

Chapter 1

Demographics

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 vision for future planning and community decisions. This chapter reviews the demographics of the Town of Plymouth and identifies the major trends impacting the Town over the next few decades. Data for Juneau County and the State of Wisconsin are utilized throughout the plan for comparison.

Background

The Town of Plymouth is located in southwest Juneau County, Wisconsin. The Town is bounded by Monroe County to the west (Towns of Oakdale, Clifton, and Glendale), the Town of Fountain to the north, the Town of Lisbon to the northeast, the Town of Lindina to the east, the Town of Summit to the southeast, and the Town of Wonewoc to the south. See Map 1: Location.

The Town encompasses roughly one six-by-six square mile township, although a part of that area is occupied by the City of Elroy. Plymouth is located on the northeastern edge of the Driftless Area, a part of the state that has never been glaciated, resulting in a more rugged terrain than most of the state. Development in the Town tends to be widely scattered and distributed along the major roadways, with a significant amount of agricultural land throughout. See Map 2: Planning area.

Planning Process

Beginning Fall 2026, the Town initiated a process to update its 2009 Comprehensive Plan. Wisconsin's state planning law, §66.1001, requires that a comprehensive plan be updated every ten years. A variety of Plan Commission meetings were held over the course of 2026 and 2027 to prepare the plan. A final Plan Commission meeting was held to review the final draft and recommend adoption of the plan by the Town Board.

Public Participation

An important part of any planning process is public involvement. Public involvement provides the citizens of the Town an opportunity to express their views, ideas, and opinions on issues that they would like to see addressed regarding the future development of the Town. Local officials use this input to guide policies and decisions with greater awareness of the public's desires and consensus. See the adopted Public Participation Plan in Appendix A. The Town of Plymouth posted all Plan Commission meetings to invite the public and held a Public Hearing to collect public input.

Issues and Opportunities

During the planning process for this plan update, the Town Plan Commission identified and discussed several issues/opportunities currently facing the Town:

- *Roadway Safety* - Several factors lead to the identification of roadway safety as a broad issue area, including speeding, a lack of stopping, hills, and narrow street widths in subdivisions.
- *Flooding* - Another road related issue was annual flooding that causes repeated road washouts.
- *Community Character & Image* - The need to address nuisance situations in the Town, such as empty and/or dilapidated buildings and junk in yards, has been identified as an issue needing more attention.
- *Telecommunications* - Phone and Internet service is not good. This has implications for daily activities in an increasingly tech-based world as well as for emergency services.
- *Opportunity* - The Town has the location, natural features and amenities to "be a hot spot" for revenue by capitalizing on both the retirement home and tourism markets.

Population and Households

Historical Trends

Most of the data in this Chapter comes from the U.S. Census, which is taken every ten years, and the American Community Survey (ACS), which provides estimates every year. The estimated 2024 population for the Town of Plymouth provided by the ACS is 547 people. As shown in Table 1, the Town experienced a steady decline in population from 2000 to 2010, at a rate of 6.6 percent. This trend of population decline continued from 2010 to 2024, at a slightly higher percentage decrease of 8.4 percent. This contrasted with the county and state, which both experienced population growth from 2000 to 2010 at rates of 9.7 percent and 6 percent, respectively. Population growth continued from 2010 to 2024 for the county and the state, albeit at slower rates of 0.1 percent and 4 percent, respectively.

Table 1: Demographic Change 2000-2024						
Minor Civil Division	2000	2010	2020	2024	2000-2010 % Change	2010-2024 % Change
Total Population						
T. Plymouth	639	597	578	547	-6.6%	-8.4%
Juneau County	24,316	26,664	26,718	26,689	9.7%	0.1%
State	5,363,675	5,686,986	5,893,718	5,914,872	6.0%	4.0%
Total Households						
T. Plymouth	244	245	269	261	0.4%	6.5%
Juneau County	9,696	10,527	10,779	10,955	8.6%	4.1%
State	2,084,544	2,274,611	2,377,935	2,479,480	9.1%	9.0%
Average Household Size						
T. Plymouth	2.62	2.34	1.99	2.08	-10.7%	-11.1%
Juneau County	2.47	2.41	2.28	2.27	-2.4%	-5.8%
State	2.5	2.41	2.38	2.33	-3.6%	-3.3%

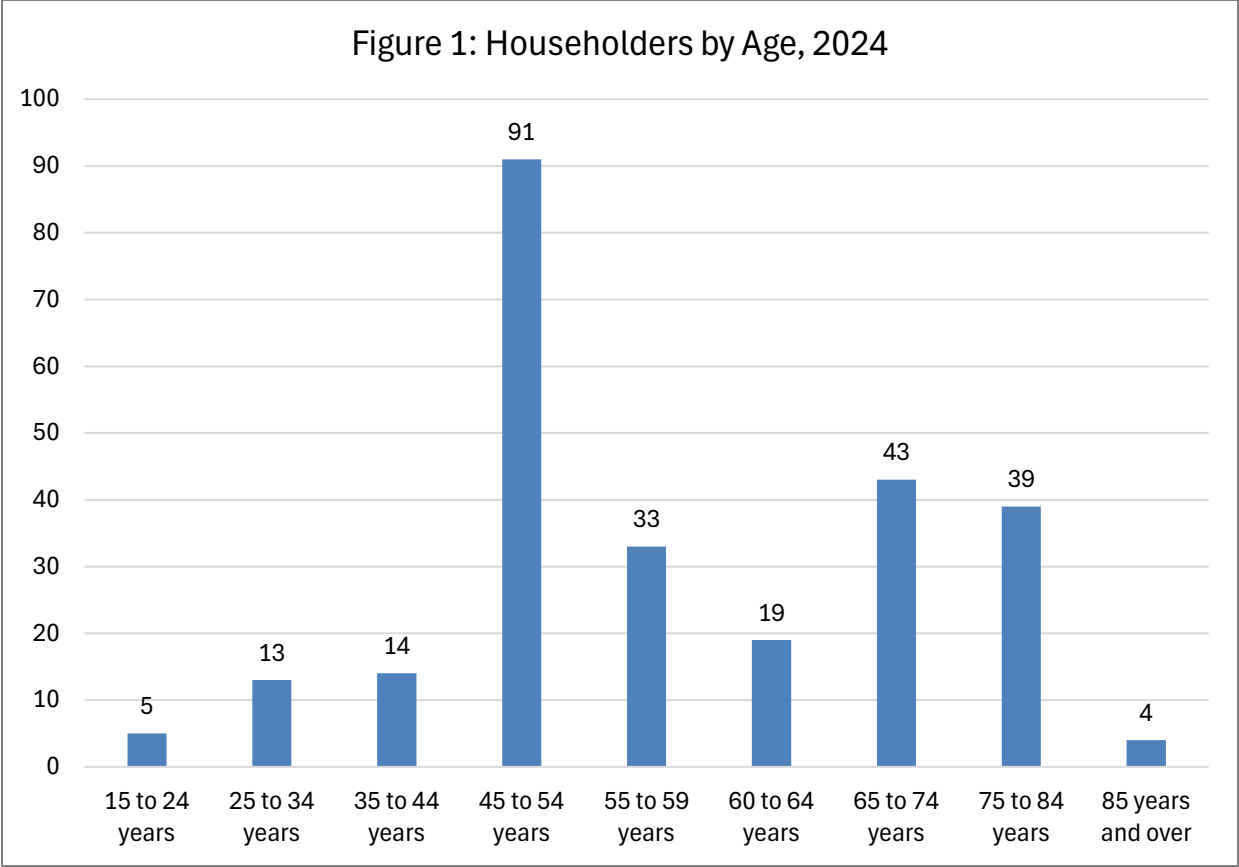
Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Table 2 shows the number of households by household type in the Town of Plymouth. In 2024, married couples made up 57.9 percent of all households in the Town, down from 66.3 percent in 2010. Married couples with children constituted 12.3 percent of households in 2024, compared to 25.8 percent in 2010. Figure 1 displays the age distribution of householders in the Town. Nearly 55 percent of householders were between the ages of 45 and 64 in 2024, with the largest concentration being in the 45- to 54-year-old cohort (34.9%).

Table 2: Households by Type, 2024	
	Town of Plymouth
Total Households	261
1. Married-couple household	151
a. With children of the householder under 18 years	32
2. Cohabiting couple household	16
a. With children of the householder under 18 years	6
3. Male householder, no spouse/partner present	53
a. With children of the householder under 18 years	2
b. Householder living alone	48
i. 65 years and over	5
4. Female householder, no spouse/partner present	41
a. With children of the householder under 18 years	0
b. Householder living alone	37
i. 65 years and over	20

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2024

Despite a declining population, the number of households in the Town remained relatively steady from 2000 to 2010, increasing by just 1 household or 0.1 percent. There was a significant increase from 2010 to 2024, when the number of households in the Town grew by 6.5 percent. The county and state both experienced increases in households from 2000 to 2010, at rates of 8.6 and 9.1 percent, respectively. However, from 2010 to 2024, the number of households in the county grew at a rate of 4.1 percent, slower than both the Town and the state. State households had the highest increase from 2010 to 2024, with a growth rate of 9.0 percent.



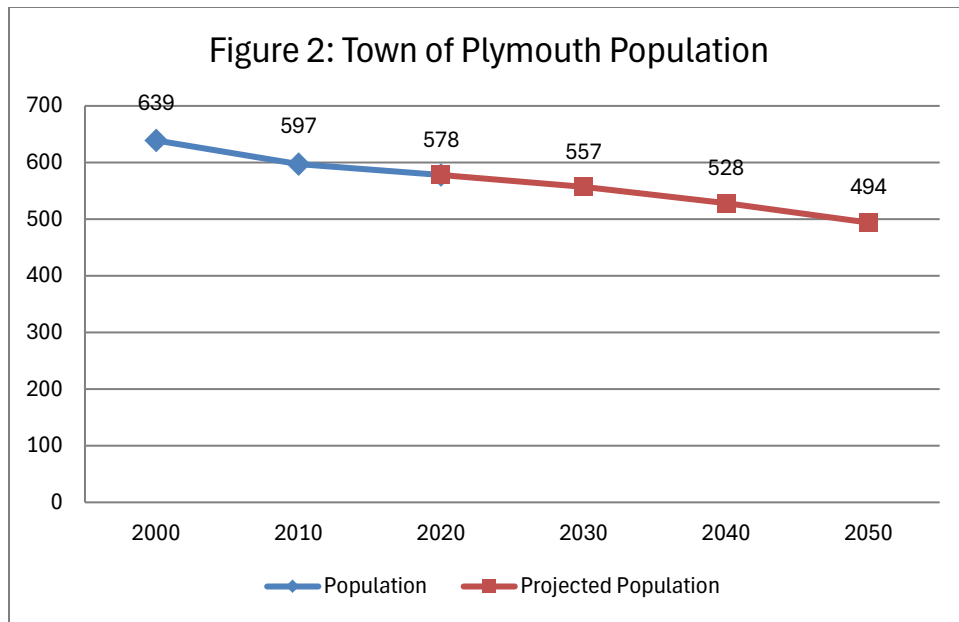
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2024

Projections

Table 3 compares projected population in the Town to Juneau County, based on projections made by the Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) and Figure 2 shows population projections for the Town of Plymouth. 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 greater weight. The Town of Plymouth is expected to experience a decrease in population through 2050 at a rate of 14.5 percent. This is slower than in Juneau County, which is expected to decrease at a rate of 16.8 percent.

