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PLAN COMMISSION
OFFICIAL NOTICE & AGENDA
Tuesday, April 28, 2026
4:00 pm – Marathon Municipal Center

1. CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL: K. HANDRICK, M. AHRENS, M. TELFORD, C. STIEBER, S. CHEREK, L. OLBRANTZ,
L. WIESMAN

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

- a. Virtual Meeting Guidelines
This meeting will be recorded and available upon request
- b. Public Participation at Government Meetings

4. APPROVAL OF JULY 23, 2025 PLAN COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

5. OVERVIEW OF 10 YEAR COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE PROCESS WITH NORTHCENTRAL WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

6. REVIEW OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN – RESOLUTION 2026-04-01A

7. REVIEW OF EXISTING COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

8. REVIEW OF DRAFT CHAPTERS

- a. Chapter 1 – Demographics
- b. Chapter 2 – Natural Resources
- c. Chapter 3 – Housing

9. DISCUSSION OF PLANNING ISSUES

10. SET NEXT MEETING DATE AND TIME

11. ADJOURNMENT



PUBLIC VIRTUAL ACCESS

Join Teams Meeting: <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-teams/join-a-meeting>

Meeting ID: 248 450 201 661 51

Passcode: 6kG6ck3E

Kurt Handrick, Jr.
Village President

Cassie Lang
Village Clerk / Deputy Treasurer

VILLAGE OF MARATHON CITY, MARATHON COUNTY, WISCONSIN

PUBLIC HEARING - PLAN COMMISSION – HYBRID

VILLAGE HALL BOARD ROOM

WEDNESDAY, JULY 23, 2025 – 5:00 PM

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER at 5:01 pm

ROLL CALL: K. HANDRICK-Present, M. AHRENS-Present, G. RUPLINGER-Absent, M TELFORD-Present, C. STIEBER-Present at 5:05 pm, S. CHEREK-Present, L. OLBRANTZ-Present

Attending in person was Brian Karlen from Urban Construction. Virtually present were Kevin O'Brien from Record Review, Melody Hamlin from Funktion Design Studio and Katie Johnson from Menzner Hardwoods.

2. OPEN PUBLIC HEARING

- a. Review and Discuss Request by Clayton & Samuel Phillips for Rezoning of Parcel 151-2806-073-9981 from Agricultural (A) to Rural Residential (R-4)
- b. Review and Discuss Setback Variance on Parcel 151-2806-073-9981

Administrator Cherek opened the Public Hearing stating that parcel 151-2806-073-9981 was never rezoned to the correct zone when it split from a larger parent parcel years ago. This was recently discovered when the landowners, Clayton and Samuel Phillips, had a survey done to potentially split the lot. According to Village Ordinance 13.5.14(3), the minimum lot area for an agricultural zoned parcel is 6 acres and the parcel in question is 4.5 acres. This rezoning from Agriculture (A) to Rural Residential (R-4) would put the parcel in accordance with the Village Ordinances.

Administrator Cherek noted the landowners requested a setback variance upon split of the parcel. Phillips would like to split the parcel into approximately 1.1 acres on the north end and 3.4 acres south of new lot line. This new proposed lot line would occur between currently standing structures which would encroach on the side yard setbacks outlined in Ordinance 13.5.9(3). The R-4 setback for a side yard is 15'. They are requesting a variance of 5'.

There was no public input on the matter.

2. ADJOURN PUBLIC HEARING at 5:22 pm

Motion to adjourn made by Telford second by Olbrantz. Motion passed by voice vote.

Cassie Lang
Clerk/Deputy Treasurer

VILLAGE OF MARATHON CITY, MARATHON COUNTY, WISCONSIN

PLAN COMMISSION MEETING – HYBRID

VILLAGE HALL BOARD ROOM

WEDNESDAY, JULY 23, 2025 – IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING PUBLIC HEARING

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER at 5:22 pm

ROLL CALL: K. HANDRICK-Present, G. RUPLINGER-Absent, M. AHRENS-Present, M. TELFORD-Present, C. STIEBER-Present, S. CHEREK-Present, L. OLBRANTZ-Present

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

a. Virtual Meeting Guidelines

i. This meeting will be recorded and available upon request

b. Public Participation at Government Meetings

Attending in person was Brian Karlen from Urban Construction. Virtually present were Kevin O'Brien from Record Review, Melody Hamlin from Funktion Design Studio and Katie Johnson from Menzner Hardwoods.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

a. May 21, 2025 – Public Hearing Meeting

b. May 21, 2025 – Plan Commission Meeting

MOTION – Approve Minutes from Both May 21, 2025 Public Hearing and Plan Commission Meetings

Motion made by Stieber second by Telford. Motion passed by voice vote.

5. NEW BUSINESS

a. Review and Possible Action on Request by Clayton & Samuel Phillips for Rezoning of Parcel 151-2806-073-9981 from Agriculture (A) to Rural Residential (R-4)

A Public Hearing was held prior to the Plan Commission meeting to discuss the possible rezoning of parcel 151-2806-073-9981. There were no public obligations or comments on this matter. Board members had little discussion to approve the rezoning.

MOTION – Approve Request by Clayton & Samuel Phillips for Rezoning of Parcel 151-2806-073-9981 from Agricultural (A) to Rural Residential (R-4)

Motion made by Cherek second by Stieber. Motion passed by voice vote.

b. Review and Possible Action on Setback Variance on parcel 151-2806-073-9981

A Public Hearing was held prior to the Plan Commission meeting regarding the setback variance for parcel 151-2806-073-9981 with no comments from the public. After some discussion Board Members determined it was not possible to approve a variance without knowing where a lot split would occur. It was decided that there would be no action taken on this Agenda Item and the homeowners would need to follow Village Ordinance 13.5.9(3) going forward.

c. Discussion and Possible Action on Proposed Modifications to the Development Plan by PJM Investments LLC / Menzner Hardwoods Co.

Administrator Cherek furnished a proposal for changes to the Menzner Lumber development in the North Industrial Park. The original approved design had a 2-tone gray color scheme, the new design proposed a

single dark gray panel to cover the building. The front façade would not change. Additional changes to be approved include the roof height lowering in Phase 1, air conditioning units previously planned to be mounted on roof would now be on the ground in a fenced in area, and an overall building downsize from approximately 105,000 square feet to around 90,000-100,000 square feet.

Cherek confirmed that the approved Conditional Use Permit would not need to change for these modifications to be approved.

Katie Johnson from Menzner Hardwoods assured the Board that the commitment to the Village for taxes will be met. The tax base is based on cost of the building, not the size, therefore the downsize would not affect taxes. She assured there is no change to the Phase 2 future development plans.

MOTION – Approve Proposed Modifications to the Development Plan by PJM Investments LLC / Menzner Hardwoods Co.

Motion made by Stieber second by Olbrantz. Motion passed by voice vote.

6. ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS & SCHEDULED MEETINGS:

- a. Scheduled as Needed

7. ADJOURNMENT at 5:42 pm

Motion to adjourn made by Telford second by Ahrens. Motion passed by voice vote.

Cassie Lang
Clerk/Deputy Treasurer

NORTH CENTRAL WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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SERVING ADAMS, FOREST, JUNEAU, LANGLADE, LINCOLN, MARATHON, ONEIDA, PORTAGE, VILAS AND WOOD COUNTIES

MEMORANDUM:

To: Village of Marathon City Plan Commission
From: Eric Sonnleitner
Re: Marathon City Comprehensive Plan First Meeting
Date: April 21, 2026

Tasks for us at the April 28, 2026 Comprehensive Plan Meeting:

1. Overview of the plan update process.
2. Review and recommendation of a public participation plan.
3. Review of the existing comprehensive plan.
4. Review of Chapters 1-3 (Demographics, Natural Resources, and Housing) and related maps.
5. Discussion of planning issues.

Please review the attached sample public participation plan. We can discuss any other ideas to involve the public in the process at the meeting.

