

**Town of Rockland Comprehensive Plan Update**

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Adoption Date: August 3, 2015 – 11/16/2025

Prepared for the Town of Rockland by the Town of Rockland Planning Commission  
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Acknowledgements

The Rockland Town Board would like to thank the following members of the Town of Rockland Planning Commission and staff for their assistance in the completion of the comprehensive plan update:

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CHAPTER 1  
Issues and Opportunities

2025 Town of Rockland Comprehensive Plan Update Prologue

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A comprehensive plan is intended to be a living, dynamic document that sets an overall vision while maintaining flexibility to efficiently respond to opportunities and challenges all communities face. A comprehensive plan's vision is generally considered to be over a 20-year horizon; however, keeping the same plan unchanged for 20 years will lead to the document becoming irrelevant if it is not occasionally updated to reflect current realities for a community, therefore state statute requires an update every 10 years. The 2015 Town of Rockland Comprehensive Plan met this need and included an implementation recommendation of reviewing and revising the comprehensive plan at a minimum of every 10 years to update background data, review the goals and objectives, and evaluate the overall implementation of the plan. It is this recommendation the 2025 Town of Rockland Comprehensive Plan Update is intended to address.

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As this is an update, much of the background data from the 2015 plan is still relevant and therefore is not changed. However, with regard to specific instances where additional and/or more recent data is available such as new census data, population projections, and existing land uses, the maps, graphs, and recommendations reflect the new data.

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It is anticipated within another 10 years, consistent with the recommendation in the 2015 plan, this update will be supplanted by a new Town of Rockland Comprehensive Plan. In the meantime, this comprehensive plan update provides the necessary bridge to ensure development decisions continue to be considered and acted upon in a manner consistent with the original vision in the 2005 plan, building upon the 2015, while addressing the issues and opportunities of 2025.

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Introduction

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Following Native American settlement, Rockland was settled by European immigrants in the mid 1800's of mainly German, Dutch, and Irish heritage—farming families looking for a better life. The settlers found forested lands to build homes and when the land was cleared, the land produced abundant crops to feed their families.

The first homes built in Rockland were small log homes lit by candles or kerosene lamps. As the settlers prospered, small businesses started in the area including: a saw mill, a feed mill and some cheese factories. Rockland had five one-room schoolhouses until the 1960's when they were consolidated into the surrounding school districts. Rockland held its first annual town meeting in 1856, eight short years after Wisconsin achieved statehood.

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Rockland is a town of about 22 square miles located in central Brown County. It is bounded by the City of De Pere and the Town of Ledgeview on the north, the Town of Glenmore on the east, the Town of Wrightstown and the Village of Greenleaf on the south, and the picturesque Fox River on the west.



A unique feature of Rockland is the Niagara Escarpment (“The Ledge”) as pictured above, which runs through the town from north to south. This natural feature along with the river boundary creates beautiful home sites. Another feature of Rockland is the Fox River Trail which provides walking and bicycling opportunities. The Ledge has been designated by the Wisconsin DNR as one of the top three land legacy places in Wisconsin.

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The Town of Rockland today has a relatively dispersed developmental pattern. Large, single-family homes are predominant along the Fox River and in the rural subdivisions that have developed in the Town. Active farming operations dominate Rockland’s land use in the central, southern, and eastern portions of the Town. Rockland’s location within Brown County is depicted in Figure 1-1.

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**Purpose and Intent**

A comprehensive plan is an official public document adopted by ordinance by the local government that sets forth its major policies concerning the future physical development of the community. The primary purposes of this plan are to generate goals for attaining a desirable development pattern, devise strategies and recommendations the Town can follow to achieve its desired development pattern, and meet the requirements of the State of Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning Law. It is intended that the recommendations reflect the 14 local comprehensive planning goals prescribed in state statute and listed in this section.

