

OUTREACH SUMMARY

Public engagement is one of the most important pieces of planning, and as such, was carried throughout the entire planning process. Components of the public engagement process included:

PLANNING TEAM MEETINGS

Throughout the process, the planning team (City staff and project consultants) met two to four times per month to discuss project milestones, community engagement techniques, and emerging recommendations.

ADVISORY WORK GROUP MEETINGS

The Whitewater Forward Advisory Work Group was an important team of 16 decision-makers and involved residents focused on improving Whitewater for today, tomorrow, and decades to come. The working group met six times throughout the development of the plan, guiding the engagement process, reviewing goals and strategies, and ensuring voices were heard and considered.

LISTENING SESSIONS

A diverse range of local subject matter experts were invited to share their perspectives on the past, present, and future of Whitewater. In early 2026, the planning team met with:

- Builders and Developers
- City of Whitewater Staff
- Education Leaders
- High School Students
- Local Business Owners
- Major Employers
- Non-Profit Organizations
- Property Managers and Landlords
- Service Providers



POP-UP EVENTS

The planning team hosted 5 pop-up events and presentations throughout the Whitewater Forward process. The purpose of these events was to catch people at another event or place they were already at to share information about Whitewater Forward and gather their thoughts and ideas.

- Immigrant Support Coalition 03/11/2026
- International Children's Day 04/18/2026
- UWW University Center 03/10/2026
- University Innovation Center 03/11/2026
- Whitewater Rotary 04/20/2026

PROJECT WEBSITE

Throughout the process, the public was invited to learn about the planning process and share their ideas and concerns via input on the project website (www.whitewaterforward.com). The website was launched in December 2025 and received over 1,050 views by May 2026.

MONTHLY POLL

The Whitewater Forward website hosted monthly survey questions for residents and stakeholders. The topics of the surveys corresponded with plan elements under Whitewater Forward, and each question was carefully crafted. Each month brought residents and stakeholders an opportunity to give input on a new topic. The first survey launched in March 2026, and these surveys earned 94 responses across 3 surveys by May 2026.

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WHITewater FORWARD
MOVING TOGETHER TOWARD 2041

Whitewater Forward

About the Project
The City of Whitewater is updating its Comprehensive Plan. This update is titled Whitewater Forward. Whitewater Forward is an important tool to guide community leaders and decision-makers on efficient community growth and public investments.

Get Involved! Get in the Know!
Be the first to know about upcoming events or when we launch a new monthly poll! Subscribe below.
Email address

Monthly Poll

Open

Monthly Poll | Transportation

How do you usually get around Whitewater? Select all that apply:

Personal vehicle

Walking

Bicycling

Carpooling or rideshare

I have limited transportation options

Other (please specify)

Next

COMMUNITY ROUNDTABLE

In February 2026, the planning team hosted a community roundtable at the community center in Starin Park. A short presentation shared information about the planning process, and boards shared preliminary data findings. Attendees discussed their experiences in Whitewater, and shared with the planning team their ideas to improve the community in the future.

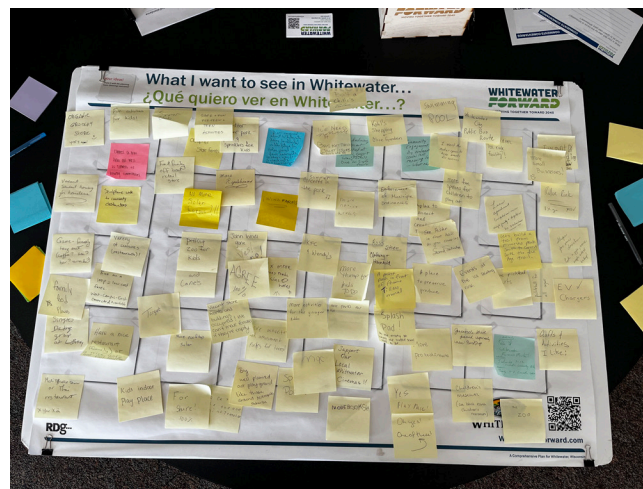
DESIGN WORKSHOPS

The design workshops were hosted in the Cravath Lakefront building in April 2026. The design workshop served as an opportunity for residents and other stakeholders to discuss future land use and mobility with the planning team over maps.

FINAL OPEN HOUSE

The final open house is scheduled for September 2026. This will allow residents and other stakeholders to review and comment on the plan's findings and recommendations before the plan becomes final.

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THE COMMUNITY SPEAKS

The meetings, listening sessions, online participation, and community events all revealed a shared hope for Whitewater's future. Several themes emerged relating to Whitewater's long-term sustainability, quality of life, and ability to attract and retain students, residents, businesses, and coworkers. Above all else, people want Whitewater to be a premier place to live, work, play, and grow.

HOUSING VARIETY AND AFFORDABILITY

Housing was the most frequent issue discussed. Stakeholders expressed concern about rising housing costs, limited workforce housing, and a lack of ownership opportunities for young professionals, young families, and aging adults. Participants emphasized that these challenges impact business recruitment and retention. Many showed support for expanded housing types, including smaller homes, mixed-use developments, student/senior housing, supportive housing, and multi-generational living options.

TRANSPORTATION, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND CONNECTIVITY

Transportation limitations and barriers came up often among stakeholders, along with ideas for solving such issues. Recurring concerns included the lack of a four-lane highway connection, limited regional access for residents, and insufficient local transit options for students, workers, and seniors. These discussions often lead to opportunity areas for future road expansions and extensions, and possibilities for a more expansive trail network throughout the community.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT DIVERSIFICATION

Many conversations centered around a desire to further diversify Whitewater's employment base. Stakeholders shared eagerness to attract new private-sector employers and expand opportunities in the business and technology park. There was support for incubator spaces, entrepreneurship programs, small manufacturing, and innovative development.

DOWNTOWN AMENITIES

Stakeholders consistently discussed the importance of improving downtown activity, tourism, recreation, and community amenities. Participants identified concerns about downtown vacancies, limited restaurant and entertainment options, and the need for more frequent-use destinations. Recreation assets including the trails and lake downtown were seen as major strengths that can be improved and built upon. There was strong interest in expanding youth programming, cultural activities, and events that encourage both residents and visitors to spend time in downtown Whitewater.

COMMUNITY IDENTITY

Participants repeatedly described Whitewater as a safe, caring, and resourceful community with strong parks, trails, and cultural assets. Stakeholders highlighted the community's ongoing efforts to improve communication, expand outreach, and create stronger connections among residents. Many participants expressed wants for increasing multilingual communication and broadening engagement opportunities beyond social media. There was strong support for enhancing community gathering spaces and continuing collaboration between the City, University, non-profits, and local organizations and businesses to foster an even greater sense of belonging and shared community pride.