

# Chapter 1

## Demographics

### Background

The Village of Marathon City is located in the west central portion of Marathon County, Wisconsin. The Village is bisected by the Big Rib River, which is flanked by wetlands and floodplains. The landscape of the Village is also very hilly. These two elements each pose some constraints on development but also contribute to the character of the community.

The Village is a major center of employment, with many businesses, service providers, and an industrial park. Major employers include Marathon Cheese Corporation, County Materials Corporation, Menzner Lumber & Supply Co., Hurtis Heating & Air, and the Marathon School District.

### Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning Law

A comprehensive plan is a local government's guide to community physical, social, and economic development. Comprehensive plans are not meant to serve as land use regulations in themselves; instead, they provide a rational basis for local land use decisions with a twenty-year vision for future planning and community decisions. According to the Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning Law, a comprehensive plan must include at least nine elements (incorporated as chapters in this plan). These are:

- Demographics
- Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources
- Housing
- Transportation
- Utilities and Community Facilities
- Economic Development
- Land Use
- Intergovernmental Cooperation
- Implementation

State statutes prescribe a list of topics to address for each of the elements. This chapter reviews demographic data including the total population, age distribution, households, educational levels, employment, and income levels. Reviewing these trends is critical to understanding what has occurred and what is likely to occur in the future.

State statutes also indicate that if a local government unit enacts or amends any of the following ordinances, the ordinance must be consistent with that local government unit's comprehensive plan:

- Official mapping established or amended under s. 62.23 (6)
- Local subdivision regulations under s. 236.45 or 236.46
- County zoning ordinances enacted or amended under s. 59.69
- City or village zoning ordinances enacted or amended under s. 62.23 (7)
- Town zoning ordinances enacted or amended under s. 60.61 or 60.62
- Shorelands or wetlands in shorelands zoning ordinances enacted or amended under s. 59.692, 61.351, 61.353, 62.231 or 62.233

## How to Use this Plan

A comprehensive plan is a local government's guide to community physical, social, and economic development. Comprehensive Plans are not meant to serve as land use regulations in themselves, and, instead, they provide a rational basis for local land use decisions with a twenty-year horizon for future planning and community decisions. The Village's Comprehensive Plan is a dynamic – living document that can be amended at any time. The Village's Comprehensive Plan should be used to:

- Guide local officials when making decisions that affect growth and development, especially decisions related to land use
- Guide public and private investment in the Village and support grant funding requests
- Examine statistical data and community opinions to provide context for policies in the plan and to form a benchmark for future reference and comparison.

## Planning Process

In early 2026, the Village initiated a process to update its plan. The state planning law – 66.1001 – requires that a comprehensive plan be updated every ten years. A variety of Village Plan Commission meetings were held over the course of 2026 to prepare the plan. A final Plan Commission meeting was held in the [season] of 2026 to review the final draft and recommend adoption of the plan by the Village Board. The plan was adopted by the Village Board in the [season] of 2026.

## Public Participation

An important part of any planning process is public involvement. Public involvement provides the citizens of the Village an opportunity to express their views, ideas, and opinions on issues that they would like address regarding the future development of their community. Local officials use this input to guide policies and decisions with greater awareness of the public's desires and consensus. See the Public Participation Plan in **Appendix A**. The Village of Marathon City posted all Plan Commission meetings, inviting the public, and held a public hearing to collect input on the final Plan.

## Community Vision

The vision for the Village in ten years is a series of aspirational statements of what makes a strong, vibrant Village of Marathon City. The Village in 2037 is larger geographically than it is today, with additional land used for residential and commercial growth. The Village is a recreational destination, utilizing trails, athletic fields, and the Rib River as key assets. The strong schools and safe neighborhoods make Marathon City a desirable place to live, work, play, and raise a family.

## Goals, Objectives, & Actions

This document describes a variety of goals, objectives, and actions the Village has identified to help it respond to issues and opportunities identified in this plan. Definitions are provided below to clarify the purpose and intent of each category.

**Goals** are statements made about the Village of Marathon City's aspirations in the topic area.

**Objectives** are vision statements which provide direction to the subtopics within the areas of each goal.

**Actions** are key steps which should be taken on the road to meeting the objective and reaching the goal.

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# Demographics

## Population and Households

### Historical Trends

According to the latest data from the American Community Survey, the Village of Marathon City’s population was an estimated 1,422 people in 2024. As shown in **Table 1**, this represents a 13 percent decrease since 2000. In comparison, the populations of Marathon County and Wisconsin both increased by about ten percent between 2000 and 2024, with populations also increasing between 2010 and 2024.

