



Sustainability Committee Meeting
Thursday, February 22, 2024
City Hall Council Chambers – 601 Main St W. Ashland, WI 54806
6:00 PM

Take notice that a meeting of the Sustainability Committee will be held in- person in the City Hall Council Chambers, with the availability to attend virtually.

To join the meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone: <https://meet.goto.com/740241965>. Or dial in using your phone. United States (Toll Free): 1 866 899 4679 Access Code: 740-241-965

The following items will be considered:

1. Approval of Agenda

2. Approval of Minutes

- a. Approval of minutes from the January 25th meeting

3. Citizen Comments

4. Projects/Discussions

- a. Climate Change
 - i. EPA Community Change and PSC Rural Startup Grants - Update
- b. Water
 - i. Develop Sourcewater Protection Plan Initial Recommendations
- c. Green Tier Legacy Communities - Update
- d. Seed Mix - Discussion
- e. Potential Ordinance Regarding Fruit and Nut Trees in City Right-of-Way - Discussion

5. Items of Interest for Future Meetings

6. Adjournment

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City of Ashland – Sustainability Committee Meeting

Thursday, January 25th, 2024

6:00 pm – 7:00 pm HYBRID MEETING:

**Meeting Link: <https://meet.goto.com/740241965> | Access Code:
740-241-965 - CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS (601 Main Street W)**

Energy Action Plan, 25x25 Plan, Sourcewater Protection Plan linked here:
<https://sites.google.com/view/ashland-sustainability/themes>

Present: Axel Peterman, Kelly Westlund, Lissa Radke, Jim Gregoire, Amy Amman, Dale Kupczyk, Steven Wiley (Planning and Development Director)

Agenda

1) Approval of Agenda

Peterman called the meeting to order at 6:01 asked for approval of the agenda. Radke moved to approve and Kuczyk seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

2) Approval of minutes from the October 26th, 2023 meeting

Amman moved to approve the minutes and Kupczyk seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

3) Citizen Comments

Bob Blaskowski asked if the committee looked into the application of chemicals on lawns. He lost a small dog last summer. For some years his dog was coming down sick, he had his vet check this out, and found that some chemicals very toxic especially for small dogs. He did some looking into what the chemicals are, life expectancy, etc. We are a bird City, a Tree City, and some of this does not jive in his book. Maybe EPA St. Paul has some studies. He would appreciate if the committee would keep working on it. He would like some type of answer. If the chemicals are not good for animals, what good are they for the environment. Radke informed Blaskowski about the source water protection plan and how this issue will come up as the committee works with the City on the implementation of the source water protection plan. The Committee heard from the PW Director at last meeting. PW did not think the chemicals the City uses are toxic. Blaskowski has another pooch and would hate to lose another. The chemical he encountered is a powerful agent to make grass grow vibrantly. Kupczyk asked which company is it? Blaskowski answered that it is Green Oasis. Peterman and Radke stated we would keep looking at this through the Source Water Protection Plan. Blaskowski thanked the Committee. Radke asked if the Source Water Protection Plan was on the City's webpage. Wiley stated that he would check. The Committee thanked Mr. Blaskowski and he left at 6:11 pm.

4) Projects/Discussions

a) Climate Change

- i. 25x25 Plan – Update – No discussion occurred on this item.
- ii. EPA Community Change and PSC Rural Startup Grants-Statement of Support – Action

Wiley explained that the City was looking to partner with Ashland County on an EPA Community Change Grant application. Bill Bailey was helping coordinate this application and the County was the lead applicant. The

coalition partnering with the County consisted of Ashland Medical Center, and the cities, villages, and towns of Ashland County. The City was also looking to apply for a Rural Energy Startup grant and this grant was through the Public Service Commission's Office of Energy Innovation (PSC-OEI). Wiley explained that the committee could vote to approve a letter of support for both these projects to the City Administrator. Peterman moved and Amman seconded to approve the draft letter of support as written. The motion carried 5-0.

b) Water

i. Develop Sourcewater Protection Plan Initial Recommendations

Radke stated that this has much relevance to what we are doing. A good chunk of her extension work is dealing with hazardous materials. Reducing the hazardous materials that go into water is important. Back in 2019 before COVID the city pulled together a multi-stakeholder group to develop a plan to protect its source of water (mainly the bay). The stakeholder group met monthly with John Butler to develop a draft and worked with a non-profit that came up with these. After 9 meetings the group had a draft. They then came up with a large plan. The Sustainability Committee needed to come up with a public facing document that compiles what the plan has including recommendations that address vulnerabilities and water protections. We got a much shorter document that highlights actions (things groups can do, education, etc.) It is a community plan to protect our shared water. This group can go through the recommendations and say that the City can look at these top five items over the next few years for example. Radke suggested making a recommendation through the system (perhaps a resolution). Maybe Committee members each pick their top five items and come to the next meeting with recommendations. Amman asked if we can send out the summarized version? Wiley answered that he could do this.

c) Green Tier Legacy Communities – Update

Wiley provided an update on the annual reporting. Staff was compiling data to input into the revised Green Tier Scoresheet. Upon completing the scoresheet staff would submit to the DNR.