Also think about the existing comprehensive plan and suggestions on how to make it better and more useful to the Village. Was the plan used regularly to prioritize improvements or to evaluate developments? Why or why not? Is there any information that would be useful to the Village in planning for the future that is missing?

Please review the draft chapters, the issues identified (these are identified from the Village's previous comprehensive plan) and think about the planning issues you think the Village is currently facing, will be facing in the near future, and will be facing over the next 20 years. These issues could include additional parks or recreation space, transportation issues, economic development, land use, housing, etc. We will discuss whether the existing issues still apply, and whether there are new issues facing the community.

Review the map for accuracy and think about any additional mapping information that would be useful to the community or the planning effort.

Please contact me if you have any questions prior to the meeting.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2026-04-01A
ADOPTION OF THE VILLAGE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN (PPP)**

THE VILLAGE OF MARATHON CITY DOES HEREBY RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

WHEREAS, the Village is updating its Comprehensive Plan as outlined in Wisconsin Statutes; and


WHEREAS, public participation is critical for the development of a plan; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary for the Village Board to approve a process to involve the public in the planning effort; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Village Board does approve and authorize the Public Participation Plan as attached to this resolution.


This 1st day of April, 2026.

APPROVED



Kurt Handrick, Jr., Village President

ATTEST



Cassie Lang, Clerk / Deputy Treasurer

Village of Marathon Village Public Participation Plan (PPP)

The Village of Marathon City recognizes the importance of public participation in the planning process. As such, a goal during the comprehensive planning process will be to inform and involve the public in the planning process.

I. Plan Development:

Throughout the plan process, the Plan Commission will provide oversight for the update of the Comprehensive Plan. The Plan Commission will also recommend adoption of the Public Participation Plan to the Village Board.

The public participation plan will incorporate the following:

1. All meetings for the planning process will be posted and open to the public.
2. Plan related materials will be available at the Village Hall for review by the public.
3. The draft plan and maps will be available on a website for review by the public.
4. A public hearing will be held to solicit comment from the public.
5. The Comprehensive Plan will be distributed as outlined in state statute.

The Plan Commission will review and recommend adoption of the Comprehensive Plan to the Village Board.

II. Implementation, Evaluation & Update:

The Comprehensive Plan will be used as a general guideline for development in the Village. The plan will support the existing zoning and other regulations that the Village has in place.

As with all plans, it is critical for the Comprehensive Plan to be maintained and updated on a regular basis to keep it current as things change.

Any planning process is subject to change, and this public participation plan is no different. Over the planning period the process may vary from that presented.

Chapter 1

Demographics

Background

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

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

Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning Law

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

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

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

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

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

How to Use this Plan

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

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

Planning Process

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

Public Participation

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

Community Vision

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

Goals, Objectives, & Actions

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

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

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

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

DRAFT

Demographics

Population and Households

Historical Trends

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

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

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

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

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

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

Projections

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

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

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

Source: WI DOA Official Population Projections

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

Source: WI DOA Official Population Projections

Age Characteristics

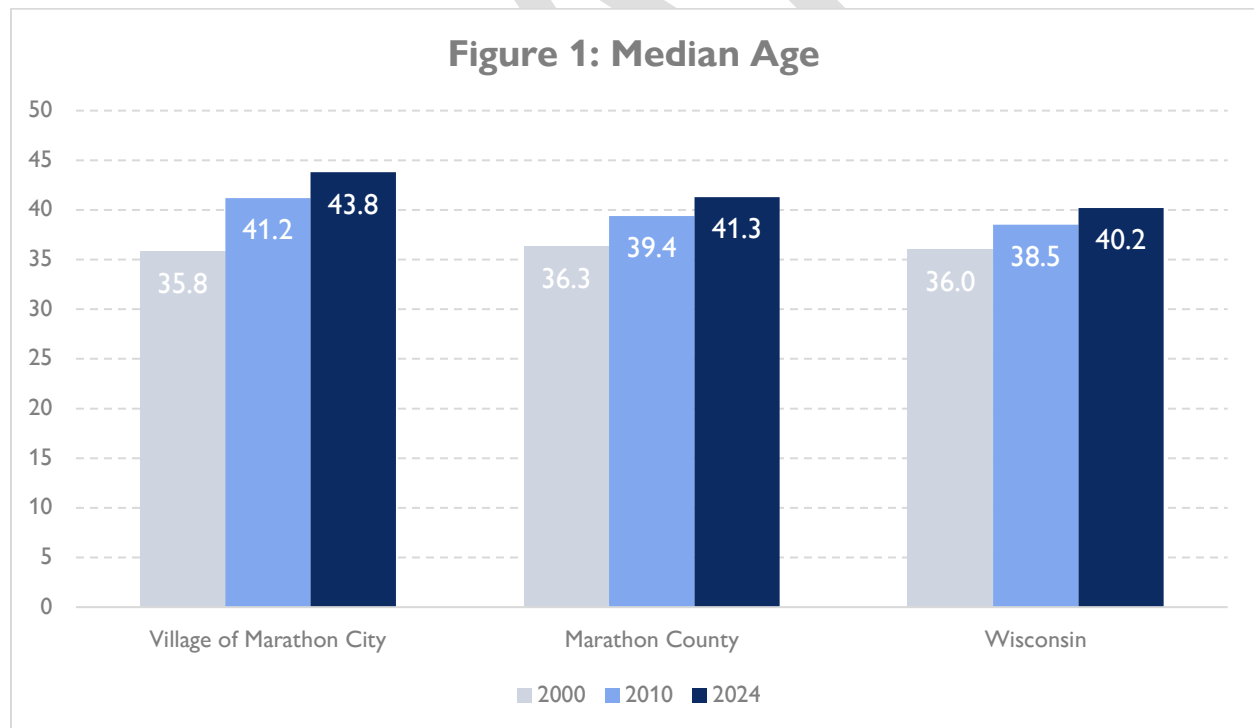
As shown in **Figure 1**, the median age in the Village of Marathon City was 43.8 in 2024, higher than it was in 2010 (41.2). The Village of Marathon City’s median age of 43.8 was higher than the median age in both Marathon County (41.3) and Wisconsin (40.2) as a whole in 2024. Two age groups are particularly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

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

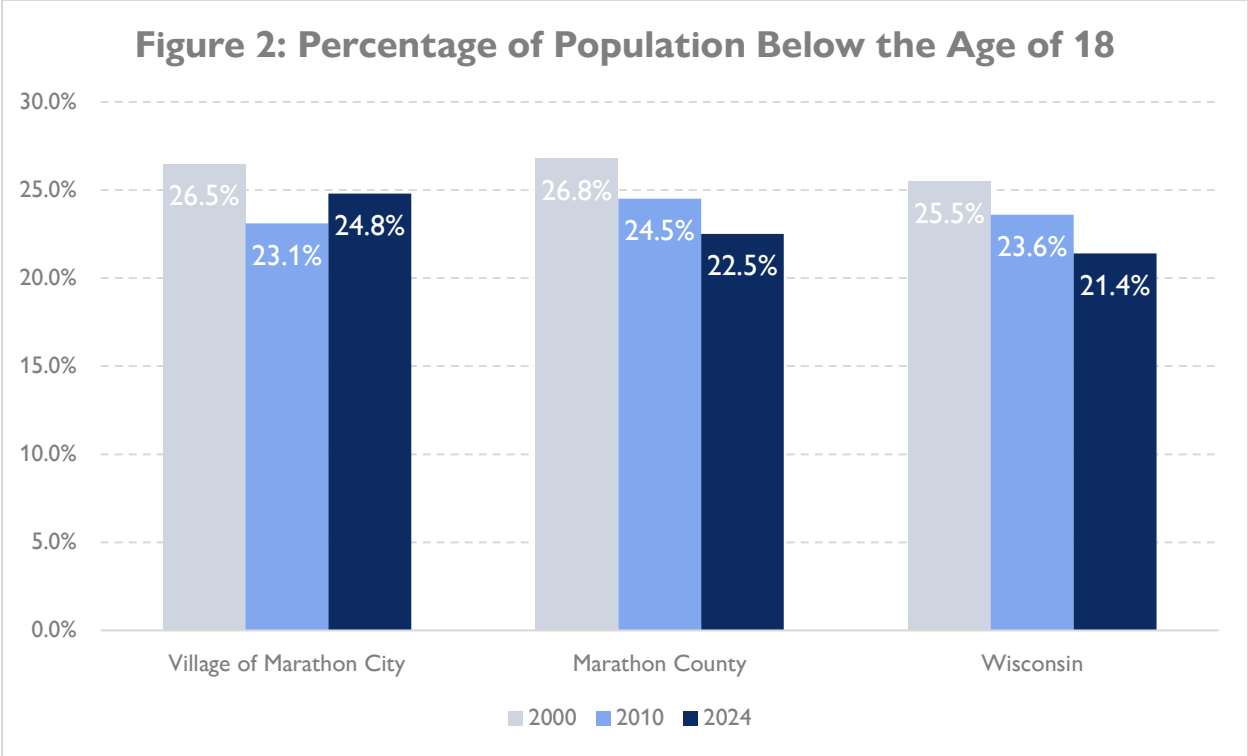
Between 2000 and 2024, the proportion of the population that was age 17 and younger within the Village of Marathon City decreased from about 26.5 percent in 2000 to about 24.8 percent in 2024, as shown in **Figure 2**. The percentage of the population below the age of 18 also decreased in Marathon County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