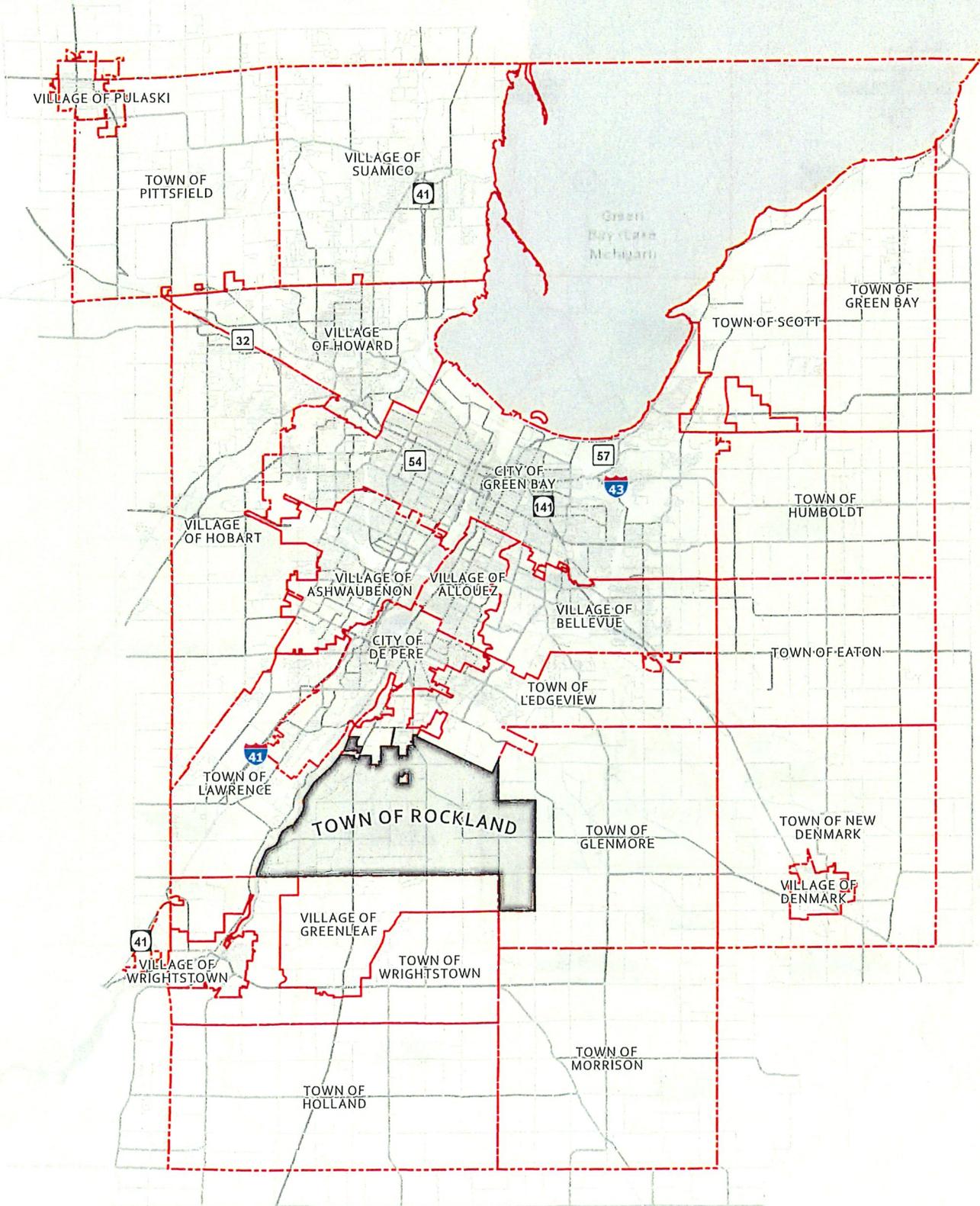
1. Promotion of the redevelopment of lands with existing infrastructures and public services and the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing residential, commercial and industrial areas.
2. Encouragement of neighborhood designs that support a range of transportation choices.
3. Protection of natural areas, including wetlands, wildlife habitats, lakes, woodlands, open spaces and groundwater resources.
4. Protection of economically productive areas including farmland and forests.
5. Encouragement of land uses, densities and regulations that promote efficient development patterns and relatively low municipal, state governmental, and utility costs.

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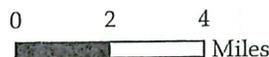
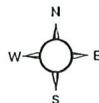
# Figure 1-1 General Location Town of Rockland, Brown County, Wisconsin

August 2025



## Legend

-  Town of Rockland Boundary
-  Municipal Boundaries



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6. Preservation of cultural, historic and archeological sites.
7. Encouragement of coordination and cooperation among nearby units of government.
8. Building of community identity by revitalizing main streets and enforcing design standards.
9. Providing an adequate supply of affordable housing for individuals of all income levels throughout each community.
10. Providing adequate infrastructure and public services and an adequate supply of developable land to meet existing and future market demand for residential, commercial, and industrial uses.
11. Promoting the expansion or stabilization of the current economic base and the creation of a range of employment opportunities at the state, regional, and local levels.
12. Balancing individual property rights with community interests and goals.
13. Planning and development of land uses that create or preserve varied and unique urban and rural communities.
14. Providing an integrated, efficient, and economical transportation system that affords mobility, convenience, and safety and that meets the needs of all citizens, including transit-dependent and disabled citizens.

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The Town of Rockland Comprehensive Plan is adopted by ordinance and should be used by Town officials when revising and administering its zoning and other land-related ordinances. The plan should be the basis for siting future developments and should be a guiding vision so that there is a consistent policy to follow and a clear goal for the future for the residents of the Town of Rockland. The maps and graphics contained within this plan are general in nature and are based on the best information available and should not be utilized for detailed site planning.

### Comprehensive Planning Process

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The most recent comprehensive plan for the Town of Rockland was adopted in 2015 as its 10-year update. ~~The Brown County Planning Commission (BCPC) was contracted to provide professional planning assistance. Staff from BCPC prepared the background information and the recommendations of this plan based upon the consensus opinions of the town planning commission members, public input, 2004 town-wide visioning session, and the Comprehensive Planning Law. The Town of Rockland Planning Commission did several exercises to determine the direction of the Comprehensive Plan for 2025. A cursory review of the Comprehensive Plan was conducted and then public input was sought via a survey in April of 2024. The results were compiled. Town of Rockland Planning Commission, along with staff and the Town Board drafted an update. Next the public was invited to inspect/digest the Comprehensive Plan draft (made available physically and electronically) and then a Public Hearing regarding the plan was held, where their comments were shared and recorded. The Planning Commission considered all comments to create a final plan.~~ Finally, the Town Board adopted the new plan by Resolution.