Radke asked if we could do a news story on this. Wiley answered that we could look at this.

d) Seed Mix - Discussion

Wiley updated the committee. Burdock and invasive plant seeds were in the soil and dormant not in the seed mix according to John Butler. Radke explained that reseeding was a mess. The City was working hard to correct infrastructure problems, roads, etc. Radke is thinking of replacing her grass with native and food plants. Peterman suggested putting in plants that can outcompete Burdock, etc. He was not sure if those existed. Radke suggested maybe having Deer Creek which is a contractor that is along Hwy 112 who contracts with DOT come in and present. Amman was suspicious that the invasive species are not caused by the seed mix. She has some sample language we can put together for contracts. Radke stated that Public Works was really trying to correct the issues by her property.

5) Future agenda items

Peterman wanted to add an item about people planting nut trees and fruit trees in their front yard in the planting strips in front of their homes. He explained that currently if people wanted to get a permit they had to get them from Sara Hudson and Public Works. This was not likely because the City was concerned about keeping sidewalks clear. We have an ordinance about people keeping sidewalks clear of snow so why not extend this to rotting fruit? It could be a simple application process with people stating what trees they want and we could then map these trees and put the map on the City website. Peterman has a good amount written up and would like to talk with Ms. Hudson and Mr. Wiley about it. Kupczyk said if the City makes people clean up the sidewalk we should make them clean up the street also. Also, if owners sell the house, what happens then? Peterman answered that the City could give new owners the option to remove the tree if they want that. Radke asked how fruit on trees in the planting strip would work. Is it available to the public? Peterman indicated that this is the case. The map of fruit trees is optional and you would not need to have your tree on there as a property owner. Wiley explained that Utilities underneath the terraces were a concern of City staff. Kupczyk suggested contacting the Water Department. Peterman asked about the process to get a permit for a tree now. Wiley explained that property owners had to obtain approval from the Public Works Department to plant in the right-of-way and also approval from Ms. Hudson as City Forester to ensure that the tree(s) as proposed and locations were suitable. Peterman stated we should streamline the process for a permit. The base change would be requiring people to keep the front of their properties clear of dead fruit and snow. Radke would love to have City employees come and tell us what the rules are about this. Wiley stated that he will put this on the agenda and can follow up with City staff on whether they can come to a future meeting and discuss regs, what is possible, etc. Radke suggested source water protection for the agenda. Kupczyk wanted the City to go around and address people who have junk in their yards. He wanted that cleaned up. Radke welcomed Jim Gregoire as the Council representative for the committee. She asked if he has heard anything interesting or useful. He stated that the main thing is the water intake pipe. The council has been addressing many of these issues especially over the past 5 meetings. Radke stated that the City is moving along at a good speed and she is appreciative of Public Works and John Butler. Overflows were decreasing dramatically so this is a great example of what people can do moving things forward. She asked if there are plans for the pipe right. Gregoire and Wiley answered affirmatively. Peterman stated that for fruit trees Municipal Code 530.1(c) prohibits allowing items unsafe for pedestrian movement on sidewalks. The code doesn't refer specifically to sidewalks but rather pedestrian movement. Debris could be interpreted as rotting fruit so the code already kind of addresses this.

6) Adjournment

Peterman moved to adjourn and Kupczyk seconded. The meeting adjourned at 7:05 pm.

Recorded by:

Steven D. Wiley, AICP
Planning and Development Director

Executive Summary: City of Ashland Source Water Protection Plan July 2021

(ADD Cover page)

(ADD photos, relevant charts/graphs)

Source water is untreated water from streams, rivers, lakes, and groundwater aquifers. Source water protection is a watershed-based approach to protecting drinking water sources and reducing treatment costs.

A watershed is not limited to political boundaries such as township, county or state. Instead, it is simply an area of land that drains to a common point. Although we often manage land according to political boundaries, it makes more sense to plan and manage areas by the lay of the land, and all people living within a watershed play an important role in protecting their water.

