

Chapter 1: Issues and Opportunities

Background

The City of Stevens Point is located near the center of Portage County in Central Wisconsin along the Wisconsin River. The City borders the Town of Hull to the northeast, the Village and Town of Plover to the south, the Town of Linwood to the southwest, and the Town of Carson to the northwest. Additionally, the Village of Park Ridge is entirely landlocked by the City of Stevens Point, and the Village of Whiting is landlocked between the Wisconsin River, City of Stevens Point, and Village of Plover. See Map 1.1: Planning Context.

A summary of the City's history is available on the Wisconsin Historical Society's website. In summary, the Wisconsin River has been inhabited for over 10,000 years. Members of Ho-Chunk, Menomonee, and Ojibwe tribes occupied present-day Portage County prior to an influx of European Settlement. Settlement in the early 19th century brought agriculture and industry that used the Wisconsin River's power, such as logging, woodworking, and paper mills. Railroads and what is now the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point arrived in the late 19th century. Today, the County's economy is driven by a mix of education, agriculture, manufacturing, and other industries.

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, which include this Chapter (Issues and Opportunities) along with eight others:



2. Natural,
Agricultural, and
Cultural Resources



3. Housing



4. Utilities and
Community Facilities



5. Transportation



6. Economic
Development



7. Land Use



8. Intergovernmental
Cooperation



9. Implementation

This plan is an update of the 2006 Comprehensive Plan adopted by the City. Much of that plan is brought forward with updated data. This chapter reviews demographic data including the total population, age distribution, households, educational levels, employment, and income levels in detail. Reviewing these trends is critical to understanding what has occurred and what is likely to occur in the future.

Planning Process

In 2022, the City of Stevens Point's City Council adopted [People Are the Point](#) as its strategic plan to enhance the City for as many different people and experiences as possible. This plan aims “to develop a network of creative nodes across the city that will serve and strengthen the neighborhoods that surround them and expand and diversify the lifestyles supported in Stevens Point.” The Plan identified four hubs that are ideal for incremental development: 1. Downtown and Riverfront, 2. North Division, 3. Stanley Street and Schmeeckle, and 4. Center and South Point. Core priorities of this strategic plan include:

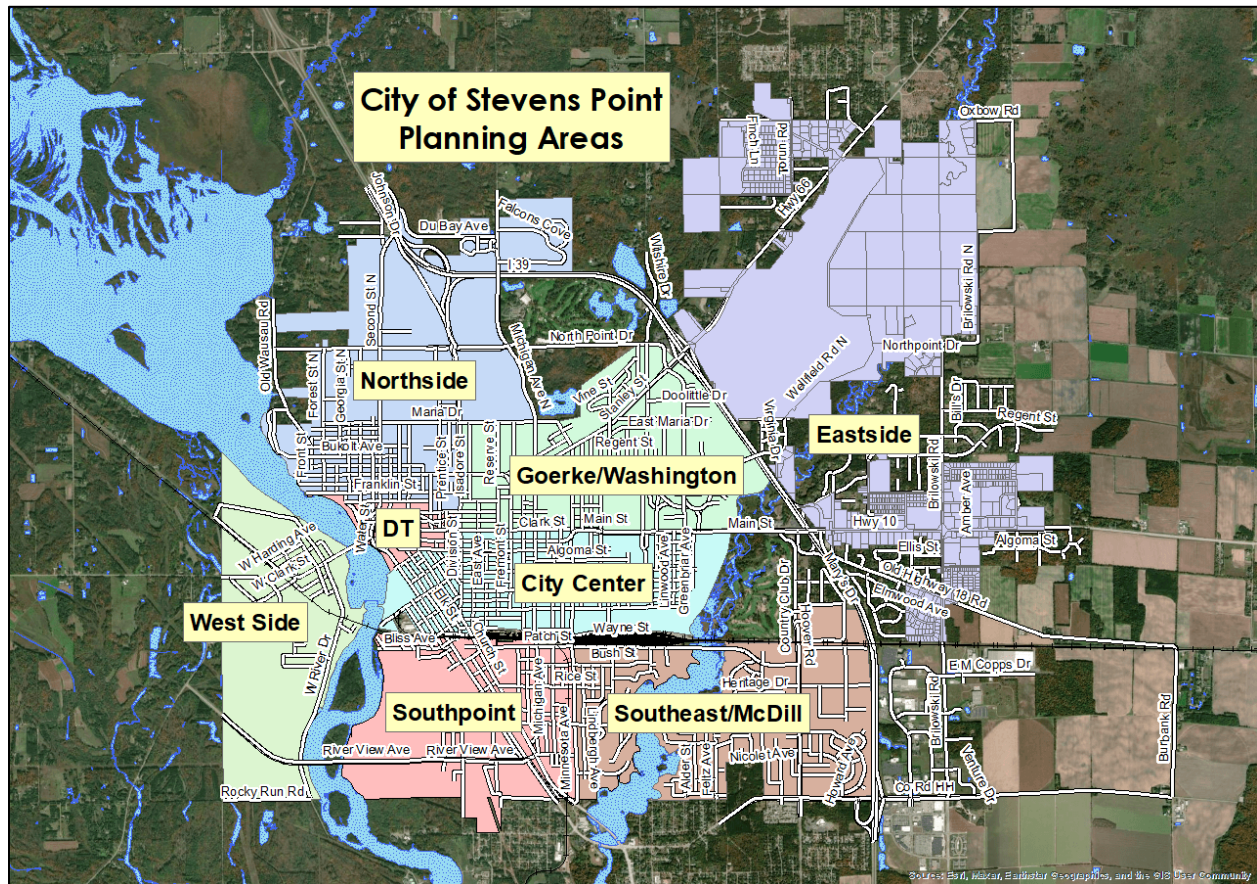
Housing: Incremental development of the urban core, creating a new loft/warehouse living, promoting small footprint homes, creating agri-hoods and adventure-hoods, supporting community solar/green utilities, and strengthening cultural identity through unique housing projects.