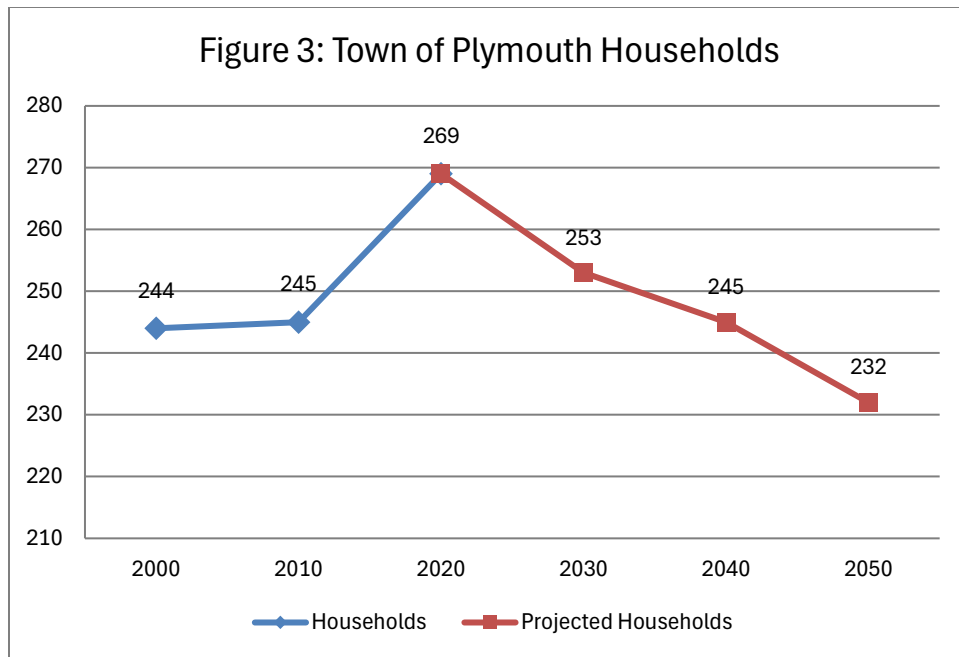
Table 3: Population Projections, 2020-2050					
Total Population by Year					
	2020	2030	2040	2050	% Change 2020-2050
T. Plymouth	578	557	528	494	-14.5%
Juneau County	26,718	25,535	23,990	22,230	-16.8%

Source: WI DOA Population Projections, 2024



The average household size has been decreasing steadily across the nation over the past few decades, which is why household growth is faster than overall population growth. This is due to a multitude of factors including longer life spans, less people having children, and people having fewer children. The Town has followed this trend, experiencing a significant drop in average household size from 2000 to 2010, going from 2.62 average people per household in 2000 to 2.34 by 2010, for a net reduction of 0.28 people per household. This decrease is more than in the county, where the average household size dropped just 0.06 people per household from 2000 to 2010. It is also more than the state, which experienced a decrease of 0.09 people per household. From 2010 to 2024, the Town's average household size decreased by another 0.26 people per household. The county and state also experienced declining household sizes during that period, with net reductions of 0.14 and 0.29 people per household, respectively.

Figure 3 and Table 4 include household projections completed by the Wisconsin DOA. Projections indicate that despite the upswing in households that the Town saw from 2010 to 2020, they are expected to decrease substantially through 2050. The Wisconsin DOA predicts the number of households in the Town to decrease at a rate of 9 percent from 2020 to 2050. This is still less than the county, which is expected to see its households decline by 11.6 percent during the same period.



Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, WI DOA

Table 4: Household Projections					
Total Households by Year					
	2020	2030	2040	2050	% change 2020-2050
T. Plymouth	255	253	245	232	-9.0%
Juneau County	10,741	10,579	10,161	9,493	-11.6%

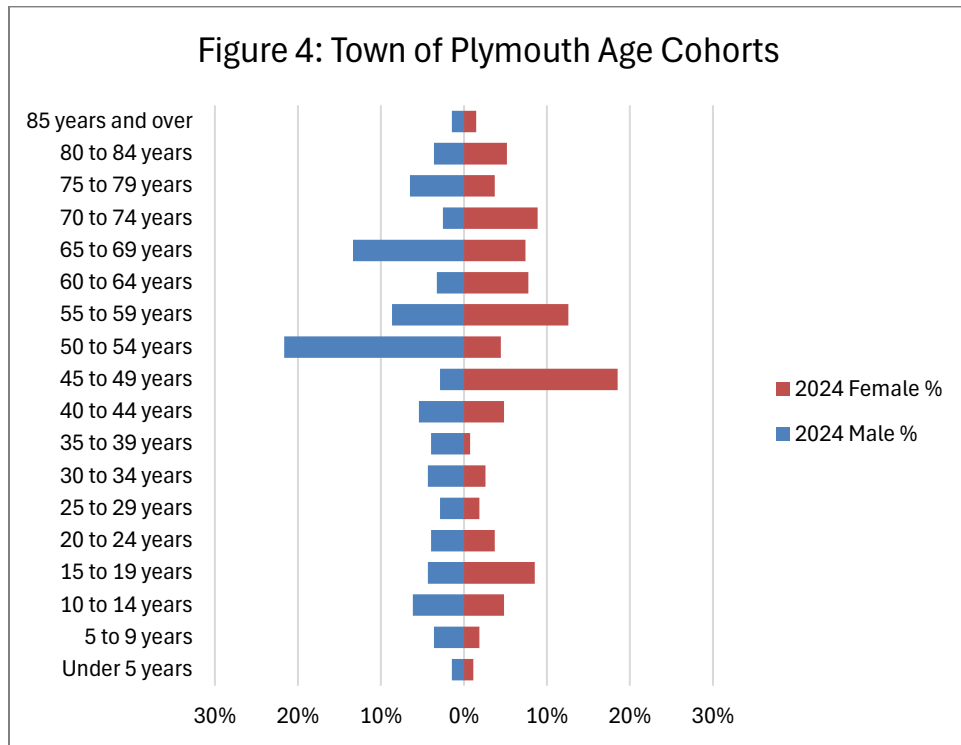
Source: WI DOA Household Projections, 2024

Age

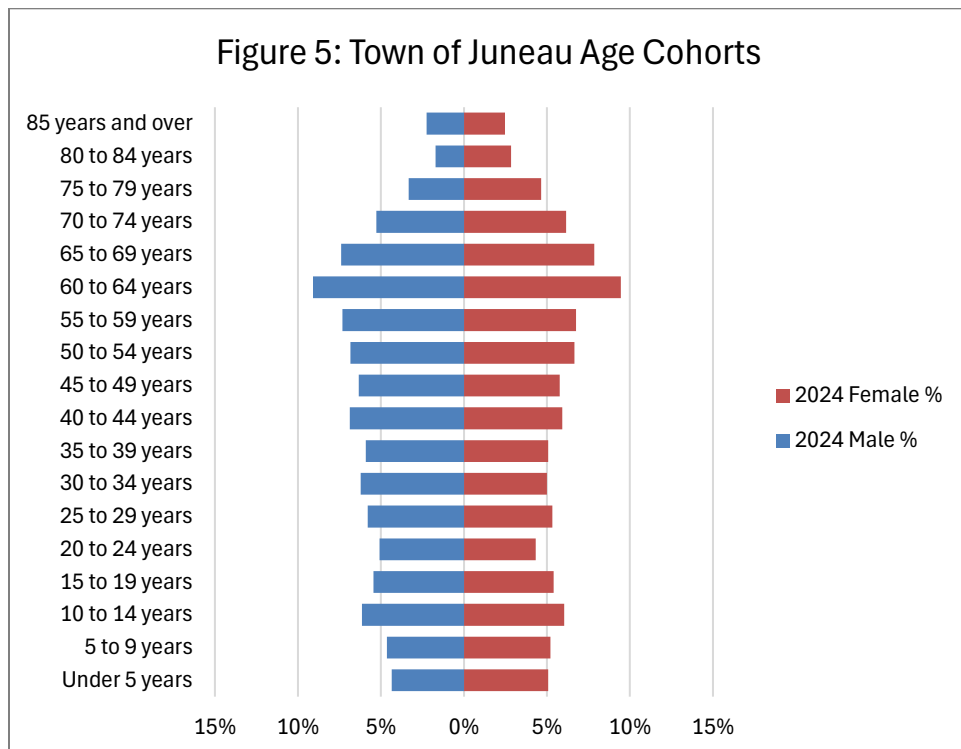
Figures 4 and 5 compare the distribution of age group for the Town of Plymouth and Juneau County. The Town of Plymouth's age pyramid was somewhat restrictive, with a noticeably high concentration of residents in the later age cohorts. The Town's largest age cohort in 2024 was 50 to 54 years old, which accounted for 13.2 percent of the total population. The 55 to 59, and the 45 to 49 years old cohorts followed, each accounting for 10.6 percent of the total population. The high concentration of residents in these older age cohorts combined with the low concentration in the younger age cohorts may indicate an aging population with slow population growth.

In comparison, Juneau County's age pyramid was more evenly distributed than the Town, with residents relatively spread out across most of the age cohorts. However, the county's largest age cohorts were still in the older ages, with the 60 to 64 years old cohort accounting for 9.3 percent of the total population in 2024. The 65 to 69 and 55 to 59 years old cohorts followed, each accounting for 7.6 percent and 7.1 percent of the total population, respectively.

In 2024, the median age was 51.9 years old, up from 47 years old in 2010. The county's median age was 45.8 years in 2024. The median age for both the Town and the county was significantly higher than the state which had a median age of 40.2 years in 2024.



Source: American Community Survey- 5 Year Estimates, 2024



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2024

Population distribution is important to the planning process. Two age groups are of particular note, those 17 years of age and younger and those 65 years of age or older. These are often referred to as dependent populations, but each has different needs. For example, the younger group requires schools and childcare and the older group requires increased levels of medical care.

The U.S. Census calculates an old age dependency ratio, which is the population age 65 and older divided by the population ages 20 to 64 times 100. In 2024, the old age dependency ratio for the Town of Plymouth was 46.8, up from 36.7 in 2010. The U.S. Census also calculates a child dependency ratio, which is the population under 18 divided by the population ages 18 to 64 times 100. In 2024, the child dependency ratio was 26.3, down from 34.9 in 2010. Clearly, the needs of those in the 65 and older group have become much more prevalent in the past few years. In contrast, the needs of the younger population are important, but are not as widespread due to the fact that the size of this group is shrinking.

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. This trend is occurring at the state and national levels and to an even greater degree within the rural Wisconsin counties. This population trend whereby older age categories increase significantly while younger age categories decline will impact the future labor supply, school system, and health care industry at the national, state, and local levels.

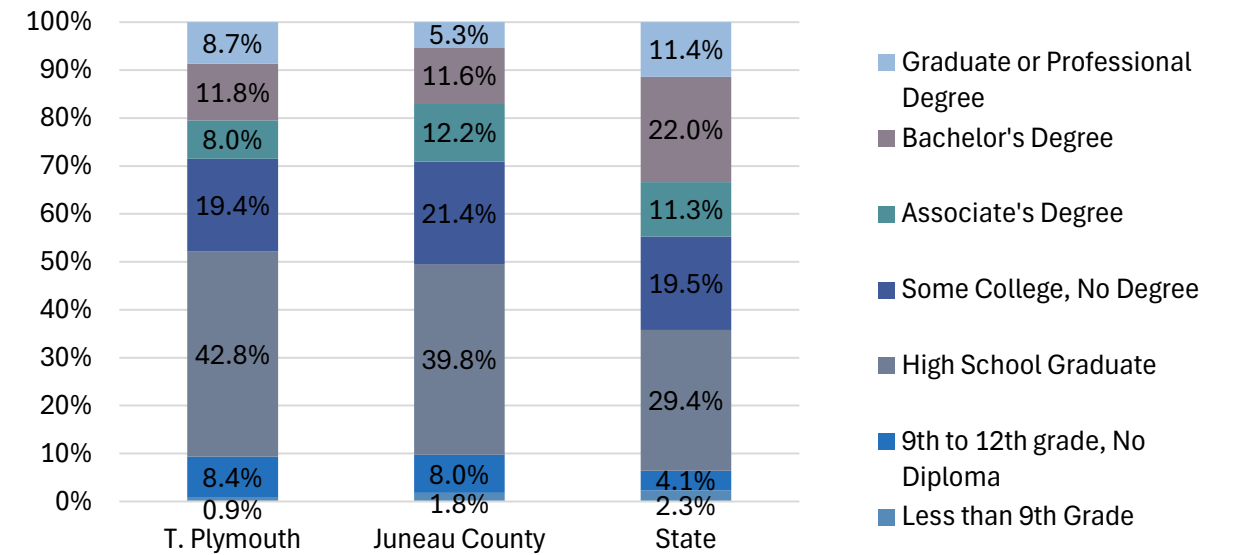
Education and Income Levels

Education

Figure 6 compares educational attainment of those in the Town of Plymouth to the county and the state. In 2024, 90.7% of Town residents aged 25 and older had a high school education or higher. This was 0.4% higher than the county average, but 2.9% lower than the state average.

