



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

TOWN OF RIB MOUNTAIN
Marathon County, Wisconsin



UPDATE: 2020

ADOPTED BY TOWN BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ON: JULY 21, 2020
RECOMMENDED BY THE PLAN COMMISSION ON: JUNE 10, 2020

Acknowledgments

Town Board of Supervisors

Allen Opall, *Town Chair*
Brad Conklin
Dan Fiorenza
Gerry Klein
Fred Schaefer
Jim Legner, *Former Supervisor*

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Bill Bursaw, *Vice Chair*
Marne' Bruner
Chad Grundemann
Andrea Larson
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Jared Wehner, *Director of Community Development*
Paul Kufahl, *Building Inspector/Deputy Zoning Admin.*
Scott Turner, *Superintendent of Streets and Parks*
Mike Heyroth, *Director of Rib Mtn. Sanitary District*
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Adoption History

Plan Commission Resolution Recommending Approval (No. PC-2020-01), adopted on June 10, 2020

RESOLUTION OF THE PLAN COMMISSION TOWN OF RIB MOUNTAIN, MARATHON COUNTY, WISCONSIN

RESOLUTION No. PC-2020-01

The Plan Commission of the Town of Rib Mountain, Marathon County, Wisconsin, by this resolution, adopted on proper notice with a quorum and by a roll call vote of a majority of the town plan commission present and voting resolves and recommends to the town board of the Town of Rib Mountain as follows:

- Adoption of the Town of Rib Mountain 2020 Comprehensive Plan.

The Town of Rib Mountain Plan Commission, by this resolution, further resolves and orders as follows:

All maps and other materials noted and attached as exhibits to the Town of Rib Mountain 2020 Comprehensive Plan are incorporated into and made a part of the Town of Rib Mountain 2020 Comprehensive Plan.

The vote of the town plan commission in regard to this resolution shall be recorded by the clerk of the town plan commission in the official minutes of the Town of Rib Mountain Plan Commission.

The town clerk shall properly post or publish this resolution as required under s. 60.80, Wis. stats.

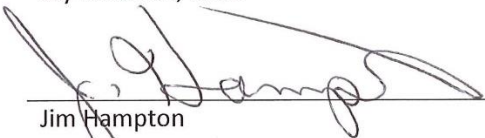
Adopted this 10th day of June 2020.



Jay Wittman, Chair



Ryan Burnett, Vice Chair



Jim Hampton



Steve Plunkett



Mary Kate Riordan



Thomas Steele

NOT PRESENT

Tonia Westphal

Attest:



Paul Kufahl, Plan Commission Clerk

Attachment: Town of Rib Mountain 2020 Comprehensive Plan

ORDINANCE No. 2020-02
ADOPTION OF THE TOWN OF RIB MOUNTAIN 2020 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
TOWN OF RIB MOUNTAIN, MARATHON COUNTY, WISCONSIN

SECTION I – PURPOSE

The purpose of this ordinance is for the Town of Rib Mountain to lawfully adopt a comprehensive plan as required under Wis. stat. §§66.1001(4)(c),

SECTION II – AUTHORITY

The town board of the Town of Rib Mountain has authority under its village powers under Wis. Stat. §§60.22, its power to appoint a town plan commission under Wis. stats. §§60.62 (4) and 62.23 (1), and under Wis. stat. §§66.1001(4), to adopt this ordinance. The comprehensive plan of the Town of Rib Mountain must be in compliance with Wis. stat. §§66.1001(4)(c), in order for the town board to adopt this ordinance.

SECTION III – ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE

The town board of the Town of Rib Mountain, by this ordinance, adopted on proper notice with a quorum and roll call vote by a majority of the town board present and voting, provides the authority for the Town of Rib Mountain to adopt its comprehensive plan under Wis. Stat. §§66.1001 (4), and provides the authority for the town board to order its publication.

SECTION IV – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The town board of the Town of Rib Mountain has adopted written procedures designed to foster public participation in every stage of the preparation of a comprehensive plan as required by Wis. stat. §§66.1001(4)(a).

