



## **Introduction**

The Town of Linn lies along the north and south shores of picturesque Geneva Lake in southern Walworth County. Established in 1844 and pre-dating Wisconsin statehood by four years, the Town had an estimated 2016 population of 2,424. It abuts the Village of Bloomfield to the east, Town of Geneva to the north, and Town of Walworth to the west. The Wisconsin-Illinois state line forms the community's southern boundary. Adjoining municipalities include the City of Lake Geneva and Villages of Fontana-on-Geneva Lake and Williams Bay.



Image courtesy Town of Linn

Linn's proximity to Chicago and Milwaukee (65 and 45 miles, respectively) makes it a desired location for both year-round and seasonal homes. Nearly sixty-percent of the Town's land base is owned by non-resident property owners. Land use in the community is dominated by high quality residential development along the lakefront and productive agricultural land in the interior. The historic hamlet of Zenda is located in the south-central part of the township.

## **The Comprehensive Plan**

A comprehensive plan is a document used by local government to guide land use, preservation, and community development. It is comprised of data, graphics, maps, goals, objectives, and visions related to housing, transportation, economic development, and natural resources (among others), which guide public land use policy. Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law (Chapter 66.1001, Wis. Stats.) was passed by the State legislature in 1999. It requires municipalities that administer zoning regulations, subdivision regulations, or official maps do so consistent with an adopted comprehensive plan. Under the law, a plan must include nine elements (or chapters) describing existing and desired conditions within the community. These include:

- **Issues & Opportunities** – Background information on the community and detailed demographic data related to population, education, income, and employment, among others.
- **Housing** – Detailed assessment of the current housing stock and a plan to ensure that future housing will meet the needs of all residents.
- **Transportation** – Comprehensive description of the existing transportation network and a plan for providing multi-modal systems to meet future demand.
- **Utilities & Community Facilities** – Analysis of current facilities including water and sewer service, stormwater, electricity and natural gas, parks and recreation, healthcare, schools, municipal facilities, and public safety, among others; and a plan to ensure that those facilities are adequate to meet future needs.
- **Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources** – Description of the community's resource base and the efforts necessary to preserve that base in the long-term.
- **Economic Development** – Plans and programs to promote the stabilization, retention, diversification, and expansion of the economic base and quality employment opportunities.
- **Land Use** – Detailed description of current land uses and a future land use plan to guide development during the next twenty years.



- Intergovernmental Cooperation – List of existing intergovernmental agreements and the identification of opportunities for future coordination and collaboration with adjoining municipalities.
- Implementation – Compilation of the programs and specific actions the local government will take to implement the comprehensive plan.

Although the Planning Law provides a framework for comprehensive planning, it does not impose a mandated template. A plan is not a technical manual. Unlike a zoning or subdivision ordinance, it is not a regulatory tool. At its core, the comprehensive plan is a guidance document that represents community visions and provides a road map for future growth and preservation. It must be crafted to reflect the values unique to each municipality...and its text, graphics, and maps must present those values within an easy to read document that informs stakeholders, provides direction to developers, and guides decision-makers.

The Town's first comprehensive plan was adopted in November 1993. The current plan, prepared by Green Bay-area consulting firm *Foth & Van Dyke* (now *Foth*), was adopted in 2004.

### **A Brief History<sup>1</sup>**

Prior to European settlement the area encompassing present day Linn was home to the Potawatomi. The Potawatomi are an Algonquin-speaking tribe that has lived in the Great Lakes region for at least four centuries. In their own language, the word Potawatomi means Keepers of the Sacred Fire but they call themselves "Neshnabek," which means the Original (or True) People.<sup>2</sup> The Potawatomi name for Geneva Lake was Kishwaukeeto, meaning clear water. Big Foot State Beach on Geneva Lake and Big Foot High School in Walworth were named after Potawatomi Chief Maunk-suck.



Dr. Lewis Fields Linn,  
1796-1843

In 1836, John Brink, a U. S. Government surveyor, named Geneva Lake in honor of his hometown, Geneva, New York. John Powers, a native of Maine, built the first house (a log cabin) in Linn in 1837 at the east end of the lake. The Town of Linn was formally established January 23, 1844, and is named for Dr. Lewis Fields Linn of Missouri, a US Senator, who died in 1843. By the 1880 US Census the Town had a recorded population of 823.

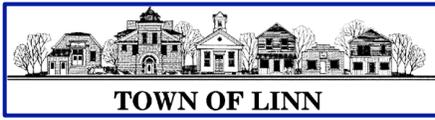
The Linn 4-H Club, the first in Wisconsin, began meeting in October 1914 and still meets monthly in the Town Hall. Linn is also home to The Lake Geneva Country Club, the first golf club in Wisconsin.

For a more detailed history of the Town and its residents, please consider:

- The Geneva Lake Book, by George W. Johnson
- The Geneva Lake Intensive Survey Architectural-Historical Report, sponsored by the Geneva Lake Conservancy and completed by the Wisconsin Historical Society.
- The Geneva Lake Museum in Lake Geneva.

<sup>1</sup> Portions of this section excerpted from Town of Linn webpage.

<sup>2</sup> Source: 'Potawatomi History,' Milwaukee Public Museum, 2017



## **Community Engagement**

The Town of Linn Comprehensive Plan 2040 was developed through a variety of community engagement opportunities to allow for the active participation of residents, landowners, business owners, and other stakeholders. A number of exercises and workshops were held over the course of plan development. Each provided opportunities for the general public to review and provide comment on draft plan chapters and maps. A complete listing of the public involvement opportunities utilized during the planning process is presented in the *Public Participation Plan* in the appendix to this document.

