



**SAREN** *shaping our future*

**Current  
Plan  
Analysis**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Current Plan Analysis is a compilation of all the planning activities the Siren area has undergone in the last 20 years. It includes plans made for the Village of Siren, Siren Area, and external plans that are relevant to the future of the community. Each plan or document has been reviewed and summarized within this Current Plan Analysis.

### Local Planning Documents

**2014 Connecting People and Businesses along the Gandy Dancer Trail:** West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission put together a project concept to enhance the economic viability of the Gandy Dancer State Trail.

**2004 Village of Siren Comprehensive Plan:** A high level guide for the future of the community with emphasis on economic development, housing, transportation, community facilities and utilities, agricultural, natural and cultural resources, and land use.

**2002 Siren Redevelopment Plan:** A plan for redevelopment following the 2001 tornado with a focus on economic and character improvements.

**2000 Land Use Plan:** The Village's first Land Use Plan following the incorporation of the Smart Growth Law in 1999.

### Local Planning Resources

**2018 - 2022 Capital Improvement Plan:** A prioritized list of public works projects and budgets for a four-year period.

**Tax Increment Financing Projects #1 & #2:** The Village of Siren has established two TIF districts to help support an industrial park and enhance the downtown corridor of the community.

**Village of Siren Façade Guidelines:** A guide to encourage facade renovation and streetscapes within designated areas that help to maintain visual continuity and retain historic integrity.

### External Plans

**Attracting and Retaining Young People as an Economic Development Strategy:** A report conducted by an Associate Professor from the University of Wisconsin focused on the Gogebic Region of Wisconsin.

**Engaging Young People to Sustain Communities, Families and Farms:** A report conducted by students through the University of Wisconsin extension system that outlines the important elements of engaging a younger demographic.

**Five Keys to Downtown Success:** A look at the simply ways in which a downtown corridor can become more resilient.

**Gaining and Maintaining Young People in Wisconsin Communities:** A report conducted by UW's Applied Population Lab focusing on the ways in which young people are attracted to and decide to stay in communities.

### Key Takeaways

The Siren area is very proactive in planning for the future. The Village has taken many steps to try and develop direction and guidance for how the community can grow and prosper. It is clear that the community has understood for many years the importance of attracting and retaining young talent but continues to seek guidance on how to accomplish that. Every plan that has been completed for the community has led to improvements and positive changes such as the implementation of an Economic Development Advisory Committee and things like the beautification efforts happening along Main Street. It is also important to note that Siren is not the only community facing challenges in attracting and retaining younger demographics. The topic has been studied at length across the nation and included with this analysis are three reports relevant to the state of Wisconsin.

The commitment to continuously plan and implement solutions by the Village is an important reason why the Village is where they are today. While there is still opportunity for growth, it is beneficial to recognize the impacts of current and past planning initiatives. Together, Siren's planning practices have helped lead to the rebuilding of State Highway 35 as a destination business corridor for residents and tourists. They have led to further investment in public spaces like Crooked Lake Park and community gardens along the Gandy Dancer State Trail. And they have worked to build the progress of the Siren Industrial park through partnerships with the Northwest Regional Planning commission. All community accomplishments are highlighted on page 5 with their corresponding goal from the 2004 Comprehensive Plan.

All in all, planning and visioning continues to help the Siren area move towards a better future. When leadership is invested in the community it can lead to stronger investment from residents, business owners and other stakeholders. Siren continues to show investment through the pursuit of planning and development projects which is a strong indication of the level of pride and commitment to the future of the community.

## LOCAL PLANS

### 2014 Connecting People and Businesses along the Gandy Dancer Trail

In 2014, the West Central Regional Planning Commission put together a project concept to enhance the transportation connections and economic opportunities the Gandy Dancer State Trail provides to the communities it exists in. The project concept was focused on the southern section of the trail that begins at Interstate Park and ends at the northern end of Burnett County in Danbury. While the project has not moved forward since 2014, the goals and objectives continue to be important and relevant to the future of the Gandy Dancer communities which includes the Village of Siren and its surrounding area.

