

**TO: Common Council**

**FROM: John S. Weidl, City Manager**

**DATE: 11/19/2025**

**RE: City Manager 2025 Supplemental Summary – Alignment with Strategic Goals**

The City Manager's Office has prepared this supplemental summary to provide the Common Council with an early update on the City's progress toward the 2025 Strategic Goals. This document outlines measurable advancements in housing, communication, economic development, organizational health, fiscal management, and the Council's two strategic initiatives on healthcare and transportation. While initially intended as a companion to the upcoming annual self-evaluation, it is suitable for release at this stage to support the Council's request for a comprehensive goals update.

**This document reflects all available 2025 data to date. As additional year-end departmental indicators continue to roll in, I will issue an updated memo or supplemental appendix to ensure the final record fully captures all performance outcomes**

## **CITY MANAGER 2025 SUPPLEMENTAL SUMMARY**

### **Alignment of 2025 Performance with the City's Strategic Goals**

This supplemental document provides a detailed, metrics-based explanation of how the City Manager's 2025 accomplishments advanced the five Strategic Goals adopted by the Common Council:

1. Increase affordable housing for families
2. Increase communication without a newspaper
3. Support thriving businesses and grow the tax base
4. Improve recruitment, retention, and diversity
5. Align future expenditures with available resources
6. Strategic Initiative 2025: Increased Access to Medical and Health Care
7. Strategic Initiative 2025: Increased Access to Transportation

This narrative is written as a standalone document that can be cut and pasted into the evaluation packet.

### **STRATEGIC GOAL 1: Increase Affordable Housing for Families**

In 2025, the City made substantial progress toward expanding affordable, family-focused housing opportunities. The City Manager coordinated, facilitated, or supported every major residential development initiative.

Key accomplishments and metrics:

- A total of **51 new single-family units** were advanced during the year.
  - Harbor Homes constructed **20 new single-family detached homes**.
  - US Shelter constructed **20 single-family attached dwellings**.
  - Additional units were advanced through scattered-site infill and ongoing subdivision planning.
- The City facilitated the first phase of **128 multifamily units**, representing a significant contribution to workforce housing and student-serving stock.
- Combined, these residential projects represent **more than \$50 million in new private housing investment** projected over the next several years.
- The City positioned a **100-home subdivision** for phased development with Bielinski Homes, one of the region's most active and reputable builders, representing an additional **\$50 million in new private housing investment**.
- Planning progressed for **12 to 18 additional homes** on City-owned land on Starin Road with US Shelter, leveraging publicly controlled property to meet family housing needs.
- Residential build-out timelines indicate that these projects will continue **well into the next decade**, reflecting sustained pipeline management and predictable development sequencing.

### **Additional 2025 Affordable Housing Achievements**

Habitat for Humanity continued to contribute meaningfully to local affordable housing production, previously building two (2) units on Franklin Street in 2023-2024, expanding access to high-quality, income-restricted housing for working families. In 2025, the City and CDA

advanced the next phase of this partnership by redeveloping CDA-owned land for four (4) additional Habitat units, ensuring long-term affordability on property intentionally assembled to meet community housing needs.

Additionally, Stonehaven advanced a new small-lot single-family neighborhood concept on a combination of City-owned and privately held Greenfield parcels along the Bluff Rd. railroad corridor, with an anticipated 12 to 15 attainable homes targeted to the workforce market. The model reflects and operationalizes the best practices presented to the Common Council by Washington County and Sheboygan County, two State-wide recognized leaders in innovative attainable-housing design, demonstrating the City's capacity to translate proven regional approaches into actionable local development. Stonehaven's concept emphasizes price-controlled, entry-level ownership opportunities, with projected sale prices under \$350,000 and an internal goal of delivering three-bedroom, two-bath homes with full utilities, driveways, garages, and complete site improvements for under \$340,000.

This level of residential activity directly advances the strategic goal of increasing affordable and attainable homes by multiplying owner-occupied opportunities, expanding inventory for families, and ensuring Whitewater's housing market remains competitive and accessible by combining nonprofit, public, and private development tools to meet documented demand

## **STRATEGIC GOAL 2: Increase Communication Without a Newspaper**

The City's communication capacity expanded dramatically in 2025, replacing traditional print-based information gaps with modern, digital communication channels.

