



Plan Commission Meeting Agenda

Thursday, June 11, 2026 at 6:30 PM

Columbus City Hall – 105 N. Dickason Boulevard

Call Meeting to Order

Roll Call

Notice of Open Meeting

Approval of Agenda

Approval of Minutes

1. Approve minutes from previous meeting

Regular Business

2. Swearing in of committee members - City Clerk

3. Public Comments (3 minute limit per person)

4. Consider and take action regarding the updating of the city's comprehensive plan

5. Consider and take action regarding the public participation plan for amending the City's comprehensive plan

6. Future agenda items

Adjourn



Plan Commission Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 14, 2026 at 6:30 PM

Columbus City Hall – 105 N. Dickason Boulevard

Call Meeting to Order

Meeting was called to order at 6:30pm by Meyers.

Roll Call

A quorum of Plan Commission member consisted of Anfinson, Hajewski, Stapelmann, Meyers, Albright, and Finkler.

Staff liaisons Kornmann and Bennett were present. Sonja Kruesel from Vandewalle and Associates along with Mayor Hammer were in attendance.

Notice of Open Meeting

Kornmann noted the meeting was noticed according to law.

Approval of Agenda

Finkler motioned to approve the meeting agenda; seconded by Anfinson. There was no additional discussion. The motion was carried by unanimous vote.

Approval of Minutes

1. Approve minutes from previous meeting

Finkler motioned to approve the meeting minutes from March 12, 2026. Seconded by Albright. There was no discussion. The motion was carried by unanimous vote.

Regular Business

2. Public Comments

There were no comments from those in attendance and no additional comments or correspondence from members of the public.

3. Election of officers: Chair, Vice- Chair, Secretary

Albright motioned to nominate keep the current officers the same. This includes Monday as Chair, Meyers as Vice Chair, and Finkler as Secretary. Anfinson seconded the motion. There was no additional discussion. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

The new Chair is Monday, the new Vice Chair is Meyers, and the new Secretary is Finkler.

4. Consider and take action regarding the rewriting of the zoning code related to signs and developer stakeholder feedback

Kruesel presented a draft of the proposed sign code as progress on part 2 of the zoning code rewrite. The presentation highlighted content-neutral signage (using terms such as “yard” “arm and post” from “church”, “political”, “for sale”, etc., reduction of ambiguity, consolidation of similar and redundant signs, modernizes sign types, removes roof signs, and creates a summary of tables of

standards. The presentation included comparing the current code with the draft code of various types of signage. Kruesel looked for feedback by the Commission regarding the Highway Interchange Overlay. Additional discussion and feedback involved electronic messaging signs, yard signs, billboards, window signs, and removal options for abandoned signs. The Commission discussed defining historic signs and how they could contribute to the character of downtown. Kruesel provided a recap of the focus group feedback from April 29, 2026, which involved realtors, developers, and property owners.

No action was taken.

5. Consider and take action related to amending the section of the zoning code pertaining to historic preservation and downtown design standards

Kruesel presented a draft code for historic preservation that proposes to remove the commission composition and duties from the zoning code and add it to Chapter 2 of the City's code to provide consistency with other City-created boards, commissions, and committees. Additionally, there would be creation of downtown design guidelines, historic preservation overlay district, and assigns specific committees to deal with each.

Downtown design district and guidelines would apply only to the downtown and would address themes, setbacks, building mass, facade articulation, materials and colors. These would be provided as recommendations by the Plan Commission. The Plan Commission may ask the Historic Landmarks Preservation Commission (HLPC) for additional recommendations as needed. When these projects are added to the Plan Commission agenda for review, HLPC would be notified and asked to attend to provide input and recommendations. Depending on the size and scope of the project, Staff would review small projects, and the Plan Commission would review large projects.

Historic preservation overlay would include HLPC making recommendations to Council for designating local landmarks and sites. The proposed code would tweak who could nominate for local designation, have HLPC make a recommendation for Council approval, and would include an appeals process that has yet to be determined, but Staff will reach out to the City Attorney for recommendation. Locally designated structures, sites, etc., would require projects go through the HLPC to obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Kruesel noted comments made during the presentation.

No action was taken.

6. Consider and discuss recent legislation related to comprehensive planning and affordable housing

Kornmann presented recent State legislation's AB453/Act 173 - "Truth in Planning" bill and recapped a brief history of comprehensive planning in Wisconsin that ties into the requirements, consistency, and official map. The updated law would use only the future land use map to determine consistency along with density and timeline for developments. Kornmann noted that these could trigger automatic rezoning and that the current future land use map does not include the density and timing requirements. Additionally, new residential tax increment financing (TIF) districts can be created for development of workforce housing. Kornmann highlighted that compliance to the new law is by January 1, 2028.