Project Goal
Create and strengthen transportation connections that expand and enhance the Gandy Dancer Trail's role beyond recreation, and further its role as an economic and tourism driver, as well as its importance as a community transportation link.
Objectives
Strengthen the transportation linkages and "breadcrumb trail" between the Gandy Dancer, downtowns, residential neighborhoods, and other key destinations along the trail
Increase the visibility and attractiveness of the trail for area residents and visitors
Encourage trail users to leave the trail and visit downtowns and other key destinations, while increasing awareness among trail users of available amenities
Increase the pedestrian and bicycle mobility of residents by improving safe transportation connections between residential areas, critical facilities, and the Gandy Dancer. Identify opportunities to promote trail use and connectivity, and make the trail an integral part of the community's transportation work
Utilize placemaking techniques to create integrated trail connections that are welcoming, attractive, linked to vibrant places and reflect the opportunities, strengths, and identity of each community
Address shared challenges, identify common themes, and develop an action plan for enhancing trail connections and encouraging trail use throughout the overall project corridor
Provide a trail-oriented development design model that explores and enhances the trail's relationship and connections to growth areas and proposed residential subdivisions lying adjacent to or nearby the Gandy Dancer Trail for potential integration into community comprehensive plans and subdivision ordinances

**KEY TAKEAWAYS:** This project concept is a great start to further discussion on opportunities surrounding the Gandy Dancer State Trail. A challenge for Burnett County and Siren specifically is the contention that exists between silent sport groups and ATV/UTV and snowmobile groups. Currently the trail in Burnett County is not open to ATV/UTV use year-round but they are provided access when the ground is frozen and snowmobiles can traverse the trail during the winter when conditions are appropriate.

The concept of improving the economic vitality of the trail is argued on both sides by the non-motorized and motorized groups who have identified the number of dollars coming into the community through their respective user groups. If this project were continued or picked back up the Village of Siren should ensure that further study is conducted to determine what the future of the Gandy Dancer in their community should look like.

## 2004 Comprehensive Plan

In 2004, the Village of Siren actively pursued an update to their 2000 Land Use Plan. This was ahead of schedule as the state only requires comprehensive and land use plans to be updated every 10 years. With the rebuilding of the downtown area it was a critical time to ensure the future of the community was being thought through in a way that would create resilience and growth. The plan included goals and objectives for the following areas:

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

Each area of focus provided background on the current issues and opportunities to make improvements. A full list of the goals and objectives from the 2004 Comprehensive Plan can be found in Appendix A.

**KEY TAKEAWAYS:** The 2004 Comprehensive Plan really spearheaded the pursuit of economic change with the push for more tourism related businesses as well as an industrial park. The following table shows the objectives outlined in the plan that have been executed in some way since inception.

Plan Goal/Objective/Strategy	Accomplishments
Create an entity that focuses on economic development issues in the Village of Siren	In 2018 the Village established the Siren Economic Development Advisory Committee and brought on a part-time Economic Development Director
Develop a site and programming for an industrial park	In partnership with the Northwest Regional Planning Commission, the Village established an Industrial Park acting as a business incubator to support and grow local businesses
Improve access to post-secondary education opportunities	Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College is working to establish a satellite program in Siren alongside Softec which provides technical training and job placement
Revitalize Main Street and make it the center for retail activity within the region	While there is still work to be done, the Village has begun beautification efforts along Main Street that include installing sidewalk and flower baskets that hang from light posts
Develop decorative signage and geographic displays to identify the location and routes for travel to special points of interest within the Village	The Village recently installed a digital sign at Crooked Lake Park that welcomes residents and visitors to Siren. In addition, the Chamber of Commerce maintains a large business member sign at the entrance to the Village on Highway 70 which informs people what businesses are located in the Village
Continue to plan for public improvements through a formal Capital Improvements Program that is updated and adopted on a periodic basis	The Village updates their Capital Improvement Plan annually with the most recent version encompassing projects from 2018-2022.
Maintain a full-service post office in the Village	A full-service post office exists along Main Street in downtown Siren
Improve Village parks to meet the needs of residents	Crooked Lake Park has been an important part of the community with both public and private investment into the area. With an amphitheater, covered picnic shelter and future investment into the shoreline, the park continues to be a centerpoint of the Village.