SECTION V – TOWN PLAN COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Plan Commission of the Town of Rib Mountain, by a majority vote of the entire commission, recorded in its official minutes, has adopted a resolution recommending to the town board the adoption of the Town of Rib Mountain Comprehensive Plan, which contains all of the elements specified in Wis. stat. §§66.1001(2).

SECTION VI – PUBLIC HEARING

The Town of Rib Mountain has held a public hearing on this ordinance on July 21, 2020, with notice in compliance with the requirements of Wis. stat. §§66.1001(4)(d) in its local paper on June 21, 2020.

SECTION VII – ADOPTION OF TOWN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The town board of the Town of Rib Mountain, by the enactment of this ordinance, formally adopts the document entitled Town of Rib Mountain Comprehensive Plan Ordinance under pursuant to Wis. stat. §§66.1001(4)(c).

SECTION VIII – SEVERABILITY

If any provision of this ordinance or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the invalidity does not affect other provisions or applications of this ordinance that can be given effect without the invalid provision of application, and to this end, the provisions of this ordinance are severable.

SECTION IX – EFFECTIVE DATE


This ordinance is effective on posting.

The town clerk shall properly post this ordinance as required under Wis. stat. §§60.80 at the Town of Rib Mountain Municipal Center, Rib Mountain Sanitary District Office, at South Area Fire and Emergency Response District Station No. 1 and on the Town of Rib Mountain's website, www.townofribmountain.org.


Adopted this 21st day of July 2020.

Signed by the Board of Supervisors of the Town of Rib Mountain:

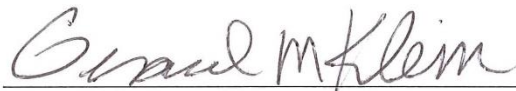
Allen Opall, Town Chairman – NOT PRESENT




Brad Conklin, Supervisor



Dan Fiorenza, Supervisor



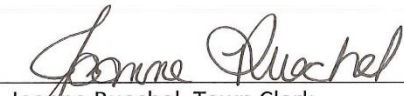
Gerry Klein, Supervisor



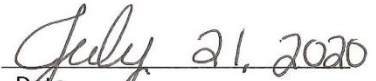
Fred Schaefer, Supervisor, Acting Chair

Attest:

I, Joanne Ruechel, Clerk of the Town of Rib Mountain, Marathon County, State of Wisconsin do hereby certify that the attached is a true and correct copy of a Zoning Resolution adopted by a majority vote of the Town Board of Supervisors of the Town of Rib Mountain on July 21, 2020.



Joanne Ruechel, Town Clerk



Date

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Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

