



MARATHON COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA



Date & Time of Meeting: **Tuesday, April 15, 2025, at 2:00pm**

Meeting Location: **Rock Room, 1000 Lake View Drive, Wausau, WI 54403**

Members: Randy Fifrick – Chair, Allen Opall (Designee, Gaylene Rhoden – Vice Chair), Dan Helgeson, Betty Hoenisch, Steve Hagman, Doug Diny, Tim Buttke, Matt Lee Baer, Milton Olson, David Baker, Mark Maloney, Kregg Hoehn, Pete Nievinski, Matthew Bronson

The meeting site identified above will be open to the public. Instead of in person attendance, Metropolitan Planning Commission members and the public may attend this meeting by telephone and video conference. **Persons wishing to attend the meeting virtually may call into the telephone conference beginning five (5) minutes prior to the start time indicated above using the following number:**

PHONE NUMBER: 1-408-418-9388

ACCESS CODE: 2490 716 6556

Please Note: If you are prompted to provide an “Attendee Identification Number” press the # symbol. No other number is required to participate in the telephone conference.

When you enter the telephone conference, **PLEASE PUT YOUR PHONE ON MIUTE!**

1. **Call Meeting to Order**
2. **Public Comment**
3. **Approval of the Minutes of the February 11, 2025, MPO Commission Meeting**
4. **Policy Issues Discussion and Commission Determination**
 - A. Wausau MPO Bike/Ped Subcommittee
5. **Educational Presentations and Commission Discussion**
 - A. Introduction of New MPO Commission Members
 - B. Domtar Dam Presentation
 - C. Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Funding Opportunity
 - D. 2024 Federally Obligated Project List
 - E. STP-Urban & TAP Update
 - F. WisDOT Reroute of Bus 51 / WIS 52
6. **Next Meeting Date & Time, Announcements, and Future Agenda Items**
 - A. Next Meeting Date and Time – TBD
 - B. Future Agenda Items – Members are asked to bring items for future discussion
7. **Adjournment**

Any person planning to attend this meeting who needs some type of special accommodation to participate should call the County Clerk’s Office at 715-261-1500 or email countyclerk@marathoncounty.gov one business day before the meeting.

EMAILED TO: Courthouse, WDH, City Pages, and other Media Groups

EMAILED BY: AA

DATE: 4/9/2025

EMAIL TIME: 8:00am

SIGNED: _____
PRESIDING OFFICER OR DESIGNEE

NOTICE POSTED AT COURTHOUSE:

BY: _____
DATE & TIME: _____



**MARATHON COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
MINUTES
February 11th, 2025**

Meeting Attendance: Randy Fifrick – Chair, Michael Wodalski, Jami Gerbert, Sydney Turner, Arran Hersey, Ron Schuenke, Aaron Anklam, Laurie Miskimins, Jason Nordberg, Chris Voll, Gaylene Rhoden; Brad Lenz, Darryl Landeau, Dave Meurett, Thomas Salzman, Jeff Gates, Andy Lynch, Ryan VanDeWalle