In 2024, 20.5% of Town residents had a bachelor's degree or higher. This was 3.6% higher than the county average, but 12.9% lower than the state average. Education and how it relates to economic development will be discussed in the economic development chapter.

Figure 6: Educational Attainment, 2024
(Age 25 and Older)



Source: American Community Survey, 2024

Income

Median household income and per capita income are two commonly used measures of income. Median household income is the amount that divides the income distribution into two equal groups, meaning half of all households have income above that amount, and half have income below that amount. Per capita income is the average income earned per person.

Median household income for the Town of Plymouth residents was \$79,250 in 2024, which rose considerably from \$61,250 in 2010. However, note that \$61,250 in 2010 had the same purchasing power as \$88,807 in 2024, so the increase is still present but not as significant as the table makes it appear. Table 5 shows that the Town’s median household income in 2024 was substantially higher than the county’s median, and slightly higher than the state’s median.

Table 6 illustrates that in 2024, income per capita in the Town of Plymouth was higher than that of both the county and the state. This trend has been consistent since 2010. This indicates smaller households. The percentage of people living below the poverty level in the Town was 10.2 percent in 2024, lower than both the county and the state, which experienced poverty rates of 13 percent and 10.6 percent, respectively.

Table 5: Median Household Income				
Minor Civil Division	2010	2024	Net Change	% Change
T. Plymouth	\$61,250	\$79,250	\$18,000	29.4%
Juneau County	\$45,664	\$67,270	\$21,606	47.3%
Wisconsin	\$51,598	\$77,485	\$25,887	50.2%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Table 6: Per Capita Income				
Minor Civil Division	2010	2024	Net Change	% Change
T. Plymouth	\$27,371	\$46,292	\$18,921	69.1%
Juneau County	\$23,026	\$33,746	\$10,720	46.6%
Wisconsin	\$26,624	\$43,373	\$16,749	62.9%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Employment Characteristics

Tables 7 and 8 illustrate the breakdown of the labor force and employed population living in the Town of Plymouth in 2010 and 2024. The “labor force” includes those that are 16 and older who are working or looking for work. Retirees, parents staying home with children, or people not actively looking for work are not included in this category. The labor force remained relatively steady in the town from 2010 to 2024. This contrasted with the substantial decrease (10 percent) seen in the county during the same period. The state experienced a 1.9 percent increase in the labor force.

Labor force participation indicates the percent of everyone aged 16 years and over that are in the labor force. The labor force participation rate decreased 3.2 percent in the Town of Plymouth from 2010 to 2024. This decrease was less than in the county, which saw a decrease of 8.4 percent, but higher than in the state, which experienced a decrease of 2.3 percent. Much of the decrease in labor force participation is due to the large cohort of Baby Boomers, born between 1946 and 1964, who are retiring.

Table 7: Labor Force					
Minor Civil Division	Labor Force			Labor Participation Rate	
	2010	2024	2010-2024 % Change	2010	2024
T. Plymouth	309	306	-1.0%	66.3%	63.1%
Juneau County	13,983	12,584	-10.0%	65.1%	56.7%
Wisconsin	3,078,465	3,136,600	1.9%	69.0%	65.3%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Table 8 shows that employed population in the town remained steady from 2010 to 2024. During this same period, the employed population decreased in the county at a rate of 6.2 percent and increased 5.6 percent in the state. 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 Town was relatively low, at 3.0 percent in 2024. This was lower than both the county and the state, at 3.8 percent and 3.2 percent, respectively.

Table 8: Employment				
Minor Civil Division	2010	2024	2010-2024 % Change	Unemployment Rate
T. Plymouth	294	295	0.3%	3.0%
Juneau County	12,745	11,953	-6.2%	3.8%
Wisconsin	2,869,310	3,031,042	5.6%	3.2%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

As shown in Table 9, a large proportion of Town residents were employed in the areas of management, business, science, and arts occupations. This was a shift from 2010, when most residents were employed in production, transportation, and material moving occupations. From 2010 to 2024, the largest increase was seen in the areas of sales and office occupations and management, business, science, and arts occupations. The most significant decrease during this period was in the areas of natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations, which declined at a rate of 44 percent from 2010 to 2024, resulting in a loss of 22 jobs in that sector.

Table 9: Resident Occupations 2010-2024		
Occupation Sector	2010	2024
Management, business, science, and arts	81	99
Service occupations	28	30
Sales and office occupations	39	51
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	50	28
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	96	87
Total employed*	294	295

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

*Total employed represents employed civilian population 16 years and over

Demographic Snapshot

- Overall, the population and number of households decreased steadily from 2000 to 2024 in the Town. During this period, there was also a significant decline in household size.
- The Town of Plymouth is expected to continue to experience steady decline both in terms of population and in the number of households through the year 2050.
- There are a large number of people in the older age categories, and the median age is higher than the county and the state.
- The median age rose 4.9 years from 47 in 2010, to 51.9 in 2024.
- In 2024, 90.7 percent of Town residents aged 25 or older had a high school education or higher and 20.5 percent had a bachelor's degree or higher. This was higher than the county, but less than the state.

- The 2024 median household income of \$79,250 was higher than both the county and the state. The 2024 per capita income of \$46,292 was also higher both the county and the state.
- The labor participation rate is higher than the county but lower than the state, and the unemployment rate is lower than both the county and the state.
- Most people working in the Town of Plymouth work in the areas of management, business, science, and arts occupations.

Town of Plymouth Vision

The Town's 2009 Comprehensive Plan included an overall vision for the Town:

"The Town of Plymouth's vision is to continue developing and retaining a strong cultural, historical, and rural character. Town of Plymouth aims to provide planning to ensure that the basic priorities that residents hold important are upheld. The Town will continue to value the importance of preserving farmland and scenic beauty, continuation of Town services with a minimum of rules and regulations, and the preservation of all recreational opportunities. Community input is valued and decisions are made with the welfare of the residents in mind. The Town's mission is to balance community identity with the interests of our residents to benefit the quality of life for current and future generations."

1. Maintain farmland and farming opportunities and enhance the farming community by creating an environment that ensures agricultural opportunities and agribusiness as a viable career choice.

Recognizing that the Town of Plymouth includes a large farming community, the Town will stress the importance of preserving farmland and promoting innovative agricultural opportunities, including the Coordination with farmers on development options and preservation methods to ensure a balance between compatible residential development and continued agriculture.

2. Preserve and protect the scenic natural beauty of the Town of Plymouth and its natural and historic resources, including water quality and significant geological features, and continue to strengthen the Town's rural character and surrounding environment.

The Town of Plymouth's natural beauty and surrounding environment is evident by the mix of agricultural and forested areas and unique landscapes. Through cooperation with landowners, activities occurring on these lands will emphasize the protection of the Town's natural character, including clean air, water quality, and visual character. Enhancing and preserving these features will result in a well-developed, aesthetically enjoyable, and safe community.

3. Encourage the continuance of good community services while improving technology-based services.

Maintenance of community services, such as fire, ambulance, and roads will continue as the Town grows, utilizing increases in the tax base to improve services when needed. The Town will identify appropriate ways to accommodate development. As technology progresses and the population increases, the Town will encourage local telecommunication, electric, and other service providers to upgrade.

4. Promote economic development that emphasizes business and employment opportunities, and which stresses the importance of retaining and establishing local recreational possibilities.

The Town of Plymouth supports the development of new commercial businesses that will benefit the local economy and reflect the rural and recreational character of the Town. The Town will emphasize those businesses that expand upon the recreational character of the Town by providing goods and services to both seasonal visitors and locals while also providing employment opportunities. The Town will also support the inception and expansion of “everyday” businesses that provide goods and services to the greater Plymouth area.

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Chapter 2

Natural, Cultural, and Agricultural Resources

This chapter describes local land and water conditions in detail as well as agricultural resources and cultural heritage. It is important to consider the patterns and interrelations of natural resources on a broader scale because they do not follow geo-political boundaries. In addition, many of the programs for protecting or mitigating impacts on natural resources are administrated at the county, state, or federal level. Thus, an overview of recent county-wide natural resource planning efforts is described below.

It is in the best interest of the community to plan for, preserve and protect natural, historic and cultural resources, as these resources impact Town residents, Town visitors, and future generations. Additionally, these resources have more than aesthetic and recreational value, they are essential to long-term human survival and general welfare.

Previous Natural, Agricultural, & Cultural Resource Plans and Studies

In the last decade, several plans were prepared by the county specifically to address protection and management of natural resources. These plans may be used as resources to guide local policy and decision-making regarding resource management and protection.

Juneau County Outdoor Recreation Plan (In Progress)

The primary focus of this recreation plan is to provide continued direction in meeting the current and future recreational needs of the county. This plan provides an inventory and analysis of existing outdoor recreational facilities and provides recommendations to meet identified needs. Specific park and forest parcel improvement lists exist within the plan.

Juneau County Farmland Preservation Plan 2013-2028

The primary goal of this plan was to establish Farmland Preservation Areas as the basis for potential farmland preservation tax credits. The goal is to preserve farmland that contributes to the economic and cultural importance to the county, while still allowing for necessary growth that leads to a vibrant and diverse community. There are currently no areas in the Town of Plymouth designated as farmland preservation areas.

Juneau County Forest Fifteen-Year Comprehensive Use Plan 2021-2035

This county forest management plan is updated every fifteen years to continue to manage and protect natural resources within the county forest on a sustainable basis for the ecological, economic, educational, recreational, and research needs of present and future residents throughout the county. The plan includes several recommendations for timber management, wildlife habitat and game management, land acquisition and forest boundary management, biodiversity management, watershed management and tourism.

Juneau County Land and Water Resource Management Plan 2019

This conservation plan outlines a comprehensive strategy for the implementation of soil and water conservation in Juneau County from 2019 to 2028. A watershed approach will be used to create more detailed and measurable steps toward reaching each goal:

Soil Erosion

1. Reduce or maintain soil erosion from agricultural fields
2. Encourage shoreline and stream bank conservation efforts
3. Encourage innovative conservation efforts through outreach and education

Water Quality

1. Conserve watersheds to improve water quality
2. Develop and participate in monitoring programs to evaluate ground and surface water
3. Develop outreach and demonstration projects to improve communication

Land Use Management

1. Work in areas prone to flooding
2. Improve nutrient management strategies and education
3. Offer opportunities for hazardous waste recycling and disposal

Natural Resources

Examining the natural environment is essential to the planning process. For instance, soils, topography and geology can pose limitations to certain types of development, while an inventory of surface water resources, vegetation types, environmentally significant areas, and historical features identify those resources and areas which should be protected from over-development. This section of the plan identifies both the land and water resources of the town.

Climate

The Town of Plymouth's climate is typical of that of any southern Wisconsin town. According to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the mean growing season is 145 days. The mean annual temperature is 43.7 degrees Fahrenheit. The mean annual precipitation is 32.6 inches, and the mean annual snowfall is 43 inches. The variability in the climate supports a high diversity of plants and animals in the area.

Land Resources

Topography and Geology

The Town of Plymouth lies primarily within the ecological landscape of the Western Coulees and Ridges region. This unglaciated landscape is a thoroughly dissected, hilly area. Steep sandstone escarpments mark the northern and eastern boundaries. At the higher elevations are remnants of the more resistant dolomite bedrock that capped these uplands. The valleys, incised 200 to 350 feet below the ridgetops, are long and V-shaped and have relatively narrow bottoms. The highest elevation is 1,380 feet, at Johnson Hill in Plymouth Township. The drainage pattern is dendritic, and most of the area is well drained. All parts of this upland area

are drained by streams within the Wisconsin River drainage basin. The Baraboo River is the major tributary in this area.

Soils

Soils occur in an orderly pattern that is related to the physical geography, climate, and the natural vegetation. Each kind of soil is associated with a particular kind of landscape or with a segment of the landscape. By observing the landscape in an area, reviewing the soil map, and understanding what is possible with each soil type, relationships can be created to determine most productive use for an area.

Most of the soils in Juneau County formed under forest vegetation. This resulted in a light-colored soil that has a relatively low content of organic matter. Also, because tree roots intercept water at greater depths than grasses, there is more effective leaching. This leaching removes nutrients and allows clay accumulation at greater depths. In addition, there is an abundance of micro flora, such as bacteria and fungi, which play important roles in decomposing organic matter and recycling the nutrients.