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This document is comprised of nine parts reflecting the requirements in the Comprehensive Planning Law: Issues and Opportunities; Housing; Transportation; Utilities and Community Facilities; Natural, Cultural, and Agricultural Resources; Economic Development; Intergovernmental Cooperation; Land Use; and Implementation. Although all of these chapters have their own goals, objectives, and recommendations, the

elements are all interrelated, and, therefore, the goals, objectives, and recommendations are also. This plan was developed with the interrelationships of the elements in mind.

The future land use plan contained within the Land Use Chapter of the comprehensive plan provides the vision of how the Town of Rockland could look 20 years from now. There are recommendations regarding the location, density, and design of future development, and these recommendations are the cornerstone of the overall plan. The future land use plan is the composite of the goals, objectives, and recommendations contained in all of the chapters.

The final part of the plan involves implementing the recommendations. A comprehensive plan is only effective when it is actually used. This includes both using the plan on a routine basis when making policy and administrative decisions and when creating and revising municipal ordinances, such as the zoning ordinance, to control and guide development consistent with the plan.

This document is not the end of the planning process. For the Town of Rockland to succeed in achieving its vision for the future, planning must be a continual, ongoing exercise.

### Community Goals and Objectives

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A major element of the comprehensive planning process is the identification of Rockland's goals and objectives. This identification is often difficult, as values held by citizens are highly elusive and complex. People vary widely in their choice of values and the degree to which they will accept or tolerate differing attitudes.

In order to identify the Town's priorities for community development, as well as key issues and concerns to be addressed, staff prepared a Community survey which was shared via the town's newsletter and available during both the February and the April 2024 elections at the Town Hall. The results were compiled and were used to guide the revision of the Comprehensive Plan. The Rockland Planning Commission updated the community priorities to account for items that were completed or no longer relevant and new issues or opportunities that have come to the forefront since 2015. The following list identifies the top issues resulting from the 2024 survey and 2025 Planning Commission update:

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- Maintain the rural atmosphere of the Town by protecting Rockland's agricultural heritage.
- Encourage the development of dense conservation subdivisions with on-site utilities until public utilities become available.
- Maintain a reasonable Town tax rate.
- Ensure development does not adversely affect the safety and supply of drinking water and investigate the feasibility of developing a public drinking water supply.
- Maintain tax base and control development by developing boundary agreements with De Pere and the Village of Greenleaf and shared services agreements with all neighboring communities.
- Plan for the impacts of the South Bridge Connector across the Fox River that connects Red Maple and Rockland Roads.
- Attract businesses and specifically agricultural-related businesses along STH 57.

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- Create a vision statement.
- Investigate the possibility of bringing public water to HWY 57 business and industrial zones.

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The Town-wide survey, input from the citizens and planning commission, the State of Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning Law and sound planning principles formed the basis for the development of the goals and objectives of the plan.

Goals and objectives each have a distinct and different purpose within the planning process. Goals describe desired situations toward which planning efforts should be directed. They are broad and long-range. They represent an end to be sought; although, they may never actually be fully attained. Objectives describe more specific purposes, which should be sought in order to advance toward the achievement of the overall goals. The third part of the planning process – policies and programs – is discussed in each chapter specific to that comprehensive plan element.

The comprehensive plan and future development of the Town are based on the following goals and objectives.

#### Land Use Goal

To manage the future growth and land uses within the Town to ensure orderly, balanced development that maintains Rockland's rural character.

#### Objectives

1. Identify, adopt, and implement planning tools and techniques that minimize the impact of development on Rockland's rural character.
2. Consider the provision of public sewer and water to focus development in certain areas of the Town.
3. Ensure that private property rights are protected by giving landowners and residents a voice in planning and development proposals.
4. Discourage strip commercial development in favor of clustering commercial activities at designated nodes along state highways.
5. Encourage additional small-scale agricultural, commercial and industrial developments that contribute to the Town's economy and provide goods or services for residents.
6. Balance individual development opportunities with maintaining the Town's rural character.
7. Ensure the compatibility of adjoining land uses for both existing and future development.
8. Coordinate the layout of new developments with the need for traffic circulation and pedestrian facilities.
9. Develop and enforce drainage plans on all properties: residential, business and agricultural. Make use of agricultural runoff treatment systems and saturation buffer areas for the purification of surface water.

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### Transportation Goal

To develop a safe and efficient multi-modal transportation system that serves all Rockland residents.

#### Objectives

1. Maximize street connectivity within and between subdivisions to distribute traffic evenly and maximize mobility and accessibility for all residents.
2. Maximize safety and accessibility at the Town's intersections.
3. Use Wisconsin's Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER) system to evaluate the condition of the Town's roads and prioritize them for maintenance.
4. Consider traffic calming techniques in existing residential areas where slower traffic is desired.
5. Work with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) and Brown County to prepare for the land use and transportation impacts of the South Bridge Connector.
6. Continue to work with the surrounding communities, Brown County, and WisDOT to plan the South Bridge Connector, STH 32/57, and other highway corridors that affect the Town.
7. Encourage the construction of narrow streets to slow traffic through new residential neighborhoods, minimize construction and maintenance costs, and maximize safety for all residents.
8. Provide safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle connections to destinations (such as parks, schools, employment centers, and shopping areas) and between/within subdivisions.
9. Educate bicyclists on following the rules of the road for riding and stopping, particularly on the Fox-River State Trail.
10. Educate residents on the use of ATV/UTV on town roads.
11. Develop a long-range plan to reconstruct Town subdivision roads that don't meet existing standards.
12. Work with Brown County to apply for grants to help fund the development of the Town's multi-modal transportation system including off-road parking to relieve congestion on narrow town roads.
13. Review the town's policies concerning maintenance of ditches along town roadways.