Minor Civil Division	2000	2010	2020	2024	2000-2024 % Change	2010-2024 % Change
Village of Marathon City	1,632	1,524	1,576	1,422	-12.9%	-6.7%
Town of Cassel	862	911	934	1,020	18.3%	12.0%
Town of Marathon	1,087	1,048	995	1,107	1.8%	5.6%
Town of Rib Falls	907	993	947	959	5.7%	-3.4%
Town of Stettin	2,140	2,554	2,580	2,572	20.2%	0.7%
Marathon County	125,834	134,063	138,013	138,403	10.0%	3.2%
Wisconsin	5,363,675	5,686,986	5,893,718	5,914,872	10.3%	4.0%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2020-2024

There were 584 households in the Village of Marathon City in 2024, which represents an decrease of about 7.6 percent from the number of households in 2000, as shown in **Table 2**. During the same period, the number of households in Marathon County increased by 21.3 percent, while the State experienced an 18.9 percent increase during the same time period. The Town of Cassel experienced the fastest household growth among surrounding communities. In 2024, the average household size in the Village of Marathon City was 2.43, down from 2.47 in 2010. In comparison, Marathon County’s average household size was 2.36 in 2024, down from 2.52 in 2010.

Minor Civil Division	2000	2010	2020	2024	2000-2024 % Change	2010-2024 % Change
Village of Marathon City	632	638	666	584	-7.6%	-8.5%
Town of Cassel	271	322	319	423	56.1%	31.4%
Town of Marathon	365	396	391	442	21.1%	11.6%
Town of Rib Falls	302	345	350	336	11.3%	-2.6%
Town of Stettin	805	999	965	848	5.3%	-15.1%
Marathon County	47,702	53,176	56,517	57,866	21.3%	8.8%
Wisconsin	2,084,544	2,279,768	2,428,361	2,479,480	18.9%	8.8%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2020-2024

## Projections

**Table 3** compares projected population in the Village of Marathon City to Marathon County, based on projections made by the Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA). The Wisconsin DOA population projections are recognized as Wisconsin’s official population projections. These projections are based on historical population and household growth in the community, with more recent years given a greater weight. The Village of Marathon City is projected to experience an 18.8 percent decrease in population between 2020 and 2050. In comparison, Marathon County is projected to decrease by about 5.5 percent during this time.

**Table 4** includes household projections completed by the WDOA. The number of households in the Village of Marathon City is projected to slightly decrease between 2020 and 2040. This is in contrast to the projected increase for Marathon County. Further analysis of housing unit change can be found in the Housing and Land Use Chapters of this comprehensive plan.

<b>Table 3: Population Projections</b>					
	2020 Population	2030 Projection	2040 Projection	2050 Projection	2020-2050 % Change
Village of Marathon City	1,576	1,484	1,390	1,280	-18.8%
Town of Cassel	934	928	916	890	-4.7%
Town of Marathon	995	912	828	739	-25.7%
Town of Rib Falls	947	870	793	710	-25.0%
Town of Stettin	2,580	2,489	2,388	2,256	-12.6%
Marathon County	138,013	136,750	134,615	130,380	-5.5%

*Source: WI DOA Official Population Projections*

<b>Table 4: Household Projections</b>						
	2020 Households	2025	2030	2035	2040	2020-2040 % Change
Village of Marathon City	666	663	665	662	651	-2.3%
Town of Cassel	319	354	363	371	375	17.6%
Town of Marathon	391	421	428	431	429	9.7%
Town of Rib Falls	350	384	397	407	413	18.0%
Town of Stettin	965	1172	1230	1283	1321	36.9%
Marathon County	56,517	59,611	61,524	62,958	63,730	12.8%