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

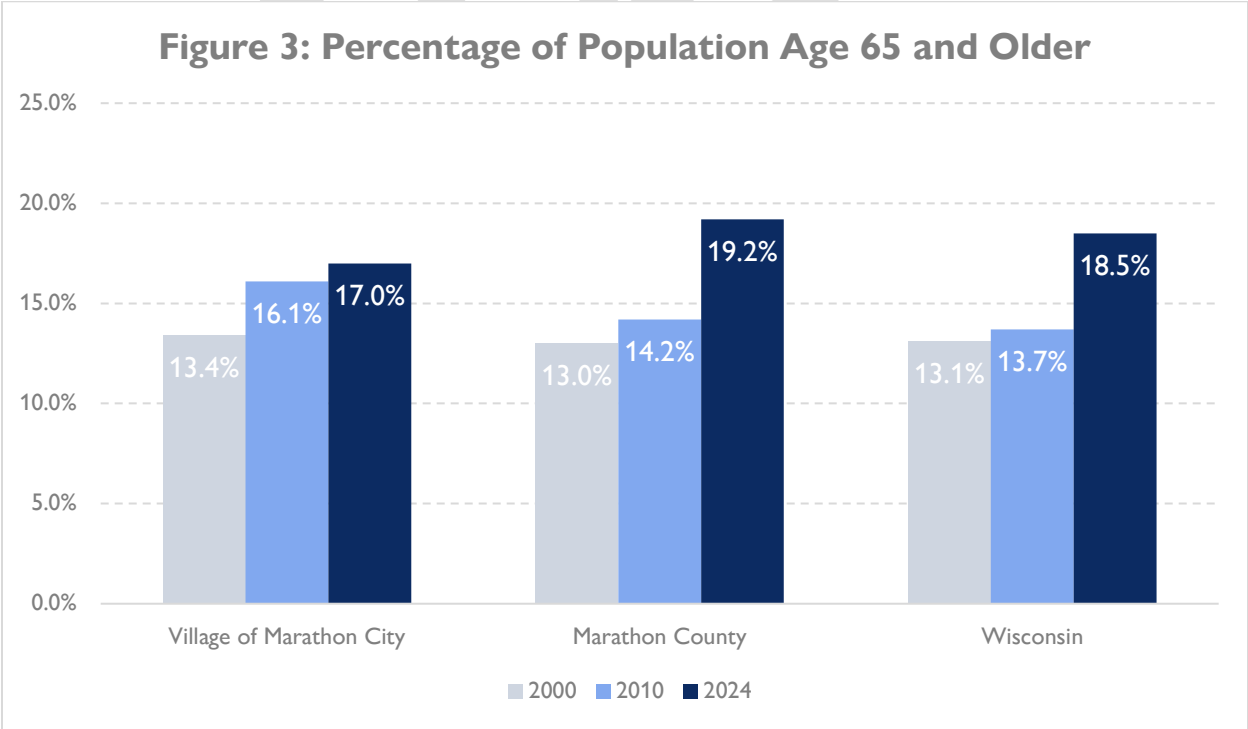
Due to longer life expectancy and the size of the Baby Boomer generation, the 65 and older age group is expected to continue to increase in size. The trend is occurring at the state and national levels and to an even greater degree within the rural Wisconsin counties, especially in the northern one-third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



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

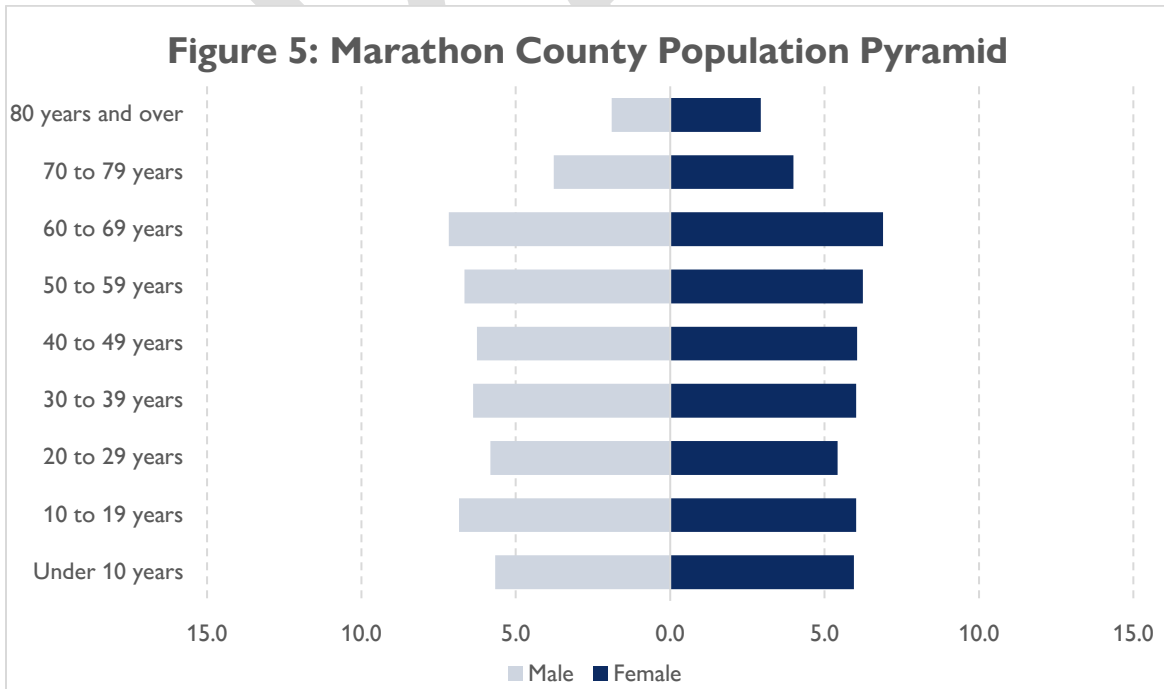
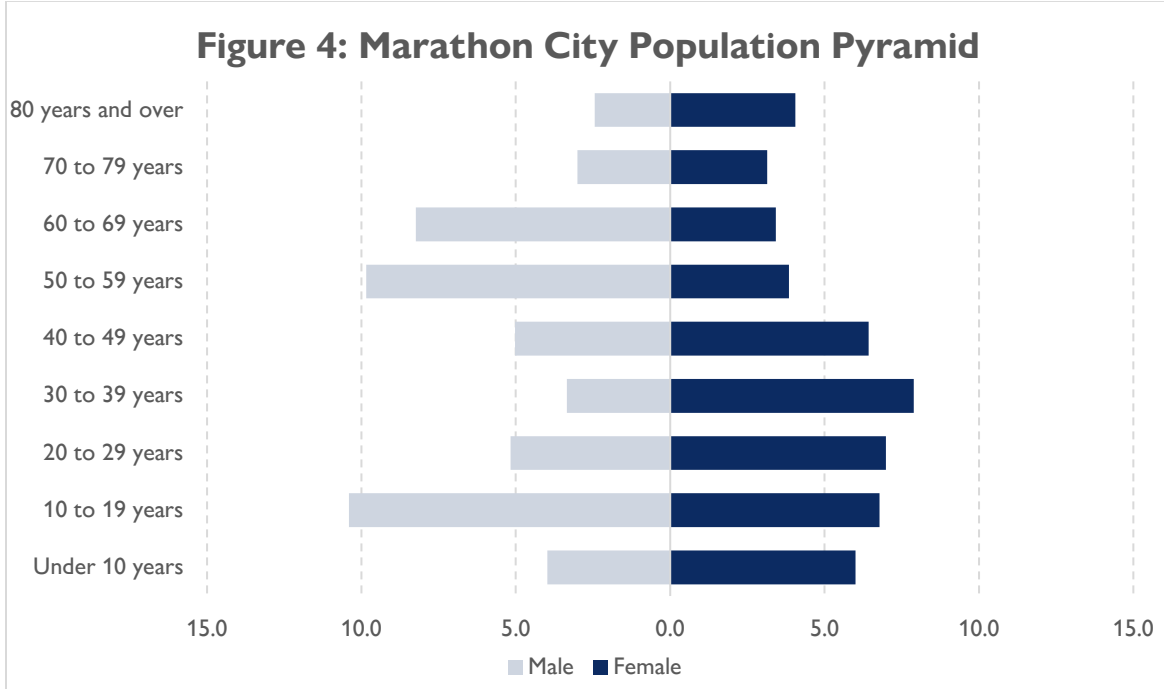


