

# ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES



## Chapter 1: Introduction

### I. Town Profile

The Town of Primrose is in southwestern Dane County, in Wisconsin’s Driftless Zone, a rolling landscape with steep river valleys that were not glaciated in the Ice Age 50,000 years ago. Primrose Brook, Deer Creek, and Mount Vernon Creek, all coldwater fisheries, flow west to east through the town, eventually joining the Sugar River West Branch in the neighboring Town of Montrose. At the [2020 census](#), 750 people lived in Primrose.

#### Background Data Summary

20,000 acres	25 new people in 13 homes by 2040
750 people	50.5 average age
340 households	6.5% minority
\$93,958 median household annual income	> 12% worked in agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, or mining

### II. Planning History

The Town adopted the first and existing *Town of Primrose Comprehensive Plan* in 2009, in compliance with the state’s comprehensive planning law, found in Chapter 66.1001. The Dane County Board of Supervisors adopted the town plan as part of the *Dane County Comprehensive Plan*. With assistance from Dane County Planning and Development, the Town gathered public input and crafted the goals, objectives, and policies contained in this plan to guide growth and development over the next twenty years and reflect this in a Land Use Plan.

### III. Plan Updates

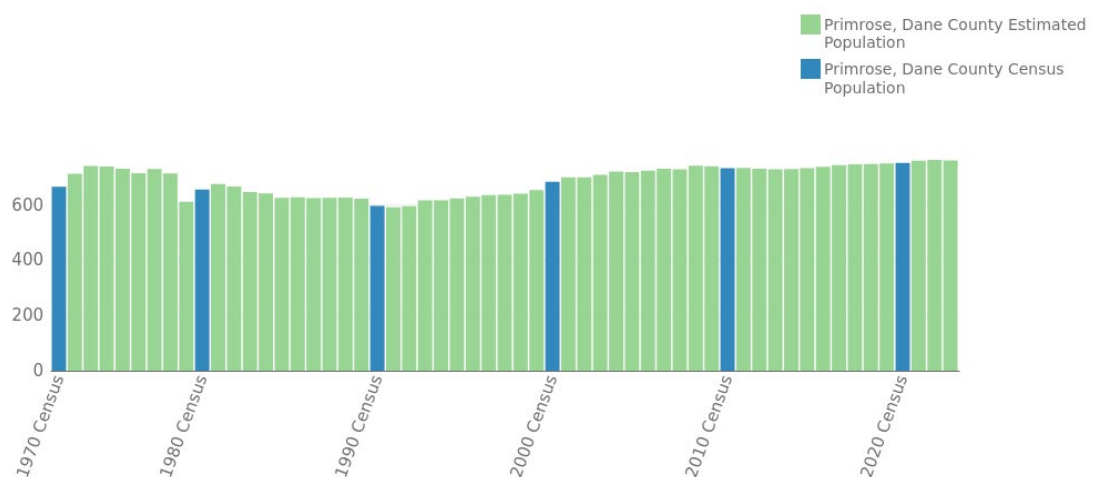
As per Wisconsin’s comprehensive planning legislation, the Town will review and update the *Comprehensive Plan* at least every ten years. Changing conditions and goals in the Town will be noted and adjustments will be made to the *Comprehensive Plan* text and maps accordingly. This plan update is intended to aid the Plan Commission and Board in meeting statutory timeline requirements and achieve the Town’s goals.

## Chapter 2: Background & Existing Conditions

### I. Population Trends and Projections

The Town of Primrose experienced minor losses in population in the decade 1980 to 1990; however from 1990 to 2000 the population grew by 14%. Growth rates began leveling off to 7.2% from 2000 to 2010, and grew at a modest 2.6% between 2010 and 2020. The Wisconsin Department of Administration (WIDOA) projects an average annual population growth rate of less than 1% over the next 20 years, adding 25 people by 2040.

Chart 1-1: Population over Time



Source: Applied Population Lab - Wisconsin Population and housing Estimates-

Table 1-1: Population Projections of Nearby Communities

Municipality	2020 Census	2025	2030	2035	2040
T. Primrose	750	765	775	780	780
T. Perry	737	761	780	790	799
T. Springdale	2,056	2,174	2,283	2,367	2,436
T. New Glarus	1,393	1,523	1,648	1,742	1,810
T. Montrose	1,064	1,064	1,059	1,049	1,030