Affordable, safe drinking water is essential to the health, development and stability of all communities. Treatment is used to maintain safe drinking water for surface water systems; however, the cost and quality of treated drinking water is a function of the pretreatment water quality.

One of the best ways to ensure safe drinking water and reduce treatment costs is to develop a local source water protection program designed to protect the source of drinking water against potential contamination.

Source Water Protection (SWP) is the first line of defense in a multi-barrier approach to assure the availability and reduce the cost of clean safe drinking water. It focuses on protecting and improving water quality at the origin before reaching the drinking water intake and undergoing treatment.

SWP is accomplished using four main steps: assessment, planning, implementation, and long-term management.

For the City of Ashland, the first step, “*assessment*,” was completed in March 2003 by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) and documented in the report *Source Water Assessment For Ashland Water Utility, Ashland, Wisconsin March 27, 2003* (A copy of Ashland’s source water assessment is available by contacting the WDNR or the City of Ashland). The source water assessment for Ashland suggests that the next steps in protecting their drinking water is for the city to develop a SWP program by forming a SWP

committee to plan and implement best management practices in the source water area. This source water protection program is intended to put in place the remaining steps of planning, implementation, and long-term management of the city's source water.

In February 2016, due to an increase in public awareness about water quality concerns, city employees compiled a list of potential source water protection committee members who could collaboratively develop a SWP plan for the City of Ashland. In March 2016, the City Council voted to approve the formation of a SWP committee and development of the SWP plan.

The city contacted the Wisconsin Rural Water Association (WRWA) for assistance with facilitating the SWP plan writing process. WRWA is a non-profit association of utilities that provides technical assistance to utilities. Ashland is a long-time member of WRWA. SWP planning efforts began with an initial meeting of the SWP committee in August 2016.

The committee started to develop the SWP plan and conducted several additional meetings throughout 2016 and 2017. Due to staff turnover at the city, the plan stalled before being completed. In early 2020, with new city staff in place and a refreshed SWP committee, the SWP planning efforts were renewed and the SWP plan was completed.

Integration with City of Ashland Planning (Comprehensive Plan and Strategic Plan) Integration of the Ashland Source Water Protection Plan with the City of Ashland is done two ways: through city operations and through ordinances. Two city council members and several city staff members sit on the SWP committee. These individuals are tasked with implementing the plan by revising and updating the city's operating procedures and developing ordinances that improve and protect water quality in the Chequamegon Bay and the tributaries leading to it.

(ADD: What else?)

City of Ashland Source Water Protection Plan Recommendations (Actions): August 2023

1.2 Integration with Ashland And Bayfield Counties (Including Resource Management Plan); P. 2

“Ashland and Bayfield Counties have Land & Water Resource Management (LWRM) Plans. The Ashland Source Water Protection Plan takes a more focused look at surface water quality in Chequamegon Bay. In Chapter VIII of the Ashland County plan, coordination with the City of Ashland is specifically listed. This includes the goal “Increase collaboration on Lake Superior waterfront issues, stormwater management, invasive species, and beach health.” The Bayfield County plan lists the City of Washburn and the City of Bayfield as implementation partners.”

Recommendation: The City of Ashland should look for commonalities in the Ashland and Bayfield Counties’ Land and Water Resource Management Plans and look for opportunities to participate in the regular planning cycle.

1.3 Integration with Other Planning Efforts (Tribal Governments and Entities and Non-Governmental Organizations); P. 2

“Tribal government entities in the area include the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, and the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission. Prominent non-governmental organizations in the area include the Superior Rivers Watershed Association, Chequamegon Bay Area Partnership, Mary Griggs Burke Center for Freshwater Innovation at Northland College, and others.”

Recommendation: The Ashland city staff and SWP committee members should seek opportunities to coordinate these tribal and non-governmental organizations to improve and protect water quality in the Chequamegon Bay and coordinate source water protection in planning efforts.

4.2 Susceptibility To Harmful Algal Blooms (P.11)

“As of January 2020, about 20,283 microcystin samples were taken through this program, and only 6 samples exceeded the advisory standards for small children, and 0 samples exceeded the advisory levels for adults. Cylindrospermopsin had 11

instances of advisory exceedance. This shows the risk of cyanotoxins being found in finished water is low, but the cyanobacteria situation is constantly evolving, so it is important to continue to monitor the situation.”

Recommendation: City Public Works staff will work with local and regional partners to monitor the situation.

5.2.4 Rural Sanitary Waste (Septic Systems, Holding Tanks; P. 21

“Septic systems must be properly used, operated, and maintained by the owner to assure the long-term performance of the system and protection of public health and the environment.”