Summaries of the key meetings and engagement activities held during the development of the plan are described below and on the following page.

### **Land Use Survey**

In January 2017 the Town of Linn Land Use Survey was mailed to each tax parcel in the township. The six-page questionnaire was intended to inform the general public of the pending planning process and generate information to guide the development of the plan document. Twenty-eight questions were divided into four broad categories:

- You and Your Residence/Property
- Your Perspectives on the Town of Linn
- Preferences Regarding Future Development
- Options for Implementing Community Decisions.

Key findings of the survey guided the development of each substantive plan chapter. The fully tabulated results of the survey are presented in the Appendix.

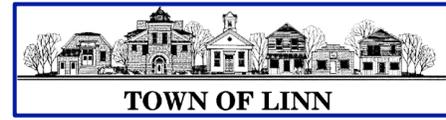
### **Community Engagement Session**

On March 27, 2017 the Town of Linn hosted a Community Engagement Session to kick-off the process of updating its comprehensive plan. The event was held at the Town Hall and was attended by more than 50 residents, landowners, and officials. Community Planning & Consulting LLC (CPC), the firm hired by the Town to assist in the planning process, facilitated the meeting. The agenda for the session included:

- Discussion of the role the comprehensive plan plays in community development.
- Results of the Town of Linn Land Use Survey.
- Presentation of updated demographic data from the 2010 U.S. Census and 2015 American Community Survey.
- Visioning and Nominal Group Exercises.
- Preliminary schedule of coming meetings and events.

### **Visioning Session**

Following the presentation and discussion of the Land Use Survey results and updated community demographic data, CPC led participants through a visioning exercise utilizing a process known as graphic recording. Particularly effective within group settings, the technique encourages freethinking and the rapid generation of ideas. Participant comments are recorded on a large wall graphic that aids in establishing the group's memory of the flow and content of the discussion. This method of meeting



facilitation evokes enthusiasm, encourages interaction and cooperative participation, and leads to informed consent since participants are able to visualize their ideas and build upon each other's comments. The results of the exercise will be used to guide the development of draft plan chapters.

During the visioning session, participants were asked to imagine that it was the year 2037 and describe, through a series of directed questions, how Linn Township looks with respect to various land-use categories (housing, transportation, parks and recreation, etc.). Upon completion of the visioning portion of the meeting, those in attendance were given three green adhesive dots and asked to place them onto the wall graphic next to the visions they deemed most important.



## **Results**

The visioning exercise focused on five general land use categories: housing, transportation, economic development, parks and recreation, and preservation. The results of the exercise appear below and on the following pages. Numerals appearing in parentheses to the right of responses indicate the number of participants who placed an adhesive dot next to that particular vision. A digital image of the complete wall graphic is presented following the tabulated results of the exercise.

### By 2037, housing in the Town of Linn includes...

- Status quo (8)
- Senior housing (3)
- Single-family (3)
- Limit acreage of residential parcels on agricultural land (2)
- Multi-family Residential (mid-rise) with preserved open space (2)
- South shore to Geneva Lake – infill (1)
- A-1 zoning; 35-acre lot
- Affordable
- Conservation subdivisions
- No short-term rentals

### By 2037, the transportation system in the Town of Linn includes...

- Bike paths (4)
- Community / Inter-community buses (3)
- Lower speed limit on Hwy 120 (1)
- Trains (1)
- Drones
- Electric vehicles
- Light rail
- Low-light emission road intersection lighting
- Uber
- Water taxi



By 2037, economic development in the Town of Linn includes...

- Agriculture – all forms, compatible with tourism (4)
- No small animal farming – in residential (2)
- Agri-tourism (1)
- Aquaculture (1)
- Family restaurants (1)
- Farmers' market (1)
- No heavy industry (1)
- Events – bikes, triathlons
- Historic preservation – Zenda!
- Wildlife preserves

By 2037, parks and recreational opportunities in the Town of Linn include...

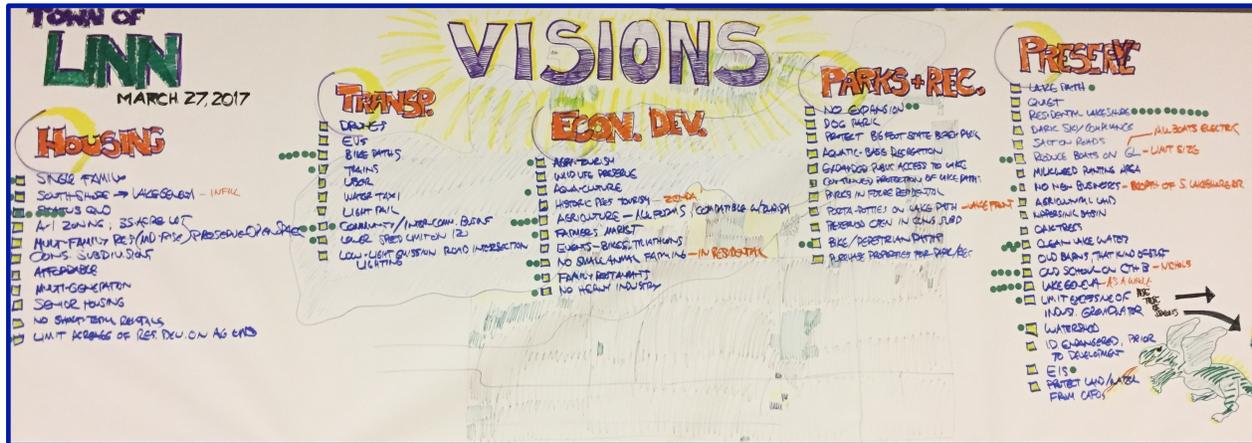
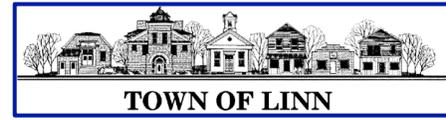
- Bike / pedestrian paths (2)
- No expansion (2)
- Aquatic-based recreation
- Continued protection of lake paths
- Dog park
- Expanded public access to lake
- Parks in future residential
- Preserved open space in conservation subdivisions
- Porta-potties on lake path – lake front
- Protect Big Foot Beach State Park
- Purchase properties for park and recreation

By 2037, the Town of Linn has successfully preserved...