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### Economic Development Goal

Broaden the tax base and strengthen the Town's economy and employment base through agricultural, commercial and industrial activity.

#### Objectives

1. Encourage businesses and industries to promote environmentally-friendly practices, such as recycling, stormwater management, erosion control, and pollution controls.
2. Identify appropriate areas for additional industrial and commercial activities within the Town.
3. Encourage and promote agriculture-related business opportunities.
4. Encourage the rebuilding of small family farms and pastoral grazing.

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5. Utilize government programs to aid in the retention of existing and attraction or promotion of new industrial and commercial activities.
6. Encourage the redevelopment of underutilized, vacant and brownfield areas and removal of facilities no longer used or abandoned (including the decommissioning of manure pits).
7. Recognize farming as an important component of the local economy and encourage those farmers who wish to remain active in the Town.
8. Work with telecommunications companies to improve broadband and wireless communication capabilities in the Town.
9. Enhance the Town's economic development partnerships with agencies, such as The Startup Hub from Greater Green Bay Chamber, Brown County Planning, Wisconsin Department of Administration, and the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation and other county, state and federal agencies.

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**Housing Goal**

Provide a variety of quality housing opportunities for all segments of the Town's population.

Objectives

1. Promote an adequate supply and mix of housing types for individuals of all life stages, physical abilities, and income levels.
2. Ensure residential development is up to a standard consistent with the Town of Rockland.
3. Plan for concentrations of new housing developments in areas with good highway and street access.
4. Develop and implement a property maintenance code for nuisance issues like junk cars and building dilapidation.
5. Identify programs to improve aging residential stock and assist first-time homebuyers.
6. Ensure auxiliary structures are compliant with Town of Rockland code including sanitary systems.
7. Utilize wetland conservation models for the placement of new homes or condo associations for best environmental protection and human use.

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**Utilities and Community Facilities Goal**

Promote a quality living environment through the timely provision and maintenance of recreation, utility, emergency and other public facilities and services affecting the health, safety and well-being of Rockland residents and businesses.

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Objectives

1. Monitor the quality and quantity of groundwater in Rockland to ensure a safe drinking water supply.
2. Investigate the possibility of future public sewer and water service to the Town.

3. Continue to utilize and maintain quality onsite sewage disposal systems in the Town while evaluating future needs and opportunities.
4. Evaluate the need for additional public and emergency services as Rockland continues to grow.
5. Coordinate future parks and greenspace with adjoining communities and the recommendations in the Brown County Open Space and Outdoor Recreation Plan.
6. Maintain the Town's existing public facilities and replace aging/obsolete infrastructure and equipment in a timely fashion.
7. Educate and inform the public on the comprehensive stormwater management plan to address water quantity issues (such as flooding) and water quality issues (through the protection of wetlands and stream habitats).
8. Encourage the placement of electrical utility lines underground.
9. Ensure adequate levels of other services and facilities to meet the needs of a growing community.

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**Natural, Cultural, and Agricultural Resources Goal**

Capitalize on the amenities offered by the Town's natural, cultural and agricultural resources and integrate these features into future development to enhance the rural character of Rockland and the quality of life of its residents.

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Objectives

1. Preserve wetlands, floodplains and other environmental areas to link various parts of the Town and to serve as wildlife corridors, pedestrian trails and stormwater management areas.
2. Enhance public accessibility to the waters of the Fox and East Rivers.
3. Recognize the Niagara Escarpment as a critical natural resource and identify tools to maintain it (as much as possible) in a natural state.
4. Encourage developments that enhance the relationship between the natural landscape and future development through the use of various subdivision design techniques.
5. Enhance the appearance and rural community identity of the Town through the use of commercial and industrial building design standards, landscaping, attractive signage and other beautification techniques.
6. Identify and encourage the preservation of historic and scenic sites in the Town.
7. Identify the productive agricultural land in the Town and identify methods to encourage farming on this land.
8. Inform new residents that Rockland has active farming operations and sights, sounds and smells that are associated with them.
9. Recognize the need for nonmetallic mineral resources while requiring quarries to be operated in an environmentally sensitive manner.
10. Encourage Town farmers to work with governmental agencies in implementing agricultural practices that lessen stormwater runoff and erosion.

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**Intergovernmental Cooperation Goal**

To work with the surrounding communities, De Pere and Wrightstown school districts, Brown County, and State of Wisconsin to cooperatively plan and develop the Town and region.

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**Objectives**

1. Work with the City of De Pere and the Village of Greenleaf to create boundary agreements.
2. Work with the De Pere and Wrightstown school districts to project future school-aged populations so that the districts can accurately plan for future facilities.
3. Coordinate with the surrounding communities regarding municipal services, land use decisions, and address other issues of mutual concern.
4. Continue working with the surrounding communities, Brown County, and WisDOT to plan the South Bridge Connector, STH 32/57, and other highway corridors that serve the Town.
5. Identify existing and potential conflicts with the surrounding communities and work with the communities and Brown County Planning Commission to resolve these conflicts.
6. Continue to work with the surrounding communities and Brown County to develop an off-street trail system that serves the Town and region.
7. Identify potential partnerships with other local, county, state, and regional agencies, as well as with nonprofit and private enterprises.
8. Explore future opportunities to consolidate the provision of Town services with other communities.