*Source: WI DOA Official Population Projections*

## Age Characteristics

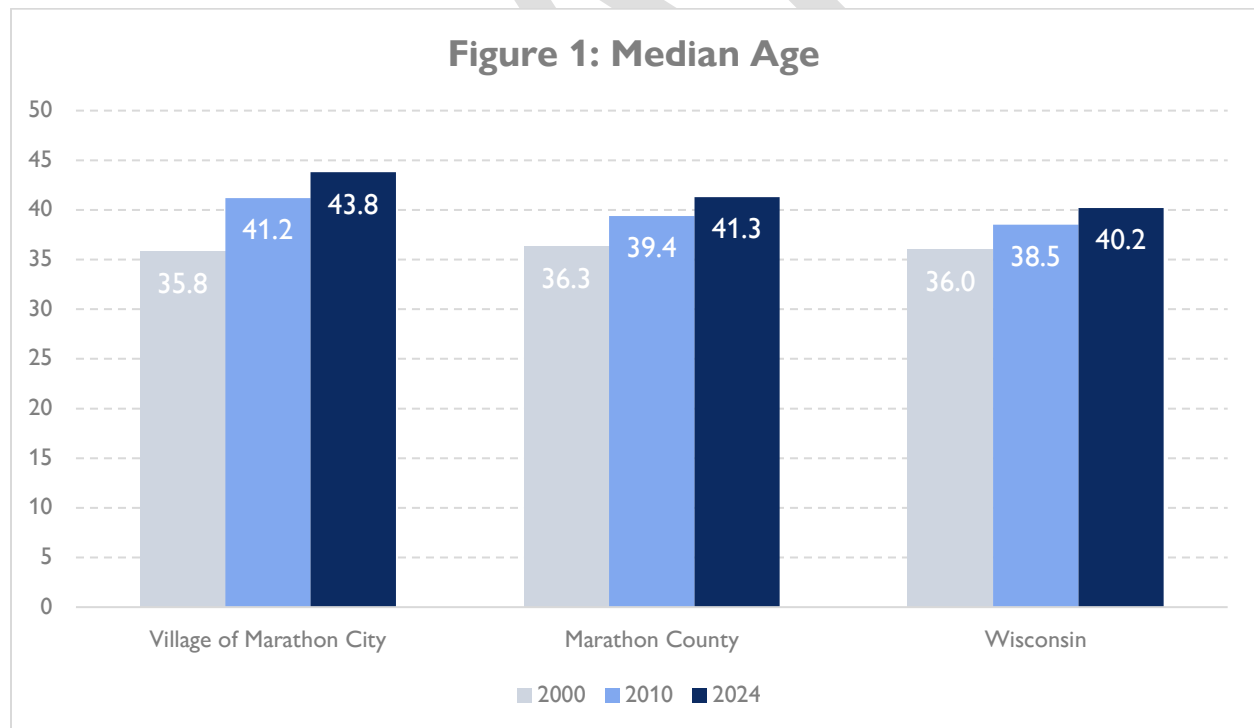
As shown in **Figure 1**, the median age in the Village of Marathon City was 43.8 in 2024, higher than it was in 2010 (41.2). The Village of Marathon City’s median age of 43.8 was higher than the median age in both Marathon County (41.3) and Wisconsin (40.2) as a whole in 2024. Two age groups are particularly significant, those 65 and over and those under 18. The population under 18 is a dependent population

that requires more services including quality childcare, schools, and specialized health care needs. Those 65 and over may require access to healthcare, transportation, and community services.