Animals in the soil, including earthworms, insects, and rodents, mix the soil and contribute additional organic matter, thereby affecting soil structure, porosity, and content of nutrients. Human activity also affects soil formation by altering and accelerating natural soil processes. Many soils have been altered by draining, clearing, burning, and cultivating. Repeatedly removing plant cover has accelerated erosion. Over cultivation has often contributed to the loss of organic matter and has reduced the infiltration rate. In some areas, over cultivation and the use of heavy equipment have changed the loose, porous surface layer to clods.

The United States Department of Agriculture's Web Soil Survey (USDA-WSS) shows groups of soil types called associations. Each association has a distinctive pattern of soils, relief, and drainage. Each is a unique natural landscape. Typically, an association consists of one or more major soils and some minor soils. It is named for the major soils. The soils making up one association can occur in another association but then would exist in a different pattern. The USDA-WSS maps, along with soil maps that are located in the Juneau County Soil Survey book are large scale and therefore most appropriate for deciding specific land uses at the section level and subdivision of a section. In addition to these maps, Map 3 of this plan depicts wetlands and floodplains that are unsuitable for development.

Soil Descriptions:

1. Urne-La Farge-Rozetta association: Moderately deep and deep, gently sloping to very steep, somewhat excessively drained to moderately well drained, loamy and silty soil; on uplands.

Most areas of the gently sloping to moderately steep soils in this association are used for crops or pasture. Water erosion is the main hazard. Soil blowing is a hazard in Urne soils. Crop and forage yields are limited on the Urne and La Farge soils because of the low or moderate available water capacity. Most of the steep and very steep areas of Urne soils are used as pasture or woodland. The main problems in managing forest are slope and rooting depth, and competing vegetation.

The La Farge and Urne soils are poorly suited to septic tank absorption fields because of the depth to bedrock. The gently sloping Rozetta soils are only moderately suited to septic tanks and to dwellings with basements because of perched water table. The moderately steep to very steep soils are poorly suited to dwellings because of the slope.

2. Ettrick-Curran-Jackson association: Deep, nearly level and gently sloping, moderately well drained to very poorly drained, silty soils; on stream terraces, lake terraces, and flood plains.

This association is on low flats, in drainageways and depressions, on flood plains, on concave foot slopes, and on concave or convex side slopes. Most areas of this association are used for crops, but the cultivated areas of the Ettrick and Curran soils must be drained and protected from flooding. Some areas are undrained and support native vegetation. A few areas are used as woodland. The main problems in managing forest are the water table and competing vegetation.

The major soils in this association are poorly suited to residential development because of the water table. The Ettrick soils are unsuitable for residential development because of flooding. The areas of the Curran soils that are subject to flooding are also unsuitable.

3. Wildale-New Glarus-Reedsburg association: Deep and moderately deep, gently sloping and sloping well drained and somewhat poorly drained, silty soils; on uplands.

This association is on convex ridgetops. It makes up about one percent of the county. Most areas of this association are used for crops or pasture. Some areas are used as woodland. The problems in managing forest are rooting depth and competing vegetation. Also the clayey texture limits planting and harvesting on the Wildale soils.

The major soils in this association are poorly suited to septic tank absorption fields because of the slow permeability. The New Glarus soils are also poorly suited to septic tank absorption fields because of the depth to bedrock and the Reedsburg soils because of perched water table. The Wildale soils are poorly suited to dwellings because of shrink-swell potential, and the Reedsburg soils are poorly suited because of the perched water table. The Reedsburg soils are poorly suited to dwellings with basements because of the shrink-swell potential.

Forests

Woodlands cover about 11,007 acres, or nearly half of the Town's landscape. Most forestlands in town are privately owned. Some private woodlands in the county are enrolled in Managed Forest Law (MFL) and its predecessor programs. This program provides a low annual tax rate per acre and requires a management plan for the property that must include some harvesting along with allowing some public uses. When timber is harvested from MFL properties, a harvest tax is also assessed. This provides an incentive to keep woodlots in active production and allows some community access to the site in exchange for greatly reduced taxes.

Forests play a key role in the protection of environmentally sensitive areas like steep slopes, shorelands, wetlands, and flood plains. Removal of woodland cover can be detrimental to these areas in both ecological functions and visual enjoyment. Specific wildlife species depend upon forests, with some species needing large blocks of forest habitat exclusively. Other animals are called "edge" species, such as deer or raccoons, because they use small clusters of trees and brush. Aquatic species benefit from trees that shade shoreland areas of lakes and rivers. Shoreland areas are the most biologically productive areas of lakes and rivers. At the same time forests must produce timber for various consumer uses and meet current and future needs of people for desired levels of values, uses, products, and services.

Invasive exotic species like garlic mustard and multiflora rose present the greatest threat to the long-term health and integrity of the forests. Invasive plants present a problem for native plants as they invade natural systems, and out-compete native species for nutrients, sunlight, and space.

Development patterns cause disturbances in forest patterns. Land subdivision and subsequent changes in use break up the continuity of forest cover, which affects forest sustainability and health. Fragmentation of forest cover may become an important issue for Juneau County tourism, wildlife habitat, and aesthetics in the future.

Metallic and Non-Metallic Mineral Resources

There is one active metallic or non-metallic mine in the Town, and it overlaps with the Town of Wonewoc.

Environmentally Remediated Areas

Brownfields are commercial or industrial properties that contain or may contain hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants. Expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of these properties can be especially difficult. The Bureau for Remediation and Redevelopment Tracking System (BRRTS) is an online database that provides information about contaminated properties and other activities related to the investigation and clean-up of properties with contaminated soil and/or groundwater.

Contaminated sites are not uncommon as all communities with commercial and industrial development have the potential for air emissions, groundwater contamination, soil spills, and surface water contamination. There are no open listed sites in the Town of Plymouth at this time.

Rare Species and Natural Communities

Wisconsin's National Heritage Inventory Program (NHI) is responsible for maintaining data on the locations and status of rare species, natural communities, and natural features throughout the State. The program's database, on the Wisconsin DNR website, identifies species and natural communities that are currently tracked by the NHI. However, data is only available at the county level to protect certain species. For Juneau County, endangered species include the Slender Glass Lizard, Wolf Spike-rush, Blanchard's Cricket Frog, Spottle Pondweed, Ebonyshell, Loggerhead Shrike, Forster's Tern, Black Tern, Regal Fritillary, Incurvate Emerald, Eastern Massasauga, and Smooth-sheathed Sedge.

Wisconsin's biodiversity goals are to identify, protect and manage native plants, animals, and natural communities from the very common to critically endangered for present and future generations. Knowledge, appreciation, and stewardship of Wisconsin's native species and ecosystems are critical to their survival and greater benefit to society.

Water Resources

Watersheds

A watershed is an area of land in which water drains to a common point. In Wisconsin, watersheds vary in scale from major river systems to small creek drainage areas and typically range in size from 100 to 300 square miles. River basins encompass several watersheds. There are 32 river basins in Wisconsin, which range in size from 500 to over 5,000 square miles.

Most of the Town of Plymouth falls within the Seymour Creek and Upper Baraboo River Watershed. A section of the eastern side of the town falls within the Lower Lemonweir River Watershed. The principal drainage is westward to the Mississippi River.

Surface Water

Surface water can be found in the following land use categories:

- Water (40 acres or 0.2 percent of the Town)
- Floodplains (381 acres or 1.7 percent of the Town)
- Wetlands (971 acres or 4.4 percent of the Town)

The main uses of surface water are as fish and wildlife habitat, irrigation, and the enjoyment of anglers, boaters, hunters, and casual observers alike. Floodplains and wetlands provide for drainage after heavy rains, and habitat for plants, fish, and wildlife. The Baraboo River upstream from State Highway 80 in Elroy and its tributaries support trout fishing.

Wetlands

Wetlands perform many indispensable roles in the proper function of the hydrologic cycle and local ecological systems. In terms of hazard mitigation, they act as water storage devices in times of high water. Like sponges, wetlands absorb excess water and release it back into the watershed slowly, preventing flooding and minimizing flood damage. As more impermeable surfaces are developed, this excess capacity for water runoff storage becomes increasingly important.

Wetland plants and soils have the capacity to store and filter pollutants ranging from pesticides to animal wastes. Calm wetland waters, with their flat surface and flow characteristics, allow particles of toxins and nutrients to settle out of the water column. Plants take up certain nutrients from the water. Other substances can be stored or transformed into a less toxic state within wetlands. As a result, the lakes, rivers and streams are cleaner.

Wetlands that filter or store sediments or nutrients for extended periods may undergo fundamental changes. Sediments will eventually fill in wetlands and nutrients will eventually modify the vegetation. Such changes may result in the loss of this function over time. Eradication of wetlands can occur through the use of fill material. This can destroy the hydrological function of the site and open the area to improper development. The WDNR has adopted minimum standards for managing wetlands.

Floodplains

A floodplain is generally defined as land where there is a one percent chance of flooding in any year. The primary value of floodplains is their role in natural flood control. Floodplains represent areas where excess water can be accommodated whether through drainage by streams or through storage by wetlands and other natural detention/retention areas. Specific areas that will be inundated will depend upon the amount of water, the distance and speed that water travels, and the topography of the area. If uninterrupted by development, the areas shown on a map as floodplains should be able to handle the most severe (regional) floods, i.e. those that have a probability of occurring once every one hundred years.

Groundwater

For most users, groundwater is the major source of supply and is readily available in quantities adequate to meet domestic, agricultural, municipal, and industrial needs. Groundwater is at various depths, depending upon the general topography, the elevation above the permanent stream level, and the character of the underlying rock formation. It is in aquifers where water fills all pores and fissures in the bedrock or in unconsolidated material, such as sand. Wells drilled into these aquifers are the source of water for rural users.

The quality of ground water in the Town is generally good for most domestic and industrial uses. The water is relatively soft in most of the county. Local differences in the quality of ground water are caused by the composition, solubility, and surface area of particles of soil and rock through which the water moves and the length of time the water is in contact with these materials. Calcium, magnesium, and bicarbonate ions derived from dolomite are present.

There are considerable local differences in the quality of groundwater in Plymouth with some residents reporting iron or lime, and others high levels of nitrites, from agricultural runoff. Minor water use problems are caused by hardness and locally by high concentrations of iron. Iron is in localized areas and is mainly produced by reducing conditions (chemical decomposition) in marshes and swamps, although some iron is from bedrock.

Lakes

The most notable body of water in the Town of Plymouth is Alpine Hills Lake. This is a private lake located in the Alpine Hills Subdivision and covers approximately 30 acres of land. The maximum lake depth is 30 feet. There are a variety of fish in the lake including panfish, largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, walleye, and trout.

Outstanding and Exceptional Resource Waters

The Wisconsin DNR classifies major surface water resources. These classifications allow water bodies of particular importance to be identified because of their unique resource values and water quality. The DNR has two categories which include Outstanding Resource Waters (ORW) which have the highest quality water and fisheries in the state and are therefore deserving of special protection, and Exceptional Resource Waters (ERW) which have excellent water quality and valued fisheries but receive or may receive water discharges.

Outstanding Resource Waters (ORWs) and Exceptional Resource Waters (ERWs) share many of the same environmental and ecological characteristics. The primary difference between the two is that ORWs typically do not have any direct point sources discharging pollutants directly to the water. In addition, any pollutant load discharged to an ORW must meet background water quality at all times. Exceptions are made for certain types of discharge situations to ERWs to allow pollutant loads that are greater than background water quality when human health would otherwise be compromised.

The Town of Plymouth does contain a section of Brewer Creek, which is considered to be an ERW. Additionally, part of Onemile Creek flows into the Town, and is also considered to be an ERW.

Impaired Waters

Section 303(d) of the federal Clean Water Act requires states to develop a list of impaired waters, commonly referred to as the “303(d) list.” A water body is considered impaired if a) the current water quality does not

meet the numeric or narrative criteria in a water quality standard or b) the designated use that is described in Wisconsin Administrative Code is not being achieved. A documented methodology is used to articulate the approach used to list waters in Wisconsin. Every two years, states are required to submit a list of impaired waters to EPA for approval. There are no impaired bodies of water in the Town of Plymouth.