Recommendation: The City should conduct regular and ongoing education activities to inform private property owners how to care for their septic systems.

5.2.5 Incidental Spills of Hazardous Materials; P. 23

“Minor releases can be addressed through landowner education, provision of convenient hazardous waste disposal options, and disconnecting paved area drainage from streams.”

Recommendation: The City should conduct regular and ongoing education activities to inform private property owners how to reduce the use of and safe disposal of hazardous materials.

5.4 Urban Nonpoint Sources of Pollution; P. 25

“Convincing people to change their behaviors and properly dispose of materials can minimize such pollution. It is important that the public be aware of the significance of their behavior and that their actions can either pollute or protect our waterways. The benefits of public education efforts cannot be understated, especially for urban stormwater pollution.”

Recommendation: The City should work with local and regional partners to conduct ongoing outreach about how to minimize nonpoint solution at residences, businesses, and local governmental properties.

5.4 Urban Nonpoint Sources Of Pollution; P. 26

“Encouraging community participation, forming partnerships, and combining efforts of other groups in the community will encourage everyone to work towards the same stormwater goals. Public involvement builds on community capital—the wealth of interested citizens and groups—to help spread the message to: prevent stormwater pollution; undertake group activities that highlight storm drain pollution; contribute volunteer community actions to restore and protect local water resources.”

Recommendation: The City should take the lead to encourage community participation, form partnerships, and combine efforts of other community groups to focus on stormwater goals collaboratively.

5.4 Urban Nonpoint Sources of Pollution; P. 26

“Phase II MS4s are required to follow all state, tribal, and local public notice requirements when implementing their stormwater program. Public involvement also includes creating opportunities for direct action, educational, and volunteer programs such as tree planting days, volunteer monitoring programs, storm drain marking, or stream clean-up programs.

“Preventing pollutants from entering a waterway is less expensive than restoring a waterway after it has been polluted. Therefore, programs should first focus on preventing pollution before it happens. BMPs under each of the minimum measures, but especially under this pollution prevention category, focus on preventing pollutants from contacting stormwater.

“Municipal activities such as winter road maintenance, minor road repairs and other infrastructure work, automobile fleet maintenance, landscaping and park maintenance, and building maintenance can release pollutants into MS4s that ultimately discharge to nearby water bodies.

“Municipal facilities can also be sources of stormwater pollutants if BMPs are not in place to contain spills, manage trash, and handle non-stormwater discharges. Sweeping parking lots and streets and cleaning storm drains can prevent pollutants from entering nearby waterways.

Recommendations: The City should work with local and regional partners (including property owners, city and county staff, and other groups and businesses)

to conduct ongoing outreach about: **(ADD—Names of local groups that can help with each?)**

- The importance of planting trees
- Volunteer monitoring programs
- Storm drain markings
- Stream clean-up programs
- Pollution prevention BMPs
- Smart salting strategies and practices
- Solid waste management
- Storm drain maintenance and cleaning (voluntary adoption of neighborhood storm drains) **([ADD link to city's page on educational activities such as this](#))**

5.4.1 Urban Runoff Entering the City's Storm Sewer System; P. 26

“An effective approach to reduce nonpoint source pollution in the city's storm sewer system should include efforts to reduce the volume and speed of runoff entering the system, a concept known as “slow the flow.” Implementing stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs) will help reduce both the volume and the speed of stormwater.

“As new development or redevelopment occurs, conservation considerations should be made to reduce stormwater runoff. The city should create runoff-reduction requirements or incentives, such as minimizing the number of impervious surfaces and/or adding filter strips, swales, or bioretention areas to filter runoff from paved surfaces and rooftops before it enters storm sewers, ditches, and/or waterways.

“Consideration should also be given to practices, in the residential, commercial and industrial sectors, that result in the reduction of chemicals associated with yard fertilizer, herbicides, and pesticides within City Of Ashland Source Water Protection Plan - July 2021 the city. Fertilizer, herbicide, and pesticides are used on lawns and gardens for the purpose of growing green grass and weed control. These lawn chemicals can runoff lawns and gardens into waterways through the urban stormwater system. The extent to which fertilizer and lawn chemicals are applied is not known; however, it is important to recognize the excess use could be an important threat to water quality in the bay. Controlling excess fertilizer and lawn chemicals from commercial and industrial development focuses on BMPs for

reducing over application and minimizing the amount that reaches surface water through good stormwater management practices, as described above. The City is in a good position to promote these practices through the Sustainability Committee.”