Source: U.S. Census & ACS 2020-2024



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

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



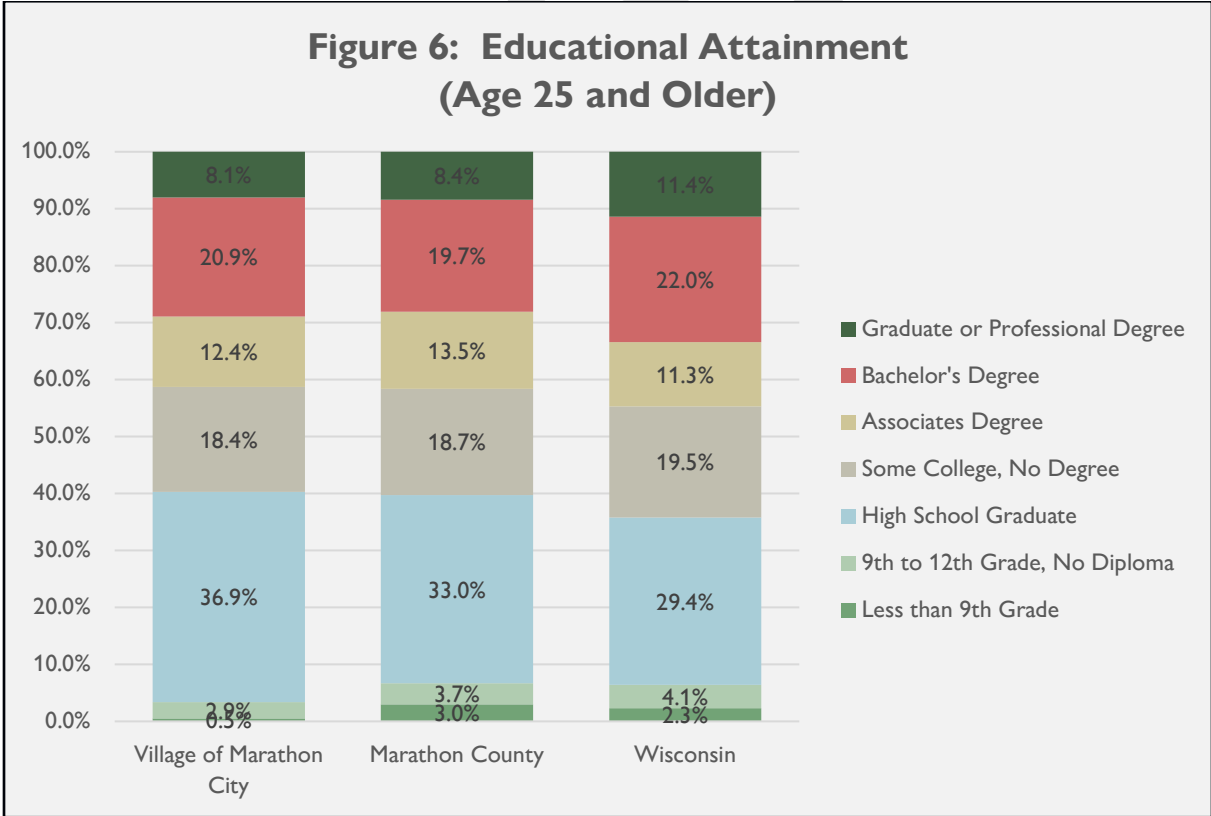
Education and Income Levels

Education

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

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

Source: American Community Survey 2020-2024



Source: American Community Survey (2020-2024)

Income

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

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

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

Table 6: Median Household Income

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

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

*: Adjusted for inflation

Table 7: Per Capita Income

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

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

*: Adjusted for inflation

Employment Characteristics

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

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

Table 8: Labor Force Characteristics

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

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

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

Table 9: Employment

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

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

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

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

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



Demographic Snapshot

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

Chapter 2

Natural 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 to 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. Natural resources covered in this chapter include biology, geology, and geography including terrain, soils, water, forests, wetlands, wildlife, and habitat.

Cultural resources include a community's heritage, archaeological sites and cemeteries, historic buildings and landscapes, historic transportation routes, or traditional cultural properties important to indigenous peoples or other cultural groups. Cultural resources also include arts and the way of life in a community. Cultural resources are those elements around us that signify our heritage and help to evoke the sense of place that makes an area distinct.

Previous 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.

[Marathon County Land and Water Resource Management Plan, 2021-2030](#)

The Marathon County Land and Water Resource Management Plan outlines a comprehensive strategy for the implementation of soil and water conservation in Marathon County from 2021 to 2030. The Land Conservation and Zoning Committee identified the following long-term program outcomes for the natural resource protection efforts in Marathon County:

1. Land Use activities are well planned to enhance community development, minimize conflicts, maximize infrastructure investments and protect rural character.
2. Improve and protect the surface and ground water assets to enhance public health and safety, recreational opportunities and economic development.
3. Maintain the soil and water resources as productive assets through topsoil and organic matter conservation.
4. Marathon County agriculture and woodlot producers are economically strong.

Marathon County Farmland Preservation Plan, 2024-2033

The Marathon County Farmland Preservation Plan is required under Chapter 91 of the Wisconsin Statutes. The purpose of this plan is to guide and manage the preservation of farmland and agricultural production capacity. There are an abundance of agricultural areas in close proximity to the Village, making this program of overall importance to the County in general and may have an impact on Village residents and visitors, for example, related to emerging trends such as the local foods movement.

Marathon County Forest Ten-Year Comprehensive Use Plan, 2021-2035

The Marathon County Forest Ten-Year Comprehensive Use Plan is a management guide for the Marathon County Forest and is updated every ten years. The mission of the plan is to manage and protect natural resources on a sustainable basis for the ecological, economic, educational, recreational, and research needs of present and future residents throughout the County. The report includes a number of recommendations for timber management, wildlife habitat and game management, land acquisition and forest boundary management, biodiversity management, watershed management and tourism.