Invasive Aquatic Species

Surface water resources in Juneau County are threatened by the introduction of invasive aquatic species. Invasive species can alter the natural ecological relationships among native species and affect ecosystem function, economic value of ecosystems, and human health. It is recommended that the Town continue to work with the County Land and Water Conservation Department to develop public outreach education strategies.

Agricultural Resources

The Town of Plymouth is made up of a significant amount of agricultural land. The Town has a rural character that lacks substantial development, which allows for good farmland. The Town prioritizes the preservation of farmland and promotion of agricultural opportunities.

Farmland

Agricultural land covers approximately 34 percent of Juneau County's land area. According to UW-Extension, the main agricultural practices in the County include dairy farming, but the County is diversified with beef, bison, goat, and emu farms, as well as forage and grain production. Specialty crops include cranberries, potatoes, grapes, blueberries, apples, and Christmas trees.

Prime farmlands are identified by NRCS nationwide as a class of the best soils in the nation to grow food and fiber on. In general, prime farmlands have an adequate and dependable water supply from precipitation or irrigation, a favorable temperature and growing season, acceptable acidity or alkalinity, acceptable salt and sodium content, and few or no rocks. They are permeable to water and air. Prime farmlands are not excessively erodible or saturated with water for a long period of time, and they either do not flood frequently or are protected from flooding. Town of Plymouth has 3,709.5 acres of prime farmland, which is 16.8 percent of the total land area of the Town.

Historical and Cultural Resources

A cultural resource is a broad term that can encompass many aspects of heritage. Cultural resources may include archaeological sites and cemeteries, historic buildings and landscapes, historic transportation routes, or traditional cultural properties important to Native Americans or other cultural groups. Cultural resources are those elements that signify heritage and help to evoke the sense of place that makes an area distinctive. Cultural resources include buildings, sites, and landscapes that help communities retain their sense of identity in an increasingly homogenized society.

Community History

Moses Pauquette had a trading post, in the area near what is today County Trunk P northwest of Elroy, on a trail that came from the south and extended to the north and west. Settlement began on the Baraboo when four Fowler brothers (Merrell, Rueben, John & George) settled at Fowler's Prairie in 1851. In 1854 the Town of

Plymouth was organized when the area was still a part of Adams County. Because of the many hills and valleys in the town it became home to many small settlements, named for their inhabitants: Thatcher Valley, Sarnow Ridge, Millard's Prairie, Goodenough Hill. Some of these, such as Knickerbocker Valley had extremely good soil and prosperous farming communities developed.

In 1856 J. M. Brintnall built a dam at the east end of the Fowler Prairie, John Hutchinson erected a grist mill (following a timber mill) in 1865 – the “Hutchinson Mill” became the starting point of Elroy. The Mount Zion post office was established near the current site of the Mount Zion Cemetery on State Road 82. From 1860 to 1867 Bart Thatcher was postmaster. The cemetery near the church started as the Thatcher family burial ground when a family member was buried there in an unmarked grave. The Fowler Prairie cemetery has over three-dozen Fowlers buried there, as well as two dozen from the Pearsall family, so the roots of several families go deep in the Town of Plymouth.

Cultural Resources

Historic structures and cultural areas provide a sense of place, enhance community pride, and reinforce social and cultural enrichment. The identification of existing historic structures and cultural areas are an important consideration in all town planning efforts, as these features are critical to defining a community's look and character.

There are no Buildings or sites on the National Register of Historic Places or on the Architectural History Inventory in the Town of Plymouth. Lands in town that are adjacent to surface waters may have an abundance of cultural and archeological significance because they were often the location of Native American and early European settlements.

Natural, Agricultural and Cultural Resources Programs

Natural, agricultural, and cultural resource programs available to the town are identified below. The following list is not all-inclusive. For specific program information, the agency or group that offers the program should be contacted.

Aquatic Habitat Protection Program

The WDNR provides basic aquatic habitat protection services. Staff members include Water Management (Regulation) Specialists, Zoning Specialists, Rivers (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission-FERC) Specialists, Lakes Specialists, Water Management Engineers, and their assistants (LTEs). The program assists with water regulation permits, zoning assistance, coordination of rivers, lake management, and engineering.

County Conservation Aids

Funds are available to carry out programs for fish or wildlife management projects as per §23.09 (12), Wis. Stats. and NR 50, Wis. Adm. Code. Projects related to providing improved fish or wildlife habitat or projects related to hunter/angler facilities are eligible. Projects that enhance fish and wildlife habitat or fishing and hunting facilities have priority. Contact the WDNR for further information.

Discovery Farms Program

Discovery Farms is a program administered by UW-Extension that works with over 40 farmers across the state in the following categories: Nitrogen Use Efficiency, Tile Monitoring, Leachate Collection Systems, Watershed

water quality, and Edge-of-Field Runoff Monitoring. The program's mission is to "develop on-farm and related research to determine the economic and environmental effects of agricultural practices on a diverse group of Wisconsin farms, and educates and improves communications among the agricultural community, consumers, researchers and policymakers to better identify and implement effective environmental management practices that are compatible with profitable agriculture."

Drinking Water and Groundwater Program

This WDNR program is responsible for assuring safe, high-quality drinking water and for protecting groundwater. This is achieved by enforcing minimum well construction and pump installation requirements, conducting surveys and inspections of water systems, the investigation and sampling of drinking water quality problems, and requiring drinking water quality monitoring and reporting. A team of specialists, engineers, hydrogeologists, and a program expert and program assistants staff the program. WDNR staff provide assistance to public and private well owners to help solve water quality complaints and water system problems. They also provide interested citizens with informational or educational materials about drinking water supplies and groundwater.

Wisconsin Fund

This is a program by the Wisconsin Department of Commerce, Safety and Buildings Division. Grants are provided to homeowners and small commercial businesses to help offset a portion of the cost for the repair, rehabilitation, or replacement of existing failing Private Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (POWTS). Eligibility is based upon several criteria, including household income and age of the structure.

Endangered Resources Program

The WDNR's Endangered Resources staff provides expertise and advice on endangered resources. They manage the Natural Heritage Inventory Program (NHI), which is used to determine the existence and location of native plant and animal communities and Endangered or Threatened Species of Special Concern. The NHI helps identify and prioritize areas suitable for State Natural Area (SNA) designation, provides information needed for feasibility studies and master plans, and maintains the list of endangered and threatened species. All management activities conducted by Wildlife Management and Forestry staff must be reviewed to determine the impact on NHI-designated species. A permit for the incidental take of an Endangered or Threatened species is required under the State Endangered Species Law. The Endangered Resources Program oversees the permit process, reviews applications and makes permit decisions. Funding for the Endangered Species Program comes from a number of sources, including tax checkoff revenue, license plates, general program revenues (GPR), gaming revenue, Natural Heritage Inventory chargebacks, wild rice permits, general gifts and Pittman Robertson grants.

Fisheries Management Program

The WDNR funds this program primarily through the sale of hunting and fishing licenses. The program assists with fishery surveys, fish habitat improvement/protection, and fish community manipulation. This program may also be used to fund public relations events and a variety of permitting and administrative activities involving fisheries.

Forest Management Program

Support for the Forest Management Program is received from the federal & state government, from recreation fees, from sale of forest products, from sale of state produced nursery stock, forest tax law payments, and other miscellaneous sources. All activities of the Forestry Program help support efforts to promote and ensure the protection and sustainable management of Wisconsin's forests.

Private Forestry

The WDNR's goal is to motivate private forest landowners to practice sustainable forestry by providing technical forestry assistance, state and federal cost-sharing on management practices, sale of state produced nursery stock for reforestation, enrollment in Wisconsin's Forest Tax Law Programs, advice for the protection of endangered and threatened species, and assistance with forest disease and insect problems. Each county has at least one Department forester assigned to respond to requests for private forestland assistance. These foresters also provide educational programs for landowners, schools, and the general public. Both private and industrial forest landowners have enrolled their lands under the Managed Forest Law.

Managed Forest Law (MFL)

The purpose of the MFL is to promote good forest management through property tax incentives. Management practices are required by way of an approved forest management plan. Landowners with a minimum of 10 contiguous acres (80% must be capable of producing merchantable timber) are eligible and may contract for 25 or 50 years. Open lands must allow hunting, fishing, hiking, cross-country skiing, and sight-seeing, however, up to 80 acres may be closed to public access by the landowner. There is a 5% yield tax applied to any wood products harvested. Contact the WDNR for further information.

Nonpoint Source Program (NSP)

Wisconsin's NPS Program, through a comprehensive network of federal, state, and local agencies working in partnership with other organizations and citizens, addresses the significant nonpoint sources in the state. This program combines voluntary and regulatory approaches with financial and technical assistance. Abatement activities include agriculture, urban, forestry, wetlands, and hydrologic modifications. The core activities of the program, which are research, monitoring, data assessment and management, regulation and enforcement, financial and technical assistance, education and outreach and public involvement, work to address current water quality impairments and prevent future threats caused by NPS pollution. Contact the WDNR for more information.

NRCS Conservation Programs

The USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) natural resources conservation programs help people reduce soil erosion, enhance water supplies, improve water quality, increase wildlife habitat, and reduce damages caused by floods and other natural disasters. Programs include:

- Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)
- Agricultural Management Assistance Program (AMA)
- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) by USDA's Farm Service Agency
- Healthy Forests Reserve Program

- Regional Conservation Partnership Program
- Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program
- Working Lands for Wildlife

Parks and Recreation Program

The WDNR gets its authority for administering the Parks and Recreation Program from Chapter 27 Wisconsin Statutes. This program provides assistance in the development of public parks and recreation facilities. Funding sources include: the general fund, the Stewardship Program, Land and Water Conservation fund (LAWCON), and the recycling fund, and program revenue funds.

Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grants

The Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection (DATCP) provides funding to producer led groups that focus on nonpoint source pollution abatement activities through the Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grant Program (PLWPG). The goal is to improve Wisconsin's soil and water quality by supporting and advancing producer-led conservation solutions by increasing on the ground practices and farmer participation in these efforts.

Stewardship Grants for Nonprofit Conservation Organizations

Nonprofit conservation organizations are eligible to obtain funding for the acquisition of land or easements for conservation purposes and restoration of wildlife habitat. Priorities include acquisition of wildlife habitat, acquisition of lands with special scientific or ecological value, protection of rare and endangered habitats and species, acquisition of stream corridors, acquisition of land for state trails including the Ice Age Trail and North Country Trail, and restoration of wetlands and grasslands. Eligible types of projects include fee simple and easement acquisitions and habitat restoration projects. All projects must be in a WDNR approved outdoor recreation plan. Contact the WDNR or NCWRPC for further information.

Wastewater Program

The Department of Natural Resources provides this program to address point and non-point source pollution control. Operating funds for this program come from the federal government's Clean Water Act funding as well as state general program revenues. The core work of this program involves the issuance of wastewater discharge permits that discharge directly to surface or groundwater and enforcing the requirements of these permits. The program closely monitors the impacts of industry, septic tanks, sludge, and stormwater on the environment. Pretreatment plants for wastewater are offered economic assistance and provided with plan review services before the facility is established.

Watershed Program

The WDNR seeks to protect wild and domestic animals, recreational activities, natural flora and fauna, agriculture, business, and other land uses through watershed management. Funds to run this program are provided by the federal government through Clean Water Act and through state general program revenues. The program assists with watershed planning, water quality monitoring and modeling, and development of water quality standards and policy.

Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)

The purpose of the WRP is to restore wetlands previously altered for agricultural use. The goal of the WRP is to restore wetland and wildlife habitats. Lands that have been owned for at least one year and can be restored to wetland conditions are eligible. Landowners may restore wetlands with permanent or 30-year easements or 10-year contracts. Permanent easements pay 100% of the agricultural value of the land and 100% cost-sharing; 30-year easements pay 75% of the agricultural value and 75% cost sharing; 10-year contract pays 75% cost share only. Permanent or 30-year easements are recorded with a property deed, however 10-year contracts are not. Public access is not required. Contact the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service for further information.