Entrepreneurial and Innovation Capacity: Support the innovation center (CREATE Portage County) at The Grove, retain existing small businesses, grow local agriculture innovation and food businesses, expand financial programs for businesses, support Mid State Technical College (MSTC) efforts, work with local organizations to expand venture capital, and enhance outdoor recreation (mountain biking, bouldering, space activation, etc.).

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: Visibility and storytelling of diverse groups through public art, speakers, music, etc., workforce attraction/retention, awareness building, working with UWSP to recruit more diverse students, and work with the County's Diversity Affairs and Inclusivity committee.

As of 2025, consultant-led Downtown Stevens Point and Division Street Corridor Plans had been adopted, and draft reports for planning activities in the Goerke/Washington, Eastside, and Southeast/McDill had been produced by the City's Community Development Department. Findings from these plans and activities are carried into this plan's various chapters. In 2025, the City decided to shift to a citywide approach to comprehensive planning to have all neighborhood-level recommendations available in one document, which ultimately led to the creation of this plan.

Figure 1. City of Stevens Point Neighborhoods



Source: City of Stevens Point

Insert summary of all planning activities here when creating final draft prior to adoption, including summary of City of Stevens Point residents' responses to the 2024 Portage County Comprehensive Plan survey.

Data Sources

Data from the U.S. Census and the American Community Survey (ACS) is used throughout this Plan in addition to other sources such as the Wisconsin Department of Administration's (DOA) population projections. The U.S. Census and the ACS are both produced by the U.S. Census Bureau; however, the Census is a count of the American population and housing units conducted every ten years while the American Community Survey is an estimate of the population and housing released on a yearly basis. Trends are generally analyzed for the thirteen-year time frame from 2010 to 2023 in this report.

The ACS evolved from the "long form" that some households used to receive with the Census. In 2010, the U.S. Census Bureau began releasing ACS data for all populations on a yearly basis. The availability of these surveys means that communities do not need to wait ten years for the census to assess current trends, but they are only estimates based on a limited sample size. Census and ACS data are self-reported which can produce its own accuracy issues as well. However, there are few substitutes, if any, for most of the demographic data provided by these sources. In general, they are the most widely used and exhaustive data sets used in plans, grants, decision-making tools, and other programs.

Demographics

Population

The City's population was estimated to be 25,666 based on the 2020 U.S. Census, with a slight decrease to an estimated 25,497 in 2023. See Table 1. A common trend in Central Wisconsin is rapid population growth between 1990 and 2010, followed by much slower growth since 2010. From 1990 to 2010, the estimated population growth for the City of Stevens Point was 16.1 percent, compared to 14 percent for Portage County, 16.3 percent statewide, and 24.1 percent nationwide. But since 2010, the City's population is estimated to have decreased by 4.6 percent, compared to a 0.5 percent increase for Portage County, a 3.6 percent increase statewide, and a 7.7 percent increase nationwide.

The neighboring Village of Plover follows these trends, but at a much higher rate between 1990 and 2010 (48.3 percent) as well as between 2010 and 2023 (13.1 percent). The Village of Plover is less topographically constrained than the City of Stevens Point, but some of this growth is due to the existing population in neighboring towns being annexed to the Village over time. The Village of Park Ridge appears to have grown the fastest since 2010 (20 percent), but its small population could result in less accurate estimates and a more pronounced percentage change in population due to Census' margins of error.

It is important to note that other official population counts are available, such as from the Wisconsin Department of Administration (WDOA). WDOA estimated a City population of 26,619 in 2024, and a County population of 72,139. While this plan relies more heavily on Census data, this could indicate a more positive outlook for the City and County's future population growth. In general, more Americans are having fewer children, and fewer Americans are having children at all, leading to fewer births relative to deaths, a higher median age, smaller household sizes, and a slower overall population growth rate. But Central Wisconsin's relatively low cost of living, lack of natural disasters, and access to nature, healthcare, and education could reverse these trends as other areas of the Country continue to be more costly and stressful.