- Residential lakeshore (10)
- Lake Geneva (Geneva Lake) – as a whole (5)
- Clean lake water (4)
- Old school on CTH B – Nichols (4)
- Reduce boats on Geneva Lake – limit size; all boats electric (2)
- Environmental impacts statements (1)
- Limit excessive use of industrial groundwater (1)
- No new business – north of South Lake Shore Drive (1)
- Agricultural land
- Dark sky compliance
- Identify endangered plant and animal species prior to development
- Milkweed planting area
- Nippersink basin
- Oak trees
- Old barns, that kind of stuff
- Protect land and water form Concentrated Animals Feeding Operations
- Quiet
- Salt on roads

Additional visions submitted after Visioning Exercise:

- No commercial use of lakefront properties
- No deep wells or taking water form the lake to be sold by any company or agency
- No new subdivisions
- Preserving agricultural land south of South Lake Shore Drive



**Plan Commission Meetings & Workshops**

The primary purposes of the Plan Commission meetings and workshops were to review and discuss draft plan chapters and maps and provide critical feedback to the Town’s planning consultant related to policy decisions presented in the plan. A total of eight were held during the course of plan development, six of which were facilitated by the planning consultant.

**Presentation of First Draft**

On February 6, 2019 the Town’s planning consultant presented the first draft of the Town of Linn Comprehensive Plan 2040. Each chapter of the document was discussed and community support was gauged in order to identify any final revisions necessary prior to taking the plan to public hearing.

**Public Hearing**

The Town of Linn held a Public Hearing on August 26, 2019. The purpose of the hearing was to solicit written and oral testimony in support of or in opposition to the plan as a whole or any of its constituent elements, consistent with the Comprehensive Planning Law. Testimony received during the hearing was recorded and subsequent revisions to the draft plan were based upon testimony provided at or for the hearing.

**Community Profile**

The process of developing the comprehensive plan begins with a profile of the people who live and work in the community. The remainder of this chapter examines the past, present, and projected demographics of the Town. The information presented on the following pages is critical to forecasting needs related to development, housing, and community facilities, among others. Community demographics will play the preeminent role in determining the direction the comprehensive plan takes in preparing for Linn’s future.

The population, housing, education, employment and economic information included herein was collected from a variety of sources including the US Census Bureau, Wisconsin Department of Administration (WDOA), Walworth County, and Southeast Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission,



among others. The Community Profile provides a snapshot image of the community following the 2010 US Census and 2014 American Community Survey and projections for the future based upon population algorithms developed by WDOA. The purpose of the various profiles that follow is to identify trends and patterns that can be compared with neighboring communities to better understand the planning context in the Town of Linn. Additional demographic information will be presented in later plan chapters.

### Decennial Census vs. American Community Survey

The information presented under the year ‘2000’ columns in the population tables that appear throughout this chapter is drawn from the 2000 US Census, the last to utilize the long survey census format. Beginning in 2010, the US Census Bureau distributed an abbreviated survey instrument that resulted in the collection of much more limited demographic data. The 2010 Census has since been augmented by additional information gathered through the *American Community Survey* (ACS).

The ACS is an ongoing statistical survey by the U.S. Census Bureau that is sent to approximately 295,000 addresses monthly (or 3.5 million annually). It gathers much of the information previously contained in the long form of the decennial census. The data listed under the ‘2014’ columns in this chapter’s tables result from the most recent ACS.

### The Pros and Cons of Growth

Some residents may view growth and development as necessary and beneficial while others see them as threats to the character of Linn. Finding a balance between the ‘preservationists’ and ‘pro-growth’ advocates is a crucial component of every planning process. Such balance can be particularly challenging in a community that has experienced sustained levels of growth during each of the past three decades. An increasing population can have both positive and negative effects upon a community. Benefits may include an expanded tax base, additional consumer spending at local businesses, employment opportunities related to new home construction, and additional students in local school districts (with resulting increases in state and federal funding). Potential challenges may consist of strains on the current housing supply, increased costs of services (i.e., increased taxes), harmful effects to the natural environment resulting from unplanned or misguided development, and the loss of agricultural lands, among others.

Population growth may change the culture of the community in ways positive or negative depending upon how and where such growth occurs. A primary purpose of this planning effort is to develop a community-supported strategy for addressing the challenges present today and those that must be faced during the next two decades.

### **Population Profile**

The population of the Town of Linn has grown by more than twenty-five percent since 1970, from 1,910 to 2,402 persons. Although not as robust as countywide growth (61.5%), the gains indicate that the township remains a sought after place to live. *Table 1.2* projects the population of Linn through 2040. According to information provided by WDOA, which develops population projections based upon a formula that includes historic population, regional demographics trends and economic forecasts, the Town will grow to 2,770 by the year 2035 before falling to 2,755 five years later. The 25-year growth rate of 14.7% is six percent lower than the increase projected for Walworth County as a whole.