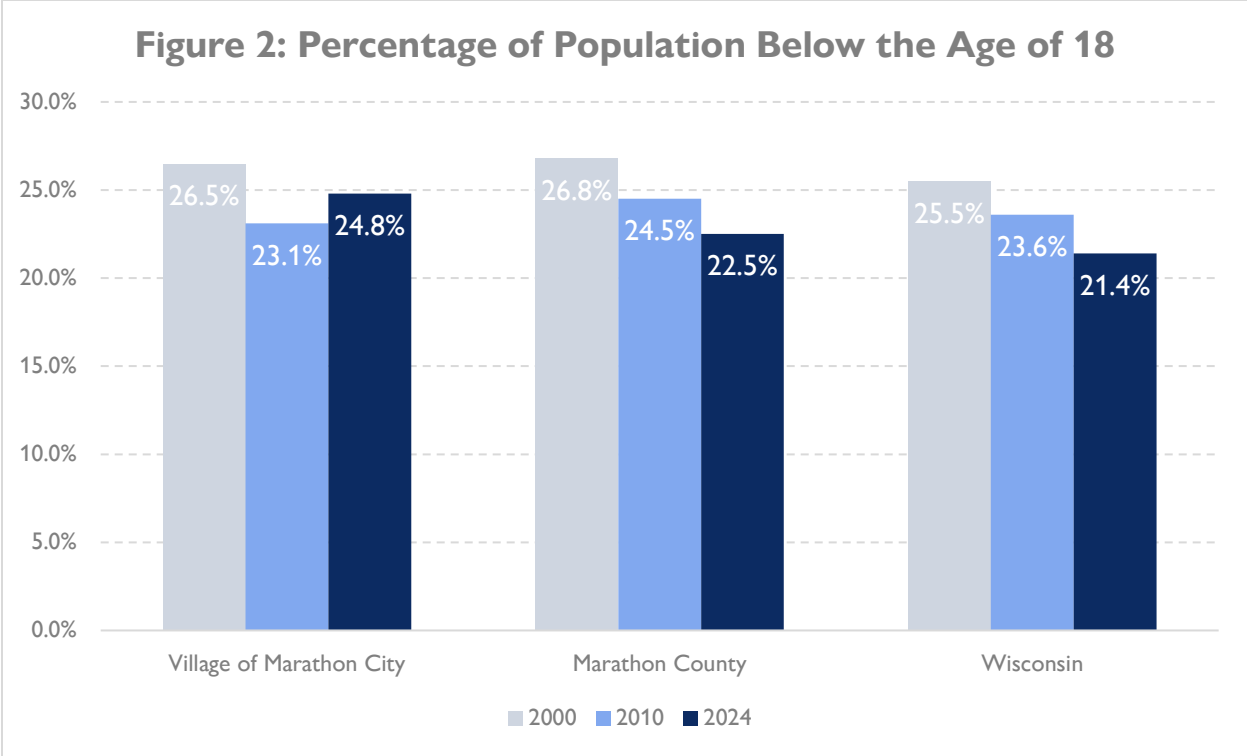
Between 2000 and 2024, the proportion of the population that was age 17 and younger within the Village of Marathon City decreased from about 26.5 percent in 2000 to about 24.8 percent in 2024, as shown in **Figure 2**. The percentage of the population below the age of 18 also decreased in Marathon County and Wisconsin as well during this time.

**Figure 3** compares the proportion of the population ages 65 and older in the Village of Marathon City, Marathon County, and Wisconsin. Between 2000 and 2024, the percentage of the population age 65 and older within the Village of Marathon City increased from 13.4 percent in 2000 to 17.0 percent in 2024. Marathon