Table 1: Population

Minor Civil Division	1990	2000	2010	2020	2023	1990-2010 % Change	1990-2010 Net Change	2010-2023 % Change	2010-2023 Net Change
C. Stevens Point	23,006	24,551	26,717	25,666	25,497	16.1%	3,711	-4.6%	-1,220
V. Park Ridge	546	499	491	530	589	-10.1%	-55	20.0%	98
V. Plover	8,176	10,647	12,123	13,519	13,713	48.3%	3,947	13.1%	1,590
V. Whiting	1,838	1,739	1,724	1,601	1,496	-6.2%	-114	-13.2%	-228
T. Carson	1,327	1,332	1,305	1,374	1,213	-1.7%	-22	-7.0%	-92
T. Hull	5,559	5,627	5,346	5,287	5,280	-3.8%	-213	-1.2%	-66
T. Linwood	1,035	1,129	1,121	1,070	1,188	8.3%	86	6.0%	67
T. Plover	2,223	2,194	1,701	1,565	1,479	-23.5%	-522	-13.1%	-222
T. Stockton	2,494	2,903	2,917	3,018	3,010	17.0%	423	3.2%	93
Portage Co.	61,405	67,182	70,019	70,377	70,375	14.0%	8,614	0.5%	356
Wisconsin	4,891,769	5,363,675	5,686,986	5,893,718	5,892,023	16.3%	795,217	3.6%	205,037
USA	248,709,873	281,421,906	308,745,538	331,449,281	332,387,540	24.1%	60,035,665	7.7%	23,642,002

Source: U.S. Census 1990-2020; ACS 5-Year Estimates 2023

Population Projections

The Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) calculates population projections for all counties and minor civil divisions. The most recent projections are based on the 2020 Census, and they are based on the existing population. They don't factor a large shift in inbound migration, for example, due to climate change or cost of living impacts that could drive the country's population to lower-risk, lower-cost areas like Wisconsin as those trends are much harder to predict. See Table 2.

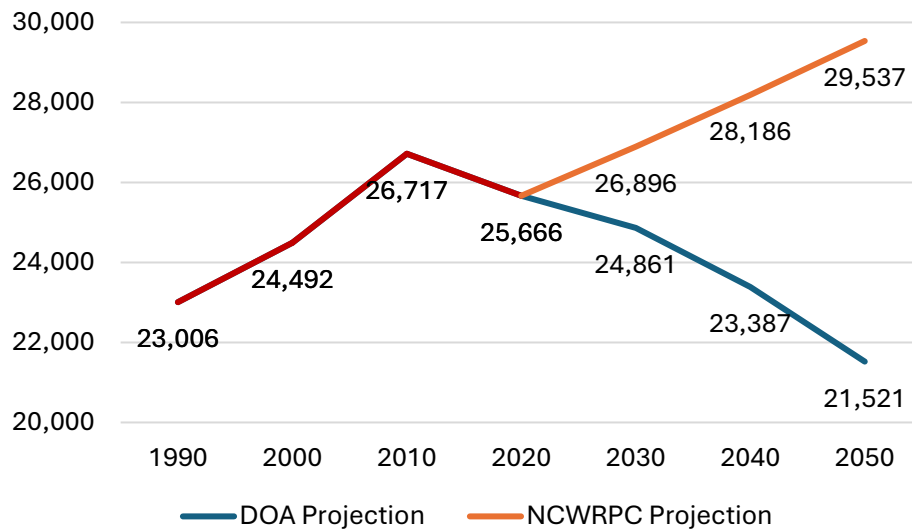
Table 2: Official State of Wisconsin Population Projections

Minor Civil Division	2020 Census	2030 DOA	2040 DOA	2050 DOA	% Change 2020-2050	Net Change 2020-2050
C. Stevens Point	25,666	24,861	23,387	21,521	-16.1%	-4,145
V. Park Ridge	530	522	498	464	-12.5%	-66
V. Plover	13,519	14,259	14,425	14,136	4.6%	617
V. Whiting	1,601	1,418	1,218	1,022	-36.2%	-579
T. Carson	1,374	1,320	1,232	1,125	-18.1%	-249
T. Hull	5,287	4,837	4,303	3,749	-29.1%	-1,538
T. Linwood	1,070	1,008	923	828	-22.6%	-242
T. Plover	1,565	1,381	1,183	989	-36.8%	-576
T. Stockton	3,018	2,850	2,618	2,355	-22.0%	-663
Portage County	70,377	68,090	63,985	58,820	-16.4%	-11,557
Wisconsin	5,893,718	5,890,915	5,841,620	5,710,120	-3.1%	-183,598

Source: Wisconsin DOA 2024

DOA projects that the City's population will decrease to 21,521 by 2050, for a decrease of 16.1 percent. Should conditions change that increase the number of people moving to the community from other parts of Wisconsin, other states, or other countries, the decline may not be as pronounced, and it could even reverse itself. Therefore, NCWRPC has included a hypothetical projection based on the City's growth rate per decade between 2000 and 2020, which was 4.8 percent. This provides a range of possibilities for future planning purposes. See Figure 2.