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**Demographic Trends**

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The Town of Rockland has grown from a population of 777 in 1960 to a population of 1,775 in 2020. This is an overall 60-year increase of 998 residents as depicted in Figure 1-2. Early in this 60-year period, the population fluctuated between increasing and decreasing residents. However, since 1980, the population trend in the Town of Rockland has been on the increase, with an additional 92 residents between 1980 and 1990, 548 residents between 1990 and 2000, and 212 residents between 2000 and 2010. The growth has leveled off in the decade from 2010 to 2020 with a much smaller growth of 41 residents. Figure 1-3 shows the growth as a percentage compared to Brown County.

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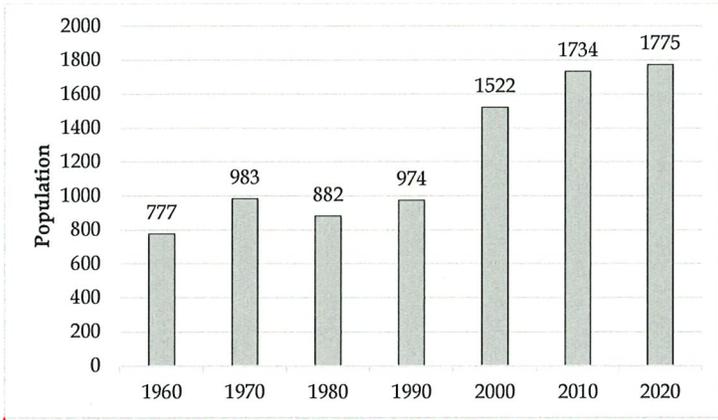
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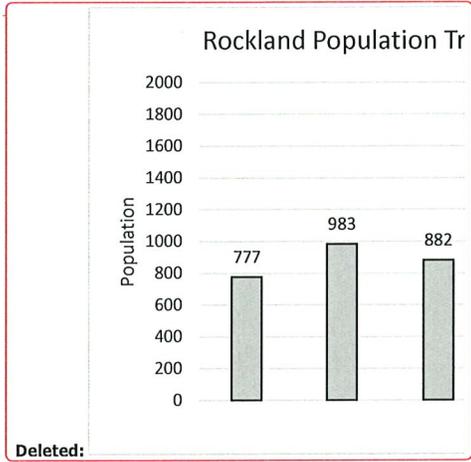
Figure 1-2: Town of Rockland Historic Growth Trend, 1960-2020



Source: U.S. Census of Population, 1960-2020 Decennial Census.

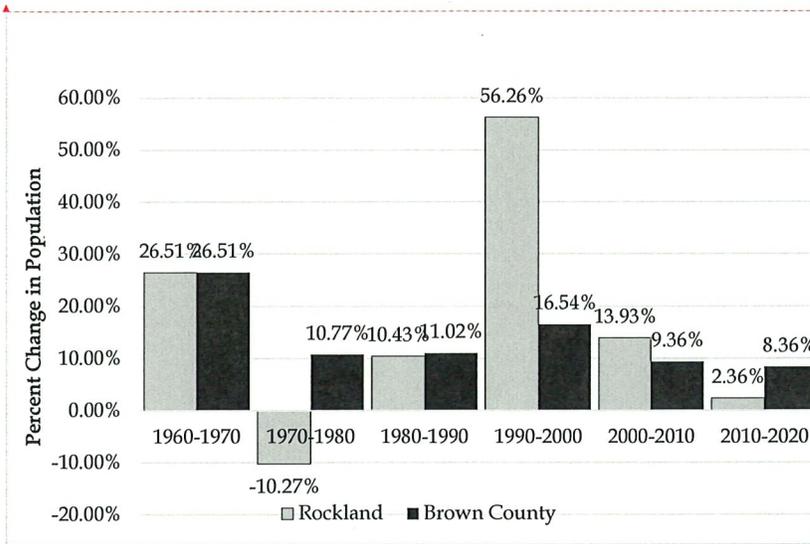
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Figure 1-3: Town of Rockland & Brown County Percent Population Growth, 1960-2020



Source: U.S. Census of Population, 1960-2020 Decennial Census.

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Percent Populat

Period	Rockland (%)	Brown County (%)
1960-1970	26.51%	26.51%
1970-1980	-10.27%	10.77%

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### Age Distribution

The age distribution chart (Figure 1-4) depicts the general aging of the population of the Town of Rockland. As of 2020 the largest age group in the Town is those residents aged 55-64. Ten years ago, it was the same group of people, but they were aged 45-54. It is also important to note the significant percentage increase in those residents in the next 2020 age group of 65-74. Conversely, the percentage of children (<5 and 5-14) has again decreased indicating a trend over a twenty year period. A general aging of the population follows state and national trends, as the largest population segment, the Baby Boomer generation, continues to age. In terms of planning, issues such as elderly care, alternative transportation, health care, and emergency response will become increasingly important.