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration

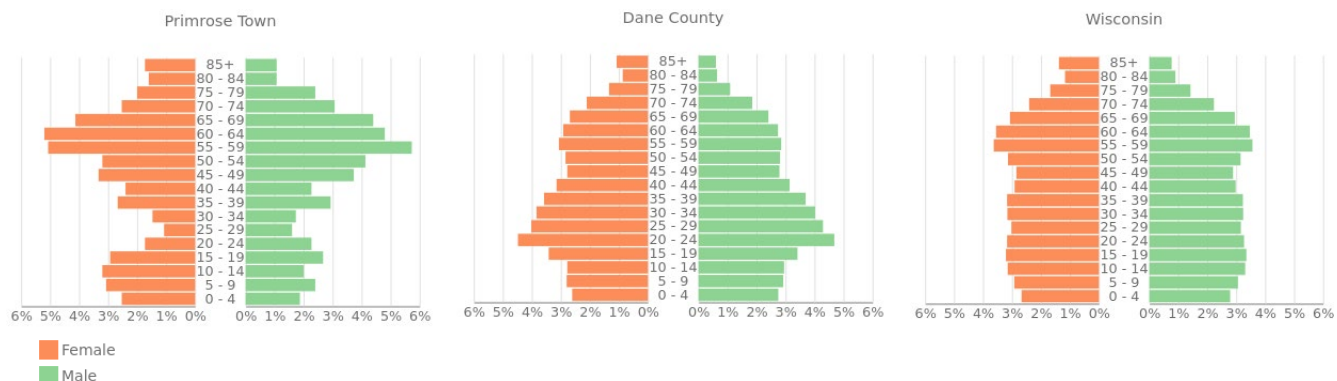
#### A. Demographic Trends

##### Age

The median age increased from about 46.2 years in 2010 to 50.5 years in 2020. In comparison, the median age in Dane County increased from 34.3 to 35.2 years of age. The

difference in age demography from 2010 to 2020 is primarily due to an increase in age groups 60 years old and older. In comparison with the County, the Town showed fewer people aged 20-45 years in the 1990 and 2020 censuses. The Town of Primrose is likely to have an increasing proportion of its population in the 65 and older year age bracket.

Chart 1-2: Age Pyramids by Percent of Population



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-year estimates 2010, ACS 5-year estimates 2020

### Ethnic Minorities

U.S. Census data show that the minority population of the Town of Primrose is 6.5% of the total population. Minority populations include Latinx (2.8%), and Asian, Black/African American and American Indian/Alaskan Native (each less than 1%).

Chart 1-3: Population by Race & Ethnicity



**Primrose town, Dane County Population**

- 93.5% White alone (not Hispanic or Latino)
- 2.8% Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
- 2.4% Two or more races (not Hispanic or Latino)
- 0.7% Asian alone (not Hispanic or Latino)
- 0.5% Black or African American alone (not Hispanic or Latino)
- 0.1% Some other race alone (not Hispanic or Latino)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Demographic Profile 2020

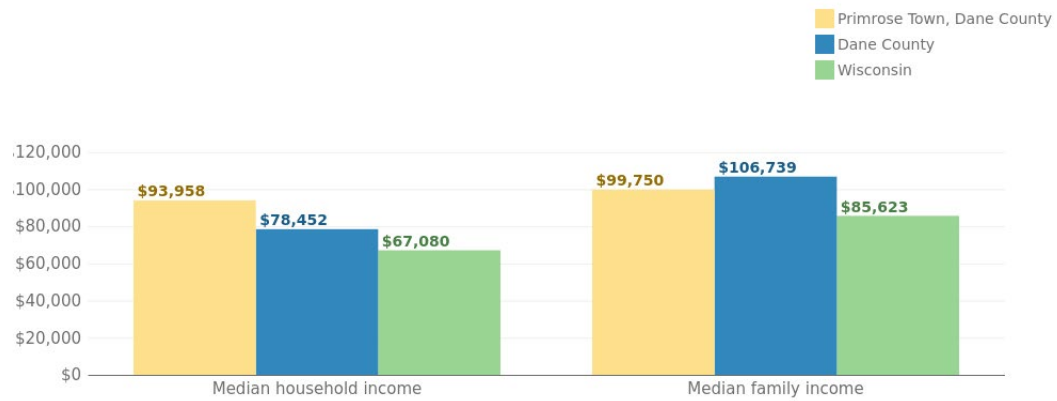
### Education

According to the American Community Survey, 25% to 35% of residents had a bachelor’s degree or higher in 2022, lower than the 55.7% of Dane County residents who had at least a 4-year degree.