Figure 2: Estimated Range of Possible Population Projections



Source: Wisconsin DOA 2024, NCWRPC 2025

Age Distribution

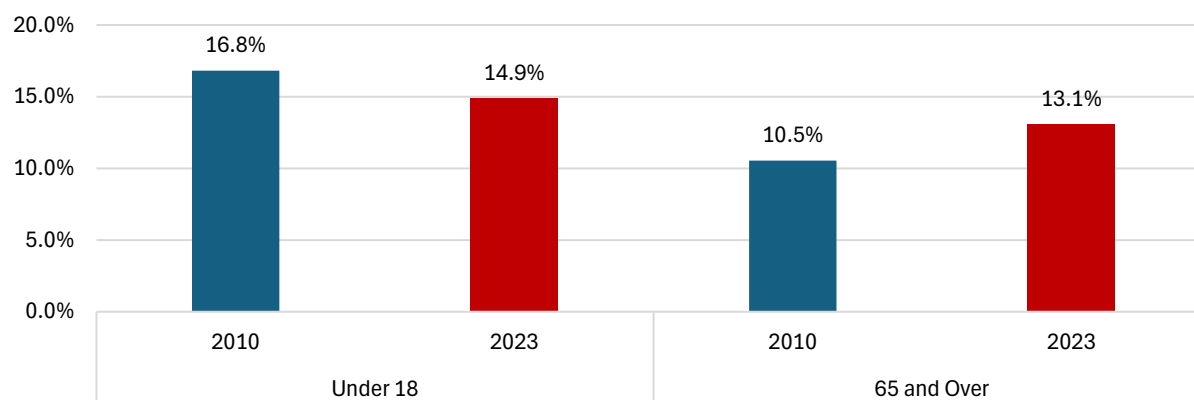
Population distribution is important to the planning process, with two groups examined in detail here. They are the populations of those 17 and younger and those 65 and older. These are often referred to as dependent populations and have different needs. The younger group requires schools, and the older group is retiring. The remainder of the population between the two age groups comprises most of the workforce. Table 3 compares these groups over time and to the state's age groups.

Between 2010 and 2023, the population under 18 decreased in the City by 15.5 percent, and a countywide decrease of 9.4 percent was reflected in decreases for most neighboring communities. The Villages of Plover, Park Ridge, and Whiting saw the population under 18 increase, but of the municipalities in Table 3, only the Village of Whiting saw a decrease in its population over 65. These trends are reflected in the rise in median age among all municipalities except for the Village of Whiting in Table 3. Note that the City's median age of 28.7 is considerably lower than the rest of Portage County (38.1), due to its college-age population. Figure 3 shows the decrease in percent of the City's population that is under age 18, and an increase among those 65 and older. Shifting demographics in these age groups should be monitored as it will impact the needs for facilities for school districts, hospitals, senior housing, and family-oriented housing, and it will affect the labor market as more retire and fewer children grow up and enter the workforce.

Table 3: Age Characteristics

Minor Civil Division	Population Under Age 18, 2010	Population Under Age 18, 2023	% Change 2010-2023	Population Age 65 and Over, 2010	Population Age 65 and Over, 2023	% Change 2010-2023	Median Age 2010	Median Age 2023
C. Stevens Point	4,493	3,795	-15.5%	2,818	3,329	18.1%	25.9	28.7
V. Park Ridge	118	143	21.2%	127	160	26.0%	44.4	45.8
V. Plover	2,857	3,259	14.1%	1,322	2,050	55.1%	36.0	36.4
V. Whiting	263	273	3.8%	513	449	-12.5%	52.2	45.2
T. Carson	211	181	-14.2%	187	321	71.7%	47.9	55.9
T. Hull	1,331	1,098	-17.5%	840	1,105	31.5%	44.4	45.9
T. Linwood	339	224	-33.9%	182	354	94.5%	41.1	51.7
T. Plover	423	268	-36.6%	148	354	139.2%	41.3	53.8
T. Stockton	767	605	-21.1%	255	539	111.4%	42.1	46.7
Portage County	14,796	13,403	-9.4%	8,546	12,556	46.9%	35.6	38.1
Wisconsin	1,343,593	1,244,078	-7.4%	754,868	1,133,395	50.1%	38.1	40.5
United States	74,033,117	73,645,238	-0.5%	38,749,413	55,970,047	44.4%	36.9	38.7