1. Call to Order: In the presence of a quorum, with the agenda being properly signed and posted, the meeting was called to order by Chairperson Fifrick at 2:02 p.m. in the Large Conference Room, 210 River Drive, Wausau and virtually via WebEx.
2. Approve Minutes – December 10, 2024, Commission Meeting
Action: Motion/Second by / VanDeWalle/Voll to approve the December 10, 2024, Minutes. Motion carried by voice vote, no dissent.
3. Announcement Of New MPO Commission Vice Chair
Discussion: Chair Fifrick introduced Gaylene Rhoden, the designated representative for the Village of Rib Mountain, as the new Vice Chair of the MPO. In January, the County Board approved appointing Gaylene to the position vacated by George Peterson last year.
4. 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment
Discussion: Anklam presented the amendments to the TIP. Rhoden provided further context on the Village of Rib Mountain project included in the amendment.
Action: Motion/Second by / Lenz/Voll to approve the TIP Amendment as presented, with spelling correction. Motion carried by voice vote, no dissent.
5. Update on Federal Funding
Discussion: Anklam and Miskimins said at this point everything is continuing as normal. FHWA and WisDOT will update the MPO as information is available and that information will be passed on to the MPO Communities. Similar, a couple MPO Communities and Metro Ride said they had heard to continue with normal operations and projects until more information was available.
6. Upcoming Funding Opportunities
Discussion: Miskimins and Anklam updated the group on funding opportunities and schedules that were shared by WisDOT at the MPO meeting in January. The links in the packet provide further timelines, eligibility, and application information. Communities should reach out to MPO staff with any questions or assistance they may need.
7. 2024 Local Match Invoices
Discussion: Anklam explained the invoices are almost complete and should go out later this week or early next week. Fifrick reminded member communities to please pay the invoices.
8. New Location for Future MPO Meetings – 1000 Lake View Dr, Wausau, WI 54403
Discussion: Miskimins updated the group about Conservation, Planning, and Zoning (MPO's host department) moving to the North Central Health Care campus in early March. The MPO Commission and advisory committees will meet in the Wisconsin Room of the Lake View Conference Center, located at 1000 Lake View Drive starting in March 2025. It can be accessed via Door 31, marked on the map in the packet. Staff will send further information prior to the next MPO Commission meeting.

MARATHON COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

9. Agenda Items for Next Meeting Date – TBD

Discussion: MPO Staff will let the chair know if there are any upcoming agenda items and when the next meeting will be held.

10. Adjournment

Action: There being no further business before the members Motion/Second by Rhoden/VanDeWalle to adjourn the meeting of the Marathon County Metropolitan Planning Commission at 2:15pm. Motion carried by voice vote, no dissent.

Submitted by:
Aaron Anklam, Transportation Planner
Marathon County Conservation, Planning and Zoning
Wausau MPO



THE ROTHSCHILD DAM

A Community Asset for North Central Wisconsin

March 7, 2025

Domtar

Papermaking in Wisconsin

- The forest products industry:
 - Is one of the **top ten** industries in WI
 - Accounts for **11%** of the state's total manufacturing jobs
 - **\$42 billion** in total economic contributions
- Wisconsin is the **#1 papermaking state** in the U.S.
- Over **32** paper mills and **200** paper converting operations exist in the state
- Papermaking employs **30,000+** individuals in WI



Rothschild & Nekoosa: Over a Century of Economic Impact

- **Nekoosa Mill:** Established 1883
- **Rothschild Mill:** Established 1910
- An hour apart, together the mills:
 - Support **>3,500 local jobs***, including **approximately 750 direct employees**
 - Provide an estimated **economic impact of \$1 billion* annually** to the local economies in the state of Wisconsin
 - Source **100%** of roundwood and wood chips from **57 counties** in Wisconsin



*Using the National Association of Manufacturers' (NAM) methodology

The Rothschild Dam and Lake Wausau



- The Rothschild Dam provided the mill's early operations with hydroelectric power
- Created Lake Wausau, a key recreational and economic asset
- **Benefits to the community:**
 - Quality of life
 - Tax revenue from private residences and businesses
 - Reservoir management
 - Public safety and flood control
 - Economic development and business growth
 - Recreational opportunities

Challenges Facing the Rothschild Dam

- Timber Crib Spillway last replaced in 1964
- **Rothschild Mill has invested \$12M** in maintenance and repair efforts over the past two decades to extend its life
- Dam inspection conducted by Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) determined patchwork repairs are no longer sufficient



Domtar's Commitment

- Modernization project is estimated to cost ~**\$84M**
- Domtar seeks a solution to fund this project via cost-sharing funding opportunities at the **local, regional, state and federal** levels.
- Domtar will continue to maintain the dam as part of its **ongoing commitment** to Wisconsin
- North central WI operations need significant infusions of capital to **support competitiveness**
 - Nekoosa Mill: 142 years old
 - Rothschild Mill: 115 years old

Proposed Collaborative Cost-Sharing Solution

- Domtar proposes funding **one-third** of the projected cost
- Seeking equitable cost-sharing partnerships at **local, regional, state and federal** levels
- Cost-sharing balances community benefits with regional economic health
- Together, we can ensure this resource continues to serve as a key recreational, economic and public safety asset to north central WI