## 2002 Siren Redevelopment Plan

A Redevelopment Plan for the Village of Siren was completed in 2002 and focused on opportunities for commercial and industrial development following the 2001 tornado. The plan broke down opportunities into economic and character redevelopment effect. It was a more focused follow-up to the 2000 Land Use Plan.

**KEY TAKEAWAYS:** The need for a redevelopment plan was critical in 2002 following the destruction of Siren's downtown area in 2001 from a tornado. While many of the objectives are similar in sentiment to those defined in the 2000 Land Use Plan, the concept of redeveloping the character of the area was a new concept. The plan's objectives describe a desire to continue the Northwoods theme and architectural integrity. The plan goes so far as to encourage the Village to develop a theme for the downtown commercial district. The plan also introduces the concept of tax incremental financing (TIF) opportunities to pursue the creation of industrial/manufacturing employment options. Outlined below are the goals and objectives describing both Economic and Charcater redevelopment opportunities.

Economic Redevelopment Objectives
Attract, retain, and expand quality business and industry that will improve employment and personal income of local residents
Provide sufficient commercial and industrial land near public facilities and transportation services that are cost effective and land use compatible
Economic Redevelopment Strategies
Encourage diversified economic development to achieve and maintain a balanced tax and employment base
Encourage manufacturing and commercial development
Encourage manufacturing development through the provision of incentives such as reduced land acquisition costs and allowable tax incremental financing activities relating to manufacturing redevelopment
Character Redevelopment Objectives
Continue the northwoods theme for the STH 35/70 corridor
Create a theme for the downtown commercial district
Create a pedestrian atmosphere incorporating pedestrian connections between downtown and highway commercial businesses
Character Redevelopment Strategies
Create a business-friendly atmosphere in the downtown and highway corridor
Encourage long-term business investments that protect environmental quality and enhance the quality of life
Encourage appropriate re-use and development of older buildings
Designate sites for industrial and commercial use that are accessible by all modes of transportation including pedestrian
Promote commercial development in proximity to existing transportation services

# 2000 Land Use Plan

Following the incorporation of the Wisconsin Smart Growth law into state statute in 1999, many communities quickly pursued development of a land use or comprehensive plan. The Village of Siren developed their first Land Use plan in 1999 with approval in 2000. The plan was a high level guide for key areas of the community including housing, economic development and transportation.

**KEY TAKEAWAYS:** The 2000 Land Use Plan was a great start to understanding how to think about the future. While high level, the objectives and strategies laid important groundwork. While tourism is mentioned in the Economic Development section it is interesting to see how much more prevalent tourism has become since this plan was created. This is an indication of the priorities of the Village in proactively building a tourism economy. Outlined below are the relevant goals and objectives from the plan.

Housing
<b>Goal: Recognize and accommodate housing for the Village of Siren</b>
Objective 1: Promote an adequate supply of safe, decent and sanitary housing types for all residents
Strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Assist in planning for increasing housing opportunities for people with special needs</li><li>- Support public and private actions that provide housing choices for residents meeting the objectives of the plan</li><li>- Ensure that residents have equal access to housing</li><li>- Support private development for specific large lot buildings</li><li>- Encourage innovative housing design for efficient, low cost, high-density housing</li><li>- Help provide for housing in a manner that ensures contribution to the design quality, standards and safety of the community</li><li>- Maintain minimum state and local housing quality standards for residential housing</li></ul>
Objective 2: Guide new housing development into areas that can be efficiently served in a fashion that does not negatively impact natural resources and meets objectives of the plan
Strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- To guide new multi-family housing into areas that have existing public services</li><li>- To guide new single-family housing into areas of low-housing density</li><li>- Maintain high-quality living environments in exclusive residential neighborhoods by re-directing non-residential uses</li></ul>
Economic Development
<b>Goal: Provide opportunity for compatible economic growth and development</b>
Objective 1: Maintain and enhance opportunities for industrial development
Strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Encourage industrial development and tourism that is consistent with the land use goals of this plan</li><li>- Encourage an atmosphere that is supportive of business within the resource capacities of the Village</li><li>- Provide incentives for industrial and commercial developments</li><li>- Provide support programs that enable the location of new and expanding business into the appropriate areas</li></ul>
Objective 2: Attract, retain and expand quality businesses and industries that will improve employment and personal income base of the Village
Strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Encourage long term business investments that generate net fiscal benefits to the village, protect environmental quality and provide increase to net personal income</li><li>- Provide support to those firms of all sizes that demonstrate a commitment to enhancing the Village's quality of life</li><li>- Promote economic opportunity for all residents, including unemployed, under-employed, and special needs populations</li><li>- Encourage diversified economic development to achieve and maintain a balanced tax base</li></ul>
Objective 3: Help provide sufficient commercial and industrial lands adjacent to public facilities and transportation services that are cost effective and land-use compatible
Strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Encourage appropriate re-use and development of older buildings</li><li>- Designate sites for industrial and commercial use that will be accessible from roadways of arterial class or higher, potentially served with utilities and free of major environmental constraints</li><li>- In cooperation with local jurisdictions, maintain an adequate supply of industrial and commercial lands with a suitable mix of light and heavy industry, retail, service and institutional use within designated growth areas in proximity to transportation services</li></ul>