County and Wisconsin experienced similar increases in the proportion of the population age 65 and older.

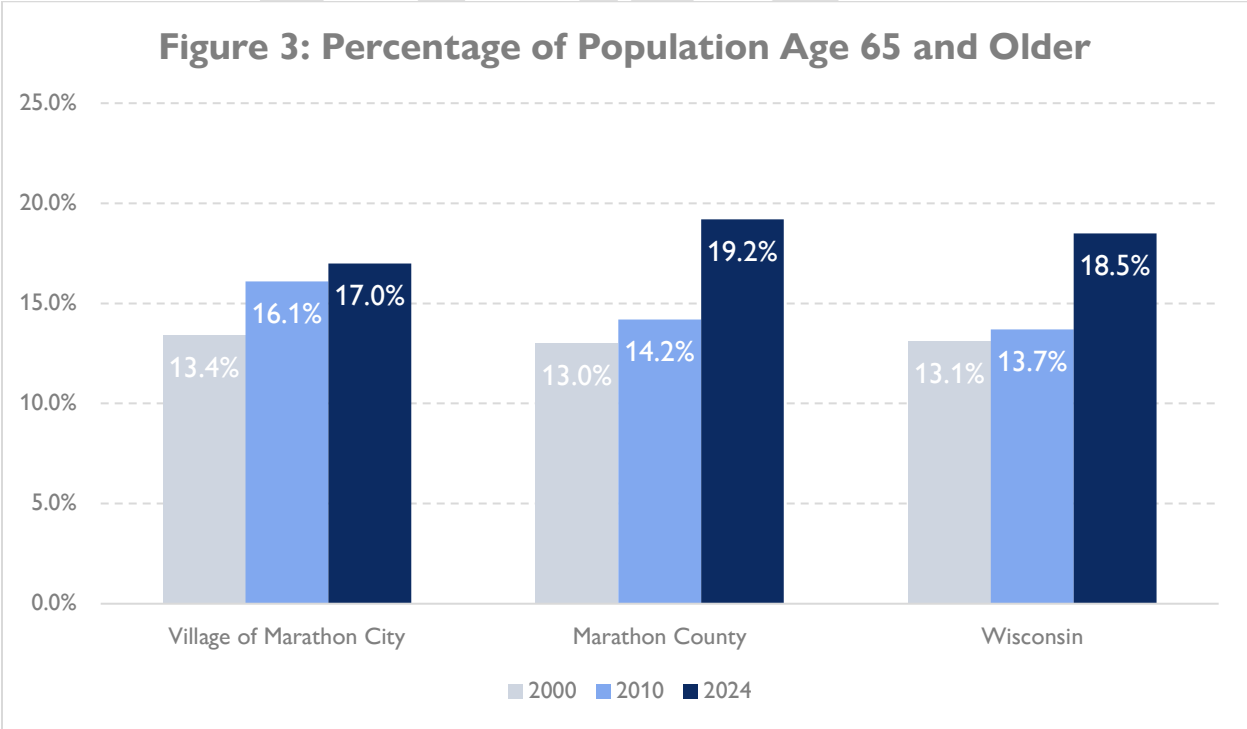
Due to longer life expectancy and the size of the Baby Boomer generation, the 65 and older age group is expected to continue to increase in size. The trend is occurring at the state and national levels and to an even greater degree within the rural Wisconsin counties, especially in the northern one-third of the state. This population trend whereby older age categories increase significantly while younger age categories decline may impact the future labor supply, school system, and health care industry at the national, state, and local levels.