Marathon County Groundwater Protection Guide, 2001

The Groundwater Protection Guide was an extension of a 1988 groundwater plan. In April 2001, the guide was created to assist county and local officials in setting policy related to groundwater. It also serves as a resource for information about groundwater and strategies to address issues related to groundwater protection. The County is considering a new groundwater planning effort.

USGS Protecting Wisconsin's Groundwater through Comprehensive Planning, 2007

In a joint effort by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the University of Wisconsin System and the U.S. Geological Survey, a website has been made available with data and information on geology, general hydrology and groundwater quantity and quality. The website was developed to aid government officials and planners in addressing groundwater in their comprehensive plans. The most recent data available for Marathon County was published in 2007. The full Marathon County report is available on the website: <https://wi.water.usgs.gov/gwcomp/find/marathon/index.html>.

Natural Resources

The environmental features and assets that are examined in this plan include water, wetlands, floodplains, soils, and woodlands. Protection of certain natural features is necessary for the environment and for future generations. Certain environmental features and assets have more than merely aesthetic and leisure-time activity values; they are essential to long-term preservation of life, health, and general welfare.

A large area of wetland and floodplains surrounds the Big Rib River which flows through the Village between the originally platted section of the Village and the newer developments along STH 29. While this poses some constraints on development, the river contributes to the natural character of the Village. Topography also affects the natural character of the Village, as Main Street climbs up a hill. See the **Natural Resources Map**.

Surface Water

Marathon County contains abundant water resources. Many have remained in a fairly pristine state, and others need focused efforts to improve water quality. Surface water resources help replenish the groundwater as part of the hydrologic cycle. Under natural conditions, the aquifers generally receive clean water from rainfall percolating through the overlying soils. However, contamination of groundwater reserves can result from runoff and pollution. Protection of these groundwater reserves is necessary to ensure adequate water for domestic, agricultural, and commercial uses. If groundwater is not protected, contamination could result, endangering the quality and supply of water in the Village.

The major surface water feature in the Marathon City is the Big Rib River and its tributaries, which run through the Village.

Watersheds

The Village of Marathon City is geographically located in what the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has named the Central Wisconsin Basin, which is a subset of the entire Wisconsin River corridor located in Central Wisconsin. The Central Wisconsin Basin extends south from the Merrill Dam located on the Wisconsin River in Lincoln County to the Castle Rock Flowage Dam in Juneau and Adams Counties. The Central Wisconsin River Basin is comprised of 29 watersheds, including the Lower Big Rib River watershed which includes the Village of Marathon City. A watershed is an area of land that is drained by a waterway that flows to a lake, reservoir, or river. The watershed boundary line is defined as a topographic dividing line from which surface streams flow in two different directions.

Floodplains

Floodplains are formally designated areas that experience flooding during a 100-year storm event. The floodplain consists of the “floodway” and the “flood fringe”. The “floodway” is defined as the channel of a river or stream and those portions of the floodplain adjoining the channel required to carry the regional flood discharge. The “flood fringe” is defined as the portion of the floodplain outside of the floodway which is covered by floodwaters during the regional flood and is generally associated with standing water rather than rapidly flowing water.

Development can occur within the flood fringe with appropriate flood proofing or elevation measures. Such measures may provide some relief from flood insurance premiums. Within the floodway, only open uses that do not obstruct flood flow are allowed.

Floodplain areas are based on information compiled by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM). See the Natural Resources map. The floodplain includes the floodway and the flood fringe. Areas within the 100-year floodplain are located near the Big Rib River. Within the Village, several residential dwellings exist within the DFIRM floodplain along River Road. The Village has a long-term desire to have no residential uses within the floodplain and have that land be integrated into the nearby park.

Wetlands

Some areas of wetlands are concentrated around the Big Rib River and the various other streams in the Village, see the **Natural Resources Map**. Wetlands are defined as those areas between terrestrial and aquatic systems where the water table is at, near, or above the land surface for a significant part of most years. Soils in wetland areas are usually saturated during the growing season within a few inches of the surface. The presence of wetlands in an area can limit the type of development that can occur.

Wetlands perform many indispensable roles in the proper function of the hydrologic cycle and local ecological systems. In a natural condition, wetlands control floodwater by moderating peak flows and acting as groundwater recharge sites. All wetlands have valuable water purification capabilities and make significant contributions to surface and groundwater quality. They act as settling areas for inflowing streams and help reduce water nutrients through uptake of these compounds into plant tissues. Wetlands also have a buffering effect on water acidity or alkalinity and are helpful in the elimination of harmful bacteria which may be found in surface or groundwater. They are breeding and nesting grounds for waterfowl and other animals that depend on aquatic habitats. Wetlands also serve as important recreation, education, and aesthetic resources for communities.

Groundwater

Groundwater is the major source of all water consumption in the Village of Marathon City. The Village operated water utility sources water from three wells on the north side of the Rib River. Depth to groundwater in the Village is mostly shallow and of ample quantity for the current level of development and use. Groundwater quality is affected by surface runoff contamination.

Land Resources

Marathon County's terrain is primarily the result of glaciation. The central area, except for the Wisconsin River Valley, is a mixed terrain of ground moraines and uplands underlain by bedrock at a depth of 2 to 20 feet. Pre-settlement this area was dominated by wetlands, which were drained to make way for agriculture. This area is characterized by a flat to gently rolling landscape, with large tracts of contiguous farmland and forest in the wetter areas and along streams.

Non-Metallic Mining

Non-metallic mines are important sources of locally used construction aggregate and also produce value added stone products (such as shingle aggregate, decorative stone, architectural stone, and railroad ballast) that are marketed regionally and nationally. Local non-metallic mines help to keep construction and infrastructure development costs low by minimizing the high transportation costs of these necessary materials. There are currently three non-metallic mines within the Village of Marathon City.

A non-metallic mining ordinance requires reclamation of mining sites to a purposeful and acceptable landscape appearance and use. The Village recently adopted a non-metallic mining reclamation ordinance to oversee reclamations at the local level.

Woodlands

Woodlands account for approximately 17 percent of total land area in the Village. The woodland areas are concentrated along the Big Rib River. Woodland areas provide protection for environmentally sensitive areas, such as steep slopes, shorelands, wetlands, and flood plains. In addition, expansive woodland areas provide recreational opportunities, aesthetic benefits, and economic development.

Wildlife Resources and Habitat

Wildlife resources include a variety of game and non-game species of birds, mammals, fish, reptiles and amphibians that typically live in Marathon County. Common types of wildlife include deer, wild turkeys, raccoon, squirrels, songbirds, waterfowl and raptors. Wildlife resources are abundant in the many undisturbed sanctuaries, refuges, reserves, and scattered habitats located throughout the County. Numerous other species of migrating birds use habitat in Marathon County for food, shelter, and resting stops during seasonal migration.

There is a significant amount of wildlife habitat in Marathon County. In addition to County parks and forest units, major wildlife habitat areas include: the George W. Mead Wildlife Area, the McMillan Marsh State Wildlife Management Area, and Rib Mountain State Park.

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. As of March 2026, NHI tracked only one species with a special status – the Blanding's Turtle - within the Village.

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.

Soils & Agricultural Resources

The United States Department of Agriculture's Conservation Service has an online survey which provides soil data and maps. Four soil groups comprise 63 percent of all soils within the Village, with other soils types represented in very small amounts. The four large soil groups are Fenwood-Rozellville silt loam (27.5%), Fenwood silt loam (16.2%), Dunnville fine sandy loam (10.1%), and Rietbrock silt loam (8.2%).

Soils can also be categorized according to other factors, such as how drained they are on a scale of Excessively Drained to Very Poorly Drained. Another method for categorizing soils is by how good they are for agricultural uses. Over half of the Village contains Class 1 prime farm soils. Class 1 soils are the best soils in Marathon County for growing all crops. The "prime farm soils" designation given to Class 1 soils indicates that these soils are good for productive farmland. While most of the Village contains soils that offer prime conditions for farming purposes, that does not mean that all of this land is currently being utilized for farming purposes, as only about 17.5 percent of the Village's land is currently being used for farming purposes.