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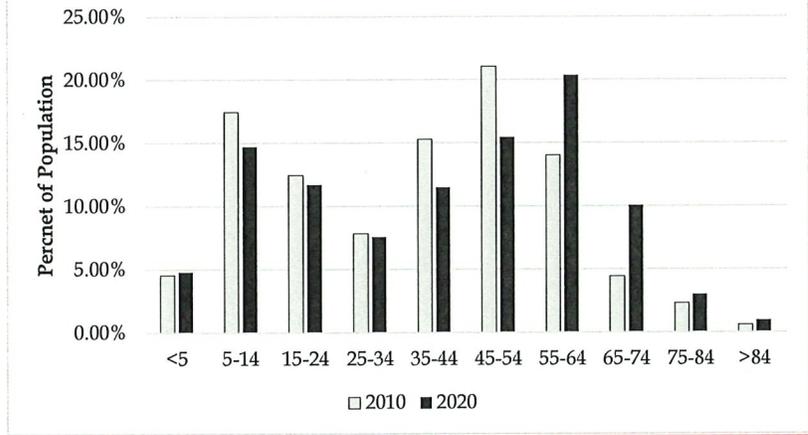
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Figure 1-4: Town of Rockland Age as a Percentage of Population, 2010 and 2020



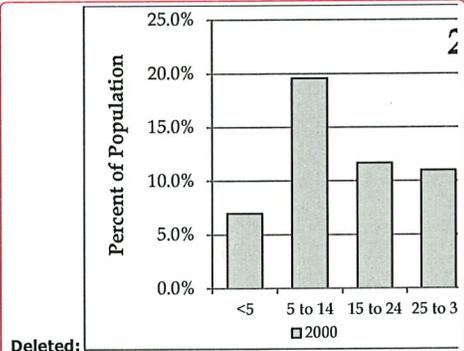
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Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2010 and 2020 Decennial Census.

**Income Levels**

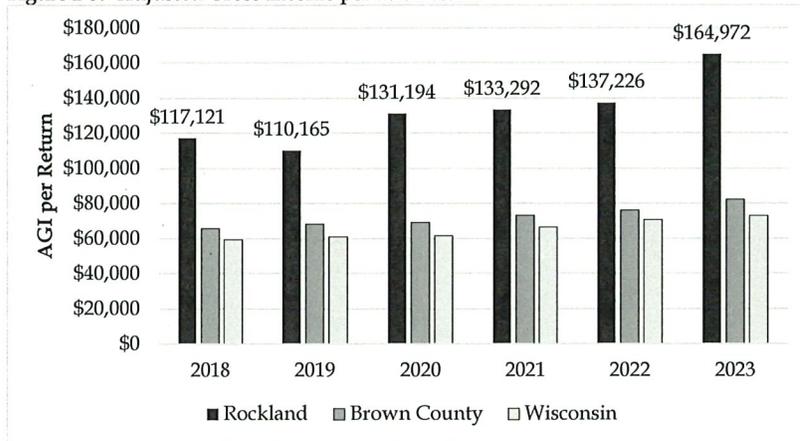
According to the Wisconsin Department of Revenue-Division of Research and Analysis, the Town of Rockland's adjusted gross income (AGI) per tax return is significantly higher than both the county and state (Figure 1-5). The most recent year for which information is available lists the year 2023 AGI for the Town of Rockland at \$164,972, as compared to the 2023 AGI per return for Brown County and the State of Wisconsin at \$2,276 and \$73,001, respectively.

When reviewing this data it is important to note that Wisconsin adjusted gross income per return includes only income subject to tax and income of persons filing tax returns. Second, income per return is not necessarily indicative of income per household because tax filings do not correspond with households as several members of a single household may file individual tax returns, and the very high or very low (negative) income of a few tax filers can distort the total income and income per return of a given municipality and county.



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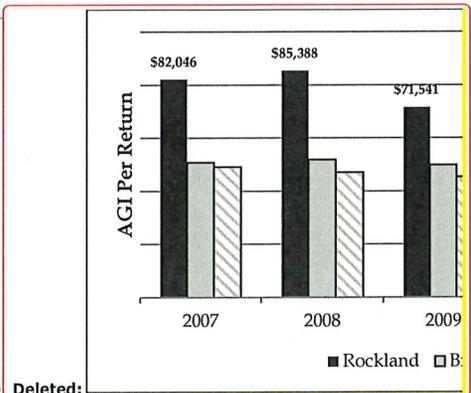
Figure 1-5: Adjusted Gross Income per Tax Return



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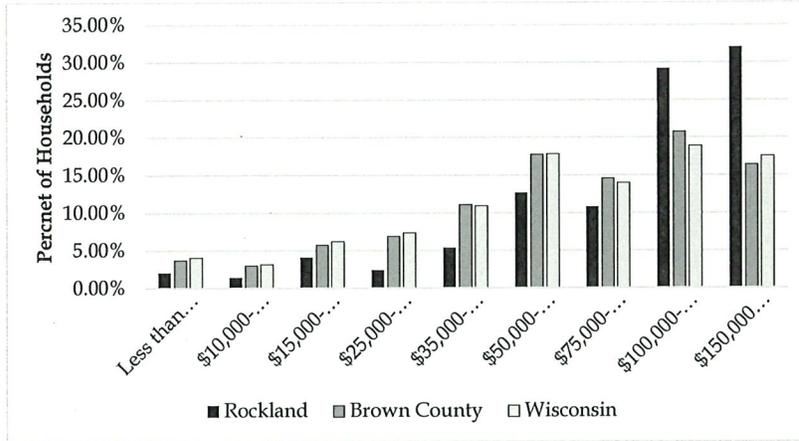
Source: Wisconsin Department of Revenue, Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) per Filed Tax Return, 2018 - 2023