## LOCAL RESOURCES

### 2018 - 2022 Capital Improvement Plan

Municipalities receiving state funding are required to conduct capital improvement planning to ensure public works projects and equipment purchases are properly planned and budgeted for. A majority of the Villages' projects include routine maintenance and upkeep of road surfaces and gutters as well as replacement of municipal vehicles.

The following list outlines the major capital improvement projects (those that are not routine) provided in the 2018-2022 CIP.

Project	Year
Replace and reconstruct shoreline at Crooked Lake Park	2019
State Road 35 Sidewalk Extension	2021
1st Ave Sidewalk Extension	2021
Elizabeth Street Life Station Upgrade	2022

**KEY TAKEAWAYS:** The Village is actively pursuing development of more sidewalk and pedestrian access throughout the downtown area and along the highway. This aligns with Comprehensive Plan direction for improving pedestrian access in the community.

### Tax Incremental Financing Projects #1 & #2

The Village of Siren currently has two Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts. The following descriptions provide an overview of the purpose of each TIF project:

**TIF #1:** This project will directly serve to improve the economic conditions of the district by providing funding for infrastructure items such as water, sewer and roads to the project area thus assuring long term viability and also making the land within the Siren Industrial Park suitable for development.

**KEY TAKEAWAYS:** The first TIF established by the Village in 1994 helped to construct the Siren Industrial Park which is now home to a Northwest Regional Planning Commission business incubator. One of the Village's larger manufacturing employers, Injection Molding Solutions (IMS) began operations at the business incubator and later constructed a new building adjacent to the old building. The Village is now actively pursuing the clearing of land behind IMS that they hope will help to attract new manufacturing/industrial companies.

**TIF #2:** The creation of TIF District #2 will allow the Village to make certain public improvements to the designated area so that business growth can occur. These improvements will allow the Village to attract and retain potential development, and encourage further private investment in local businesses. The business development that is anticipated to occur will provide long term tax benefits to both the Village and all other overlying taxing jurisdictions.

**KEY TAKEAWAYS:** The second TIF established in 2003 focused on development in Siren's downtown area. The specific projects included water main improvements, land acquisition, sanitary sewer improvements, street improvements and other relevant projects to ensure the district is able to sustain growth.

### Village of Siren Facade Design Guidelines

In 2012, the Village of Siren, with support from the Northwest Regional Planning Commission and the Burnett County Development Association, developed Facade Guidelines for the commercial corridors within the Village. The guidelines were an effort to both support local businesses in improving their storefronts but also to help create architectural integrity and promote creative design.

**KEY TAKEAWAYS:** The guidelines reiterate the desire for a "Northwoods" theme for the business corridor which includes Main Street and those establishments along Highway 35/70. It is an excellent tool for local businesses because it not only provides guidance for design but also acts as a first step to applying for a low-interest loan from the Northwest Regional Planning Commission.

## EXTERNAL PLANS

### Attracting and Retaining Young People as an Economic Development Strategy

While slightly outdated, the report Attracting and Retaining Young People as an Economic Development Strategy, provides some relevant insights into the concept of rural America and its challenges in expanding demographics. The report was completed by an Associate Professor from the UW Extension program. The report focused on the Gogebic Range of Wisconsin which is in the North Central area of the state and includes a focus on Iron County. The following work groups were created to identify outcomes to better attract and retain young people. Important to note that these outcomes reflect specific actions for the Gogebic Range.