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. Contaminated sites originate when a property is used for such activities as a gas station, industrial processing facility, a landfill, or a laundromat.

There are currently two sites listed as open (indicating they are in need of remediation) on the BRRTS database and 21 sites listed as closed (indicating they have been remediated to DNR standards) within the Village of Marathon City. An additional six contaminated sites within the Village required no action. The current open sites located within the Village are located at 409 Pine St and 800 4th St.

Several agencies such as the WI DNR, WEDC, and EPA all offer funding and assistance programs for cleaning up brownfields and contaminated sites. The DNR maintains a list of brownfield resources here: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Brownfields/Financial.html>.

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Historical and Cultural Resources

Cultural resources are features that signify a community's heritage and help to evoke the sense of place that makes an area distinctive. 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.

The Marathon City Heritage Center serves as a historical and education site to collect Marathon City's cultural and historical assets, records, artifacts, data and stories so they are inventoried, protected and preserved, and shared with the community and public. The center is a vibrant resource for Marathon City where people celebrate community pride and share the history and continued growth of the Village and the surrounding area.

Community History

Marathon City, which began as the main settlement within the Town of Marathon, was among the earliest settled communities in Marathon County. A group of mill workers in Pittsburgh, known as the Pittsburgh German Homestead Society, banded together in 1856 to purchase land in Wisconsin. Armed with deposits of \$100 per worker, representatives arrived in Stevens Point and purchased 3,000 acres in what later became the Towns of Marathon and Cassel. The settlers followed in 1857 and took steamboats from Stevens Point to Mosinee, then continued their journey with American Indian guides to Marathon.

The site of Marathon City, platted as a village in 1857, was heavily forested. The new residents attempted to build a sawmill and dam the Rib River at Marathon City, but the river's swift current prevented any success. However, Henry Fricke, who came to Marathon City in 1870, built a successful gristmill and sawmill that became the industrial center for the Village and fostered its growth. This business evolved into the Menzner Sawmill and Lumberyard, still in business in Marathon City. When lumbering declined as the primary economic activity, Marathon City became a service center for surrounding farmers.

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 is one property in the Village that is listed on the National and State Registers of Historic Place: the Fricke-Menzner House at 105 Main Street. The Fricke-Menzner House is significant for its association with Henry Fricke, early mill developer in Marathon City, and Phillip Menzner, lumber businessman and civic leader. The Italianate house, built by Fricke in 1875 and later occupied by Menzner, is significant as the only surviving Italianate style house in Marathon City.

The Wisconsin Historical Society maintains the Wisconsin Architecture & History Inventory (AHI) that identifies any properties that may have been surveyed in the past; the Inventory does not convey special status and may not be current. There are 32 historic properties in Marathon City that have been previously surveyed and included in the AHI. The full list is available on the Wisconsin Historical Society's webpage. It is important to note that the AHI lists historical records of surveyed properties and does not reflect the current standing of the properties. Some of the once historical buildings in Marathon City no longer exist, but the list reflects their once historic status and preserves a record of the buildings that were once present in the Village.

Natural, Agricultural, and Cultural Resources Programs

There are a variety of programs available to the Village related to natural, agricultural, and cultural resources. Some of these 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.

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.

Parks and Recreation Program

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

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. 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 — 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.

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.

The Central Wisconsin Groundwater Center allows residents in Central Wisconsin to determine the safety of their well water by providing the opportunity to have their well water tested. Residents can send in water samples of their well water to any state-certified testing laboratory, including the Water and Environmental Analysis Lab at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, which houses the Central Wisconsin Groundwater Center.

Aquatic Habitat Protection Program

The WDNR provides basic aquatic habitat protection services through their staff. 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.

Endangered Resources Program

The DNR'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.

Wildlife Management Program

The DNR'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 DNR 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.

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. NRCS provides funding opportunities for agricultural producers and other landowners through these programs:

- Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)
- Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA)
- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) by USDA's Farm Service Agency
- Healthy Forests Reserve Program
- Regional Conservation Partnership Program
- Small, Limited, and Beginning Farmer Assistance
- Working Lands for Wildlife

Wetlands Reserve Program

The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) is a voluntary program which was established to restore wetlands on lands which were previously altered for agricultural use. The program is administered by the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service in consultation with the Farm Service Agency and other federal agencies.

Land is eligible for enrollment in the WRP if the landowner has owned that land for at least one year, and the land is restorable and suitable for wildlife benefits. Landowners may choose to restore wetlands with a permanent or 30-year easement, or enter into a cost-share restoration agreement with the USDA. If a permanent easement is established, the landowner will receive payment up to the agricultural value of the land and 100% of the wetland restoration costs. The 30-year easement payment is just 75% of what would be provided for a permanent easement on the same site, and 75% of the restoration costs. Voluntary cost-share restoration agreements are generally for a minimum of 10 years, and 75% of the cost of restoring the land to wetlands is provided. In all instances, landowners continue to control access to their land.

Discovery Farms Program

Discovery Farms is a program administered by UW-Extension that works with over 40 farmers across the state of Wisconsin. 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." On-Farm projects fall under one of the following categories: Nitrogen Use Efficiency, Tile Monitoring, Leachate Collection Systems, Watershed water quality, and Edge-of-Field Runoff Monitoring.

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.

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.

The Marathon County Historical Society is available to assist Village residents with preserving their own history, and artifacts that also build upon the history in Marathon County. Their mission is to collect, preserve, and exhibit materials related to the history of Marathon County, and to use those materials to help people learn about North Central Wisconsin, connect with their roots, and explore their own historical connections.

Natural Resources and Cultural Resources Issues

- **Big Rib River** – The unpredictability of the River can cause difficulties. The River floods often and is not always navigable. The River could be a great local asset, but it would require clean up and new signage to be safe.
- **Topography Limits Building Sites** – Topographic relief as well as floodplain boundaries limit where urban development can occur. Some areas in the Village are very hilly and rocky making construction more difficult.
- **No Recognition Process** – There is no process to recognize historic buildings or begin to plan for their protection. Once historic properties are identified, the Village does not have an established mechanism for recognizing them or integrating them into ongoing planning processes.
- **Rural Character and Historic Resources** – Residents in Marathon City have expressed a strong desire to preserve the small town character of the community. An important part of rural character is the small town landscape and the buildings that convey that sense of place. While it is important to address the location and type of new development, there is also a need to preserve some visible reminders of small town character.

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Goals, Objectives & Policies

Natural and Cultural Resources Goal: The Village of Marathon City manages natural and cultural resources in a balanced way for current and future generations' health, enjoyment, and benefit.

1. Maintain good groundwater quality.
 - a. Evaluate water quality levels on a periodic basis.
 - b. Report instances of possible groundwater contamination to the DNR.
 - c. Enhance monitoring efforts in areas thought to contain possible contamination hazards.
2. Maintain good water quality in existing river and stream corridors.
 - a. Set policies to limit uncontrolled runoff, overuse of fertilizers, and other waterway contaminants to surface water.
 - b. Monitor water quality reports from the State.
 - c. Discourage development in areas that will affect surface water resources through increased runoff, loss of vegetation, or improper landscaping.
3. Protect wetlands and floodplains from the encroachment of development.
 - a. Establish local guidelines for development located near wetland areas including type and use.
 - b. Communicate and work with the DNR regarding wetland protection and regulations.
 - c. Encourage the elimination of residential uses from within the floodplain.
4. Ensure that development on slopes does not negatively affect the Village.
 - a. Utilize the review process to ensure that only appropriate developments are built on slopes.
 - b. Ensure that scenic vistas and viewshed provided by slopes are not negatively impacted by development.
 - c. Monitor stormwater management systems in sloped areas for appropriate design capacity.
5. Preserve historically significant buildings and sites.
 - a. Work with the local historical society and/or the County Historical Society to identify historic resources.
 - b. Ensure that any known cemeteries, human burials, or archaeological sites are protected from encroachment by development activities.