Chapter Intent

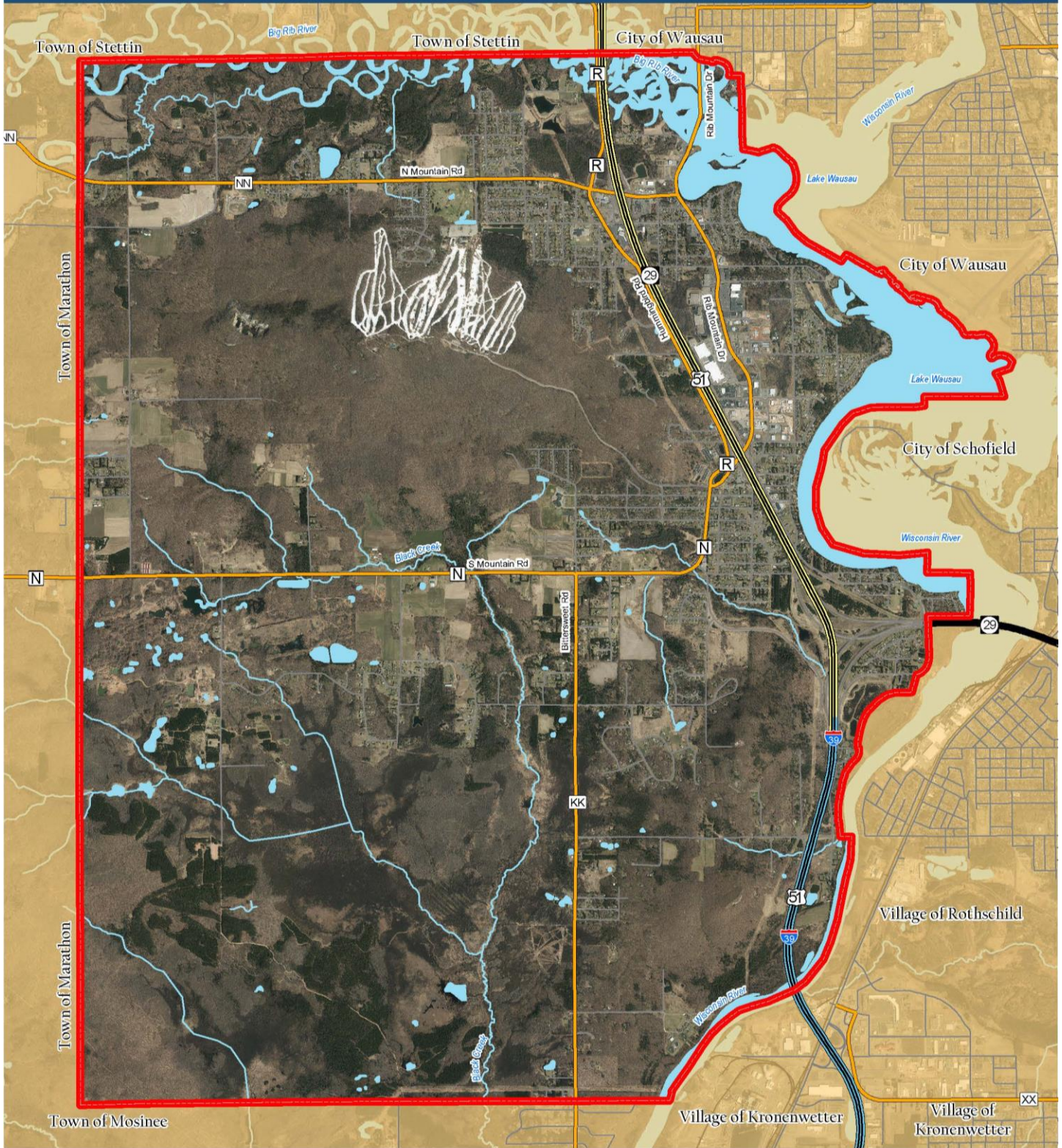
- Explain the purpose of the Town’s Comprehensive Plan

The Town of Rib Mountain’s Comprehensive Plan guides the future growth, development and enhancement of the Town for the next 10 to 20 years. This plan incorporates more than just future land uses, but also direction for housing and neighborhood development, economic development, transportation, community facilities, protection of natural resources and intergovernmental cooperation. These crucial elements among others will shape the future of the Town.

The Plan Elements

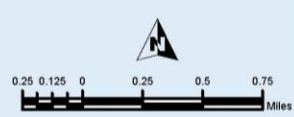
The State of Wisconsin requires all municipalities to adopt a Comprehensive Plan every ten years. This is guided by Wis. Stat. §§66.1001 *Comprehensive Planning*, which has established 9 essential and required elements and the Comprehensive Plan must address. They are as follows:

- **Issues and Opportunities.** The chapter includes the background information on the Town of Rib Mountain, an overarching community vision statement of the overall objectives, policies, goals and actions of the Town to guide development and redevelopment over the next 20-year period. This section also contains current demographic information, trends, behaviors and employment characteristics within the Town.
- **Natural, Agricultural and Cultural Resources.** The chapter discusses the current conditions of the local land and water, as well as the local cultural heritage. It also takes into consideration impacts and patterns the Town has on its natural features within its borders as well as neighboring communities.
- **Housing and Neighborhoods.** This chapter analyses the housing needs within the Town and projects the future needs and types. This section also looks at how these varied housing types can incorporate into the existing fabric that exists in the different neighborhoods of the Town.
- **Utilities and Community Facilities.** This chapter discusses the public utility systems that serve the Town and analyses of the future needs compared to the capacity of the infrastructure in place. This section also reviews the cultural resources, such as parks, schools and safety facilities that are in and serve the Town.
- **Transportation.** This chapter reviews the current transportation networks within and through the Town, ranging from the Interstate down to local street and trails. These networks include motorized vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians and other alternative forms of transportation.
- **Economic Development.** The chapter takes a look at the current economic conditions and trends of the Town. This analysis also looks at the impacts on a regional level and the changes of scales of various sectors and their impact on employment and growth.
- **Land Use.** This chapter compiles all the existing land uses within the Town and projects the anticipated needs and growth. Factors that are analyzed are productive soils, natural limitations, floodplains, wetlands, and proximity to public services. This is then compiled into the Future Land Use map, which guides the Town’s future development.
- **Intergovernmental Cooperation.** This chapter looks at the Town’s relationships with neighboring government units, as well as the school district, sanitary district and Marathon County and how those relationships can be used to accomplish common goals that meet the needs of both entities and those they serve.
- **Implementation.** This chapter discusses how the challenges that were analyzed in previous chapters are to be overcome and mitigated. This is where specific tasks are listed in order and how they will be accomplished. This section will also address how changes to this document are to be made.



- Town Boundary
- Water
- Transportation**
- Interstate
- U.S. Highways
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Railroad

Source: WI DNR, Wis DOT, NCWRPC
 This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey of the actual boundary of any property depicted. This drawing is a compilation of records, information and data used for reference purposes only. NCWRPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.



North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
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Chapter 2: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Chapter Intent

- Discussion of the history and background of the Town of Rib Mountain
- The planning processes and public participation
- Community Vision Statement
- Analysis of the Town's demographics and projections

History and Background

The Town of Rib Mountain is located in eastern Marathon County along the STH 29/I-39 corridor, in the southwest portion of the Wausau Metropolitan area. This can be seen in the Location Map. The landscape of the Town includes both urban and suburban characteristics. The eastern third of the Town is more densely developed while the western portion of the Town remains contains low-density, single-family housing development. Rib Mountain is the prominent natural feature and occupies a large area in the north central part of the Town. Nine-Mile Forest Unit also occupies a large area in the southwest portion of the Town.

The Town adopted its first comprehensive plan in 2005 as a part of a county-wide planning effort. Rib Mountain has its own zoning and subdivision regulations and utilizes development agreements as a means to ensure high development standards. Town roads are generally in good repair and multi-use trails can be found Town-wide. Portions of Rib Mountain are in the Wausau Urban Service Area and receive public sanitary sewer service through the Rib Mountain Sanitary District. Outside the sewer service area, all development uses private on-site septic systems and wells.

The Town experienced fairly strong population growth over the past 30 years, with an increase in population of 45% between 1970 and 2000. Since 2000, the population growth has not been as robust and is projected to remain low to moderate at least into the near future.