**Table 1.1: Population of Town of Linn and Select Municipalities, 1990-2015**

Municipality	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2015	Change Number, 1970-2015	Change Percent, 1970-2015
<b>T. Linn</b>	<b>1,910</b>	<b>2,064</b>	<b>2,062</b>	<b>2,194</b>	<b>2,383</b>	<b>2,402</b>	<b>492</b>	<b>25.8%</b>
T. Bloomfield*	2,481	2,621	3,723	5,537	6,278	1,600	-881	-36.5%
T. Delavan	3,796	4,182	4,195	4,559	5,285	5,250	1,454	38.3%
T. Geneva	3,491	3,933	3,472	4,099	4,788	5,017	1,526	43.7%
T. Walworth	1,370	1,443	1,341	1,676	1,702	1,692	322	23.5%
V. Bloomfield*	--	--	--	--	--	4,685	--	--
V. Fontana-on-Geneva Lake	1,464	1,764	1,635	1,754	1,672	1,676	212	14.5%
V. Williams Bay	1,554	1,763	2,106	2,415	2,564	2,582	1,028	66.2%
C. Lake Geneva	4,890	5,612	5,979	7,148	7,654	7,727	2,837	58.0%
Walworth County	63,444	71,507	75,000	92,013	102,228	102,469	39,025	61.5%

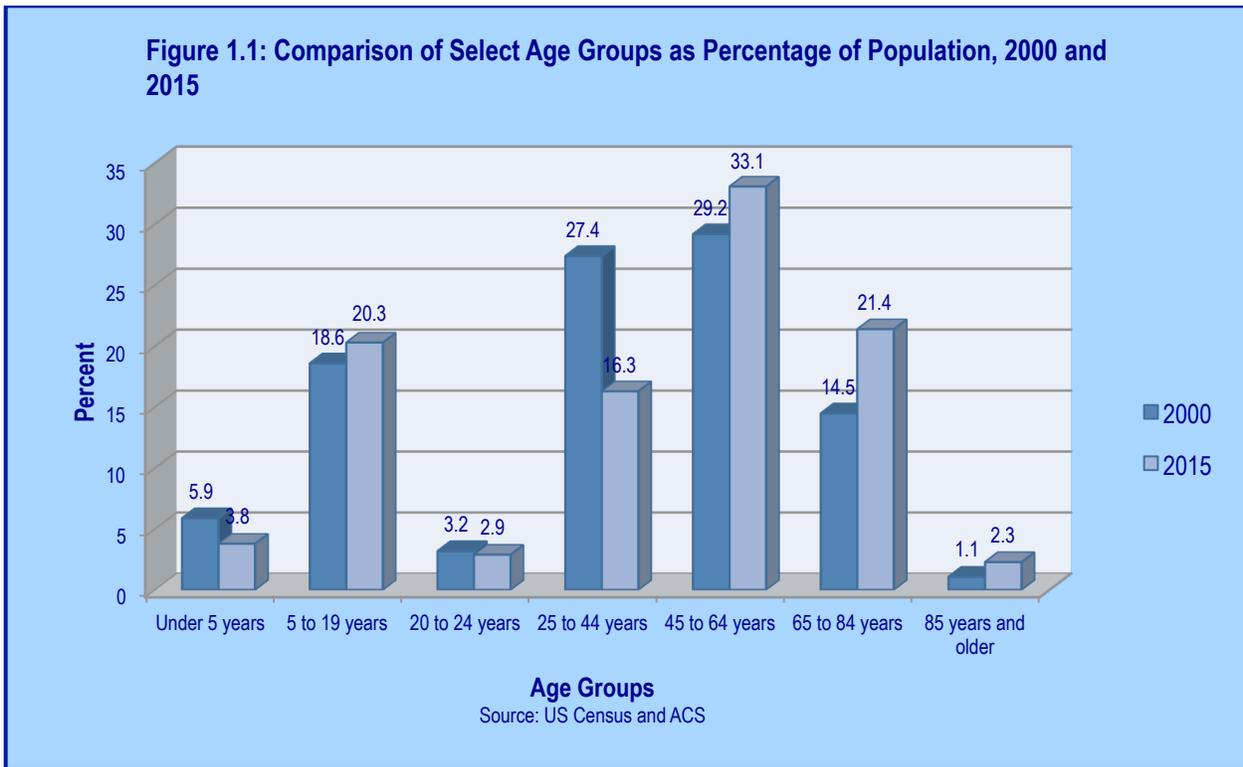
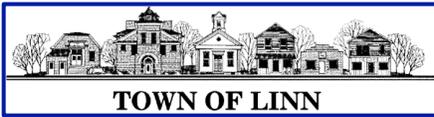
\* Note: The bulk of the Town of Bloomfield incorporated as the Village of Bloomfield in 2012. This explains the drop in population for the Town between 2010 and 2015 and the lack of population data for the Village for the years 1990 through 2010.  
 Source: WDOA

**Table 1.2: Population Projections for Town of Linn and Select Municipalities, 2015-2040**

Municipality	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	Change Number, 2015-2040	Change Percent, 2015-2040
<b>T. Linn</b>	<b>2,402</b>	<b>2,515</b>	<b>2,650</b>	<b>2,755</b>	<b>2,770</b>	<b>2,755</b>	<b>353</b>	<b>14.7%</b>
T. Bloomfield	1,600	1,725	1,825	1,910	1,930	1,930	330	20.6%
T. Delavan	5,250	5,600	5,920	6,195	6,265	6,255	1,005	19.1%
T. Geneva	5,017	5,580	6,085	6,550	6,800	6,960	1,943	38.7%
T. Walworth	1,692	1,750	1,820	1,875	1,865	1,840	148	8.7%
V. Bloomfield	4,685	5,040	5,410	5,735	5,870	5,935	1,250	26.7%
V. Fontana-on-Geneva Lake	1,676	1,680	1,715	1,730	1,690	1,630	-46	-2.7%
V. Williams Bay	2,582	2,705	2,850	2,960	2,975	2,960	378	14.6%
C. Lake Geneva	7,727	8,080	8,505	8,860	8,915	8,870	1,143	14.8%
Walworth County	102,469	109,365	116,105	121,835	123,470	123,680	21,211	20.7%