Community Benefits of Modernization

- **Recreational enhancements:** boosts tourism and regional business
- **Property value stability:** encourages growth in tax revenue
- **Flood control:** ensures safety and confidence for investments
- **Preserves Lake Wausau** as a key community asset



Future Investments: North Central Wisconsin

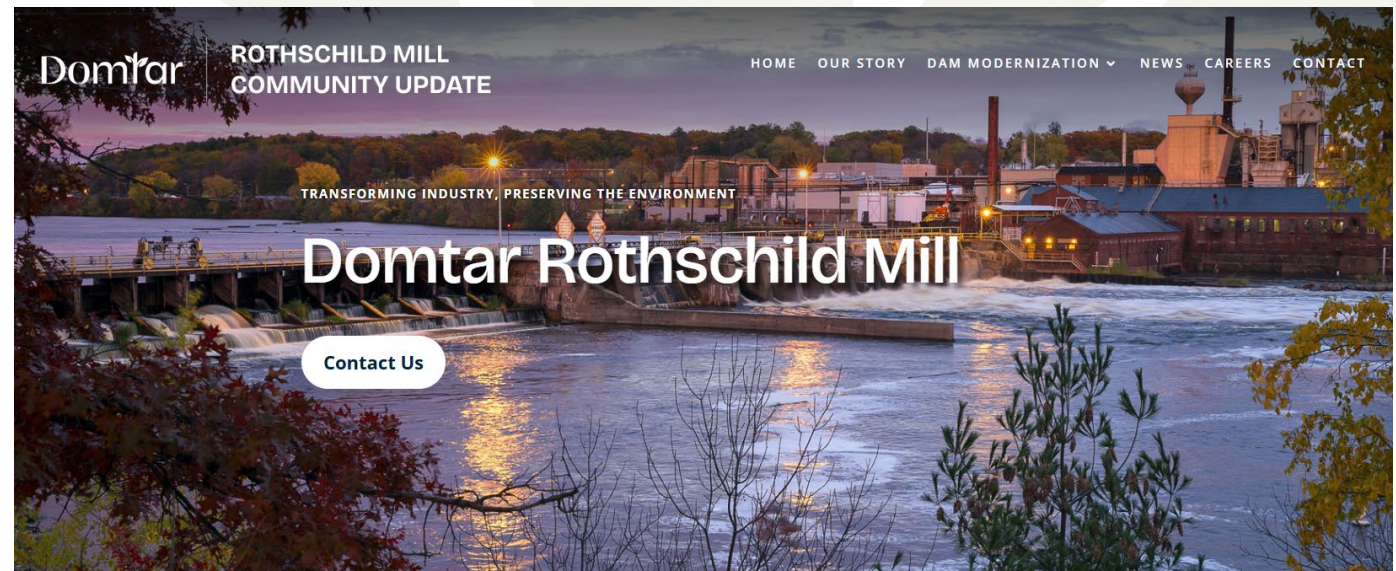


North Central Wisconsin
(Marathon and Wood counties)

- By securing these partnerships, **Domtar will commit to investing \$100M** in Rothschild and Nekoosa manufacturing operations over the next three years
- In the event funding options from various sources exceed two-thirds of the project cost, such funds will be **returned directly to the State of Wisconsin** to offset or reduce any contributions to the dam modernization project
- These investments:
 - Support competitiveness
 - Reinforce Domtar’s role as a key regional employer
 - Support jobs and economic growth in north central WI

Keeping Stakeholders Informed

- Central resource created for
 - News on Domtar's Rothschild Mill
 - Dam project updates
 - FAQs
 - Contact form
- domtarrothschild.com