Wildlife Management Program

The WDNR's Bureau of Wildlife Management oversees a complex web of programs that incorporate state, federal and local initiatives primarily directed toward wildlife habitat management and enhancement. Programs include land acquisition, development and maintenance of State Wildlife Areas, and other wild land programs such as State Natural Areas. Wildlife Staff work closely with staff of state and county forests to maintain, enhance, and restore wildlife habitat. Wildlife Management staff conduct wildlife population and habitat surveys, prepare property needs analysis's, develop basin wildlife management plans and collaborate with other WDNR planning efforts such as Park, Forestry or Fishery Area Property Master Plans to assure sound habitat management. Funding comes from the federal government in the form of Endangered Species grants and Pittman-Robertson grants and from state government in the form of hunting and trapping license revenues, voluntary income tax contributions, general program revenue and Stewardship funds.

Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Wisconsin Historical Society

This office is part of the Wisconsin Historical Society and serves as the principal historic preservation agency in the state. In partnership with communities, organizations, and individuals, the SHPO works to identify, interpret, and preserve historic places for the benefit of present and future generations.

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Goals:

1. Protect natural areas, including wetlands, floodplains, wildlife habitats, ponds, woodlands, open spaces, and groundwater resources, as much as possible.
2. Protect economically productive areas, including farmland and forested areas.
3. Preserve cultural, historic, and architectural sites.

Objectives:

1. New development in the Town should not negatively impact natural resources.
2. Minimize impacts to the Town's natural resources from non-metallic mineral mining.
3. Encourage and support the preservation of natural open spaces that minimize flooding in lowland valleys.

4. Promote development that minimizes groundwater impacts from on-site septic systems and other sources.

Policies:

1. New development should be discouraged from areas shown to be unsafe or unsuitable for development due to flood hazard, potential groundwater contamination, loss of farmland, highway access problems, incompatibility with neighboring uses, etc.
2. Discourage the draining or filling of wetlands.
3. Existing agricultural uses and buildings should be taken into consideration when locating new development to avoid conflicts.
4. Preserve productive farmland for long-term agricultural uses.
5. Development proposals should be reviewed relative to the potential impacts to the historical and cultural resources of the Town.

Chapter 3

Housing

Housing characteristics and trends are important components of comprehensive planning. The physical location of housing can determine the need for many public facilities and services. Furthermore, understanding dynamics in the market likely to affect housing development in the future provides a basis for the formulation of policy to coordinate transportation facilities with a sustainable pattern of residential development. Understanding the factors affecting people's ability to meet their own housing needs provides a basis for reinforcing community ties, fostering economic development and environmental sustainability and improving the quality of life.

Previous Housing Plans and Studies

Juneau County Housing Assessment 2023

The 2023 Juneau County Housing Assessment, conducted by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) in collaboration with the Juneau County Health Department, works to respond to growing concerns over housing affordability and to update the 2018 Juneau County Housing Study. Housing affordability affects the County's quality of life and ability to compete economically, and it affects the health, safety, and happiness of the County's residents.

This project consisted of robust data collection, public surveys, public open houses, and stakeholder interviews to understand which housing types are highest in demand, and what barriers prevent an adequate supply of desired housing. This assessment recommends a variety of strategies and programs that each individual community may explore depending on their own needs to encourage the construction and rehabilitation of needed housing.

Wisconsin State Consolidated Housing Plan 2025-2029

The Consolidated Housing Plan is required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in the application process required of the states in accessing formula program funds of Small Cities Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships, Emergency Shelter Grants and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA).

The Consolidated Plan provides the Framework for a planning process used by states and localities to identify housing, homeless, community, and economic development needs and resources and to tailor a strategic plan for meeting those needs.

North Central Wisconsin Regional Comprehensive Plan 2025

The North Central Wisconsin Regional Comprehensive Plan evaluates opportunities for improved and expanded housing throughout the North Central Wisconsin Region. The Regional Comprehensive Plan's

housing chapter includes a listing of programs and strategies for enhancing the housing market and identifies the following issues facing housing in the Region:

- Affordability
- Availability
- Housing Condition
- Senior, Disability-friendly, and Low-income Housing
- Seasonal Housing

Housing Assessment

Housing Type and Tenure

In 2024, the Town of Plymouth had approximately 261 occupied housing units, 91.2 percent of which were owner-occupied, see Table 10. The Town of Plymouth had a significantly higher percentage of owner-occupied homes than both Juneau County and the State of Wisconsin. There were 13.1 percent more owner-occupied homes than in Juneau County, and 23.4 percent more than in Wisconsin. The average household size of 2.08 people per household in the Town of Plymouth was slightly lower than the county and the state, where the average household size was 2.27 and 2.33, respectively. In the Town of Plymouth, 32.6 percent of the households consisted of the householder living alone, and 41.4 percent of the households had an individual age 60 or older. The Town of Plymouth's percentage of households with an individual age 60 or older was roughly the same as the state at 41.4 percent, but substantially lower than the county at 49.7 percent.

Table 10: Housing Units by Type and Tenure, 2024			
	T. Plymouth	Juneau County	Wisconsin
Total occupied housing units	261	10,955	2,479,480
Owner occupied housing units	238	8,559	1,682,214
Renter occupied units	23	2,141	797,266
Average household size	2.08	2.27	2.33
% owner occupied	91.2%	78.1%	67.8%
% householder living alone	32.6%	31.2%	31.5%
% with individuals 60 or over	41.4%	49.7%	41.7%

Source: 2024 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Seasonal Housing

In the Town of Plymouth, just a small portion of the housing stock is used seasonally. As shown in Table 11, in 2024, 37 of the 327 total housing units were seasonal housing units, accounting for 11.3 percent of the total housing units. This was substantially lower than the county, where 20.2 percent of the total housing units are seasonal housing units, and slightly lower than the state, where 6.2 percent of units were seasonal.

Table 11: Percentage of Seasonal Housing 2024

	Total Housing Units	Seasonal Housing Units	% Seasonal Housing Units
T. Plymouth	327	37	11.3%
Juneau County	14,767	2,989	20.2%
Wisconsin	2,778,572	172,842	6.2%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Structural Characteristics

Tables 12 and 13 detail the number and percentage of housing units by type in 2024. Housing in the Town of Plymouth was majority single-family detached housing, which accounted for 94.5 percent of the total housing units in the Town. The county and state had significantly lower percentages of single-family detached housing than the Town of Plymouth, at 69.9 percent and 66.2 percent, respectively. Mobile homes made up 5.2 percent of the total housing units in the Town, compared to 18.5 percent in the county, and 3.1 percent in the state.

The Town of Plymouth had no multi-family units as of 2024. In contrast, multi-family housing made up 10.6 percent of the county's housing stock, and 26.4 percent of the state's housing stock. As mentioned in the 2023 Juneau County Housing Assessment conducted by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) and the Juneau County Health Department, a lack of multi-family units can be a significant factor in the affordability of housing for people from a variety of incomes, especially seniors living on fixed income who are looking to downsize. However, this type of development will primarily occur in incorporated areas with access to public water and sewer facilities since they aren't as feasible in rural areas.

Table 12: Housing Units by Structural Type 2024

	1- Detached	1- Attached	2	3 or 4	5 or more	Mobile Home	Other	Total
T. Plymouth	309	1	0	0	0	17	0	327
Juneau County	10,319	129	377	255	934	2,735	18	14,767
Wisconsin	1,839,569	120,679	162,913	97,215	472,263	84,807	1,126	2,778,572

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Table 13: Housing Units by Structural Type (Percentage) 2024

	1- Detached	1- Attached	2	3 or 4	5 or more	Mobile Home	Other	Total
T. Plymouth	94.5%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.2%	0.0%	100%
Juneau County	69.9%	0.9%	2.6%	1.7%	6.3%	18.5%	0.1%	100%
Wisconsin	66.2%	4.3%	5.9%	3.5%	17.0%	3.1%	0.0%	100%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Age Characteristics

The age of a community's housing stock typically reflects several important factors including size, offered amenities, and overall maintenance costs. Age of the home often also reflects different regional and national trends in housing development. Housing predating the 1960s, for example, was typically smaller and built on smaller lots. In subsequent decades, both average lot and home sizes have increased. For example, average homes constructed in the later part of the previous century and the first decade of the millennium are typically much larger than housing built in previous decades. Additional bedrooms, bathrooms, and attached garage space are among the amenities found in newer housing units.

Tables 14 and 15 outline build dates of housing units throughout the Town of Plymouth, Juneau County, and the State of Wisconsin based on 2024 American Community Survey data. In the Town of Plymouth, 54.7 percent of homes were built in 1970 or later, compared to 66.8 percent of homes in the county, and 57.2 percent of homes in the state. 45.3 percent of the Town's homes were built earlier than 1970. This was significantly more than in the county, where 33.2 percent of homes were built earlier than 1970, and slightly higher than the state, where 42.8 percent of home were built earlier than 1970. This shows that the housing stock in the Town of Plymouth is comparatively older than in the county and state.

The greatest percentage increase in the Town of Plymouth resulted between 1990 and 1999, when a total of 59 homes or 18 percent of homes were constructed.

Table 14: Year Structure Built 2024

	1939 or earlier	1940 to 1949	1950 to 1959	1960 to 1969	1970 to 1979	1980 to 1989	1990 to 1999	2000 to 2009	2010 or later
T. Plymouth	95	12	19	22	29	9	59	51	31
Juneau County	2,208	633	978	1,091	2,263	1,633	2,230	2,367	1364
Wisconsin	495,155	146,155	285,081	262,558	394,494	262,669	347,567	347,953	236,940

Source: 2024 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Table 15: Year Structure Built (Percentage) 2024

	1939 or earlier	1940 to 1949	1950 to 1959	1960 to 1969	1970 to 1979	1980 to 1989	1990 to 1999	2000 to 2009	2010 or later
T. Plymouth	29.1%	3.7%	5.8%	6.7%	8.9%	2.8%	18.0%	15.6%	9.5%
Juneau County	15.0%	4.3%	6.6%	7.4%	15.3%	11.1%	15.1%	16.0%	9.2%
Wisconsin	17.8%	5.3%	10.3%	9.4%	14.2%	9.5%	12.5%	12.5%	8.5%

Source: 2024 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Value Characteristics

Table 16 details housing values in owner-occupied homes throughout the Town of Plymouth, Juneau County, and the State of Wisconsin. In 2024, the median housing value in the Town of Plymouth was \$309,200. The Town of Plymouth's median housing value was significantly higher than both the county, at \$177,700, and the

state, at \$266,500. Compared to the county and the state, the Town of Plymouth had proportionately far fewer homes valued below \$100,000, and proportionately far more homes valued at \$100,000 or above.

As of 2024, most homes (52.5%) within the town were valued at \$300,000 or more, compared to 23.8 percent in the county, and 42.4% in the state. This indicates that the Town of Plymouth is less affordable when compared to neighboring municipalities, and the county and state at large.

Table 16: Housing Values Owner Occupied, 2024							
	Less than \$50,000	\$50,000 to \$99,999	\$100,000 to \$149,999	\$150,000 to \$199,999	\$200,000 to \$299,999	\$300,000 or more	Median Value
T. Plymouth	1.3%	0.8%	8.8%	8.8%	27.7%	52.5%	\$309,200
Juneau County	6.9%	14.2%	17.4%	16.8%	20.9%	23.8%	\$177,700
Wisconsin	4.0%	5.1%	8.9%	14.1%	25.5%	42.4%	\$266,500

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Summary of Housing Characteristics

Housing within the Town of Plymouth consists of primarily single-family detached housing and mobile homes. Most homes are owner-occupied. A higher percentage of the Town's housing was built prior to 1939 when compared to Juneau County and the State of Wisconsin as a whole.

Across Juneau County and the State of Wisconsin, families are getting smaller, and more people are living alone, so average household size has been going down for several decades. This generally holds true for the Town of Plymouth, where the average household size has overall decreased from 2000 to 2024. The result of this trend is that demand for housing units is increasing faster than population.

The lack of affordable housing within the Town of Plymouth may present challenges for people living on limited incomes, such as a family on a single income or a retiree living on a fixed income. Over half of the homes in the Town are valued at \$300,000 or more, which is unaffordable for many individuals and families looking to own a home. The 2023 Juneau County Housing Assessment contains a variety of strategies that can help lower the cost of housing for households with a variety of incomes.