Source: WDOA

Figure 2.1 compares the change in the population of select age groups for the years 2000 and 2015. These age groups are significant due to the role each plays in planning for future services, facilities, infrastructure, and the like (see Table 1.3). Each group over the age of 45 has seen growth in its population during the past 15 years, while those younger have generally declined as a percentage of the total population (excepting the 1.7% increase in the 5 to 19 group). This is consistent with most national and state trends, particularly with respect to rural communities. The Town of Linn is growing older. The median age in 2000 was 41.9 years, meaning half of all residents were younger than 41.9 while the rest were older. By 2015, that figure had increased to 51 (21.7%).



**Table 1.3: Characteristics of Select Age Groups**

Age Group	Description	Status	Community Needs
Under 5 Years of Age	Infants, toddlers, and pre-school.	Entirely dependent upon others.	Healthcare and day care.
5 to 19 Years	School aged children and young adults.	Dependent upon others for lodging, food, education, and most other needs.	Schools, play apparatus and sports fields/courts, safe pedestrian and bicycle facilities; libraries.
20 to 24 Years	Post high school young adults; job and career training (college, trades, military, etc.).	Somewhat dependent upon others for some needs.	Affordable housing, part- and full-time employment opportunities, multi-modal transportation systems, entertainment, coffee shops, high-speed/broadband internet access.
24 to 44 Years	Established adults.	Prime earning and spending years; traditional child-raising years.	Community needs include diversity in housing choices, safety, healthcare, dining alternatives, diverse retail, childcare services, career opportunities, banking and insurance.
45 to 64 Years	Mature adults.	Often "empty nesters".	Community needs are similar to the 24 to 44 group with less emphasis on programs, facilities, and services for youth.
65 to 84 Years	Retirement-age.	Decreased earning, sustained activity level.	Community needs include healthcare, multi-modal transportation opportunities, recreation, senior housing options.
85 Years and Older	Post retirement.	Decreased earning and activity level.	Community needs similar to '65 to 84' with greater emphasis on around-the-clock care.



### Population Characteristics

Of the 2,382 people living in the Town as of the 2010 US Census, 51% were male and 49% were female. Ninety-six percent of respondents (2,294 persons) indicated their race as white, with 150 of those self-identifying as of Hispanic or Latino origin. A detailed breakdown by race of Linn’s 2010 population is presented below.

Stated Race	Number	Percent
White	2,294	96.3%
African American	2	0.1%
Asian	20	0.8%
American Indian or Alaska Native	10	0.4%
Other	29	1.2%
Identified by two or more	28	1.2%

### Seasonal Population Profile

The US Census and WDOA population projections fail to tally vacationers and seasonal residents. Communities with strong tourism sectors may experience significant variations in population over the course of a year due to temporary residents. The effective population of the Town of Linn may double over the summer months or during the Holidays. This is important since a large part of the local economy is driven by seasonal residents, tourists, and others attracted to Geneva Lake.

A considerable portion of the Town’s current housing supply is comprised of second and vacation homes, most of which are owned by nonresidents. Some portion of the remainder may be available as seasonal rentals, precluding their availability to year-round residents. As of the 2015 ACS the Town of Linn had 2,082 housing units. Less than fifty-percent (1,008) of these were classified as ‘occupied’, the census term attributed to units inhabited by year-round residents. The remaining 1,074 were deemed ‘vacant’. The United States Office of Management and Budget, the agency overseeing the US Census and ACS, offers the following definition for a vacant housing unit:<sup>3</sup>

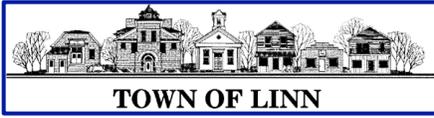
*“A housing unit is vacant if no one is living in it at the time of the interview, unless its occupants are only temporarily absent. In addition, a vacant unit may be one which is entirely occupied by persons who have a usual residence elsewhere.”*

In Linn, the majority of these vacant units are probably seasonal homes. Although accurate mechanisms to track variations in local population resulting from non year-round residents are not readily available, their effects upon a community may be significant (in both positive and negative ways). Visitors [and seasonal residents] create economic, social, and physical impacts through increased demand for public and private goods and services, as well as through additional stress on the natural environment and physical infrastructure.<sup>4</sup> They may affect traffic, real estate prices, retail sales, crime, littering and pollution, and local employment, as well as the use of public transit, medical and emergency services, recreational facilities, utilities and public spaces.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Source: United States Office of Management and Budget, US Census Housing Definitions and Explanations, 2002.

<sup>4</sup> Excerpted from: Toward a Methodology for Estimating Temporary Residents, S.K. Smith, Journal of the American Statistical Association, May 13, 2014.