Key accomplishments and metrics:

- Social media post engagement increased from **562 to 5,974 interactions**, a **960% increase** in one year.
- City video content generated **more than 102,000 views**, expanding reach across all demographic groups, including younger audiences and university-affiliated residents.
- Departmental dashboards were designed, standardized, and implemented across multiple divisions to provide consistent, data-driven public reporting.
- The City Manager produced comprehensive **City Manager Reports for every Council meeting**, including multi-department updates, project tracking, operational data, and financial information.
- Communications output expanded significantly across all platforms.
- Staff are building a growing library of “evergreen” video content to support continuous public engagement, onboarding, education, and transparency.
- The City strengthened its presence across multiple social media platforms, enabling real-time updates and expanded access to information for residents who do not rely on newspapers.

Collectively, these efforts address the strategic goal of modernizing communication and ensuring residents receive timely, accurate, and engaging information regardless of traditional media decline.

### **STRATEGIC GOAL 3: Support Thriving Businesses and Grow the Tax Base**

The City Manager oversaw major economic development initiatives, long-range industrial capacity planning, and direct business engagement, thereby strengthening the economic base.

Key accomplishments and metrics:

- A key manufacturer (Lavelle) is currently developing a **50,000-square-foot industrial expansion**, adding over \$5 million in new manufacturing tax base, strengthening Whitewater's long-term employment base and tax capacity.
- The City advanced **three new industrial/commercial condominium buildings**, adding new space for business growth, startups, and light industrial tenants.
- The City is actively working with a company considering relocation from Sullivan, Wisconsin, demonstrating Whitewater's competitive position for targeted recruitment.
- Coordination began with WE Energies to secure **long-term power upgrades** in the industrial park, ensuring the site can support modern manufacturers and future expansions.
- The City continued its partnership with the Whitewater Community Foundation on a **\$10 million early childhood education center**, directly supporting workforce participation by expanding daycare capacity by 100 new slots.
- Business retention and expansion contacts were maintained throughout the year, with ongoing discussions, technical support, and project navigation for existing employers.

These outcomes advance the strategic goal of supporting businesses, expanding employment opportunities, and strengthening the long-term tax base by aligning public infrastructure with private-sector competitiveness.

## **STRATEGIC GOAL 4: Improve Recruitment, Retention, and Diversity**

The City made measurable gains in workforce stability, culture, and organizational modernization.

Key accomplishments and metrics:

- Turnover dropped to **12.4%**, a significant improvement compared to prior years. It was nearly 30% in 2023.
- Average tenure increased to **6.97 years**, reflecting improved organizational stability.
- Employee Net Promoter Score increased to **73.7**. The employee engagement indicators that feed into the City's ENPS—87% employee happiness, 61% employee appreciation, and a 4.0 culture score—show a clear improvement in organizational health.
- Employee engagement data showed:
  - **87% employee happiness,**
  - **61% employee-reported appreciation,**
  - **4.0 score** for overall culture and atmosphere.
- The City implemented new leadership development tools, stay interviews, professional pathways, and consistent internal communication practices.
- The City Manager completed or maintained multiple high-level professional credentials, strengthening organizational leadership capacity:
  - Certified Public Manager (CPM)
  - Certified Economic Developer (CEcD)
  - ICMA-CM credential effective January 2026

- Ongoing Doctor of Business Administration studies
- Completion of CVMIC “Perfecting Leadership” coursework
- Recruitment improvements were made across communications channels, job posting quality, and media production.

These efforts advance the strategic goal by improving organizational health, reducing turnover cost, strengthening culture, and ensuring Whitewater remains competitive in a tight labor market.

### **STRATEGIC GOAL 5: Align Future Expenditures With Available Resources**

The City strengthened its fiscal position in 2025 by aligning major expenditures with sustainable revenues, maintaining strong reserves, securing favorable financing, and advancing multiple high-priority capital initiatives without compromising service levels, wages, or long-term financial stability.

Key accomplishments and metrics:

- **Maintained a 24% fund balance**, significantly above minimum thresholds and reflective of disciplined, conservative financial stewardship.
- **Responsibly carried forward approximately \$500,000** to pre-fund essential equipment and capital purchases, reducing future levy impact and strengthening readiness for 2026–2027 capital cycles.
- **Implemented the Police and Fire referendum** without destabilizing City finances, ensuring staffing, training, and equipment enhancements proceeded as planned.