Chapter Three

Housing

Housing characteristics and trends are important components of comprehensive planning. The physical location of housing can determine the need of 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 Plans and Studies

Wausau Metropolitan Area Regional Housing Assessment, 2022

Eight communities (including the Village of Marathon City) in the Wausau Metropolitan Area and Marathon County worked with the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) to produce this report in response to growing concerns over housing affordability.

Housing affordability affects the region's quality of life and ability to compete economically, and it affects the health, safety, and happiness of the region'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.

The assessment identifies the following top five strategies that all of the communities included in this report, including the Village of Marathon City, should consider:

- Amend zoning ordinances that enable a greater variety of housing units and prices.
- Amend subdivision ordinances to allow for smaller lot sizes.
- Reach out to developers, agencies, and nonprofits to increase housing supply.
- Educating the community about the housing market.
- Updating municipal planning documents.

The assessment concludes that it is essential that the Wausau Metropolitan Area work to attract new development of all types and strategically reduce costs whenever possible to ensure households have access to housing that meets their needs.

Wausau Older Adults Housing Report, 2026

This report serves as an addendum to the 2022 Wausau Metropolitan Area Regional Housing Assessment focused specifically on the housing and infrastructure needs for those aged 55 and over. While this report focuses on the City of Wausau, data for Marathon County and a county-wide inventory of senior housing facilities are also provided in the report.

Centergy Regional Housing Study, 2025

This Regional Housing Study focuses on housing needs for the region's workforce by analyzing existing conditions and providing recommendations that lead to the recommendation of a regional housing fund. The goal of this study and its subsequent housing fund is to address the gap between development costs and rent or purchase prices that the region's incomes can afford to increase the supply of housing.

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

ALICE: A Study of Financial Hardship in Wisconsin, 2025

This report, developed by the United Way, described the 32 percent of households in Marathon County that are above the federal poverty level, but still struggle to afford basic household necessities, or "ALICE" households (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed). These households are largely employed but do not earn enough in wages to meet the "household survival budget," which does not allow for any savings. The report states that many ALICE households provide vital services, such as retail, health care, childcare, and security, but cannot make ends meet on the income provided from these jobs.

Wisconsin State Consolidated Housing Plan

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."

Housing Stock Assessment

Housing Trends

In 2024, the Village of Marathon City had 584 total housing units, as shown in **Table 10**. This represents an 11 percent decrease in housing units within the Village since 2000, contrasting the significant growth in housing units experienced by both Marathon County and Wisconsin during this time.

Table 10: Total Housing Units						
Minor Civil Division	2000	2010	2020	2024	2000-2024 % Change	2010-2024 % Change
Village of Marathon City	658	680	695	584	-11.2%	-14.1%
Town of Cassel	289	341	342	431	49.1%	26.4%
Town of Marathon	375	415	410	461	22.9%	11.1%
Town of Rib Falls	309	362	354	343	11.0%	-5.2%
Town of Stettin	801	1,057	1,009	921	15.0%	-12.9%
Marathon County	50,360	57,734	59,828	60,910	20.9%	5.5%
Wisconsin	2,321,144	2,593,073	2,734,511	2,778,572	19.7%	7.2%

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

Housing Type and Tenure

Table 11 describes the Village’s housing stock by type and tenure. As previously stated, there were 584 total housing units within the Village of Marathon City in 2024. All of the Village’s 584 housing units were occupied. The Village of Marathon City (about 80 percent) has a higher percentage of owner-occupied homes than both Marathon County (73 percent) and Wisconsin (68 percent), meaning it has a lower proportion of renter-occupied homes than both the County and State. The average household size of 2.43 was slightly higher than both the County (2.36) and the State (2.39). Over a quarter of households within the Village were occupied by a single householder and over 44 percent of households had at least one individual age 60 and older.

	Village of Marathon City	Marathon County	Wisconsin
Total Housing Units	584	60,910	2,778,572
Total Occupied Housing Units	584	57,866	2,479,480
Vacant Housing Units	0	3,044	299,092
Seasonal Housing Units	0	744	172,842
Owner-occupied Housing Units	466	42,414	1,682,214
Renter-occupied Housing Units	118	15,452	797,266
Average Household Size	2.43	2.36	2.39
Percent Owner-occupied	79.8%	73.3%	67.8%
Percent Householder Living Alone	25.5%	28.4%	31.5%
Percent with Individuals 60 or Over	44.5%	43.1%	41.7%

Source: American Community Survey 2020-2024

Structural Characteristics

According to the 2020-2024 American Community Survey data, a majority of the housing units in the Village of Marathon City are classified as single-family, as shown in **Table 12**. The Village of Marathon City’s housing stock has a higher percentage of single-family housing, and thus a lower proportion of multi-family housing, than both Marathon County the State as a whole.

	Single-Family		Multi-Family		Mobile Home		Total
Village of Marathon City	488	83.6%	86	14.7%	10	1.7%	584
Marathon County	47,582	78.1%	11,801	19.4%	1,527	2.5%	60,910
Wisconsin	1,960,248	70.5%	732,391	26.4%	85,933	3.1%	2,778,572

Source: American Community Survey 2020-2024

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 1940’s 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. This can be seen in both the rural and more urban environments of Marathon County. Additional bedrooms, bathrooms, and attached garage space are among the amenities found in newer housing units.

Table 13 outlines build dates of housing units throughout the Village, County, and State based on 2024 American Community Survey data. Over 15 percent of the Village of Marathon City’s housing units were built before 1940, compared to about 17 percent of housing units in Marathon County and about 18 percent of housing units statewide. Over 46 percent of housing units within the Village were built between 1970 and 1999, a higher proportion than both Marathon County (about 37 percent) and Wisconsin (about 36 percent). Housing growth has slowed significantly over the past decade, as only about seven percent of the Village’s housing stock has been built since 2010, a trend that is also being experienced within Marathon County and Wisconsin. Nationwide, home supply has not been constructed to meet demand since the Great Recession of 2008, leading to increased competition and higher prices.

Table 13: Year Structure Built						
	Village of Marathon City		Marathon County		Wisconsin	
Before 1939	89	15.2%	10,024	16.5%	495,155	17.8%
1940-1949	27	4.6%	2,931	4.8%	146,155	5.3%
1950-1959	59	10.1%	5,755	9.4%	285,081	10.3%
1960-1969	59	10.1%	5,009	8.2%	262,558	9.4%
1970-1979	135	23.1%	8,885	14.6%	394,494	14.2%
1980-1989	52	8.9%	5,813	9.5%	262,669	9.5%
1990-1999	84	14.4%	7,784	12.8%	347,567	12.5%
2000-2009	34	5.8%	9,538	15.7%	347,953	12.5%
2010 or Later	45	7.7%	5,171	8.5%	236,940	8.5%
Total	584	100.0%	60,910	100.0%	2,778,572	100.0%

Source: American Community Survey 2020-2024

Value Characteristics

Table 14 details housing values in owner-occupied homes throughout the Village, County, and State. In 2024, the median housing value was \$198,200 in the Village of Marathon City. This was lower than Marathon County’s median housing value of \$219,600, and significantly lower than the State of Wisconsin’s median home value of \$266,500. Over 44 percent of the homes within the Village are valued between \$100,000 and \$199,999, and an additional 49 percent of the Village’s housing stock is valued at over \$200,000.

Table 14: Housing Values of Owner-Occupied Units, 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
V. Marathon City	2.6%	4.3%	19.3%	24.9%	27.7%	21.2%	\$198,200
Marathon County	3.6%	7.3%	14.1%	18.6%	28.5%	27.9%	\$219,600
Wisconsin	4.0%	5.1%	8.9%	14.1%	25.5%	42.4%	\$266,500

Source: American Community Survey 2020-2024

Housing Affordability

Several factors contribute to the affordability of housing in Marathon County. These factors include rent and mortgage payments, maintenance expenses, lot size, and required or desired amenities for the dwelling. Household size and income are key factors contributing to what housing options are available and accessible to residents.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban (HUD) development recommends that housing costs do not exceed 30 percent of monthly income. If housing costs exceed 30 percent of monthly income, a household is considered cost-burdened. HUD also indicates that lenders are more willing to make loans if the scheduled mortgage payment is no greater than 31 percent of the monthly household income. Low-income households that pay more than 30 percent of their income toward rent may have difficulty affording other household necessities such as food, childcare, and healthcare costs. Severely cost-burdened households are at risk of becoming homeless.