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates 2010 & 2023

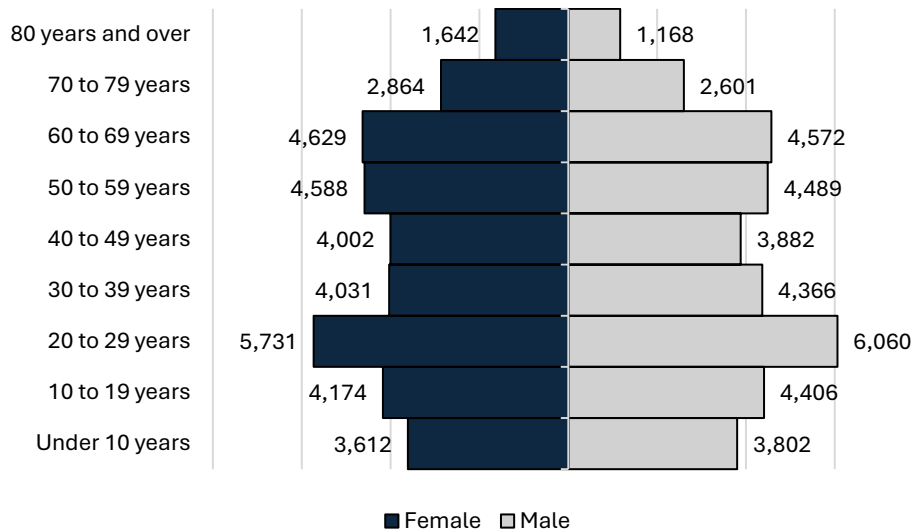
Figure 3: Age Group Percent of Total City Population

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates 2010 & 2023

Baby Boomers, the largest generation in American history, are retiring and living longer than previous generations. The oldest Baby Boomers are 79 in 2025 and the youngest are 61 years old. Based on increases in life expectancy and advances in medicine, those 65 and older will grow in size and as a percentage of the total population. However, the increase is also due to lower fertility rates. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Country's fertility rate was 3.7 births per woman in 1957. In 2014, it was 1.93 which is below the 2.1 replacement rate that maintains a population. With an older population, demand for specific types of housing or healthcare services is expected to increase, while school district enrollment is expected to change. These topics are covered in other chapters of this plan.

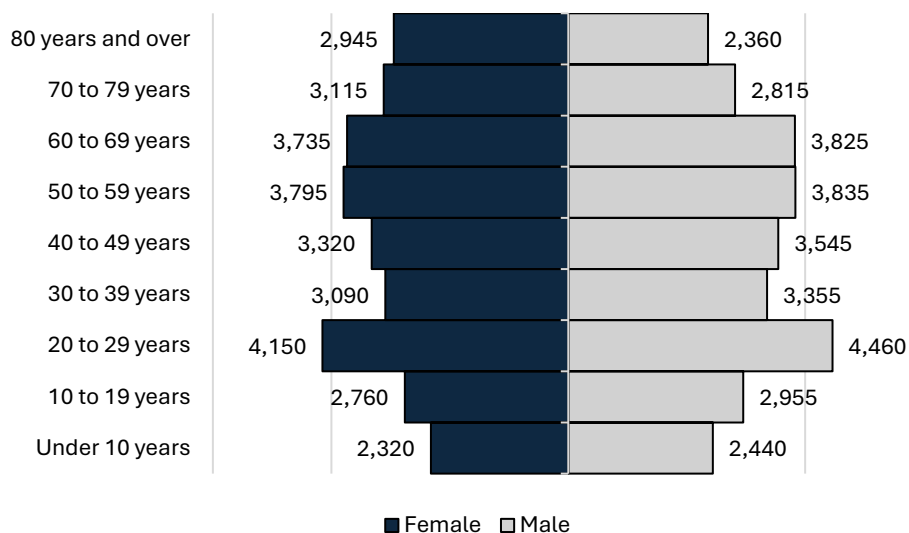
Population Pyramids in Figures 4 and 5 depict the number of residents in each age category based on the 2020 Census and the 2050 DOA Projection for Portage County. The 2050 Projection more closely resembles a box than a pyramid, reflecting the higher share of older age categories relative to younger age categories. Note that the 20-to-29-year-old category is pronounced in both pyramids because of the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point (UWSP).

Figure 4: 2020 Portage County Population Pyramid



Source: 2020 Census

Figure 5: 2050 Projected Portage County Population Pyramid



Source: Wisconsin DOA 2024

Households

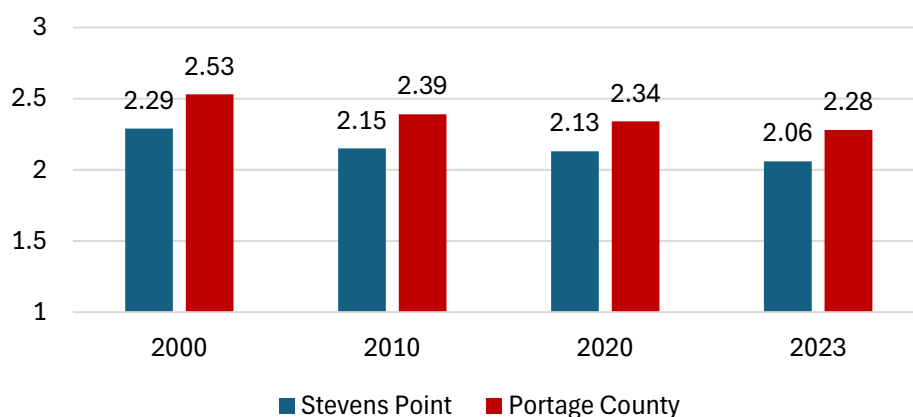
Despite slowing population growth, there is continued household growth in the City because household sizes are getting smaller. See Table 4 and Figure 6. The City's number of households increased by 28.5 percent between 1990 and 2010, followed by a 4.4 percent increase between 2010 and 2023, indicating demand for housing despite a decreasing total population. Growth between 2010 and 2023 was slower than countywide, statewide, and national trends. Of the municipalities listed below, the Village of Whiting was the only one to see a decrease in the number of households between 2010 and 2023. Additionally, the average household size decreased from 2.29 in the City and 2.53 countywide in 1990 to 2.06 in the City and 2.28 countywide in 2023.