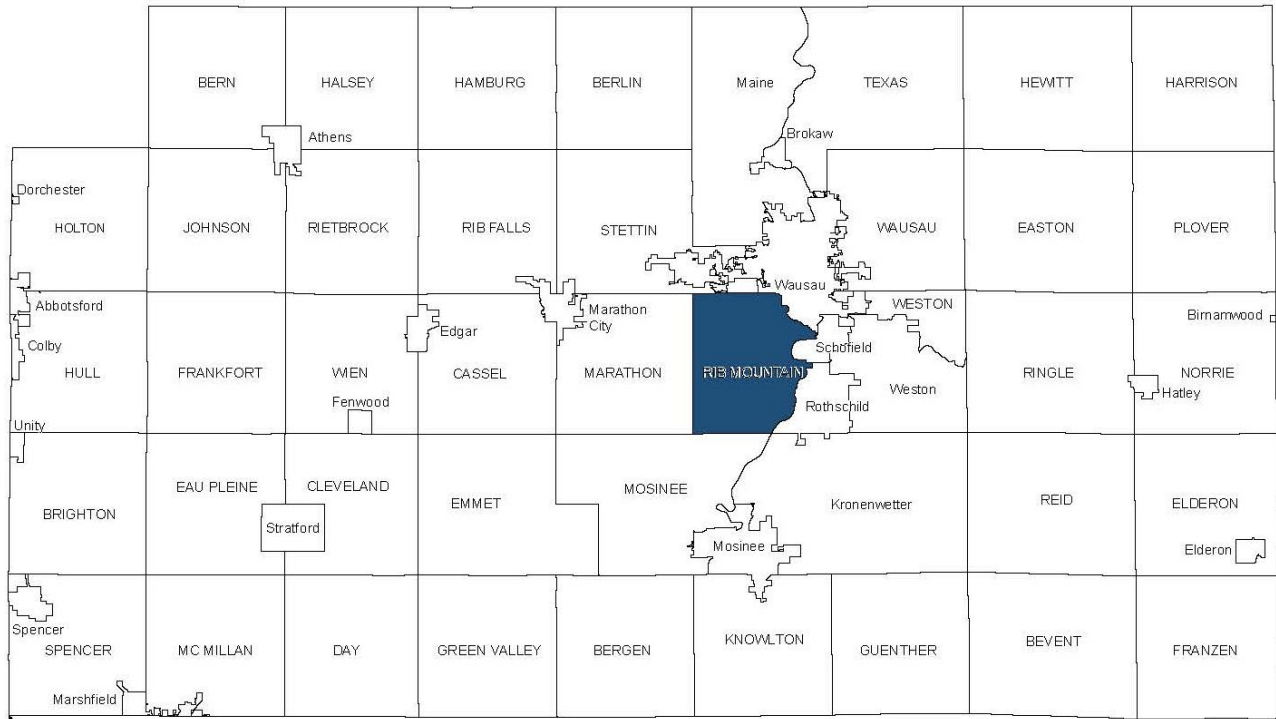
The Town's economy is dominated by commercial and service type businesses, most of which are located in the eastern part of the Town, near Rib Mountain Drive. Some scattered agricultural activities are found in the central and western parts of the Town. In 2014, Rib Mountain included 3,479 jobs, mostly in the retail trade industry. The number of jobs in Town has varied between 1,240 and 3,479 over the past 12 years.

The Planning Processes and Public Participation

In the Spring of 2017, the Town initiated a process to update its 2005 plan. Wis. Stat. §§66.1001, Wisconsin's Smart Growth Law, requires a comprehensive plan be updated every 10 years. A variety of Town Plan Commission meetings were held between 2017 and 2019 to prepare the plan. A final Plan Commission meeting was held in May of 2020 to review the final draft and recommend to proceed with the adoption process of the plan to the Town Board. A public hearing was held prior to adoption.

An important part of any planning process is public involvement. Public involvement provides the citizens of the Town an opportunity to express their views, ideas and opinions on issues, goals and objectives. Local officials use this input to guide policies and decisions with greater awareness of the public's desires and consensus. The adopted Public Participation Plan is found in Appendix A.

The Town of Rib Mountain posted all Plan Commission meetings inviting the public and held a public hearing to collect public input. In addition, residents were informed of the process through the Town Beat quarterly newsletter and provided opportunities to provide input as part of special public engagement sessions during elections in 2017 and 2018.



Source: WI DNR, Wis DOT, NCWRPC

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Community Vision Statement

In 2005, during the creation of the first Rib Mountain Comprehensive Plan, the Town Plan Commission created a vision for the community. As part of the 2020 update process, the Plan Commission has worked to create a refined vision:

“The Town of Rib Mountain is a unique convergence of quality, balanced commerce with attractive, distinct natural recreational opportunities which provides a welcoming environment to foster a safe, affordable community that enjoys a high quality of life”

Demographics, Trends and Projections

This section describes the existing demographics of the Town of Rib Mountain and identifies major socio-economic trends impacting the Town. A variety of demographic information is examined in this section, including total population, age distribution, household composition, educational attainment, income levels, poverty, and resident employment data. The Towns of Marathon and Mosinee, the Village of Rothschild, the cities of Schofield and Wausau, as well as the County and the State are listed for comparison.

