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# THE CITY *of Altoona*

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# 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 a vibrant arts, culture, music, and food scene, along with excellent K-12 schools. Altoona is located approximately 90 miles east of Minneapolis/St. Paul and 175 miles northwest of Madison.

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, with a full pipeline of projects with zoning entitlement or currently in process, indications are that similar growth is likely for the immediate future. Growth has been mixed between redevelopment, infill, and new neighborhoods.

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.

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 planning process.



POPULATION  
8,651



SIZE  
4.7 sq. miles



MEDIAN INCOME  
\$55,571



MEDIAN HOME  
VALUE  
\$157,600



# 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 organization focused on providing Altoona residents a variety of quality-of-life amenities and events to enrich their lives.

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 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. City Departments include: planning, clerks office, administrative services, public works and engineering (including roads, water, wastewater, storm water), 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. 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:

- The City has contracted with a consulting firm to support city staff in creating a new Comprehensive Plan, see [www.AltoonaCompPlan.com](http://www.AltoonaCompPlan.com)
- The City has purchased 80 acres of property to the 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 to begin, 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.
- 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.



# EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

- Graduation from a four-year college or university with major coursework in political science, geography, urban planning, or a related field. Graduate degree and AICP credential preferred.
- Supervisory experience preferred.
- Four years' experience in community development, municipal planning, and project administration.
- 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 excellent benefits package including health, life, disability and dental insurance. The City also contributes 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.



## APPLICATION PROCESS

For more information on this position contact:  
**Mike Golat, City Administrator**  
[michaelg@ci.altoona.wi.us](mailto: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](http://www.ci.altoona.wi.us) and click on the CAREERS tab.**

## RESOURCES

City of Altoona, Wisconsin  
[www.ci.altoona.wi.us](http://www.ci.altoona.wi.us)

### SOCIAL MEDIA



**Click Link Box to visit  
COA Website!**

## The City of Altoona Position Description

<b>Position Title:</b>	Planning Director	<b>Department:</b>	Planning
<b>Grade:</b>	N	<b>FLSA:</b>	Exempt
<b>Last Update:</b>	December 2019	<b>Reports To:</b>	City Administrator

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### Purpose of Position

The Planning Director is a director level position that is responsible for articulating a compelling vision for Altoona that embodies the highest ambitions of livability, design excellence, quality public space, economic vitality, sustainable and ecological performance, and social equity, based on sound planning principles and market realities.

### Essential Duties and Responsibilities

The following duties are normal for this position. These are not to be construed as exclusive or all-inclusive. Other duties may be required and assigned.

Directs and coordinates the functions of the Planning and Development Department as part of the City's Executive Leadership Team, including, budgeting, coordination of planning projects, and authoring development agreements.

Provides developers and the public with information pertaining to development requirement and standards. Meets with developers and property owners and advises them of the City's procedures, regulations and requirements pertaining to land development.

Serves as principal planner for land use, housing, parks and public space, economic development, and outdoor recreation management programs.

Serves as the City's Zoning Administrator with full charge of the City's development review process including, but not limited to, review of site plans, conditional uses, rezones, plat and certified survey maps and annexations. Coordinates comments and makes recommendations on development proposals from all affected City departments.

Serves as the City's primary zoning code enforcement officer.

Answers public inquiries and complaints related to City planning and zoning issues.

Administers the City's zoning code and proposes amendments to the City's zoning title and other areas of the Altoona Municipal Code.

Updates the City's official zoning map.

Coordinates updates to the City's Comprehensive Plan and other key City planning documents. Implements the approved Comprehensive Plan which includes ensuring that all development that occurs within the City and its extraterritorial jurisdiction area is consistent with the approved plan.

Collaborates, supports, and advises the City Engineer regarding the planning and design of transportation and public utilities, including water, sewer and stormwater.

Supervises the Building Inspector and oversees the building inspection and code enforcement offices for the City.



Supports and advises the City Administrator in the formulation and implementation of the City's economic development policies, strategies, and activities.

Manages and coordinates sustainability, climate and energy, and housing-related policies, programs, and activities.

Administers the City's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) in coordination with the City Engineer, and coordinates the curation of geospatial data, generation of maps and illustrations, and manages related consultant contracts.

Serves as staff and principal advisor to the City Council, Plan Commission, Parks Board, Zoning Board of Appeals and any other applicable bodies regarding planning and development responsibilities and assignments. Prepares meeting agendas and briefings; prepares findings of fact and recommendations to various boards.

Monitors best practices, applicable case law, and statutory changes as necessary to keep planning policies, practices and ordinances up to date.

Assists in preparations of grant applications and assists in grant administration and reporting.

Compiles necessary data and information required to prepare detailed reports on a wide variety of planning issues. Develops annual reports related to development activity.

Completes special projects, as assigned, to meet City goals and objectives.

## **Minimum Training and Experience Required to Perform Essential Job Functions**

Graduation from a four-year college or university with major coursework in political science, geography, urban planning, or a related field. Four years' experience in community development, municipal planning, and project administration. Graduate degree and AICP credential preferred. Supervisory experience preferred.

## **Physical and Mental Abilities Required to Perform Essential Job Functions**

### **Language Ability and Interpersonal Communication**

Ability to modify existing policies, strategies and/or methods to meet unusual conditions within the context of existing management principles. Ability to analyze and categorize data and information, to determine consequences and identify and select alternatives. Ability to decide the time, place, and sequence of operations within an organizational framework, as well as the ability to oversee their execution.

Ability to manage and direct a group of workers, including the ability to provide counseling and mediation. Ability to persuade, convince and train others. Ability to advise and interpret regarding the application of policies, procedures and standards to specific situations. Ability to provide formal instruction in a classroom or other structured setting.

Ability to utilize a variety of advisory and design data and information such as invoices, budgets, financial statements, real estate purchase offers, contracts/agreements, grant applications/reports, bond prospectus, job applications/resumes, personnel policies, time sheets, performance evaluations, annexation petitions, planning applications, site plans, maps, aerial photos, comprehensive plan, press releases, promotional materials, technical reports, ordinances, resolutions, audit reports, loan manuals, state statutes, state administrative code, computer languages, accounting methods and non-routine correspondence.

Ability to communicate orally and in writing with city officials, other city department heads/employees, developers, contractors, business representatives, real estate brokers, news media representatives, state and federal agencies, other planners/development managers and the general public.

**Mathematical Ability**

The position is required to complete algebraic, geometric and statistical calculations.

**Judgment and Situational Reasoning Ability**

Ability to apply functional reasoning in synthesizing information and functions, and ability to influence others in activities such as leading, controlling, managing, supervising and teaching.

Ability to exercise the judgment, decisiveness and creativity required in situations involving the direction, control and planning of an entire program or multiple programs.

**Physical Requirements**

Ability to operate a variety of office equipment such as computer terminal, typewriter, blueprint copier, drafting instruments, architect's scales, telephone, fax machine, computer, printer and photocopier.

Ability to coordinate eyes, hands, feet and limbs in performing movements requiring moderate skill, such as typing and measuring.

Ability to exert light physical effort in sedentary to light work, but which may involve some lifting, carrying, pushing and pulling.

Ability to recognize and identify degrees of similarities or differences between characteristics of colors, shapes, sounds and textures associated with job-related objects, materials and tasks.

**Environmental Adaptability**

Ability to work under generally safe and comfortable conditions where exposure to environmental factors such as irate individuals and intimidation may cause discomfort and poses a limited risk of injury.

**EOE/ADA**

The City of Altoona is an Equal Opportunity Employer. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the City will provide reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities and encourages both prospective and current employees to discuss potential accommodations with the employer.