Table 4: Total Households

Minor Civil Division	1990	2000	2010	2020	2023	1990-2010 % Change	1990-2010 Net Change	2010-2023 % Change	2010-2023 Net Change
C. Stevens Point	8,245	9,305	10,598	10,771	11,063	28.5%	2,353	4.4%	465
V. Park Ridge	214	211	217	235	249	1.4%	3	14.7%	32
V. Plover	2,857	3,985	4,948	5,717	5,555	73.2%	2,091	12.3%	607
V. Whiting	637	690	750	720	633	17.7%	113	-15.6%	-117
T. Carson	441	475	514	542	531	16.6%	73	3.3%	17
T. Hull	1,851	1,988	2,069	2,141	2,189	11.8%	218	5.8%	120
T. Linwood	342	388	430	453	517	25.7%	88	20.2%	87
T. Plover	738	861	639	597	654	-13.4%	-99	2.3%	15
T. Stockton	807	984	1,087	1,182	1,208	34.7%	280	11.1%	121
Portage Co.	21,306	25,040	27,814	29,138	29,636	30.5%	6,508	6.6%	1,822
Wisconsin	1,822,118	2,086,304	2,279,768	2,428,361	2,446,028	25.1%	457,650	7.3%	166,260
USA	91,947,410	105,539,122	116,716,292	126,817,580	127,482,865	26.9%	24,768,882	9.2%	10,766,573

Source: U.S. Census 1990-2020; ACS 5-Year Estimates 2023

Figure 6: Average Household Size



Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates 2000, 2010, 2020, & 2023

Education

Education rates are high in the City of Stevens Point as well as Portage County as a whole. See Table 5. The percentage of residents over 25 with a high school diploma increased in all municipalities, the County, the state, and the nation between 2000 and 2023. The City of Stevens Point (95.9 percent), Portage County (94.8 percent) and its municipalities generally have higher rates of high school graduates than statewide figures (93.7 percent), and the State of Wisconsin has higher rates than national figures (89.4 percent). Portage County (33.7 percent) and the State of Wisconsin (33.8 percent) have similar rates of those with a bachelor's degree or higher, which is only slightly under the national rate (35 percent). The City of Stevens Point (39.4 percent), Village of Park Ridge (60.9 percent), and Village of Plover (40.3 percent) have higher rates of those with a bachelor's degree or higher than County, state, and national rates, with all other municipalities listed below having a lower share of college graduates than County, state, and national rates. Note that the City's percent increase in residents with a bachelor's degree or higher rose higher (13.3 percent) than all the municipalities listed below as well as the county (10.3 percent), state (10.4 percent), and nation (10.6 percent). High school, technical college, and college education ensures a skilled workforce for the City.

Table 5: Educational Attainment

Minor Civil Division	% Completed High School			% with Bachelor's Degree or Higher			% Change (High School)	% Change (Bachelor's)
	2000	2010	2023	2000	2010	2023		
C. Stevens Point	85.1%	92.6%	95.9%	26.1%	33.2%	39.4%	10.8%	13.3%
V. Park Ridge	93.6%	96.5%	98.6%	52.9%	46.8%	60.9%	5.0%	8.0%
V. Plover	91.5%	91.5%	92.6%	30.6%	31.6%	40.3%	1.1%	9.7%
V. Whiting	84.0%	85.7%	95.9%	22.8%	20.9%	32.2%	11.9%	9.4%
T. Carson	80.9%	84.0%	96.4%	13.8%	21.0%	22.6%	15.5%	8.8%
T. Hull	90.4%	91.6%	97.7%	31.1%	34.3%	30.7%	7.3%	-0.4%
T. Linwood	88.5%	90.7%	94.7%	19.6%	16.0%	25.2%	6.2%	5.6%
T. Plover	85.5%	88.1%	95.5%	22.4%	17.1%	28.7%	10.0%	6.3%
T. Stockton	88.3%	89.4%	93.2%	16.0%	18.6%	27.4%	4.9%	11.4%
Portage County	86.5%	90.4%	94.8%	23.4%	27.1%	33.7%	8.3%	10.3%
Wisconsin	85.1%	90.4%	93.7%	23.4%	27.1%	33.8%	8.6%	10.4%
United States	80.4%	85.0%	89.4%	24.4%	27.9%	35.0%	9.0%	10.6%