Housing Programs

The following are housing programs available to the Town:

Wisconsin Department of Administration

- Community Development Block Grant-Housing Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) Program
- Community Development Block Grant-Small Cities Housing Program
- Homeless Programs (EHH Program)
 - Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)
 - Housing Assistance Program (HAP)
 - Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP)
- HOME Homebuyer and Rehabilitation Program
- HOME Rental Housing Development (RHD)
- Neighborhood Stabilization Program
- Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA)
- Tenant Based Rental Assistance Program (TBRA)
- Housing Cost Reduction Initiative Program (HCRI)

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

- Housing-Related Consumer Protection Services

Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA)

- Advantage Home Improvement Loan Program (HILP)
- Housing Tax Credit (HTC)
- Wisconsin Bipartisan Housing Legislation Package 2023
 - Infrastructure Access Loan
 - Restore Main Street Loan
 - Vacancy-to-Vitality Loan
 - Home Repair and Rehab Loan
- Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers
- Foreclosure Prevention
- Advantage Conventional Loan
- FHA Advantage Loan
- First-Time Home Buyer Advantage
- Foundation Grant Program
- Mortgage Credit Certificate (MCC) Program

U.S. Department of Agriculture – Rural Development (USDA-RD)

- Section 502 Homeownership Direct Loan Program
- Section 502 Mutual Self-Help Housing Loans
- Section 504 Very-Low-Income Housing Repair Program
- Section 515 Multi-Family Housing Loan Program

- Section 521 Rural Rental Assistance Program
- Section 523/524 Rural Housing Site Loans
- Section 533 Rural Housing Preservation Grants
- Single Family Home Loan Guarantees

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

- Hazard Mitigation Assistance Programs

Other Programs

- Central Wisconsin Community Action Council
- The Historic Preservation Tax Credit
- Historic Homes Tax Credit

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Goals:

1. Allow adequate, affordable housing for all individuals consistent with the rural character of the community.
2. Discourage residential development in unsuitable areas.

Objectives:

1. Ensure that local land use controls and permitting procedures do not discourage or prevent the provision of affordable housing opportunities.
2. Direct residential development away from existing agricultural uses and buildings to avoid conflicts.

Policy:

1. The Town should work with developers to provide a variety of housing types for all income and age groups.
2. Restrict the location of new development in areas that are shown to have highway access problems, etc.

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Chapter 4

Utilities and Community Facilities

Utilities and community facilities, provided by either public or private entities, are critical for community development. Utilities include things such as electrical service, natural gas, telephone, cable and internet. Community facilities include local government buildings, libraries, educational facilities, and maintenance and storage facilities, as well as services like police, fire protection, and emergency medical services. Utilities and community facilities play an important role in the economy and livability of a community.

Previous Plans and Studies

Juneau County All Hazards Mitigation Plan 2024

This plan examines general conditions, including an inventory of utilities, community facilities, and emergency services throughout Juneau County. Risk assessment is at the heart of the all-hazards mitigation program. In order to mitigate the risks, it is necessary to assess their relative importance. The report looks at a series of mostly weather-related disasters; how they have affected the county in the past and how future instances are likely to affect the county and how local government should respond to such occurrences.

The report concludes with suggested mitigation measures that might be taken by local governments to reduce the risk from identified hazards. Counties and incorporated municipalities are required to adopt such plans with updates every five years.

Juneau County Outdoor Recreation Plan (In Progress)

The primary purpose of the Juneau County Outdoor Recreation Plan is to provide continued direction in meeting the current and future recreation needs of Juneau County. This direction takes the form of an inventory and analysis of outdoor recreational facilities followed by establishing recommendations to meet identified needs.

Utilities

Water Service

The Town of Plymouth does not have a public water supply system. Instead, private wells supply the water for public and private facilities within the Town. Most private wells provide a clean, safe supply of water; however, contaminants can pollute private wells, and unfortunately most contaminants cannot be seen, smelled, or tasted. Because of this, Juneau County recommends that individuals should test their water on a regular basis. The Juneau County Health Department has water test kits available for Plymouth residents.

Wastewater

There is no public sewer system in the Town of Plymouth. Therefore, all development in the Town uses on-site septic systems that discharge to underground drainage fields and may include conventional (underground), mound, pressure distribution, at-grade, holding tank, or sand filter systems. Wisconsin Administrative Code regulates these on-site wastewater treatment systems.

Solid Waste and Recycling

The Town of Plymouth is a member of Juneau County's recycling program called C.R.A.M. (County Recycling Agency for Municipalities). This allows Town residents to drop off recyclables at the County landfill. There is a fee for some items. Most residents contract for garbage service from private companies that utilize landfill facilities outside of the county.

Energy and Telecommunications

Electric and Natural Gas

The Town of Plymouth receives electric service primarily from Oakdale Electric Cooperative, though some areas of the Town are serviced by Wisconsin Power & Light Company (Alliant Energy). Natural gas service is provided to the Town by Madison Gas and Electric Company.

Cable/Internet

Phone service in most of the Town comes from CenturyTel, with some areas in the northern edge of the Town coming from Lemonwier Valley Telephone Co-op.

Telephone/internet/cable providers covering the Town include Brightspeed, Lynxx Networks, and Spectrum. Current satellite internet providers include Bug Tussel, DirectTV, HughesNet, Starlink, and Viasat.

Community Facilities

Town Operations

The Plymouth Town Hall is located at W9902 State Road 82. The Town Hall includes an attached shop that houses equipment related to road maintenance. Additionally, there is a garage adjacent to the Town Hall that houses heavy equipment that the Town uses on its road.

Public Safety

Police

The Juneau County Sheriff's Office provides primary law enforcement services to all areas not included within municipal police department boundaries, including the Town of Plymouth. The Sheriff's Department has an office located at the Justice Center in the City of Mauston and provides law enforcement, crime investigation, patrol, traffic supervision, and community programs such as D.A.R.E.

Fire

The Town is a member of the Elroy Area Fire & Ambulance Association which provides fire services. Property owners are responsible for the charge associated with each fire protection serviced. The Town recommends checking with your insurance policy to determine coverage for the charge.

Emergency Medical Services and Medical Facilities

The Town of Plymouth contracts with the Elroy Ambulance Association to provide ambulance service to its residents. The closest medical facilities to the Town of Plymouth include Mile Bluff Medical Center in Mauston, Gundersen St. Joseph's Hospital in Hillsboro, and Reedsburg Area Medical Center in La Valle.

Cemeteries

Wisconsin Statute 157.70 provides for the protection of all human burial sites, including all marked and unmarked burials and cemeteries. There are two main cemeteries located in the Town of Plymouth. Fowler Prairie Cemetery is located on County Road PP. Mt. Zion Cemetery is located at the corner of State Road 82 and Nelson Road.

Child Care Facilities

Children's Cottage is the only known daycare provider within the Town of Plymouth. It is a licensed childcare facility with a capacity of 48 and accepts children from 6 weeks old to 13 years old.

Education

Primary and Secondary Schools

The Town of Plymouth is located within the Royall School District. Royall Elementary and Intermediate School serves students in the pre-K through 6th grade. Royall Middle and High School serves students 7th grade through 12th grade.

Post-Graduate Education

Western Technical College is a public two-year campus that has six regional locations, including one in Mauston.

Libraries

Juneau County is served by the Winding Rivers Library Systems (WRLS). The WRLS provides services to a seven-county library system including Juneau County. Within Juneau County, the WRLS has libraries located in Necedah, New Lisbon, Mauston, Elroy, and Wonewoc. The Elroy location is the closest to the Town of Plymouth.

Recreation

Parks

Allen Thompson Memorial Park is a forty-acre tract owned by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) just outside Elroy in the Town of Plymouth, adjacent to the Elroy – Sparta State Trail. It provides restrooms, picnic areas, and parking spaces for visitors, as well as thirteen camping spaces.

Geologic Sites

The Town of Plymouth is located on the northeastern edge of the Driftless Area, a part of the state that has never been glaciated. The most notable characteristic of the landscape is its “rolling” nature. The highest point in what are known as the Western Highlands is at Johnson Hill within Plymouth Township.

Trails

The Elroy-Sparta State Trail is a 32.5-mile trail that travels between the City of Sparta and the City of Elroy. It was the first rails-to-trail conversion in the country and remains a popular destination for biking. The route includes three rock tunnels and passes through five communities: Elroy, Kendall, Wilton, Norwalk, and Sparta. The trail crosses the southwest part of the Town of Plymouth on its way into the City of Elroy. It then connects with the Omaha Trail, a 12-mile trail traveling north through the Town to Camp Douglas, and the 400 State Trail, a 22-mile trail traveling southeast from Elroy to Reedsburg.

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Goals:

1. Continue to provide ambulance and volunteer fire to residents.

Objectives:

1. Share equipment and services across Town boundaries, where possible.

Policies:

1. Encourage the County and the State to maintain and improve recreational trails within the Town.
2. Encourage recycling by residents.
3. Provide for long-term viability of the cemeteries within the Town.

Chapter 5

Transportation

The transportation system in the Town includes all the state, county, and local roads. The local transportation network is an important factor in the safe movement of people and goods, as well as in the physical development of the Town. There is no transit, passenger rail, air or water transportation service within the Town's jurisdiction.

Previous Plans and Studies

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act)

This current federal transportation program authorizes up to \$108 billion to support federal public transportation programs, including \$91 billion in guaranteed funding. It also reauthorizes surface transportation programs for FY 2022-2026 and provides advance appropriations for certain programs. Major goals include improving safety, modernizing aging transit infrastructure and fleets, investing in cleaner transportation, and improving equity in communities with limited transportation access.

Other federal legislation that frames transportation planning includes the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA); the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); and the Clean Air Act. Environmental Justice is an applicable executive order that attempts to ensure that transportation planning and programming includes underrepresented groups such as minority and low-income populations.

Juneau County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan 2019

The focus of this plan is to enhance the viability of bicycling and walking as a form of transportation throughout communities, including Plymouth, in Juneau County. This plan focuses on guidelines for planning bicycle facilities, with general design and funding information included. This plan also examines existing conditions for biking and walking countywide and suggests routes and segments on which to prioritize bicycling and walking improvements. Recommendations of this plan focus on policies, programs, and facility treatments intended to improve the safety, convenience, and attractiveness of bicycling and walking for Juneau County residents and visitors. Recommendations specific to Plymouth include:

Corridor #17 – Mauston to Elroy: There are no shoulders (paved or gravel) on the 24-foot wide CTHs G or O. This potential route uses CTH G out of Mauston, then a series of town roads to climb and descend over the scenic Mullin Ridge, and finally connects to Elroy on CTH O.

Locally Developed, Coordinated Public Transit-Human Service Transportation Plan 2024-2028

The purpose of this five-year plan is to assess transportation services provided for seniors and individuals with disabilities within Juneau County, analyze service gaps and needs, and then propose strategies to address those gaps and needs.

North Central Wisconsin Regional Comprehensive Plan 2025

The 2025 Regional Comprehensive Plan (RPC) is the most recent update of a plan adopted by the NCWRPC in 1981. The RCP looks at transportation in all ten counties that make up the North Central Region, including Juneau. It looks at general trends within the Region and recommends how county and local government can address transportation issues. Transportation goals in this plan include:

1. Provide and improve transportation access to people of all ages and abilities to ensure lifelong mobility and accessibility.
2. Fund the maintenance and expansion of the transportation system.
3. Enhance the Regional economy by supporting airports, freight rail, and intermodal freight opportunities.

North Central Wisconsin Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan 2018

This plan is a regional effort to improve bicycling and walking across communities throughout the north central Wisconsin region. The Plan assesses existing conditions related to bicycling and walking, identifying other potential trail and route user groups, identifying routes and describing policies and programs to assist local governments in improving bicycling and walking to promote connectivity between communities and destinations throughout North Central Wisconsin.

Connections 2050

Connections 2050 is the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's (WisDOT) long-range transportation plan for the state. Adopted in 2022, the plan addresses all forms of transportation over a 20-year planning horizon: highways, local roads, air, water, rail, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit. It replaces Connections 2030.