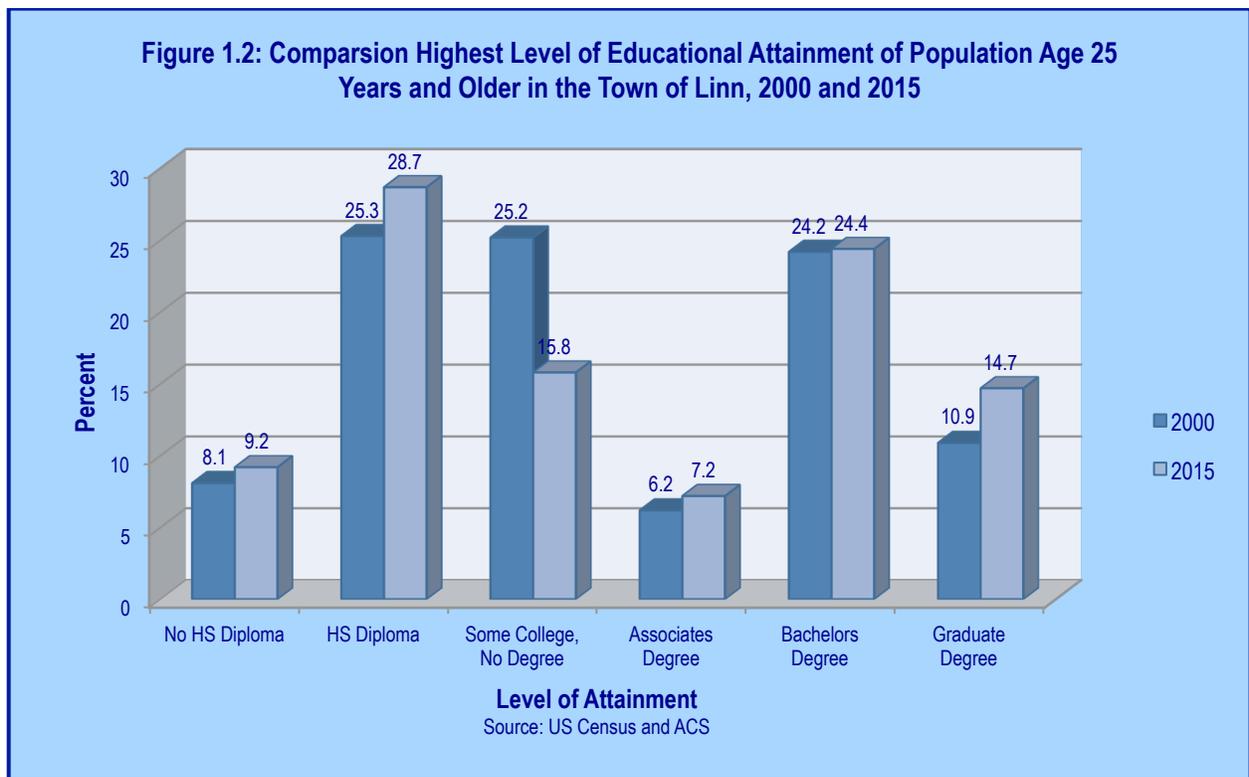
<sup>5</sup> Excerpted from: Temporary Migration: A Case study of Florida, S. K. Smith & M. House, Population Research Policy Review, May 7, 2014



The Town’s 2004 comprehensive plan utilized a presumptive correlation between seasonal (vacant) housing units and average persons per household to provide a rough estimate of the seasonal population increase circa the year 2000. Applying that same methodology to 2015 figures (1,074 units; 2.32 persons/household) results in a seasonal population increase of approximately 2,492 persons...effectively a doubling the Town’s actual population.

**Education Profile**

The level of educational attainment in a community serves as a good indicator of quality of life. Generally, a high level of educational attainment reflects a skilled population with higher earnings potential. It also allows a community to more effectively compete for the most sought-after industries (technology, healthcare, etc.).



Each of the columns in *Figure 1.2* indicates the percentage of highest level of education attainment for Linn residents 25 years and older. For example, the educational attainment for 28.7% of residents peaked at a high school diploma (or its equivalency), whereas 90.2% of achieved *at least* a high school diploma. As the chart demonstrates, Linn is becoming a more highly educated community. The percentage of residents with a 2-year, 4-year, or graduate degree rose from 41.3% in 2000 to 46.3% fifteen years later. The bulleted list below provides compares the percentage of residents with an Associate’s degree or higher in Linn with those of the select municipalities as of the 2015 ACS.



Percentage of Population Over Age 25 with Associate’s Degree or Higher

• T. Linn	46.3%	• V. Fontana-on-Geneva Lake	63.8%
• T. Bloomfield	21.0%	• V. Williams Bay	55.4%
• T. Delavan	35.5%	• C. Lake Geneva	37.3%
• T. Geneva	38.2%	• Walworth County	36.0%
• T. Walworth	35.4%	• Wisconsin	37.9%
• V. Bloomfield	33.5%		

Education & Income

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the 2009 unemployment rate was more than twice as high for persons without a high school diploma than for persons with an Associate’s degree. That gap widens to three times in comparison to persons who hold a Bachelor’s degree. The unemployment rate for persons with Master’s, professional, and doctoral degrees was the lowest, at 2.4 percent. The same report finds that persons with a high school degree make, on average, \$626 weekly. In comparison, persons with an Associate’s degree make \$761, workers with a Bachelor’s degree make \$1,025 and those with a Master’s degree take in \$1,257 a week. According to these numbers, a person with an Associate’s degree is likely to earn nearly \$7,000 more per year than someone with just a high school diploma, a person with a Bachelor’s degree is likely to earn nearly \$14,000 more a year than someone with an Associate’s degree, and a worker who possesses a Master’s degree is likely to earn nearly \$12,000 more annually than someone with just a Bachelor’s degree.