Source: U.S. Census 2000; ACS 5-Year Estimates 2010 & 2023

Employment

Table 6 lists the number of citizens of a given geography that are employed, rather than where the job is located. For all municipalities listed, the City of Stevens Point saw the largest percent increase (20.5 percent) and net change (2,576) in residents with a job between 2000 and 2023, followed by the Village of Plover (10.7 percent, 654 net change). By comparison, the County's employment grew by 5.7 percent, the state's employment grew by 10.4 percent, and the nation's employment grew by 15.1 percent. All other municipalities listed saw a decrease in employment during the same time, however, some of them have a higher number of employed residents in 2023 compared to 2010, which is likely due to the recovery that followed the Great Recession of the 2000s. In general, an aging population will result in fewer employees filling jobs and a need to attract workers to the area.

Table 6: Total Employed

Minor Civil Division	2000	2010	2020	2023	2000-2023 % Change	2000-2023 Net Change	2010-2023 % Change	2010-2023 Net Change
C. Stevens Point	12,547	13,795	14,557	15,123	20.5%	2,576	9.6%	1,328
V. Park Ridge	260	207	254	252	-3.1%	-8	21.7%	45
V. Plover	6,094	6,447	6,616	6,748	10.7%	654	4.7%	301
V. Whiting	864	696	650	670	-22.5%	-194	-3.7%	-26
T. Carson	752	600	724	682	-9.3%	-70	13.7%	82
T. Hull	2,977	2,534	3,036	2,671	-10.3%	-306	5.4%	137
T. Linwood	649	748	617	544	-16.2%	-105	-27.3%	-204
T. Plover	1,182	1,020	798	696	-41.1%	-486	-31.8%	-324
T. Stockton	1,669	1,674	1,623	1,652	-1.0%	-17	-1.3%	-22
Portage County	35,677	36,395	37,703	37,693	5.7%	2,016	3.6%	1,298
Wisconsin	2,734,925	2,869,310	2,983,277	3,018,918	10.4%	283,993	5.2%	149,608
United States	138,820,935	141,833,331	155,888,980	159,808,535	15.1%	20,987,600	12.7%	17,975,204

Source: U.S. Census 2000; ACS 5-Year Estimates 2010, 2020, & 2023

Income

Income is a local indicator of prosperity, and it is typically measured in two ways: median household income and per capita income. See Tables 7 and 8. In general, per capita income has risen faster than median household income, which is partially due to smaller household sizes. Of the municipalities listed below, the City of Stevens Point had the smallest net income increase between 2000 and 2023 (\$23,040), and the lowest overall income in 2023 (\$56,218). This could be due to its position as an older, more urban community, as surrounding municipalities with newer, more expensive housing tend to attract higher income households. Stevens Point's urban fabric also results in a greater variety of housing unit styles, so those with limited incomes find more housing options within the City's limits than in neighboring communities without necessarily needing to own a car.

The percent increase in the City's median household income between 2000 and 2023 (69.4 percent) was higher than many surrounding communities, which could be due to its younger population, increase in job opportunities, and lower share of retirees compared to neighboring communities. Median household incomes across Portage County (\$73,284) were slightly behind statewide (\$75,670) and national (\$78,538) incomes, but the cost of living is also lower, indicating that wages go farther in Central Wisconsin than in larger cities. This could increase the appeal of living in the area as the cost of living continues to rise nationwide.

Per Capita incomes in the City (\$32,670) are also lower than all other municipalities listed, and they were considerably lower than county (\$39,476), state (\$42,019), and national (\$43,289) incomes. This could be due to younger employees earning lower wages in college or at the beginning of their career, and it could indicate demand for economic and educational opportunities that help residents earn a living wage.

Table 7: Median Household Income

Minor Civil Division	2000	2010	2020	2023	2000-2023 % Change	2000-2023 Net Change	2010-2023 % Change	2010-2023 Net Change
C. Stevens Point	\$33,178	\$40,115	\$46,663	\$56,218	69.4%	\$23,040	40.1%	\$16,103
V. Park Ridge	\$57,031	\$62,708	\$73,611	\$82,083	43.9%	\$25,052	30.9%	\$19,375
V. Plover	\$51,238	\$59,714	\$63,988	\$83,139	62.3%	\$31,901	39.2%	\$23,425
V. Whiting	\$42,381	\$43,239	\$58,304	\$72,257	70.5%	\$29,876	67.1%	\$29,018
T. Carson	\$51,583	\$60,260	\$87,721	\$96,875	87.8%	\$45,292	60.8%	\$36,615
T. Hull	\$53,915	\$64,621	\$86,357	\$101,306	87.9%	\$47,391	56.8%	\$36,685
T. Linwood	\$55,972	\$65,333	\$77,772	\$79,531	42.1%	\$23,559	21.7%	\$14,198
T. Plover	\$49,313	\$75,000	\$75,150	\$81,009	64.3%	\$31,696	8.0%	\$6,009
T. Stockton	\$50,957	\$63,646	\$72,381	\$82,279	61.5%	\$31,322	29.3%	\$18,633
Portage County	\$43,487	\$51,456	\$60,316	\$73,284	68.5%	\$29,797	42.4%	\$21,828
Wisconsin	\$43,791	\$51,598	\$63,293	\$75,670	72.8%	\$31,879	46.7%	\$24,072
United States	\$41,994	\$51,914	\$64,994	\$78,538	87.0%	\$36,544	51.3%	\$26,624