Recommendation:

The City should work with local and regional partners (including property owners, city and county staff, and other groups and businesses) to conduct ongoing outreach about:

- Slow the flow BMPs
- Reduce stormwater runoff (rain barrels, native plantings, etc.)
- Reduce lawn chemicals

5.4.2 Streambank Erosion Along Open Channels Within the City (Bay City Creek, Other Streams and Ravines Leading to the Bay); P. 27

“Another component of the effective reduction of sediment and pollution loading to Chequamegon Bay is prevention of streambank erosion.... McClure identified five major sites (3 sites on Bay City Creek, 1 site on Industrial Park Creek, and 1 on Mack Road Creek) that combined contribute approximately 40% of the total sediment load from urban streams. The study recommended that the city prioritize and implement repairs to those five sites.”

Recommendation: The City will prioritize and implement repairs to 5 identified sites in partnership with local and regional partners.

7.1.1 Sanitary Surveys; P. 43

“A sanitary survey is an inspection of a water system’s facilities, operations, and records to ensure the delivery of safe and reliable drinking water. As required by the WI DNR under section NR809.35, the DNR must complete a sanitary survey every 3 years. Several deficiencies were identified during the most recent sanitary survey conducted in 2018 that have yet to be corrected. The city must prioritize fixing these deficiencies as well as any additional deficiencies identified during the next sanitary survey conducted during summer of 2021.”

Recommendation: The City’s Public Works Department will prioritize fixes of the deficiencies found by WI DNR of its sanitary surveys.

7.1.3 Harmful Algal Blooms; P. 43

“If it is determined that Chequamegon Bay is at high risk for cyanobacteria blooms, the City of Ashland water utility will develop a monitoring and response plan after assessing their capabilities and priorities. When creating a plan, the water utility must decide when to test for cyanobacteria, which testing method to use, which step in the drinking water treatment process to collect samples from, and which method of decontamination to use.”

Recommendation: The city’s water utility will develop a monitoring and response plan to cyanobacteria blooms after assessing its capabilities and priorities. Included will be information about when to test for cyanobacteria, which testing method to use, which step in the drinking water treatment process to collect samples from, and which method of decontamination to use.

7.1.4 Chemical Compounds; P. 44

“The City’s water utility tests for all regulated compounds on an annual basis. Reducing the water system’s susceptibility to chemical compounds can be accomplished by working directly with businesses that use or store chemical compounds and educating the general public about the hazard chemicals pose to the city's water supply.”

Recommendation: The public works department will coordinate with the fire department to help prevent spills of chemical compounds through the fire inspection program.

7.1.5 Redundant Water Intake

“The City of Ashland has received grant funds from the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers for the construction of a new drinking water intake to serve the city water system.... Preliminary design concepts include the incorporation of the new intake piping into the existing pumping facility in a manner that will allow the continued use of the existing intake piping as backup source of water supply.

“Although the existing intake piping has exceeded its useful life and will eventually begin to fail, rehabilitation of some portion of the piping will likely allow the city to continue use of the existing intake as a redundant source of water supply, as recommended by the WI DNR.”

Recommendation: The city will continue using the existing intake pipe as a

redundant source of water supply, as recommended by the WI DNR, when a new pipe is constructed.

7.2.1 Municipal Wastewater Treatment Plant Effluent Load Reductions: P. 45

“The Wastewater Utility anticipates that regulatory changes in the next 10-20 years will further work to reduce loading to Chequamegon Bay through the regulation of phosphorus and nitrogen.”

Recommendation: The City should monitor the regulatory process and prepare for the impact of these requirements from a technical and managerial perspective.

7.2.2 City of Ashland Sanitary System Load Reductions; P. 46

“During testing of the sanitary sewer collection system in 2019, city staff noticed an unusually high amount of clear water flowing into a manhole near the water treatment plant. Field investigation revealed that backwash water, used to clean filtration units used in the drinking water treatment process, was being disposed of in the sanitary sewer system. Upon consultation with the WI DNR, it was determined that this water could instead be directly discharged to the storm sewer system and Chequamegon Bay, as it was free of any of the chemicals used at the water treatment plant.

“City staff are currently pursuing an aggressive program to evaluate the collection system and anticipates the identification and elimination of similar discharges to the sanitary sewer as these efforts are further implemented.”

Recommendation: City staff will pursue an aggressive program to evaluate the collection system and identify and eliminate similar discharges to the sanitary sewer as these efforts are further implemented.