The data in this chapter, as well as the chapter on housing, mainly utilizes data from the U.S. Census and the American Community Survey (ACS), as well as the Wisconsin Department of Administration (WDOA). The U.S. Census and the ACS are both produced by the U.S. Census Bureau; however, the Census is a count of the American population conducted every 10 years, while the ACS is an estimate of the population released on a yearly basis. Data is analyzed for the years 2000 and 2010 from the U.S. Census Bureau for this plan, while 2014 data is provided to give a sense of current trends. This creates consistency with the 2005 plan data, which mainly analyzed Census data between 1990 and 2000, before the ACS was available on a yearly basis.

In 2010, the U.S. Census Bureau started releasing ACS data for all populations on a yearly basis, including the Town of Rib Mountain. However, small populations such as Rib Mountain, are often difficult to survey while the Census is a full count of the population. This can produce data that is not always completely accurate or consistent.

This was the case for the Town of Rib Mountain in the 2000 Census. Several subdivisions were included in the Rib Mountain data which were not actually a part of the Town, giving the appearance of a large population increase in the 1990s. This was not corrected in the 2000 data by the Bureau, but the issue appears to have been corrected for the 2010 Census. The Wisconsin DOA 2000 estimate was used as a substitute for a population count in the following population estimate tables and figures. The DOA 2000 estimate was 611 people fewer than the U.S. Census count. This would indicate that the population has slowed rather than seeing a large decline from 2000 to 2010.

Most of the 2000 Census demographic data for Rib Mountain was affected by this miscalculation; however, there is no substitute for several demographic markers including educational attainment, income, poverty, and employment which are essential information to the community planning process. As such, the aforementioned 2000 demographic markers from the 2000 Census were left unaltered in this section.

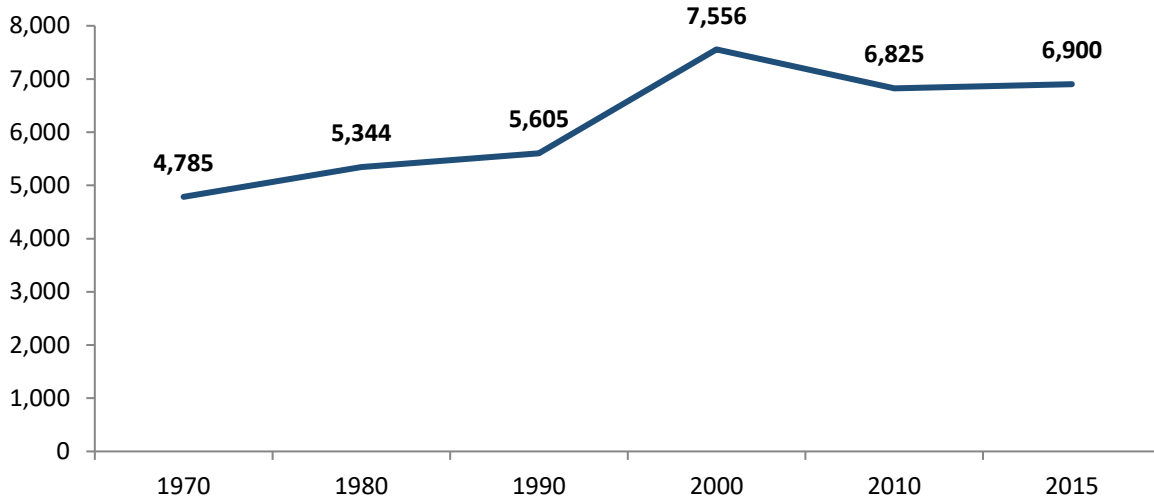
Population and Households

As shown in Figure 2.1, over the past 40 years the population of the Town of Rib Mountain increased by 42.6 % from 1970 to 2010. This was lower than the percent increase experienced by Marathon County (57.4%), but higher than the State (28.7%).