Outcome	Description
Attract young workers by strengthening our niche	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Create a vision for a proposed two county trail route to serve as a catalyst for the development of a regional trail system connecting all five cities on the Range</li><li>- Enhance awareness of the economic importance of strengthening the area's "nature-based outdoor recreation niche"</li></ul>
Attract young workers by promoting our strengths	<p>Seven factors represent the strengths of the Gogebic Range in terms of what young people are looking for in the place they live:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Scenic Beauty</li><li>• Safe Streets</li><li>• Affordable</li><li>• Place to raise a family</li><li>• Close to friends/family</li><li>• Low traffic</li><li>• Walkable streets</li></ul>
Retain young workers by building social capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Establish "Go-In" Forward Next Generation Group to plan social events and engage in local community projects and fundraising activities. Work to connect new residents to the community so they are more likely to stay.</li></ul>
Retain students by better connecting them to the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Create a partnership with the local community college to create a nature photography project to encourage youth to explore and appreciate their surroundings and to share their efforts with their peers and the broader community</li><li>- Create a partnership with a local high school to provide service-learning opportunities to students based on a needs survey of local stakeholders</li></ul>

**KEY TAKEAWAYS:** Siren is not the only community that struggles with attracting and retaining young people. However, in looking at the strengths identified in the Gogebic range Siren has them all. Siren is a place with scenic beauty, safe and walkable streets, a place to raise a family with a good school system and strong sense of community as well as a low traffic and affordable community. Lastly, the importance of being close to friends and family speaks to the concept of feeling connected to a place and reflects the idea of building social capital, especially for those people who do not have friends and family in the area.

None of the outcomes of this report are necessarily rocket science and they are things that have been discussed for many years. What is important is that the community takes this information and works hard to actually implement these outcomes.

Link: <http://www.iira.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Attracting-and-Retaining-Young-People-as-an-Economic-Development-Strategy.pdf>

## Engaging Young People to Sustain Communities, Families and Farms

The Engaging Young People to Sustain Communities, Families and Farms was developed by students at University of Wisconsin Extension and focuses on engaging communities with young people to build social capital and citizenship capacity. The report asks the following three questions:

1. How can we support civic and business oriented networks and educational programs that build the social capital and skills of young people?
2. How can we engage young residents in appreciating and promoting the civic, economic, and recreational assets of their communities?
3. How can we support young people and adults working together to promote sustainability and to model ways that young people can be contributing citizens?

The report goes on to discuss the key elements for sustainable communities in engaging young people and provides a framework for engagement. The following critical engagement elements are identified:

Key Elements
Sustainable Communities invest in multiple types of capital
Sustainable Communities are characterized by high levels of social capital; engaged young people enhance social capital and are beneficiaries of living in communities with strong social networks
Strong civic engagement among all age groups promotes a sense of community and increases community capacity to address issues
Place-based approaches are critical for addressing local complexities. Efforts that intentionally focus on promoting a sense of place may be particularly effective for retaining young people already in communities and for attracting new residents
Young people are diverse and some groups are doubly excluded by age and by other characteristics such as educational level, race and ethnicity, and family status. Effective efforts to create leadership, economic and community-building opportunities are often targeted, rather than universal.
Effective engagement strategies are strategic, intentional, and well coordinated with opportunities for young people to participate at multiple levels and in multiple settings

**KEY TAKEAWAYS:** Critical elements to the Siren area include social capital, civic engagement and creating a sense of place. The Siren area has already begun to pursue place-making efforts for the Main Street area and are also fortunate to have the north end of the Village act as a gathering place with the General Store property and Crooked Lake Park. It is important to continue pursuing social capital efforts that better connect people with the community, especially those that have transplanted themselves in the area and are not necessarily connected in any way. The concept of increasing civic participation in young people is also important as it helps to give people a sense of community. Educating young people on the ways in which they can be involved in making positive differences in their community can go along way in keeping them engaged and excited about the future.

Link: <https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/youthadultpartnership/2016/07/21/engaging-young-people-to-sustain-communities-families-and-farms-a-framework-for-promoting-engagement/>

## Five Keys to Downtown Success

Vierbacher Associates and the Local Government Institute of Wisconsin put together a report titled Downtown Economics - Ideas for Increasing Vitality in Community Business Districts. A section of the report, Five Keys to Downtown Success outlines keys to improving downtown corridors and the importance of resiliency over growth.