7.2.3 Sanitary Sewer Overflow/Inflow and Infiltration Reduction; P. 47

“Smoke testing to identify leaking sewer lines was completed in 2019 but results were inconclusive, an indication that I&I is seen from multiple diffuse sources. A pilot study completed with a specialized firm from Finland resulted in the identification of a few large sources of inflow, including one from a private property. The city is working to partner with the property owner on necessary repairs, but future changes to applicable city ordinances and regulations will be

necessary for the efficient organization and enforcement of similar repairs throughout the city.”

Recommendation: The City will partner with property owners on necessary repairs on private properties.

Recommendation: The City will determine future changes to applicable city ordinances and regulations in order to efficiently organize and enforce similar repairs throughout the city.

Recommendation: Future capital projects for the sewer collection system will be scheduled annually and supported by a funding allocation directed by the city council.

7.2.3 Sanitary Sewer Overflow/Inflow and Infiltration Reduction; P. 48

“The first step to managing the I&I issue is to measure the extent of the problem... The wastewater utility is in a good position to address the impact of I&I on the sewer collection system as a result of council direction to prioritize this work and the annual allocation of funds to support it. However, it is critical that the city continue to prioritize and support these efforts on a long term and ongoing basis in order to ensure control of I&I and ensure source water protection through the regular collection, treatment, and disposal of wastewater in accordance with WI DNR requirements.”

Recommendation: The city should continue to prioritize and support these efforts on a long term and ongoing basis in order to ensure control of I&I and ensure source water protection through the regular collection, treatment, and disposal of wastewater in accordance with WI DNR requirements.

7.3.1 Urban Runoff Load Reductions: Stormwater Utility; P. 50

“Managing stormwater quality is a requirement, particularly for communities located adjacent to pristine water resources. As such, municipal stormwater management programs are becoming an important part of a community’s infrastructure and overall operational costs. As comprehensive stormwater management programs grow in complexity they begin to resemble electric, water, and wastewater utility systems. It is becoming increasingly common to consider stormwater management as a public utility.”

Recommendation: The creation of a stormwater utility ultimately should be the future long-term end goal of the City of Ashland.

P. 51: “Although the creation of a stormwater utility is not feasible at this time, a long-term priority with a funding strategy will need to be developed in order to provide a means for implementation that does not further diminish available resources for other city priority programs.”

7.3.1 Urban Runoff Load Reductions: Ongoing City Efforts; P. 50

“The City continues to seek opportunities to best reduce nonpoint source pollution and source pollution within the storm sewer system. Road reconstruction and paving projects frequently result in reduced roadway widths and associated runoff. A 2019 project at Maslowski Beach saw the installation of a bioswale for the collection, treatment, and disposal of runoff. Another example is the construction of the new police station, which incorporated onsite facilities for stormwater treatment. Reducing nonpoint source pollution should be a top priority in any development or redevelopment projects.”

Recommendation: Reducing nonpoint source pollution should be a top priority in any development or redevelopment projects.

7.3.1 Urban Runoff Load Reductions: Green Infrastructure; P. 50

“Green infrastructure efforts must be balanced with general stormwater infrastructure maintenance...Well maintained stormwater infrastructure is a key component to stormwater runoff management and should be the city’s first priority with installation of green infrastructure being a secondary goal.”

Recommendation: City staff should continue to investigate the use of green infrastructure initiatives in applicable projects.

7.3.4 Road Salt Usage Load Reduction; P. 53

“The city recognizes the safety concerns associated with icy roads and winter driving conditions and tries to maintain, to the extent practicable, reasonably clear roads during the winter months. Additionally, the city recognizes the potential water quality concerns that come from road salt-laden runoff from roadways. It is important to find a balance between maintaining safe roads and reducing the amount of road salt used. Essentially, the goal is to use the least amount of salt possible to get the job done.”

Recommendation: The City will conduct ongoing outreach programs about salt usage, with a primary goal of educating residents, leaders, and winter maintenance professionals on salt pollution and solutions, providing training, and promoting best practices to reduce salt pollution and recognize contractors committed to using the right amount of salt for conditions.

Recommendation: The City will provide this to new employees and will evaluate new technology and alternatives with the potential to reduce road salt application, such as new plow blades for existing equipment that can more effectively remove ice from roadways.

7.4.1 Sediment Load Reductions; P. 55

“The Mary Griggs Burke Center for Freshwater Innovation, along with other partners, have completed one bluff restoration project on North Fish Creek, and another is scheduled to begin construction in the summer of 2021. Prioritizing restoration in this area of the watershed is vital to reducing sediment loads in Chequamegon Bay since eroding bluffs in North Fish Creek are the primary contributors of sediment into the watershed.”

Recommendation: The City should continue to work with local and regional partners when possible to stabilize erosion along stream banks, which continue sediments to Chequamegon Bay.