State Trails Network Plan 2003

This 2001 document (revised in 2003) clarifies the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) role and strategy in the provision of all types of trails. The plan identifies a series of potential trail corridors that would link existing trails, public lands, natural features, and communities. This statewide network of interconnected trails would be owned and maintained by municipalities, private entities, and partnerships of the two. Preserving transportation corridors, such as old rail lines, is specifically discussed as a very important strategy in the creation of recreational and alternative transportation corridors.

Road Network

In analyzing the road system, several aspects and factors should be examined to discern possible shortcomings as well as plan for future needs. Analysis of traffic patterns through the examination of the road system, analysis of road conditions, review of traffic counts, discussion with individuals at the local, county and state levels, and finally observation can assist in providing possible recommendations relevant to the system.

Map 5 depicts the Town's road network. The Town of Plymouth road network consists of approximately 12.34 miles of county highways, 45.16 miles of local roads, and 12.15 miles of state road, for a total of 69.65 miles.

Jurisdictional and Functional Classification

Functional Classification

A functionally classified road system is one in which streets and highways are grouped into classes according to the character of service they provide, ranging from a high degree of travel mobility to land access functions. At the upper limit of the system (principal arterials, for example), are those facilities that emphasize traffic mobility (long, uninterrupted travel), whereas at the lower limits are those local roads and streets that emphasize access.

The functional classifications are defined by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation as follows:

- **Principal Arterials** – The principal function is to serve corridor movements having trip length and travel density characteristics indicative of substantial statewide or interstate travel. They connect urban areas with populations greater than 25,000 and provide an integrated network of continuous routes.
- **Minor Arterials** – The principal function is to link cities and larger towns (and other major destinations such as resorts capable of attracting travel over long distances), and form and provide intrastate and inter-county service. They are spaced at intervals, consistent with population density, so that all developed areas within Wisconsin are within a reasonable distance of an Arterial roadway. They provide service to corridors with trip lengths and travel density greater than those served by Collectors and Local Roads.
- **Major Collectors** – The principal function is to provide service to any county seat not on an Arterial route, to the larger communities not directly served by an Arterial and to other traffic generators of equivalent intra-county importance such as consolidated schools, shipping points, county parks and other important rural industry locations. They serve the most important intra-county travel corridors (arterials or other major collectors).
- **Minor Collectors** – The principal function is to provide service to smaller communities not served by an Arterial or Major Collector, and to link locally important traffic generators with surrounding rural areas. They are spaced at intervals, consistent with population density, to collect traffic from Local Roads and bring all developed areas within reasonable distance of a Collector.
- **Local Roads** – provide access to homes and businesses. They have low speed limits and offer limited mobility for through traffic.

The Town of Plymouth's minor arterials are State Highways 82 and 71. State Highway 80, and County Roads O and H are major collectors. The remaining 45.16 miles of town roads are local roads.

Jurisdiction

Jurisdiction refers to governmental ownership, not necessarily responsibility. For example, some state-owned roads are maintained by local jurisdictions. Additionally, the designation of a "Federal aid highway" does not alter its ownership or jurisdiction as a state or local road, only that its service value and importance have made the road eligible for Federal-aid construction and rehabilitation funds.

Ownership is divided between the federal, state, and local governments. States own over 20 percent of the national road network. The Federal Government has responsibility for about five percent, primarily in national parks, forests and Indian reservations. Approximately 65 percent of the Town's roads are locally controlled.

In some cases, local municipalities are responsible for conducting routine maintenance and minor repairs on state and federal highways within their jurisdictional boundaries. In return, the state generally provides financing to those jurisdictions. However, major repairs and reconstruction are generally still the responsibility of Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT). Road mileage by jurisdiction for the Town of Plymouth is indicated in Table 17.

Table 17: Road Mileage by Jurisdictional and Functional Class, 2026				
Jurisdiction	Arterial	Collector	Local	Totals
Federal	0	0	0	0
State	6.49	5.65	0.00	12.15
County	0.00	9.16	3.18	12.34
Town	0.00	0.00	45.16	45.16
Totals	6.49	14.81	48.34	69.65

Source: WisDOT

In addition to these main classifications, a road or segment of road may hold several other designations, such as forest road, rustic road, emergency or evacuation route, truck route, bike route, etc.

Pavement Conditions

WisDOT requires all local units of government to submit road condition rating data every two years as part of the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR). The Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER) program and WISLR are tools that local governments can use to manage pavements for improved decision making in budgeting and maintenance. Towns can use this information to develop better road budgets and keep track of roads that need repair. A summary of pavement conditions in the Town of Plymouth can be found in Table 18. Roads exhibiting a surface condition rating at or below “fair” must be examined to determine what type of reconstruction or strengthening is necessary.

The roads that display a surface rating of “good” or better will only require minimal preventative maintenance to promote safe travel conditions. Most Town roads are in relatively good condition, as about 10.5% of roads rate as “Poor” or “Very Poor” and about 89.5% of roads rate as “Fair” or better. However, there is room for improvement, as over one-third are rated “fair,” indicating that the need to repair or replace roads may accelerate in the coming years.

Table 18: Summary of Pavement Conditions		
Surface Condition Rating	Miles	Percent of Total Mileage
Very Poor	0.00	0.0%
Poor	4.73	10.5%
Fair	15.52	34.4%
Good	11.07	24.5%
Very Good	0.77	1.7%
Excellent	13.06	28.9%
Total	45.16	100.0%

Source: WisDOT

Traffic and Safety

Traffic Volumes

Annual average daily traffic (AADT) counts are measured and calculated on selected high traffic roads and highways every three, six, or ten years (depending upon functional classification) by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT). Monitoring these counts provides a way to gauge how traffic volume is changing in the Town of Plymouth.

Table 19: Average Daily Traffic Counts - Plymouth			
Location	2010	2019	% Change
STH 80 N of STH 82 East - Plymouth	1,800	1,600	-11.1%
CTH H Between Mustang Ave & Alpine Road - Plymouth	230	180	-21.7%

Source: WisDOT

There are two 2019 state traffic count sites located in the Town, see Map 5. Both sites experienced a drop in average daily traffic from 2010 to 2019. The site on County Highway H had the most significant decrease, at a rate of 21.7 percent, compared to the site on State Highway 80 which saw a decrease of 11.1 percent from 2010 to 2019. This overall drop in traffic could be attributed to the decreasing population size within the Town in recent decades and the growing share of retirees who are no longer commuting every day.

It remains important to balance planned land use with existing roadway infrastructure. Land use type and intensity have a direct relationship with traffic volumes, with higher density and intensity of land use generally leading to higher traffic volumes. To maximize safety, proposed land use should be considered in conjunction with the existing road network.

Increased traffic volume, congestion concentrated in certain areas, and even the types of vehicles travelling to and from a site can be impacted depending on land use. Mitigation is possible through measures such as creation of new access points, changes in circulation patterns, and general roadway modifications. Uncontrolled division of land tends to affect highways because of the increased intensity, which impairs safety and impedes traffic movements.

Evacuation Routes

The town should meet with the Juneau County Sheriff's Office to discuss a plan for evacuation of residents and visitors in the town. Areas of high population concentration like campgrounds and other high-density developments should have plans for efficient evacuations in times of emergencies.

Alternative Transportation Modes

Airports

The nearest commercial airports to Plymouth are the La Crosse Regional Airport (LSE), the Central Wisconsin Airport (CWA) in Mosinee, and the Dane County Regional Airport (MSN) in Madison. There is also the Mauston/New Lisbon Union Airport, which serves as a small general aviation airport.

Bus/Transit

There are a few transit systems near and within Juneau County. Shared ride taxi service is provided in Mauston. The nearest stops to access inter-community bus services are in Mauston, La Crosse, Sparta, Tomah, and Wisconsin Dells with connections to Appleton/Green Bay, Chicago, Madison, Milwaukee, Minneapolis and other communities along those lines. The bus services that serve some of these cities include the Greyhound, Flix, and Jefferson Lines.

Rail

There are no railroad services available within the Town of Plymouth. The nearest service is in New Lisbon at the intersection of two rail lines: Canadian National and Canadian Pacific Kansas City. There is regular freight service on both lines. Passenger rail service is provided by Amtrak, which runs along the Canadian Pacific Kansas City Railway line with stops in Tomah and Wisconsin Dells.

ATV/UTV

There are extensive snowmobile trail and ATV route/trail systems throughout Juneau County that include the Town of Plymouth. Juneau County's website has an up-to-date, interactive map of these routes.

Pedestrian/Bicycle

All roads within the Town are available for bicycle and pedestrian travel, although walking on rural roads can be dangerous. The 2019 Juneau County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan identified on-road bike routes within the Town of Plymouth:

Corridor #17 - Mauston to Elroy: There are no shoulders (paved or gravel) on the 24-foot wide CTHs G or O. This potential route uses CTH G out of Mauston, then a series of town roads to climb and descend over the scenic Mullin Ridge, and finally connect to Elroy on CTH O.

The Town of Plymouth is in one of the best areas for bicycling in the state. Four former railroads have been converted to recreation trails—Elroy-Sparta State Trail, 400 State Trail, Hillsboro State Trail, and Omaha County Trail. All four trails lie within the Townships of Plymouth and Wonewoc, and connect the municipalities of Camp Douglas, Elroy, Hustler, Kendell, Norwalk, Sparta, Union Center, Wilton, and Wonewoc. All the trails are surfaced with limestone screenings to provide a smooth surface suitable for walkers and bicyclists from spring through fall and for snowmobilers in winter. Each of the four trails has a unique story.

The Elroy-Sparta State Trail is considered the first rail-to-trail in the United States and remains one of the most popular trails too. Between Sparta and Elroy, the trail passes through the communities of Norwalk, Wilton and Kendall; through wetlands, prairies, farmland, and unglaciated areas. Three century-old railroad tunnels highlight the trail. The tunnels near Kendall and Wilton are each about a quarter-mile long. The tunnel between Norwalk and Sparta is three-quarters of a mile long.

The 400 State Trail was named for the Chicago-Northwestern passenger train that ran on this grade. The train traveled the 400 miles between Chicago and Minneapolis/St. Paul in 400 minutes. Wetlands, wildlife, sandstone bluffs, rolling croplands and pastures are just a few of the sights you can enjoy on the 400 State Trail as it repeatedly crosses the Baraboo River. The entire length of the 22-mile trail follows along the river valley from Elroy to Reedsburg, and it passes through the communities of Union Center, Wonewoc and

LaValle. A unique feature of the 400 Trail is a 7-mile horse trail parallel to the bike trail between Wonewoc and LaValle.

Hillsboro State Trail is a 4.2-mile state-owned and county-operated hike, bike, and snowmobile trail between Hillsboro and the 400 Trail in Union Center. The trail crosses the Baraboo River four times.

The Omaha Trail runs north for 13 miles from Elroy to Camp Douglas. This trail has one tunnel, which is 875 feet long. Most of the pathway is straight, flat, and shaded. Northwest of Camp Douglas is Mill Bluff State Park, which is known for its towering sandstone bluffs.

Specialized

The Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) of Eagle Country Juneau County Office provides transportation options for individuals aged 60 and over, or those living with a disability that prevents them from being able to drive. Individuals in need of medical care are prioritized for trips, but trips for shopping or for recreation purposes are occasionally available. Current programs include:

- **Volunteer Escort Driver Program:** Provides qualifying individuals with non-emergency transportation to and from medical appointments for a small fee.
- **Find Your Own Driver Program:** Individuals in need of ongoing transportation find support within their own family or friends and are reimbursed for a portion of the mileage accrued.
- **Handicap Accessible Bus/Van:** Intended for individuals who need to use a wheelchair or ramp to enter and exit a vehicle. The ADRC provides transportation in a handicap accessible vehicle for a small fare fee.
- **Taxi Voucher Program:** Provides taxi voucher punch cards at a reduced rate for qualifying individuals who use the Mauston Taxi-Cab service.

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Goals:

1. Provide an efficient and economical transportation system that affords mobility, convenience, and safety.

Objectives:

1. Support and maintain a safe and efficient Town road system.
2. The Town should work with the County on any project that affects the Town.

Policies:

1. Utilize WISLR/Pacer software to inventory and rate the local roads.
2. Discourage land uses that generate heavy traffic volumes on local roads that have not been constructed or upgraded for such use.
3. Control roadway access along the existing Town road network to increase safety and preserve capacity.
4. Widen and improve existing roads before constructing new roads.