Source: U.S. Census & ACS 2020-2024

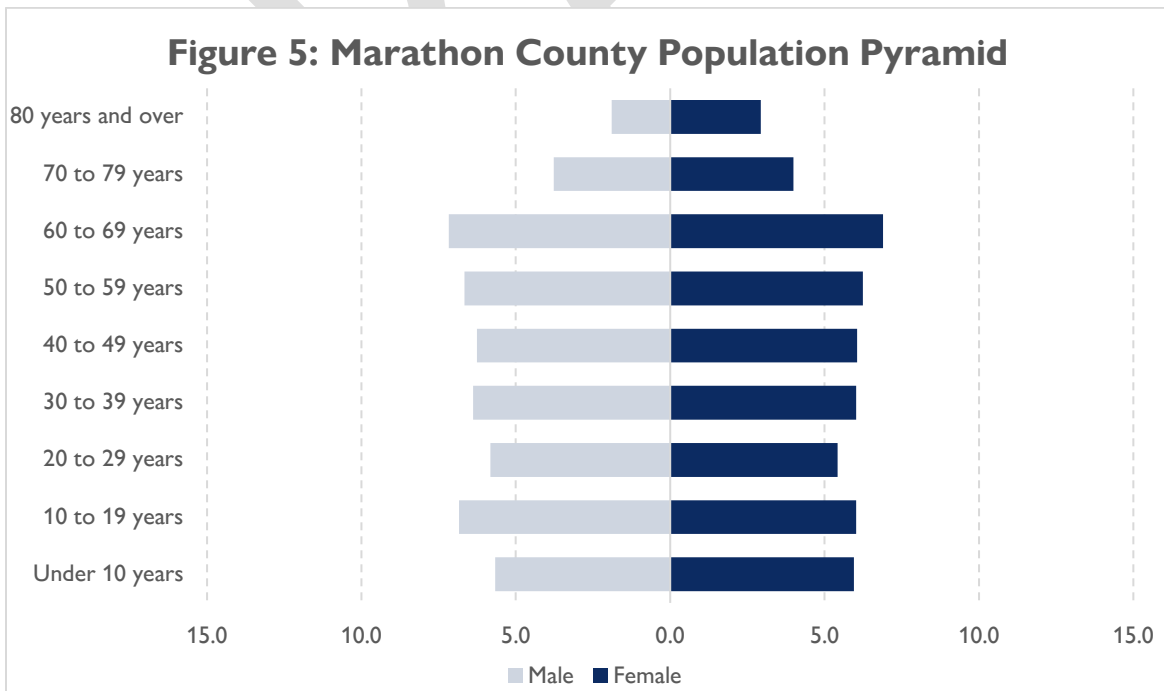
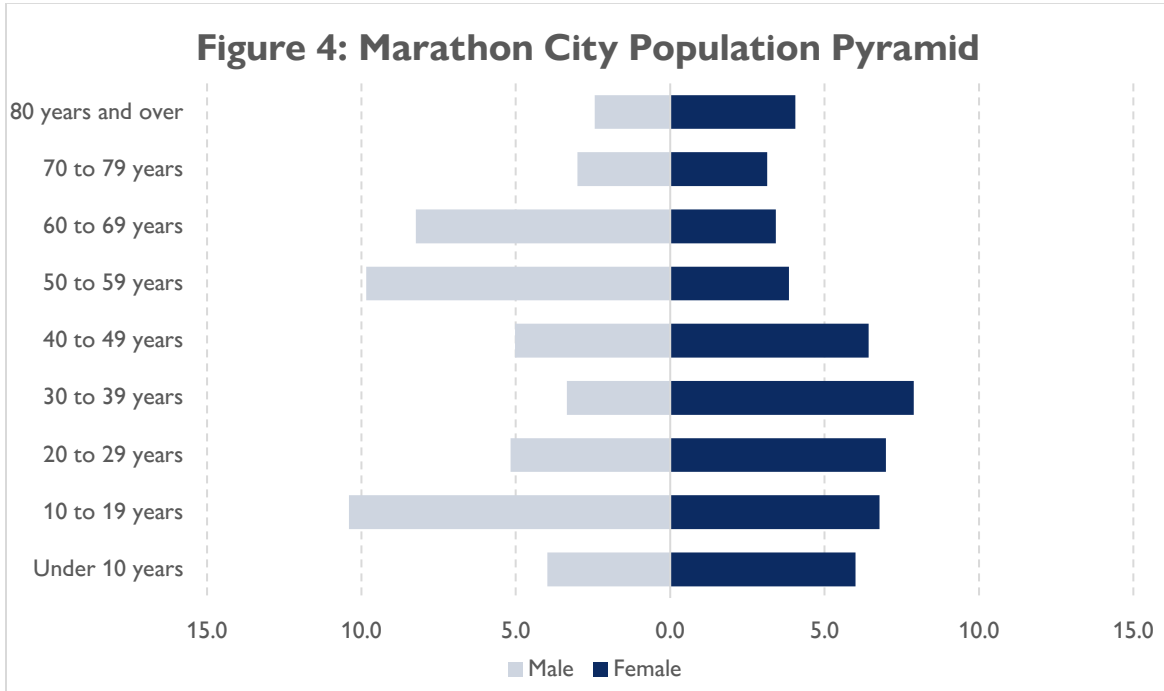