7.4.2 Hydrodynamics; P. 55

“Bathymetry mapping efforts are planned for 2021. The city does not need to be directly involved with this project at this time, but it is important to keep up to date with research findings, which will help anticipate potential threats to the drinking water system based on patterns of pollutant movement.”

Recommendation: The City will keep up to date with research findings about research results related to currents in the Bay.

7.4.3 Nutrient Load Reductions; P. 57

“Nutrient load reductions are achieved by reducing the amount of nutrient laden surface water runoff that reaches lakes and rivers and when the amount of nutrients contained in the surface water runoff is reduced.

“Ashland County has adopted NR151 rules and is able to enforce NR 151 regulations at the county level....Bayfield County has adopted NR151 rules and is

able to enforce NR 151 regulations at the county level. In addition, they have adopted a number of county ordinances to manage large scale livestock operations.”

Recommendation: Ashland County will consider also adopting ordinances similar to Bayfield County’s regarding CAFO operations (see ordinance titles and links and p. 57 of this plan.)

7.4.4 Land Spreading Load Reductions; P. 57

“The City of Ashland has the most direct control over land spreading of municipal sludge from Ashland’s wastewater treatment plant. The city has a WPDES permit (#0030767) that regulates the city’s land spreading. The wastewater utility is responsible for complying with the terms of the WPDES permit and completing all required testing. The wastewater treatment plan is under the supervision of the City of Ashland Public Works Department. The wastewater department should consider SWP during long range planning and look for opportunities to upgrade facilities and improve processes to reduce pollutant runoff and improve source water quality.”

Recommendation: The wastewater department should consider source water protection during long range planning and look for opportunities to upgrade facilities and improve processes to reduce pollutant runoff and improve source water quality.

7.5.1 City of Ashland Private Well Ordinance; P. 58

“Cities have the authority to regulate private wells within the municipal boundary. Private wells in the City of Ashland are regulated under Chapter 705 *Water Utility Rates and Regulations*, Section 705.19(b). Generally speaking, the city can better ensure the quality and reliability of drinking water through the public water system, rather than private wells, due to the technical staff and regulation associated with the system. The city should more strongly enforce the provisions of the above ordinance and also consider modifications to require connection to the public water system for all residences, commercial, industrial, and institutional entities within the municipal boundary in a designated time period.”

Recommendation: The City should more strongly enforce the provisions of the above ordinance and also consider modifications to require connection to the

public water system for all residences, commercial, industrial, and institutional entities within the municipal boundary in a designated time period.

7.5.3 Capture Zone Delineation; P. 59

“Having a better understanding of where groundwater pumped from a well comes from allows for better decision making on how to protect the well. While it is not practical to delineate the capture zones for the many private wells in the SWP area, delineating capture zones for the 28 non-municipal public supply wells within the SWP area could be completed with a reasonable amount of effort.”

Recommendation: The City of Ashland should support efforts to work with Ashland and Bayfield counties to better understand and delineate groundwater capture zones for non-municipal public wells within the SWP area.

7.5.4 County Well Head Protection Ordinance; P. 59

“A common regulatory approach to protecting public wells is adopting a wellhead protection ordinance. A wellhead protection ordinance works to protect groundwater quality near a well by regulating land use within a specified distance of the well and maintaining minimum setbacks from potential groundwater contaminant sources. Municipalities often use this approach, but it can easily be expanded to non-municipal public wells at a county wide scale... The City of Ashland should support efforts to work with Bayfield and Ashland counties to develop and adopt county wellhead protection ordinances.”

Recommendation: The City of Ashland will support efforts to work with Bayfield and Ashland counties to develop and adopt county wellhead protection ordinances.

7.6.1 Community Education and Outreach; P. 59

“The wastewater utility has recently developed educational materials regarding the proper disposal of waste products in order to allow for reliable operation of the sewage collection system and wastewater treatment plant.”

Recommendation: The city should seek opportunities to staff future outreach campaigns with AmeriCorp or similar staffing programs, either in a short term or permanent capacity, as well as look to broaden the approach to incorporate sanitary sewer and drinking water management.

7.6.2 Coordination with Local Organizations; P. 60

“The City of Ashland coordinates with local groups and organizations on a variety of efforts to protect water quality in the Chequamegon Bay.”

Recommendation: The City should seek additional opportunities to work with organizations to promote source water protection or activities that protect and improve water quality. Such groups include League of Women Voters, Superior Rivers Watershed Association, UW Extension Ashland County, Ashland County Human Health Services Department, Lake Superior Collaborative, Ashland County Land and Water Conservation Department, City of Ashland’s Sustainability Committee, City of Ashland’s Public Works Advisory Committee, and local schools.