Table 15 shows the affordability of housing for owner-occupied households. In 2024, about nine percent of owner-occupied households with a mortgage in the Village of Marathon City were considered cost burdened. This percentage is significantly lower than both the County and the State. Only about four percent of owner-occupied households without a mortgage were considered cost burdened, which is also significantly lower than both the County and State.

Table 16 shows the affordability of housing for renter-occupied households. In 2024, over 31 percent of renter-occupied households in the Village were considered cost burdened, a lower percentage of households than both the County and the State.

Table 15: Housing Affordability (Owner-Occupied Units)				
	With Mortgage	Percent Cost-Burdened	No Mortgage	Percent Cost-Burdened
Village of Marathon City	\$1,345	8.8%	\$645	4.4%
Marathon County	\$1,463	17.7%	\$589	9.8%
Wisconsin	\$1,689	22.5%	\$659	12.6%

Source: American Community Survey 2020-2024

*Cost-Burdened means a household is paying more than 30% of their income towards housing costs

Table 16: Housing Affordability (Renter-Occupied Units)		
	Median Gross Rent	Percent Cost-Burdened
Village of Marathon City	\$853	31.5%
Marathon County	\$999	42.0%
Wisconsin	\$1,087	43.7%

Source: American Community Survey 2020-2024

*Cost-Burdened means a household is paying more than 30% of their income towards housing costs

Specialized Housing

In Marathon County, housing for seniors and populations with special needs is primarily provided in the urbanized areas in and around Wausau. The Marathon County Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRC), the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, and the Marathon County United Way all maintain a list of these housing options throughout Marathon County. As the number of elderly populations increases in the coming years, there will most likely be a greater need for a wider variety of housing options.

Senior Housing

Housing for seniors typically consists of a range of housing options that provide a spectrum of assistance starting with individual units or homes with little or no assistance, independent living communities for seniors that remain independent, assisted living facilities for those who are no longer able to live on their own, and nursing homes for those that need skilled medical care. According to research by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the overwhelming majority of seniors prefer to “age in place,” or remain in their home throughout retirement.

Within the Village of Marathon City, two organizations provide senior housing and assisted living options. Copperleaf Assisted Living and Parkview Apartments are facilities which provide trained staff, personal services, and social activities for residents. Additionally, Copperleaf provides dementia care, hospice, and rehabilitation services. Beyond the Village, other senior housing options can be found throughout Marathon County. The Marathon County Aging and Disability Resource Center, the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, and the Marathon County United Way all maintain a list of these housing options.

Housing Issues

Note: Additions to issues from old plan are highlighted.

- **Rising Housing Costs & Housing Supply** - Housing costs remain high in some communities, making it challenging to find housing that is affordable for people at all stages of life. These costs result from multiple factors, including land prices, building materials, insurance, code requirements, and labor. Taxes and municipal service costs (e.g., utilities, public protection) also affect overall housing affordability. While the county cannot control all these factors, it can continue to examine how county policies and ordinances may assist in improving affordability.
- **Lack of Buildable Sites** - There are few improved, available lots in the Village of Marathon City for future residential development. Steep topography in some areas also presents constraints on construction in the Village. This issue is eased by recently annexed lands.
- **Diversity in Housing Options** - There is very limited multi-family zoning within the Village. This in turn can limit the housing options for current and potential residents. However, recognizing this concern, the Plan Commission and Village Board have modified the zoning code to accommodate multi-family zoning developments in other zones.
- **Housing Condition** – The current housing stock is fairly old, with nearly 20 percent of the housing in the Village built prior to 1949. As such there are some distressed properties in need of rehabilitation. Programs such as USDA’s Section 504 Home Repair Program, USDA’s Housing Preservation Grant (HPG) program, DEHCR’s HOME Homebuyer and Rehabilitation Program, WHEDA’s Home Improvement Loan Program (HILP), and the MCDEVCO POWTS Loan Program (to be used for replacing a Private Onsite Wastewater Treatment System) are available to help homeowners with housing rehabilitation of older homes.
- **Available Housing** – The Village is in need of more quality, family housing. There are currently not many housing options for people to choose from if they desire to move to the Village.
- **Absentee Landlords** – Some housing in the Village is in need of rehabilitation. Many residents have cleaned up properties, but there remain several buildings owned by absentee landlords. These properties are often host to less than favorable activities due to lack of oversight. The Village needs to devise a strategy to deal with these properties and property owners.
- **Senior Housing & Services** - As the baby-boom population continues to age, demand for senior housing and related services will increase. Most existing senior housing is currently located in the metro areas or in rural villages, locations that provide convenient access to healthcare, shopping, and social services. It makes sense that most senior housing and associated services will continue to be concentrated in these areas. Many seniors are choosing to remain in their homes longer due to better health and increased life expectancy. This trend will increase demand for supportive services and specialized transportation. The ability to expand upon and sustain existing services will remain vital.

Housing Programs

There are a variety of state and federal housing programs geared at addressing a variety of housing issues. Grants and low interest loans are available for counties, communities, or individual homeowners and renters. The following are some housing resources administered through the state using state or federal funds that are available to participants.

Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA)

- Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC)
- Rental Assistance (Section 8) Programs
- Multifamily Loan Fund
- National Foreclosure Mitigation Counseling
- WHEDA Advantage
- FHA Advantage
- First-Time Home Buyer Advantage
- WHEDA Tax Advantage
- WHEDA Foundation Grant Program
- WHEDA Advantage Home Improvement Loan Program (HLIP)

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

- Single Family Direct Home Loans
- Single Family Home Loan Guarantees
- Mutual Self-Help Housing Technical Assistance Grants
- Rural Housing Site Loan
- Housing Preservation & Revitalization Demonstration Loans & Grants
- Housing Preservation Grants
- Multi-Family Housing Direct Loans
- Multi-Family Housing Loan Guarantees
- Multi-Family Housing Rental Assistance

State of Wisconsin Department of Administration Division of Energy, Housing and Community Resources (DEHCR)

- CDBG – Housing Regions and Small Cities Housing Revolving Loan Program
- Housing Grants and Loans
- Homelessness Assistance and Prevention
- Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA)
- HOME Homebuyer and Rehabilitation Program
- HOME Rental Housing Development (RHD)
- Tenant Based Rental Assistance Program
- Housing Cost Reduction Initiative Program (HCRI)

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

- The HUD Self-Help Homeownership Opportunity Program
- The HOME Investment Partnership Program
- Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers
- CDBG – Small Cities Program

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Goals, Objectives & Policies

Housing Goal: The Village of Marathon City has decent, safe, affordable housing options that meet the needs of all community members.

1. Encourage a greater diversity of housing types.
 - a. Develop a housing plan to inventory supply of affordable housing and identify programming to ensure proper upkeep.
 - b. Encourage development of multi-family housing units and senior living facilities.
 - c. Consider amendments to the Village's zoning ordinance that allow for more types of housing development.
 - d. Consider amendments to the Village's zoning and subdivision ordinances, such as smaller lot sizes, reduced setbacks, provision of multi-family units, and other standards that reduce barriers to constructing affordable housing.
 - e. Utilize the planning unit development (PUD) ordinance to allow for greater flexibility in residential development.
2. Improve the condition of the existing housing stock.
 - a. Encourage enforcement of building code requirements.
 - b. Explore additional program development for home improvements, such as a revolving loan fund, for exterior repairs and code enforcement.
3. Locate new residential development in appropriate areas.
 - a. Discourage development in natural, sensitive areas.
 - b. Guide new housing to locations where the extension of service provision will be easiest to deliver.
 - c. Observe the Future Land Use Plan when siting new residential developments.