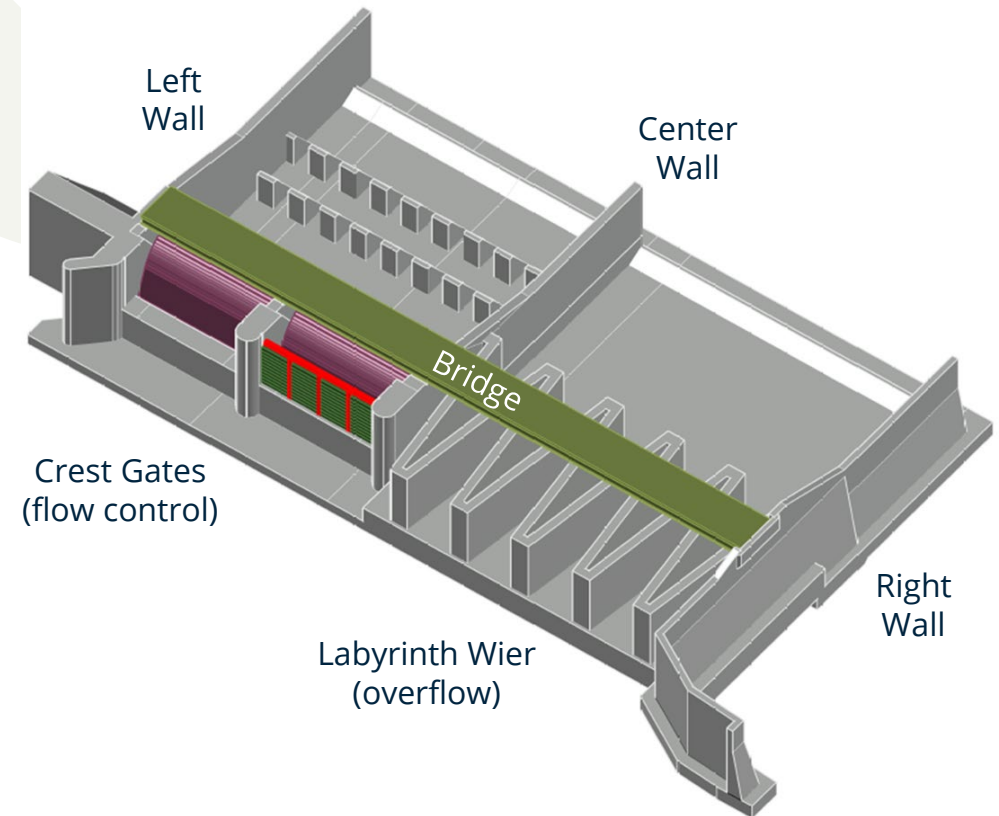
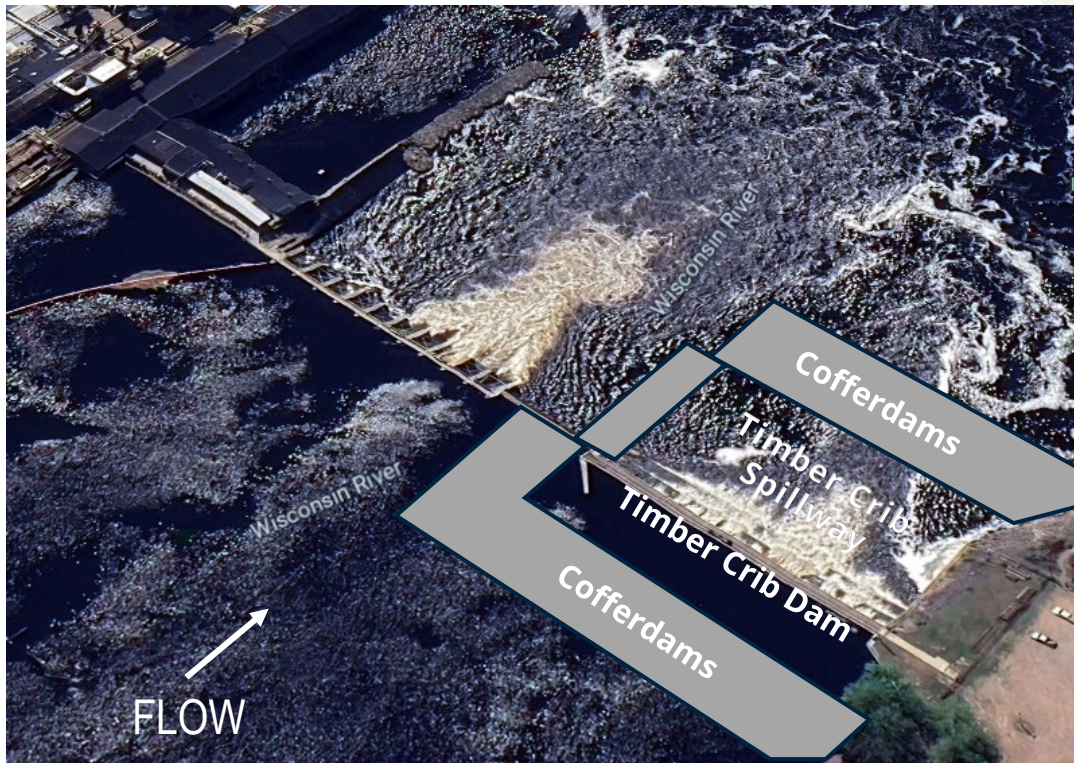