## Income

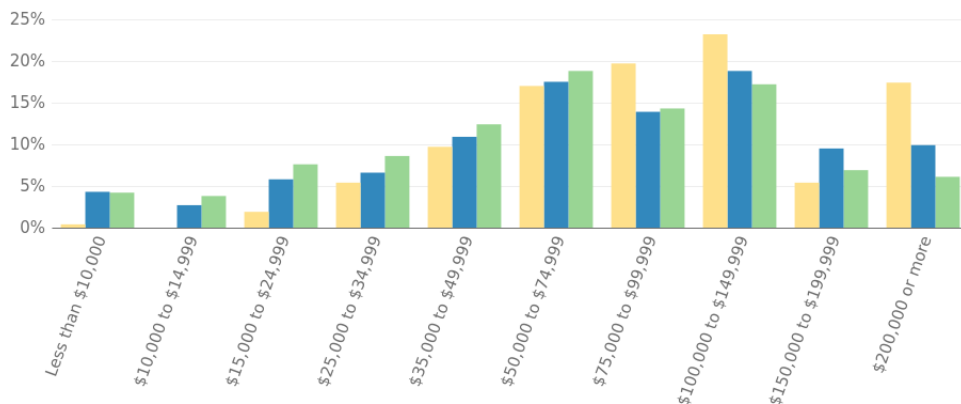
Based on 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, the median household annual income was approximately \$93,958, substantially higher than the Dane County median of \$78,452. More recent American Community Survey data suggest median income increased approximately 8% in 2022, compared with the 2021 5-year estimates.

Chart 1-4: Household Median Income



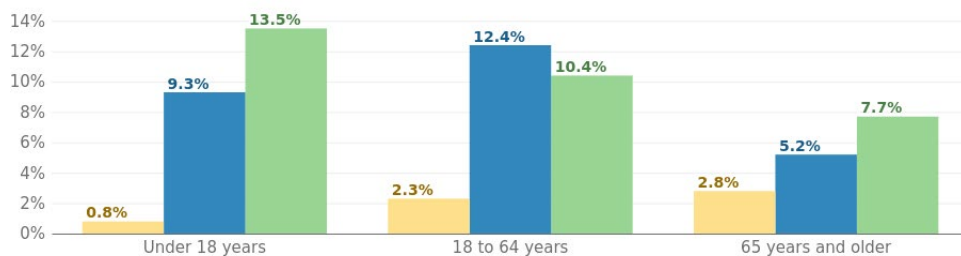
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-year estimates 2017-2021

Chart 1-5: Income Distribution



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-year estimates 2017-2021

Chart 1-6: Poverty Rates by Age



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-year estimates 2017-2021

## Poverty

Primrose had lower poverty rates, less than 3%, across all age groups than Dane County and Wisconsin.

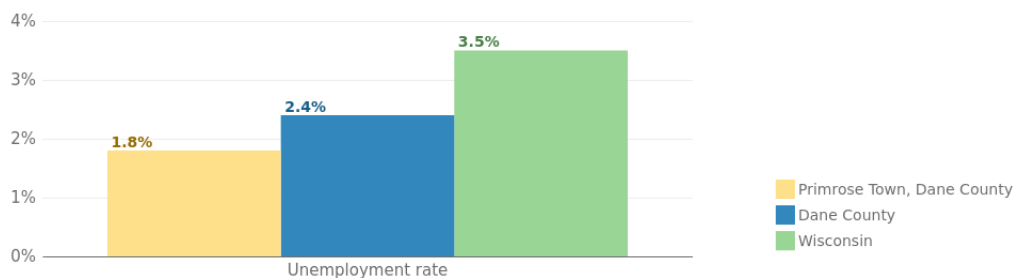
## B. Housing and Household Trends

The number of housing units in the Town increased from 282 in 2010 to 310 in 2020, an increase of 9.8%. However, mean household occupancy fell from 2.59 persons in 2010 to 2.40 persons in 2020. This change mirrors a national trend in decreasing household size. Assuming a constant numeric increase in houses, we can project 56 new households by 2040.

## C. Labor Force and Employment Trends

The Town of Primrose’s labor force includes individuals 16 years old who are currently employed or who are available for work. Between 2017 and 2021, Primrose enjoyed a lower unemployment rate (1.8%) than both Dane County (2.4%) and Wisconsin (3.5%).