Source: U.S. Census & ACS 2020-2024



Source: U.S. Census & ACS 2020-2024

**Figures 4 and 5** show age distribution in the Village of Marathon City and Marathon County. The largest age group for the Village is 10 to 19 years, while the largest age group for Marathon County is 60 to 69 years.



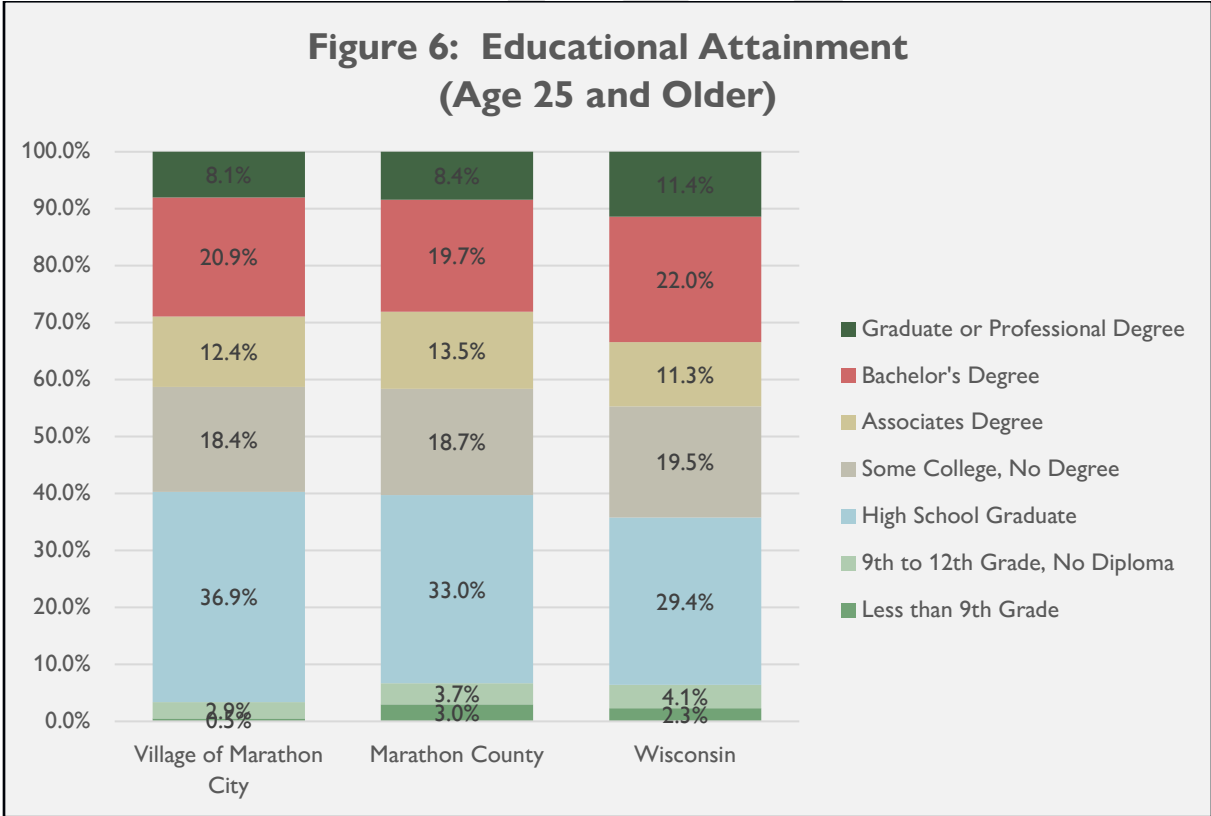
# Education and Income Levels

## Education

**Table 5** compares the percentage of the population ages 25 and older who have a high school diploma or higher, an associate’s degree or higher, and a bachelor’s degree or higher in Marathon City, Marathon County, and Wisconsin. **Figure 6** compares educational attainment of those in the Village of Marathon City to the County and the State by showing the highest level of education completed by residents ages 25 and older. In 2024, 96.6 percent of Village residents ages 25 and older had a high school education or higher. This was higher than the County and State percentages. In the Village of Marathon City, about 29 percent of the population held bachelor’s or other advanced degrees, slightly higher than the County’s percentage and lower than State’s percentage residents.

	Marathon City	Marathon County	Wisconsin
Percent high school graduate or higher	96.6%	93.3%	93.6%
Percent associate’s degree or higher	41.4%	41.6%	44.7%
Percent bachelor’s degree or higher	29.0%	28.1%	33.4%

Source: American Community Survey 2020-2024



Source: American Community Survey (2020-2024)

## Income

Median household income and per capita income are two commonly used measures of income. Median household income is the income for the middle point of households, meaning half of all households fall below that income, and half are above. Per capita income is the measure of average total income per person.

Median household income for Village of Marathon City residents was \$89,519 in 2023. **Table 6** shows that this was significantly higher than Marathon County and the State of Wisconsin. Median household income within the Village was also higher than the County and the State in 2010. When adjusted for inflation, median household income in the Village increased by about 6.5 percent between 2010 and 2024. During this time, Marathon County experienced an increase in median household income of 2.3 percent while median household income in Wisconsin increased by 5.5 percent.

**Table 7** illustrates that income per capita in the Village of Marathon City was higher than both the County and the State in 2024. When adjusted for inflation, per capita income in the Village of Marathon City increased by over 25 percent between 2010 and 2024. This was a significantly faster increase than both the County and State, which rose at rates of 12.4 percent and 14.5 percent respectively.