Recommendation: The City of Ashland should look for opportunities to work with local elementary, middle and high schools to educate students on the importance of protecting water resources.

7.1.2 Coordination with Other Departments; P. 61

“The plan has been provided to other city departments for awareness and discussion regarding the implementation. Source water protection impacts all departments in a variety of ways but key stakeholders within the city include the Public Works, Finance, Planning, Parks and Recreation, and Fire/EMS Departments.”

Recommendation: The Public Works Director will coordinate inter-departmental management of the plan as needed to keep all department heads and staff invested and engaged in the implementation.

Recommendation: The source water protection plan will be used as a guidance and reference to these departments as they conduct planning activities and implementation related to their department’s mission and associated goals.

Recommendation: City Departments should periodically review the plan to ensure members are familiar with its recommendations and goals.

8.1.2 Regulatory Requirements; P. 62

“The city’s primary tool for communications plan related to the drinking water system is as a stakeholder in the Ashland County Emergency Operations plan (EOP). Discussions with the WI DNR have brought up that this plan needs to be updated.”

Recommendation: The city should participate in and support efforts to update the Ashland County EOP.

8.3.2 Communication Methods; P. 63

“Communications with the public regarding source water quality issues may be provided by several different methods depending on the situation.”

Recommendation: The City of Ashland will notify customers potentially affected by an incident/event using one or more of the following options:

- Direct contact (phone, text and email)
- Local media (press release, press conference, updates)
- County emergency alert system
- Website and social media (Facebook, Twitter)
- Door-to-door/door hangers
- Posted notices (city hall, public library)

By Lissa Radke
Ashland County UW Extension
August 2023

PUBLIC FOOD TREE/SHRUB PLANTING ORDINANCE PROPOSAL

A property owner may plant food trees/shrubs in the space between the edge of the sidewalk and the curb (hereafter referred to as the "planting strip") with a Public Food Tree/Shrub Planting Permit granted by the Public Works Department. (This may be obtained through a quick and comprehensive application process (a simplified version of the existing Right-of-Way Permit Application), without cost (or at minimal cost) to the property owner. The permit application will require the address of the parcel, and a brief description of the planting, including the number of plants, their location(s), and type(s) and variety/varieties of fruit/nut (if known.)

The property owner may (and is encouraged to) opt to have their registered planting(s) placed on a map of public food trees/shrubs in the City of Ashland, which will be made accessible through the Parks and Recreation page on the COAWI website. In this case, the planting(s) should be clearly marked as available for harvest by members of the public using a sign, or other easily visible marker.

The property owner shall be responsible for care and maintenance of the planting(s) without the use of chemical inputs, and for the removal and use/disposal in a timely manner of any fruits/nuts which may fall on the sidewalk, on the planting strip, or in the street.

No food tree/shrub over four feet in height may be grown within 35ft of an intersection (standard based on that used by the City of Sheboygan, which makes reference only to trees, not to shrubs.)

If a person purchases a property with a registered food tree/shrub growing in its planting strip, the new owner may choose to continue to maintain the planting in accordance with City maintenance standards, or may choose to remove the planting, notifying the Public Works Department no less than ten days prior to the removal.

Relevant Existing Ordinances:

MC454.05 Private Planting on Public Property

No person shall plant any tree, shrub or plant of any kind on any public property, including property between the lot line and curb or improved portion of any street or alley, without first having consulted the Director of Public Works or his designee and obtaining the applicable permit(s) [Right-of-Way Permit] from the Public Works Department.

MC501.02(o) Definitions

Public Right-Of-Way. A public way or thoroughfare dedicated or platted for public use which includes but is not limited to, a street, road, highway, alley, sidewalk, bicycle path and bridge. A public right-of-way includes that portion between the curb lines or the lateral lines of a public way and the adjacent property lines (commonly referred to as a boulevard or shoulder).

MC530.09(a) Winter Sidewalk Maintenance

The Department [of Public Works] may cause the removal of snow and ice from sidewalks that have not been removed in the required time period by the responsible property owners. Failure to remove snow and ice from sidewalks as provided by this Ordinance will result in a fine or forfeiture levied against the abutting property owner as provided by these Ordinances. Also, the Department shall bill the abutting property owner for the full cost of removing the snow and ice and if unpaid a lien may be placed on the property in accordance with Wisconsin Statute (66.615).

MC530.10(c) Prohibited Acts

No one shall allow an ongoing accumulation of toys, debris, bicycles, or any other item that may be considered unsafe for pedestrian movement.