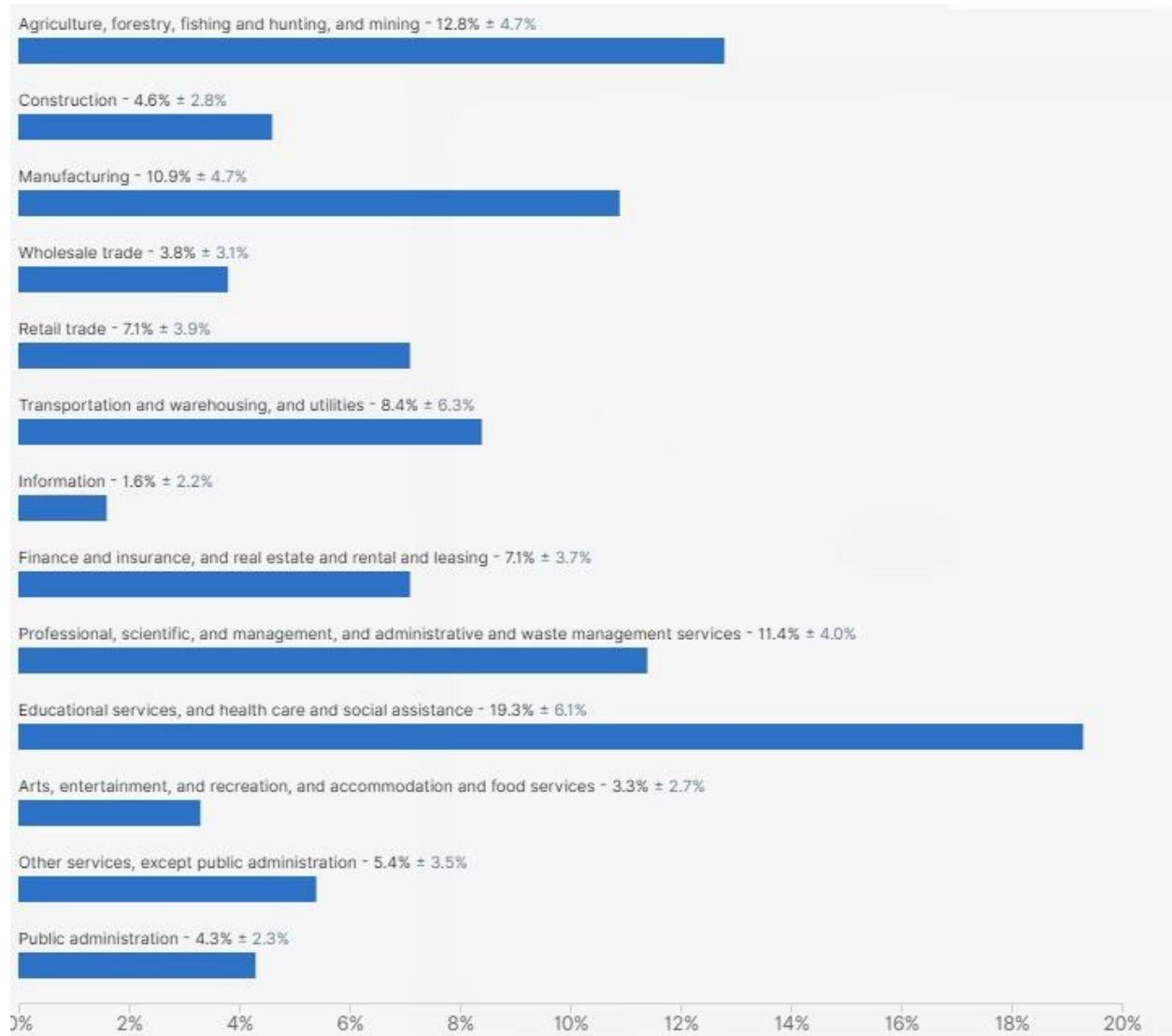
Chart 1-7: Unemployment Rate (16 year olds and older)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-year estimates 2017-2021

Compared with the rest of Dane County, Primrose’s agriculture and forestry sectors are relatively important employment sectors. More than 12% of Primrose residents worked in the “agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, or mining” sectors in 2022, compared with 1% in Dane County ([American Community Survey, 2022](#)).

Chart 1-8: Employment by Industry (16+ years old)



## II. Key Planning Issues and Goals

### A. Public Participation Process

At the beginning of the planning process, the town adopted a public participation plan (see Appendix A). This plan included forming a plan steering committee, and various methods of ensuring input, including a community survey, and a public hearing. The survey generated useful input into the comprehensive planning effort. One hundred fifty residents responded to the survey. Results indicated strong majorities support the 2009 goals as follows:

- 87% agreed or strongly agreed the town should seek to “Maintain traditional farms and current farming practices.”

- 90% agreed or strongly agreed the town should seek to “Encourage small sustainable agriculture.”
- 91% agreed or strongly agreed “Preserving woodlands and wetlands are as important as farmland preservation.”
- 91% agreed or strongly agreed the town should seek to “Maintain Primrose's current rural character (natural, undeveloped countryside, wildlife, and quiet environment).”
- 76% agreed or strongly agreed the town should seek to “Site houses in less conspicuous places.”
- 40% agreed or strongly agreed the town should seek to “Cluster new houses.”
- 82% agreed or strongly agreed the town should seek to “Consult neighbors about development on adjacent properties.”
- 82% agreed or strongly agreed “The dark night skies of the town are important.”

A detailed analysis of survey results is in Appendix 1.

## B. Overarching Goals

- Preserve the productive farmlands in the town for continued agricultural use.
- Prevent conflicts between incompatible uses.
- Protect the natural environment.
- Maintain the rural character of the town.