**Table 6: Median Household Income**

Minor Civil Division	2000*	2010*	2024	2000-2024 % Change	2010-2024 % Change
Village of Marathon City	\$80,508	\$84,016	\$89,519	11.2%	6.5%
Marathon County	\$82,522	\$76,107	\$77,884	-5.6%	2.3%
Wisconsin	\$80,011	\$73,441	\$77,485	-3.2%	5.5%

Source: U.S. Census and American Community Survey (2020-2024)

\*: Adjusted for inflation

**Table 7: Per Capita Income**

Minor Civil Division	2000*	2010*	2024	2000-2024 % Change	2010-2024 % Change
Village of Marathon City	\$37,419	\$37,125	\$46,600	24.5%	25.5%
Marathon County	\$37,827	\$36,854	\$41,413	9.5%	12.4%
Wisconsin	\$38,865	\$37,895	\$43,373	11.6%	14.5%

Source: U.S. Census and American Community Survey (2020-2024)

\*: Adjusted for inflation

# Employment Characteristics

**Tables 8 and 9** illustrate the breakdown of the labor force and employed population living in the Village of Marathon City in 2010 and 2024. The “employed population” includes those that are 16 and older. Between 2010 and 2024, the Village’s labor force decreased by 118 persons. This is likely due to the increase in labor force participation during the same time period.

Labor force participation indicates the percentage of those 16 years and over that are in the labor force. The labor force participation rate significantly decreased within the Village of Marathon City from 2010 to 2024, decreasing by over six percentage points during this time. This is similar to the County and the State where labor force participation rates also significantly decreased during this time.

**Table 8: Labor Force Characteristics**

	Labor Force			Labor Participation Rate	
	2010	2024	2010-2024 % Change	2010	2024
Village of Marathon City	866	748	-13.6%	73.1%	66.5%
Marathon County	74,962	74,302	-0.9%	72.2%	66.9%
Wisconsin	3,078,465	3,136,600	1.9%	69.0%	65.3%

Source: U.S. Census and American Community Survey (2020-2024)

In 2010, the Village of Marathon City had an employed population of 838 people; see **Table 9**. Employment within the Village of Marathon City decreased to 745 people by 2024, representing an 11 percent decrease in employment since 2010. Employment increased in Marathon County during the same period, increasing by 3.1 percent. The State experienced an 5.6 percent increase in employment from 2010 to 2024. The U.S. Census classifies individuals as unemployed if they are not working, actively seeking work, and available to accept a job. The unemployment rate in the Village was 0.3 percent in 2024, lower than Marathon County’s rate of 1.9 percent and the State’s rate of 2.1 percent.

**Table 9: Employment**

	2010	2024	2010-2024 % Change	Unemployment Rate
Village of Marathon City	838	745	-11.1%	0.3%
Marathon County	69,980	72,144	3.1%	1.9%
Wisconsin	2,869,310	3,031,042	5.6%	2.1%

Source: U.S. Census and American Community Survey (2020-2024)

As shown in **Table 10**, most residents in the Village of Marathon City were employed in Management, Professional, & Related occupations. The second sector most represented was the Production, Transportation & Mineral Moving occupation group, followed by Sales & Office occupations. From 2010 to 2024, the most significant increase in employment were seen in Management, Professional & Related occupations.

<b>Table 9: Occupation of Employed Workers</b>				
Occupation	Village of Marathon City		Marathon County	
	2010	2024	2010	2024
Management, Professional & Related	217	268	21,212	27,203
Service	98	106	9,919	10,803
Sales & Office	218	132	17,063	14,118
Natural Resources, Construction, and Maintenance	84	41	6,970	6,421
Production, Transportation & Mineral Moving	221	198	14,816	13,599
Total	838	745	69,980	72,144

Source: U.S. Census and American Community Survey (2020-2024)

## Demographic Snapshot

- The Village of Marathon City has experienced a decrease in both population and the number of households since 2010. The Village has lost households at a slightly faster pace than population.
- The Village of Marathon City is projected to decrease in terms of the number of people through 2050 and is projected to slightly decrease in the number of households through 2040.
- There are a large number of people in the lower and older age categories. In 2024, the Village's median age of 43.8 was slightly higher than Marathon County's median age of 41.3 and Wisconsin's median age of 40.2.
- The median age slightly increased from 41.2 in 2010 to 43.8 in 2024.
- The Village of Marathon City has a higher proportion of residents with a high school diploma than the County and State, a higher proportion of residents with a bachelor's degree than Marathon County but a lower proportion of residents with a bachelor's degree than the State.
- The Village of Marathon City's median household income of \$89,519 in 2024 was higher than the median household incomes of Marathon County and Wisconsin. Additionally, per capita income within the Village was higher than both the County and State in 2024.
- The labor participation rate is slightly lower than the County but is higher than the State, and the unemployment rate of 0.3 percent in 2024 is lower than the State and the County.
- Most people in the Village of Marathon City work in Management, Professional, and Related occupations.