7. Consider and take action regarding a recommendation of updating the city's comprehensive plan

Kornmann noted options for AB453/Act 173 - "Truth in Planning" bill compliance by either updating the land use chapter of code or perform a full comprehensive plan update. The Plan Commission discussed the options and preferred the option to update the land use chapter citing that it would be a narrower scope, lower cost, and quicker to implement. Kornmann highlighted that staff would likely update the land use chapter, or contract with a consultant to update the entire comprehensive plan.

The Plan Commission discussed additional tradeoffs between the two compliance options for updating the City's comprehensive plan. Kornmann noted that if the comprehensive plan does not get updated, that a developer could trigger an automatic rezone. There was discussion of what Staff would not be able to get done if the option of updating the land use chapter is selected. Kornmann cited business retention and expansion along with code enforcement could be impacted. The Plan Commission would like more information regarding staff involvement versus consultant costs. This could be taken to Council during budget recommendations.

No action was taken.

8. Future Agenda Items and reminders: Joint Plan Commission - City Council Workshop May 19, 2026 at 5:15 pm

Kornmann highlighted the joint meeting with Council on May 19th and noted the reasoning to adding public comments to the current and upcoming Plan Commission agendas in order to create an additional avenue for public input on the zoning code rewrite. Staff will begin a series of social media posts following the joint meeting.

Adjourn

Finkler motioned to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Albright. There was no discussion. The motion was carried by unanimous vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:37pm.

** These minutes will be approved at a future meeting and may be amended. These minutes are respectfully submitted by David Bennett, Communications and Economic Development Coordinator **



Agenda Item Report

Meeting Type: Plan Commission

Meeting Date: June 11, 2026

Item Title: Consider and take action regarding the updating of the city's comprehensive plan

Submitted By: Mike Kornmann, Director of Community and Economic Development

Detailed Description of Subject Matter: While state statute requires the update of comprehensive plans every ten years, other factors require updating portions of the plan more frequently. In the case of WEHDA, Wisconsin Economic, Housing and Development Association, their housing loan programs require a comprehensive plan be updated every five years for citizens and developers to qualify for low interest loans for creating new housing. Our plan was adopted in June of 2021, so it is out of date for developers to utilize WHEDA's impactful loan programs. We have had inquiries over the past two years and currently have one project in the application phase of the WHEDA program. By updating the housing chapter and looking over other sections of the plan, the city can provide a needed funding source for creating more housing in the city and downtown. Updating the plan requires creating a public participation plan that includes public input throughout the process and not just at the end of the process.

List all Supporting Documentation Attached:

- None

Action Requested: Approve proceeding with an update of the comprehensive plan with an emphasis on the housing chapter.

City of Columbus

Public Participation Plan

Comprehensive Plan Housing Chapter Update – 2026



Item #5.

Background

Wisconsin statute 66.1001 requires municipalities to adopt and/or update a comprehensive plan every 10 years. The City of Columbus last updated their comprehensive plan in 2021. However, certain grants through WHEDA require an updated housing element of the comprehensive plan within 5 years of the application date. Thus, the City must create and adopt an updated Housing Chapter to remain eligible for grants and loan programs.

Public participation is an important part of this process, and is statutorily necessary under Wis. Stat. 66.1001(4)(a) which states, “The governing body of a local governmental unit shall adopt written procedures that are designed to foster public participation, including open discussion, communication programs, information services, and public meetings for which advance notice has been provided, in every stage of the preparation of a comprehensive plan...”. This document outlines the ways in which the City of Columbus will comply with this statute during the Housing Chapter update.

Goals

To ensure statutory compliance and meaningful public participation, this plan aims to meet the following goals:

- Receive feedback from all key stakeholder groups (City Alders and Commissioners, Residents, Property Owners, Business Owners, Developers, and the General Public)
- Provide spaces for public comment throughout the process
- Ensure participation of resident groups that are typically underrepresented

Plan Elements

Social Media: Social Media pages used to inform the public about project and ways to participate

Web Page: Create page on City website where citizens may find the survey and updates on the project

Survey: At beginning of process, open a survey and comment space to the public. After a draft has been made available, open a second space for public comments.

Meetings: To receive specific feedback, two focus groups will be held, one with a group of residents and the other with a group of property owners. Additionally, a workshop with the

planning commission will be held during the drafting process. After a draft has been made, there will be a public hearing to get feedback from interested members of the public.