Source: U.S. Census 2000; ACS 5-Year Estimates 2010, 2020, & 2023

Table 8: Per Capita Income

Minor Civil Division	2000	2010	2020	2023	2000-2023 % Change	2000-2023 Net Change	2010-2023 % Change	2010-2023 Net Change
C. Stevens Point	\$17,510	\$21,653	\$26,127	\$32,670	86.6%	\$15,160	50.9%	\$11,017
V. Park Ridge	\$28,074	\$30,807	\$32,854	\$43,717	55.7%	\$15,643	41.9%	\$12,910
V. Plover	\$23,085	\$27,672	\$33,929	\$40,730	76.4%	\$17,645	47.2%	\$13,058
V. Whiting	\$19,492	\$24,681	\$30,616	\$44,458	128.1%	\$24,966	80.1%	\$19,777
T. Carson	\$21,576	\$33,500	\$39,023	\$52,342	142.6%	\$30,766	56.2%	\$18,842
T. Hull	\$22,433	\$30,718	\$47,480	\$52,397	133.6%	\$29,964	70.6%	\$21,679
T. Linwood	\$21,073	\$24,482	\$37,762	\$44,090	109.2%	\$23,017	80.1%	\$19,608
T. Plover	\$21,186	\$26,977	\$34,078	\$45,985	117.1%	\$24,799	70.5%	\$19,008
T. Stockton	\$19,886	\$26,497	\$32,522	\$38,118	91.7%	\$18,232	43.9%	\$11,621
Portage County	\$19,854	\$24,873	\$32,268	\$39,476	98.8%	\$19,622	58.7%	\$14,603
Wisconsin	\$21,271	\$26,624	\$34,450	\$42,019	97.5%	\$20,748	57.8%	\$15,395
United States	\$21,587	\$27,334	\$35,384	\$43,289	100.5%	\$21,702	58.4%	\$15,955

Source: U.S. Census 2000; ACS 5-Year Estimates 2010, 2020, & 2023

Summary

The City of Stevens Point and its surroundings have experienced much slower population growth since 2010 compared to the decades before 2010, with a steady growth in the number of households and increasing rates of education and income. While wages and population growth are lower than statewide and national trends, the cost of living is relatively low, and job opportunities and incomes are growing faster in the City than in surrounding municipalities. These trends indicate a need to accommodate changing demand for housing, schools, healthcare, and other aspects that contribute to the City's high quality of life.

Issues

A variety of issues were identified throughout the planning process. Many of these were brought up during the series of planning meetings, others were taken from existing documents, and some were taken from other public meetings. The following chapters of this Plan will list the issues that relate to each chapter's topic. Responses from the 2024 Portage County Comprehensive Plan public survey were also used to confirm existing knowledge about concerns regarding land use, environmental protection, quality of life, and other issues that are discussed throughout this Plan.

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Each of the following Comprehensive Plan chapters will conclude with a set of goals, objectives, and policies, which will be used to guide the future development of the county. For purposes of this planning process, goals, objectives, and policies are defined as follows:

Goals

Broad statements that express general priorities about how the community should approach development issues during the next 20 years. These goals are based on key issues, opportunities and problems that affect the community.

Objectives

More specific than goals and are usually attainable through planning and implementation activities. The accomplishment of an objective contributes to the fulfillment of a goal.

Policies

Rules or courses of action that are used to ensure plan implementation and to accomplish the goals and objectives. Policies are intended to be used by decision-makers on a regular basis. The City listed the following 10 overall goals in its Issues & Opportunities Chapter of the 2006 Comprehensive Plan:

- Managed Growth
- Quality of Life
- Good Living Environments
- Good Land Use Planning
- Annual Planning and Development Strategy
- Good Development Ordinances
- Intergovernmental Cooperation
- Tax Base Growth
- Cost-Effective Public Services
- Local Control
- Citizen Input
- Interrelated Goals and Plans

Goals, Objectives, and Policies throughout this updated Plan are designed to reflect these original goals, which are found at the end of each Chapter. Additionally, the former Plan's extensive number of goals, objectives, and policies for each chapter have been condensed into fewer and more concise ones that serve the same purpose as the original 2006 Plan while being easier to navigate. Finally, goals, objectives, and policies were added as needed to provide solutions to the latest issues facing the City of Stevens Point.