicting uses outside its limits.

Intergovernmental Relationships

Surrounding Towns

The City of Eagle River has joint service agreements with the St. Germain Volunteer Fire Departments via the Eagle River Area Fire Department. The Eagle River Area Fire Department is operated by a joint municipal fire commission, which is comprised of the City of Eagle River and the Towns of Cloverland, Washington, and Lincoln. Additionally, the City of Eagle River and the Towns of Cloverland and St. Germain have formed a multi-jurisdictional commission to head up development of the River Trail, a proposed 10-mile-long trail that would connect to the Heart of Vilas County Bike Trail system.

County

As the county seat, Eagle River is the hub of County government. The Courthouse, as well as a variety of other County assets are located in the City, including the Vilas County Sheriff's Office. These all require ongoing communication between the City and County to provide residents of the City and County the best service.

In many cases where state and federal agencies require area-wide planning for various programs or regulations, the County sponsors a county-wide planning effort to complete these plans and include each individual local unit in the process and resulting final plan. Examples of this include the County Outdoor Recreation plan which maintains the eligibility for Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources administered park and recreation development funding of each local unit that adopts it, and All Hazard Mitigation Plans which are required by Federal Emergency Management Agency in order for individual local units of government to qualify for certain types of disaster assistance funding.

North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

The North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) was formed under §60.0309 Wis. Statutes as a voluntary association of governments serving a ten-county area. Vilas County is a member of the NCWRPC, which includes all of its local units of government.

NCWRPC provides both regional and local planning assistance. Typical functions of the NCWRPC include (but are not limited to) land use, transportation, economic development, intergovernmental and geographic information systems (GIS) planning and services.

State and Federal Government

The Wisconsin departments of Natural Resources and Transportation are the primary agencies the City might deal with regarding development activities. Many of the goals and objectives of this plan will require continued cooperation and coordination with these agencies.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources takes a lead role in wildlife protection and sustainable management of woodlands, wetlands, lakes, rivers, and other wildlife habitat areas, while Wisconsin Department of Transportation is responsible for the planning and development of state highways, railways, airports, and other transportation systems. State agencies make a number of grant and aid programs available to local units of government like the City of Eagle River. Examples include local road aids, the Local Roads Improvement Program (LRIP) and the Priority Watershed Program. There are also a number of mandates passed down from the state that the City must comply with, such as the biannual pavement rating submission for the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR).

School District

The City of Eagle River is in the Northland Pines School District, but the Wisconsin Open Enrollment program allows children to attend other nearby school districts, provided that the district has the necessary space to accept the student. The Northland Pines School district has satellite elementary schools located in Eagle River, Land O' Lakes, and St Germain that serve students located throughout the district. Additionally, Northland Pines Middle and High School is located in Eagle River. In addition to public schools there are several private K-8 schools located within the Eagle River area.

Goals and Objectives

Goal: Strengthen local control of land use decisions.

Objectives:

1. Encourage Vilas County to create sewer only zones in areas that have sanitary sewer available to the property within the Eagle River extraterritorial planning area.
2. Cooperate with the Town of Lincoln to develop a mutually beneficial boundary agreement with the City of Eagle River to encourage sustained growth in the border areas.
3. Seek and establish mutually beneficial intergovernmental relations.
4. Continue to cooperatively provide services for the library, airport, fire, landfill, combating Aquatic Invasive Species, old landfill, buoy placement, etc.