The American Community Survey (ACS) is a rolling survey that samples a representative portion of the American people every year. Based upon the results of the survey, estimates for each community are prepared in one and five-year increments. The ACS provides ranges for income levels. Based on the results of the ACS, the largest percentage income group is those households with \$100,000 to \$149,999 in annual income. There are also significantly higher percentages of households with higher incomes in all income ranges from \$75,000 and higher, as compared to Brown County and the State of Wisconsin. According to the ACS, the median household income for the Town of Rockland is approximately \$90,694, consistent with the AGI per tax return. The household income percentages are displayed in Figure 1-6.



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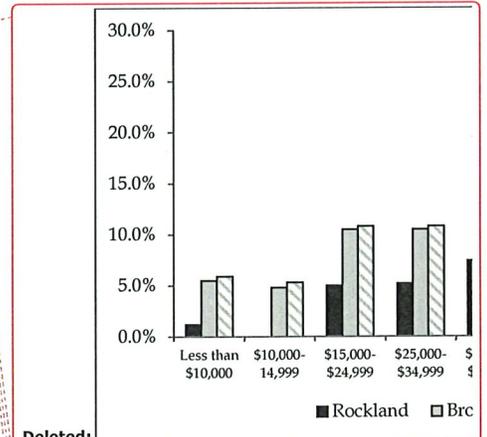
Figure 1-6: Household Income



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2018 - 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

**Educational Levels**

Educational levels of people 25 years and older in the Town of Rockland are unlike those typically found in other rural areas. Rockland’s percentage of non-high school graduates and high school graduates is significantly lower than in Brown County and the State of Wisconsin. This is because secondary educational attainments were moderately higher than both Brown County and the State of Wisconsin. Overall, in associate degrees (10.52 percent), bachelor’s degrees (30.6 percent) and graduate degrees (15.43 percent), Rockland was significantly higher than Brown County and the State of Wisconsin. Higher educational attainment is likely one of the drivers for the higher incomes also found in Rockland. The educational levels are displayed in Figure 1-7. The graph depicts the percentage of residents aged 25 totaling 100%



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**Figure 1-7: Town of Rockland Wisconsin Educational Attainment of People 25 Years and Older**

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2016 - 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

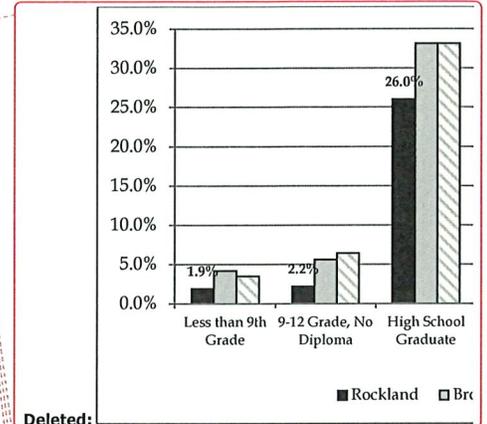
**Employment Characteristics**

As displayed in Figure 1-8, 57.8 percent of the Town of Rockland population is employed in management, business, science, and arts occupations and sales and office occupations. These occupations correspond to the generally higher income ranges found in the Town as compared to Brown County and the State of Wisconsin as a whole.

**Figure 1-8: Town of Rockland Employment by Occupation**

Occupation	Number	Percent
Management, Business, Science, and Arts Occupations	445	46.5%
Sales and Office Occupations	108	11.3%
Production, Transportation, and Material Moving Occupations	132	13.8%
Natural Resources, Construction, and Maintenance Occupations	96	10.0%
Service Occupations	176	18.4%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2018 - 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.



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## Employment Forecast

The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development produced an updated profile in 2022 for the Bay Area Workforce Development Area which includes Brown, Door, Florence, Kewaunee, Manitowoc, Menominee, Oconto, Shawano and Sheboygan Counties within its boundaries. The profile identifies projected job increases or decreases by industry for the 10-year period between 2018 estimate and 2028 and factors in macro-economic conditions experienced by the area through December 2022.

According to the profile, the total number of non-farm jobs is projected to increase by 34,000 (7.3 percent) by the year 2032. The construction sector is projected to add 2,676 jobs in the 10-year period (12.1 percent). Financial Activities also shows a growth rate of 12.1 percent with a gain of 2,938 jobs in the 10 year period. Both sectors tie for the largest projected growth rate for all industry sectors in the Bay Area.

Manufacturing is projected to continue to have the largest number of jobs through 2032; there is a demand for manufacturing employees with the ability to produce precision components for advanced technology machining. Job growth and economic development strategies are discussed in much more detail in the Economic Development Chapter of this document. Figure 1-9 displays total non-farm industry employment projections for the Bay Area Workforce Development Area.