**Employment Profile**

This section profiles the local job market by presenting data and examining factors related to employment, income, and poverty rates. The information presented below and on the following pages offers a general description of key economic indicators as they exist today. For a more comprehensive look at the local economy, please refer to *Chapter 6: Economic Development*.

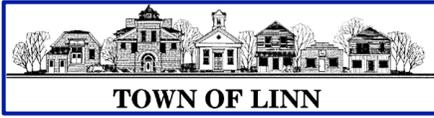
Employment

The Town of Linn possesses the limited commercial and industrial land use inventory typical of a rural community. Accordingly, most residents in the work force tend to find employment outside of the community, either elsewhere in Walworth County or in surrounding counties. As of the 2015 ACS, there were 1,221 residents in the labor force from a total population 16 years and older of 1,981. 1,113 were employed, resulting in an unemployment rate of 8.8%. This figure reflects the lingering effects of the 2007-11 Great Recession. *Table 1.4* compares employment by industry sector for Town residents for the years 2000 and 2015.

**Definitions**

**Labor Force:** The labor force is the sum of employed and unemployed persons who are 16 years of age and older and who are willing and actively seeking work. Institutionalized populations are not included in the labor force.

**Unemployment:** The actual unemployment rate is calculated by dividing the sum of the Labor Force by the total number of unemployed. The unemployment rate does not count those not in the Labor Force.



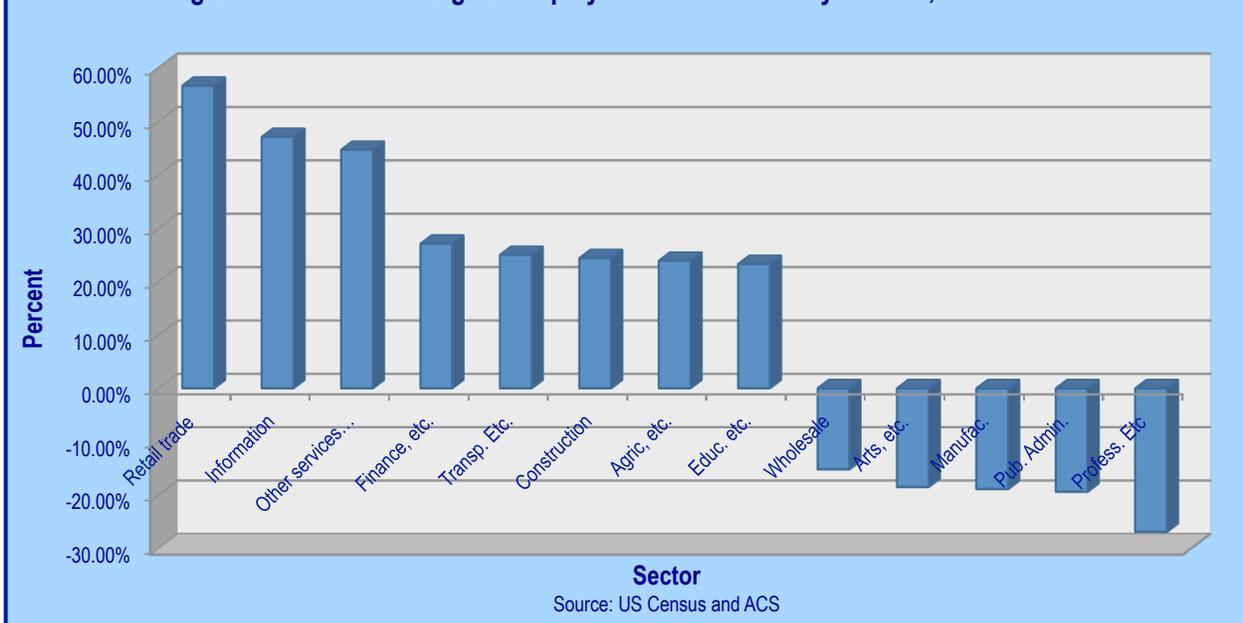
**Table 1.4: Comparison of Employment by Industry Sector in the Town of Linn, 2000 and 2015**

Sector	2000		2015		Change, 2000-2015	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Educational services, health care, and social assistance	159	15.1%	196	17.6%	37	23.3%
Manufacturing	206	19.6%	167	15.0%	-39	-18.9%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, mining	92	8.8%	114	10.2%	22	23.9%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	135	12.8%	110	9.9%	-25	-18.5%
Retail trade	67	6.4%	105	9.4%	38	56.7%
Construction	78	7.4%	97	8.7%	19	24.4%
Professional, scientific, and management	104	9.9%	76	6.8%	-28	-26.9%
Finance, insurance, and real estate	59	5.6%	75	6.7%	16	27.1%
Other service, except public administration	38	3.6%	55	4.9%	17	44.7%
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	32	3.0%	40	3.6%	8	25.0%
Wholesale trade	33	3.1%	28	2.5%	-5	-15.2%
Information	17	1.6%	25	2.2%	8	47.1%
Public administration	31	2.9%	25	2.2%	-6	-19.4%

Source: US Census Bureau and ACS

In 2015, the top five industry sectors for employment of town residents were: *educational services, health care, and social assistance; manufacturing; agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, mining; arts, entertainment, and recreation; and retail trade*. Figure 1.3 shows the change in employment within each sector, by greatest increase to greatest decrease, from the year 2000 to 2015. It is important to consider where jobs are being lost and where they are gained. The manufacturing and education sectors are known for offering high paying jobs with good benefits, while retail trade, hospitality and services are generally low paying positions without benefits. Others, construction for instance, may provide good pay but limited benefits. Although manufacturing sits at number two as of 2015, the number of residents employed in the sector has declined by nearly 20% since 2000. Retail trade has shown the biggest gain (56.7%). See the table on the following page for average annual wage by industry in Walworth County and Wisconsin as of 2014.

