

News List

Library Remodel, Housing Growth, and Traffic Safety Take Center Stage at Wauwatosa's State of the City

Watch the video of the address and see the highlights from the event.

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Mayor Dennis McBride and Wauwatosa city leaders hosted the 2026 State of the City address at Hart Park's Muellner Building. The highlights included efforts towards housing, a historic benchmark in traffic safety, and a summer of public engagement on the future of Wauwatosa's library and city hall building.

[View the full view of the address.](#)



Library and City Hall Remodel Options

The city is kicking off a summer of public engagement regarding the future of the Library and City Hall complex. The facility has not seen a major remodel since 1992, and core pieces of its infrastructure are original to 1957. Throughout the summer, leaders will be asking the public for critical feedback on four distinct renovation options, ranging in scope and investment from \$36 million to \$107 million, ahead of a planned Common Council decision on the project scope in late July.

Library Director Pete Loeffel shared: "Our Library is the 15th largest in the state, and in 2025, we had the highest circulation in our 140-year history. We see over 1,000 visitors every single day - making us #7 in the state for visitation. And our Children's Library? We check out over 400,000 items a year, making us third in the entire state for kids' materials circulated. While the magic happening inside our walls is better than ever, the walls themselves are tired. You know it, and I know it. We've been listening to your feedback, and the community has been loud and clear: our building is outdated. The building was designed before we needed private rooms for virtual job interviews. Before students needed charging hubs for laptops instead of just a desk for a notebook. Our physical space has to evolve as fast as our community's needs do."

Visit the [project webpage](#) to see the concepts, estimated tax impact, FAQs, and a survey.

A New Design Element

The event featured the official sneak peek and phased rollout of Wauwatosa's fresh, digital-first design element. The new look features a clean font and an inclusive, nature-inspired visual concept designed to ensure public communication is clear, high-contrast, and easily legible across all modern print and digital platforms. You'll start to see this rolled out in 2026.

State Innovation Grant for Fire Merger

Leadership shared that Wauwatosa is eagerly anticipating an upcoming announcement regarding the State Innovation Grant. If secured, the grant could award the city up to \$24.9 million over five years. This critical funding would provide a monumental boost, enabling the city to successfully launch and execute the upcoming regional fire department merger with West Allis.

Addressing Housing Growth and Traffic Safety

Mayor McBride addressed a variety of local updates, noting the addition of 556 new housing units over the last year - including 168 senior housing units and 80 dedicated affordable rate units - reaffirming that housing variety remains a top priority. The Mayor also touched heavily on proactive investments in traffic safety and enforcement. Thanks to these targeted efforts, Wauwatosa achieved a major milestone with zero traffic-related fatalities in 2025. However, acknowledging injuries from a crash just last week, Wauwatosa emphasized that this critical enforcement work must continue.

On housing, Mayor McBride stated: "168 of the 556 new housing units were for seniors. 80 were at an affordable rate. But inflation and high interest rates have made construction extremely expensive. It is important to remember that the City does not build housing. That is done by the private sector. But to ease the crisis – and the crisis is nationwide – we've revised our zoning code and created an affordable housing fund to which housing developers contribute. We're doing what we can to help people who work in Wauwatosa, and seniors who've spent their lives here, to live in our great community. But housing demand remains high."

On traffic safety, Mayor McBride stated: "That's why we instituted a modest vehicle registration fee and dedicated it entirely to repairing our roads and making our streets safer. The result? In 2025, Wauwatosa had zero traffic fatalities. Zero. That certainly is a meaningful number. At the same time, our Police Department has been creating "hot spot patrols." The police now use data to decide where to place our squads. Over a six-month period, we saw an 8.4% reduction in the severity of incidents in those areas. This means that fewer crimes are happening, reducing harm to residents and the demands on our police. There's still work to be done, but every day we're working to keep Wauwatosa safe."

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