The following table presents the report's findings:

<b>Leverage: Used as the power to pull together the different means needed to get a project to fruition, such as the money, skills, volunteers, and support by the community.</b>
Inventory the community and its associations
Establish networks, linkages and channels
Keep the network activated
Bring support together as needed
<b>Spatial Relationships: Proper distribution of land sources combined with creativity in networks can make for an appealing spatial relationship. Thinking critically about how density, proximity, space, and connections are working with each other in a downtown corridor are important to having a good spatial relationship.</b>
Comprehensive planning and zoning
Tightly clustered and connected schools, trails, residences and employment
Acquisition of vacant property
Connect destinations within a community with both paths and good roads
Having increased interactions can increase property value and expand the capacity of a community
<b>Collaboration: Makes achieving goals easier and is used if there is a shared perception of need, collaborative leadership, trust, mutual benefit, and stakeholder support. Collaborations can be local, regional, public-private sector, or private.</b>
Meet with regional peers, major institutions, organizations, and competitors
Have regular meetings and standing agenda
Seek out common cause, share information, and find reasons to work together
<b>Community Health: Prioritizing community health and including it within a downtown improvement plan not only shows priority of residents first, but also fleshes out the importance of a downtown area.</b>
Promote access to healthcare and fresh food downtown
Encourage multi-modal linkages to area destinations including bicycling
Provide the physical activity infrastructure of parks, recreation, programs and clubs
Make health a shared community value with related downtown activities
<b>Support Local: Supporting local doesn't just mean the businesses that operate using energy and resources locally, but also provides an outlet to include non-profit organizations, volunteers, and community leaders in building a strong identity.</b>
Make the community aware of local opportunities to buy or get involved
Matchmaking programs that link volunteers and organizations or buyers and suppliers
Stagger/combine local initiatives so not to over-ask for participation
Appreciate community leaders

**KEY TAKEAWAY:** "Successful small downtowns focus on 'Resilience' by leveraging community assets and resources, attending to spatial relationships, collaborating with each other, encouraging activities to stay healthy, and supporting local businesses and community activities."

Link: <https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/downtowneconomics/files/2015/11/DE1215.pdf>

## Gaining and Maintaining Young People in Wisconsin Communities

The Applied Population Lab at University of Wisconsin Madison completed a lengthy research study into how to increase and retain youth in Wisconsin communities with a focus on rural areas. They developed an entire webpage dedicated to the report which talks about the less obvious findings of the study such as how schools are for more than just students and the importance of inside amenities like a low-key coffee shop.

The following outlines the key findings relevant to the Siren area:

- **Schools are for more than just the students.** Small class sizes allow teachers to really get to know the parents and allow parents to get involved in the schools. The schools are open for more than just class, but also spaces for the community to gather. People want to go to plays, sports events, etc.
- **Providing the right kind of housing.** The report found that every community was different, but the more rural towns attracted people who wanted more space and larger lots. Diversity in housing was an overall theme though, communities must provide options.
- **Amenities.** The top two amenities stated over and over in the interviews were silent outdoor recreation and non-alcoholic gathering spots. The report concluded that it makes sense young people that are escaping the stimulation of a large city would also prefer silent sports over motorized. Coffee shops, movie theaters, and family-style restaurants rated high on gathering spot preferences.
- **Proximity to a large city.** Which Siren has. There's a lot of opportunity for voluntary community engagement in a small city but people must work in the same town as they live; if they are commuting to the large city for work every day then they're not able to be present for community life. But, proximity to a large city allows people to escape to bigger entertainment whenever they want.
- **Diversity and tradition.** The people interviewed said they enjoy living in a town with diversity, but also tradition. Having racial and sexual diversity created a feeling of inclusiveness. Many people want to live in a small town to have a "Mayberry" -type existence.
- **Needing a partner.** The people who grow up in a small town and leave for college but then come back usually return with a partner. A lot of interviewees admitted that their town would be a hard place for single people to live in.

Link: <https://apl.wisc.edu/shared/youngadults>

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