Domtar

Project Overview – proposed solution

1. Install Cofferdams to enable construction work
2. Dewatering of work area
3. Demolish existing timber crib dam and spillway
4. Drive piling
5. Pour concrete structures
6. Install crest gates and bridge



THE ROTHSCHILD DAM





2024 Wausau MPO Federally Obligated Project List (FHWA & FTA)

Can be found here:

<https://wausaumpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Wausau-MPO-Obligated-Project-List-2024-Final.pdf>

Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant Program

Can be found here:

<https://www.transportation.gov/grants/SS4A>

SS4A Comprehensive Safety Action Plan Examples:

<https://berkshireplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/BRPC-Safety-Action-Plan.pdf>

<https://engage.thinkconfluence.com/dsm-mpo-safety-action-plan/comprehensive-safety-action-plan>

https://metroplanorlando.gov/wp-content/uploads/Draft_VZCF_ActionPlan_July_2024.pdf

From: [Meurett, David - DOT](#)
To: [Aaron Anklam](#); [Laurie Miskimins](#)
Subject: FW: WisDOT will complete reroute of BUS 51/WIS 52 through Wausau this spring
Date: Tuesday, April 8, 2025 2:13:02 PM

Aaron and Laurie,

For next week's MPO meeting, can you please include the below press release for the Bus 52 and WIS 52 route changes in the City of Wausau in the packet for the meeting?

Dave Meurett, AICP
Transportation Planner
WisDOT - North Central Region
Phone: 715-421-8348

From: Rose, Bryan J - DOT <bryan.rose@dot.wi.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, February 25, 2025 1:49 PM
Subject: WisDOT will complete reroute of BUS 51/WIS 52 through Wausau this spring

Wisconsin Department of Transportation North Central Region

510 Hanson Lake Road, Rhinelander, WI 54501 Phone: (715) 365-3490
1681 2nd Ave. S., Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495 Phone: (715) 421-8301
www.wisconsin.gov

Release Date: Feb. 25, 2025
For more information, contact:
Bryan Rose, Region Communications Manager
715-493-3710, bryan.rose@dot.wi.gov

WisDOT will complete reroute of BUS 51/WIS 52 through Wausau this spring *With most of the signing complete, the final signs will go in when the ground thaws*

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) is completing the reroute of BUS 51 and WIS 52 through the city of Wausau that began last year.

The rerouting moves WIS 52 onto Bridge Street from US 51 to N 6th Street, and BUS 51 from Grand Avenue to Thomas Street and 1st and 3rd Avenues. The signing in the city was relocated in 2024.

Crews are currently updating signs on US 51 to alert travelers of the new route. Signs requiring new posts and bases will be installed when the ground thaws this spring.

The rerouting of the highways is the result of a study conducted by WisDOT per the request of

the city of Wausau related to ongoing efforts to re-vitalize their downtown central business district.

For more information regarding traffic impacts, transportation news and improvement project updates in Wisconsin's North Central Region:

- Follow us on Twitter: @WisDOTnorthcent
- Visit the region's design site at: <https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/projects/by-region/nc/default.aspx>

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