- **Advanced major DPW reconstruction projects** on Ann Street, Fremont Street, and Forest Avenue, delivering new sanitary sewer, water main, storm sewer, curb and gutter, sidewalk, and pavement—representing a multi-million-dollar coordinated infrastructure investment completed without cost overruns or service disruption.
- **Secured 100% principal forgiveness** on all private-side lead service line replacements and **0.25% interest financing** for public-side replacements, minimizing long-term debt exposure and positioning the utility to meet state and federal mandates at the lowest possible cost.
- **Moved forward on planning, financing, and preliminary work for the new \$12–15 million Public Works facility**, one of the most consequential long-term capital needs facing the community, including site planning, engineering scoping, and multi-year borrowing strategy development.
- **Scaled multi-year capital workloads across numerous departments**, including Utilities, DPW, Fire/EMS, Police, Parks, and the WAFC, while maintaining high service quality, competitive employee wage progression, and full compliance with regulatory and auditing standards.
- **Initiated early-stage work on a capital campaign and endowment fund for the Whitewater Aquatic & Fitness Center (WAFC)**. Preliminary feasibility discussions indicate community and donor support for a **\$3 million endowment**, with 50% contributions expected to come from **donor support**. The endowment is designed to stabilize WAFC operations over the long term and reduce future levy exposure.

- **Applied for approximately \$500,000 in external grant funding to construct a splash pad at Starin Park.** If awarded, this grant would allow the City to deliver a major community amenity without relying on local tax dollars, aligning fully with the goal of leveraging outside resources to reduce long-term fiscal pressure.

These accomplishments demonstrate strong alignment with Strategic Goal 5 by preserving reserves, safeguarding the City's financial position, reducing long-term operating and borrowing costs, and planning responsibly for large-scale capital obligations. These financial outcomes position the City to sustain its service levels, meet long-horizon obligations, and maintain flexibility as additional needs emerge.

### **STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 2025: Increased Access to Medical and Health Care**

The City of Whitewater significantly expanded community access to healthcare in 2025 through its partnership with Solstice Health. Solstice opened a fully operating medical clinic in Whitewater, secured local clinical space, hired professional medical staff, and began providing direct primary care, outpatient surgical services, diagnostic imaging, and preventative wellness programming to the broader community. In addition to serving municipal employees, Solstice's employer-focused care model now supports multiple local businesses, offering predictable Direct Primary Care plans and substantially lower-cost surgical and diagnostic services. This expansion improves workforce access to affordable, high-quality care and strengthens Whitewater's position as a competitive employment hub.

The City and CDA further strengthened Whitewater's healthcare infrastructure by approving a \$140,000, zero-interest loan to Edgerton Hospital & Health Services for the purchase of a new

X-ray machine at the Whitewater Urgent Care Center. The agreement requires the Urgent Care to operate in Whitewater for at least ten years, ensuring long-term local access to diagnostic services. This investment expands on-site imaging capacity, reduces reliance on out-of-town emergency departments, shortens wait times for residents, and significantly increases the number of clinical service hours available to the community.

Additional progress was in conjunction with Councilperson O. Smith on a public health grant application submitted to the Whitewater Community Foundation, as well as City collaboration with Walworth County to explore installation of a no-cost community health supply vending machine that would provide essential hygiene items and harm-reduction materials. Collectively, these initiatives demonstrate the City's responsiveness to Council direction in the strategic plan update and reflect a coordinated, multi-partner strategy to broaden healthcare access, strengthen local medical infrastructure, and support comprehensive community wellness.

### **STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 2025: Increased Access to Transportation**

The City continued advancing transportation accessibility in 2025 by maintaining a flexible approach to mobility and keeping multiple transportation options available to residents. Bird Scooters withdrew from Whitewater due to national restructuring and no suitable micro-mobility replacement has yet emerged. However, the City is in the third year of permitted ATV and UTV use on designated City roadways, demonstrating an ongoing commitment to alternative transportation options already in place prior to Bird's contract.

Regional transportation remains an area of concern for fourth-class cities under state statute, and the City worked with Brown Cab to strengthen performance and responsiveness within the

parameters of the current ride-share service contract. Staff also conducted a detailed review of what it would take to bring transit fully in-house; however, the required upfront capital investment, fleet costs, and ongoing personnel obligations make that option financially impractical at this time. Walworth County is expected to revisit its broader transportation contract in 2026-2027, and the City plans to align with that Request for Proposals to leverage economies of scale, pursue cost efficiencies, and secure a more dependable and responsive transportation service for Whitewater. This initiative reflects the Council's strategic priority to broaden mobility choices and improve long-term regional connectivity.