**Figure 1.3: Percent Change in Employment within Industry Sectors, 2000 to 2015**





Income

The three most common income categories used to assess municipalities are per capita, median household, and median family. Per capita income is the sum of annual income divided by the total number of residents, including children and other groups of individuals who do not actually earn income. Median household income (MHI) is the middle point of household incomes reported in a community (households include families, married couple households, and individual households). Median family income is the middle income reported by families. Of these, median household income is the one deemed most relevant for planning purposes by demographers, economists, and urban planners.

As *Table 1.5* shows, the Town of Linn is a relatively affluent community when compared to its neighbors, greater Walworth County, and the state of Wisconsin. Of the municipalities included in the data set, only residents of the Villages of Fontana-on-Geneva Lake and Williams Bay surpassed the Town of Linn in MHI. The township’s 2015 MHI of \$62,500 represents a 15% increase from the year 2000 (\$54,213).

Poverty Status

The US Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) sets annual poverty guidelines for the nation (see *Table 1.6*). The formula used to create the guidelines was originally developed in the early 1960s. It took the US Department of Agriculture’s economy food plan for families of three or more persons and multiplied the costs by a factor of three. Different procedures were used to calculate thresholds for one and two-person households in order to allow for the relatively larger fixed costs that small family units face. Since its original creation, the HHS prepares annual poverty guidelines based upon the previous year and updated for price changes using the Consumer Price Index.<sup>6</sup>

	Wisconsin	Walworth	Percent of Wisconsin	1-year % change
	Average Annual Wage	County Average Annual Wage		
All industries	\$ 43,856	\$ 35,432	80.8%	2.8%
Natural Resources	\$ 36,156	\$ 36,577	101.2%	14.1%
Construction	\$ 55,317	\$ 43,560	78.7%	4.7%
Manufacturing	\$ 54,365	\$ 48,769	89.7%	3.5%
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	\$ 37,362	\$ 33,208	88.9%	3.4%
Information	\$ 62,482	suppressed	Not avail.	Not avail.
Financial Activities	\$ 61,884	\$ 38,784	62.7%	1.3%
Professional & Business Services	\$ 52,386	\$ 31,638	60.4%	-1.0%
Education & Health	\$ 44,829	\$ 39,593	88.3%	1.8%
Leisure & Hospitality	\$ 16,055	\$ 17,334	108.0%	2.6%
Other Services	\$ 25,847	\$ 23,483	90.9%	3.4%
Public Administration	\$ 44,462	\$ 36,440	82.0%	1.6%

Source: Walworth County 2015 Workforce & Economic Profile, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

Municipality	MHI
T. Linn	\$62,500
T. Bloomfield	\$52,292
T. Delavan	\$56,164
T. Geneva	\$60,496
T. Walworth	\$61,406
V. Bloomfield	\$52,283
V. Fontana-on-Geneva Lake	\$77,679
V. Williams Bay	\$68,191
C. Lake Geneva	\$43,587
Walworth County	\$53,445
Wisconsin	\$53,357

Source: ACS

**Median vs. Mean Income**

Census data related to income is reported as a median figure. This represents the middle point of all incomes reported. It is not the same as a mean (or average) income. For example, if four people reported their income at \$30,000 and one person reported their income at \$100,000, the median income would be \$30,000. In the same scenario, the mean income would be \$44,000, which does not accurately depict the income status of the majority (i.e. four people versus only one).

<sup>6</sup> Source: US Department of Health & Human Services, <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/index.cfm>, 2014.



In 2000, 3.5% of families and 5.1% of individuals (21 and 114, respectively) failed to breach the poverty guideline as defined by HHS. By the 2015 ACS those numbers had risen to 4.8% and 6.3%, undoubtedly a result of the recession. By comparison, 8.0% of families and 13.5% of individuals throughout Walworth County had incomes falling below the ‘poverty line.’ Poverty figures in the Town of Linn as of 2015 include:

- All families – 4.8%
- Families with related children under 18 years, 8.7%
- Families with related children under 5 years, 0.0%
- Married couple families, 3.8%
- Families with female householder, no husband, 21.2%
- All people, 6.3%
- Under 18 years, 7.9%
- 18 years to 64 years, 5.6%
- 64 years and older, 6.2%

**Table 1.6: Poverty Guidelines for the 48 Contiguous States and the District of Columbia, 2016**

Persons in Family/ Household	Poverty Guideline
1	\$11,800
2	\$16,020
3	\$20,160
4	\$24,300
5	\$28,440
6	\$32,580
7	\$36,730
8	\$40,890

For families/households with more than 8 persons, add \$5,200 for each additional person.

Source: US Department of Health & Human Services.

## Summary

The Town of Linn remains a predominantly rural community, albeit one with a strong tourism sector and growing land use diversity. Its population has increased by more than twenty-five percent since 1970, and is projected to reach a high of 2,770 persons by the year 2035. Like most American communities, the township is aging. The median age of all residents increased by a decade since 2000. As of 2015, a quarter of all residents are 65 years of age or older with the bulk of the baby boom generation rapidly approaching retirement age.

These two factors, combined with an overall increase in the general population, will require that the Town reevaluate past strategies for providing housing, transportation, and services. The Town of Linn Comprehensive Plan 2040 is intended to provide the community with the tools necessary to adequately prepare for its future...while preserving the cultural and natural resources most valued by its year-round and seasonal residents.



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