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Figure 1-9: Industry Projections for Bay Area Workforce Development Area, 2022-2032

Industry Title	Employment		Ten-Year Change	
	2022 Actual Employment	2032 Projected	Numeric	Percent
Total All Industries	463,024	497,026	34,002	7.3%
Natural Resources and Mining	7,788	8,327	539	6.9%
Construction	22,164	24,840	2,676	12.1%
Manufacturing	93,011	96,873	3,862	4.2%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	79,141	84,861	5,720	7.2%
Information	2,624	2,459	-165	-6.3%
Financial Activities	24,280	27,218	2,938	12.1%
Professional and Business Services	38,538	42,902	4,364	11.3%
Education and Health Services	88,640	94,511	5,871	6.6%
Leisure and Hospitality	39,731	43,154	3,423	8.6%
Other Services (except Government)	20,392	22,408	2,016	9.9%
Government	21,984	22,204	220	1.0%
Total Self Employed and Unpaid Family Workers	24,731	27,269	2,538	10.3%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, *Wisconomy* December 2022.

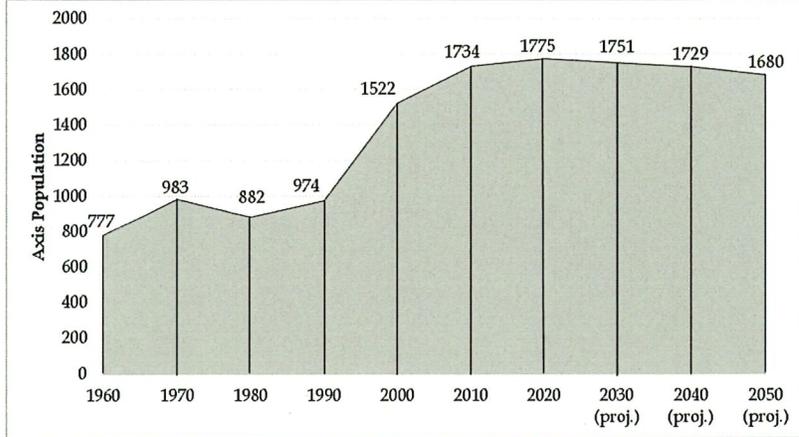
Population and Housing Forecasts

In 2024, the Wisconsin Department of Administration released new population projections for Wisconsin municipalities through 2050, which took into account the 2020 census and recent population growth trends. According to these projections, the Town of Rockland is forecasted to have slow population decline during the time period between 2020 and 2050, with a total projected population of 1,680 by 2050. This is a projected decrease of only 69 residents during this 30-year period. The projected slow decline is likely the result of very little new subdivision development in the Town of Rockland occurring over the past 20 years due to the 10-acre minimum lot size extraterritorial platting limitations placed on the Town by the City of De Pere and costs of acreage and building supplies. The historic and projected population for the Town is displayed in Figure 1-10.

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Figure 1-10: Historic and Projected Population, Town of Rockland, 1960-2050



Source: Wisconsin Dept. of Administration, 2024.

Based upon this information, a baseline projection of the housing units required for the 2035 year of this comprehensive plan can be determined. According to the 2020 census, the Town of Rockland had an average household size of 2.68 people per household. Dividing this amount into the 1,729 people projected to live in the Town by 2040 yields a result of 645 total housing units required for the future population. Subtracting the 661 existing (2020) housing units results in a surplus of 16 homes, provided the population and the persons per household average does not significantly change over time.

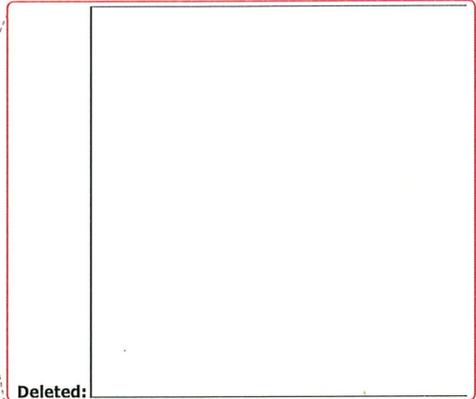
However, this information cannot be taken on it's own. The City of De Pere has developed as much of their residential property as they are able and are building apartments in the shadow of the Town of Rockland. The population of the City of De Pere will continue to put pressure on the housing availability in the Town of Rockland.

**Summary**

Population and housing growth in the Town of Rockland has slowed significantly since the 2005 Comprehensive Plan. This is likely the result of a combination of extraterritorial land division controls implemented by the City of De Pere and the major downturn in the housing market during the mid to late 2000s. Although development has slowed, this has provided an opportunity for Town residents to enjoy the rural character of the Town that they either grew up with, or moved to Rockland to enjoy. The goals and objectives are reflective of the results of the town-wide visioning session, survey, citizens advisory committee, and 14 State of Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning Goals.

The goals and objectives identified in the Issues and Opportunities Chapter are intended to guide the Town and create a community that is reflective of residents' desire to balance development with the Town's rural character. Objectives, such as utilizing various

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development techniques to maintain the Town's rural character and agricultural community, identifying ways for pedestrians and bicyclists to get around, and enhancing the Town's natural features, are all concepts that will be further discussed with specific policy recommendations within the plan.

As the demographic trends indicate, the Town's population is aging more quickly than Brown County as a whole. As Rockland continues to grow, it will need to be cognizant of the increasing number of older residents in the community and make sure that future development patterns and styles take their needs into account, as well as the needs of the rest of the community. Future population and housing growth, limited though it may be, must be guided in a manner that meets the stated objectives in the comprehensive plan, including providing services to existing and future Town residents, while protecting the Town's natural, cultural, and agricultural resources.

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