The increase in total households over the past 40 years was substantially higher than the increase in population, increasing 99.4 % from 1970 to 2010. This is likely due to a decrease in household size, reflecting the national trend

toward more households comprised of singles, couples without children, and widows or widowers. The rate of increase of households in Rib Mountain was higher than the County (78.6%) and the State (71.6%).

Figure 2.1 Rib Mountain Historical Population Change, 1970-2015



Source: WDOA Demographic Services Center. Note 2000 Census year error, see Table 2.1.

	2000	2010	2015	2000-2010 Net Change	2000-2010 % Change
T Rib Mountain	6,945*	6,825	6,900	-120	-1.7%
T Marathon	1,085	1,048	1,051	-37	-3.4%
T Mosinee	2,146	2,174	2,189	28	1.3%
V Rothschild	4,970	5,269	5,302	299	6.0%
C Schofield	2,117	2,169	2,212	52	2.5%
C Wausau	38,426	39,106	39,063	680	1.8%
County	125,834	134,063	135,341	8,229	6.5%
State	5,363,675	5,686,986	5,724,692	323,311	6.0%
United States	281,421,906	308,745,538	314,107,084	27,323,632	10.0%

Source: US Census and WDOA Estimates 2015, *2000 Department of Administration population estimate for Rib Mountain.

Population Trends from 2000 to 2015

As displayed in Table 2.1, during the last decade the population appears to have decreased by 1.7% in Rib Mountain from 6,945 persons to 6,825 persons when attempting to account for the 2000 Census error. Most of the surrounding municipalities saw growth during this decade. At the same time, the County grew 6.5% while the State increased 6.0%. Since 2010, the Town's population has rebounded; nearly returning to its 2000 level.

In 2010, the Town contained 2,650 households, with an average household size of 2.57. Marathon County saw an increase of 19.8% in households while the State experienced an increase of 9.4%.

In 2015, the WDOA estimated the population of Rib Mountain to be 6,900. This was an increase of 1.1% since 2010, which was similar to levels of growth experienced in the County and the State from 2000.

Rib Mountain's median age was 45.0 years in 2010. The largest age group was individuals between the ages of 50 and 54 years, which was 9.6% of the population. It will be important for the community to consider the aging population in

decision making opportunities. In Marathon County over the next 10 years, the percent of the population aged 65 years and older is anticipated to increase from 16% to 20% of the population. This is a 39% increase based on the 2013 WDOA county age projections.

The WDOA does not provide these projections at the municipal level; however, in 2015, those aged 65 years and older in Rib Mountain comprised 18% of the population and the age cohort, ages 55 to 64 years, which will reach retirement age in the next ten years, comprised 14% of the population. As displayed in Table 2.2, this is similar to surrounding communities. However, due to migration, births, and deaths, the proportion of the population 65 years and older will not increase 14%age points. If the Town increases at the same rate as the County projections, the number should increase by 473 persons. This would be 24% of the Town population.

Table 2.2: Population at or Near Retirement Age, 2015

	Marathon County		Mosinee Town		Rib Mountain Town		Rothschild Village		Schofield City		Wausau City	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total Pop.	135,177	-	2,228	-	6,867	-	5,287	-	2,104	-	39,210	-
55 - 64 yrs.	18,249	14	365	16	968	14	619	12	322	15	4,940	13
65 yrs. and Over	20,952	16	350	16	1,209	18	708	13	375	18	6,626	17

Source: WDOA.

Population and Household Projections

Table 2.3 shows population projections completed by the WDOA Demographic Services Center. The WDOA population projections are recognized as Wisconsin’s official population projections in accordance with Wisconsin Statue 16.96. The WDOA projections are based on the historical population trends of individual communities, however, more recent years carry a greater weight in the WDOA’s projected populations.

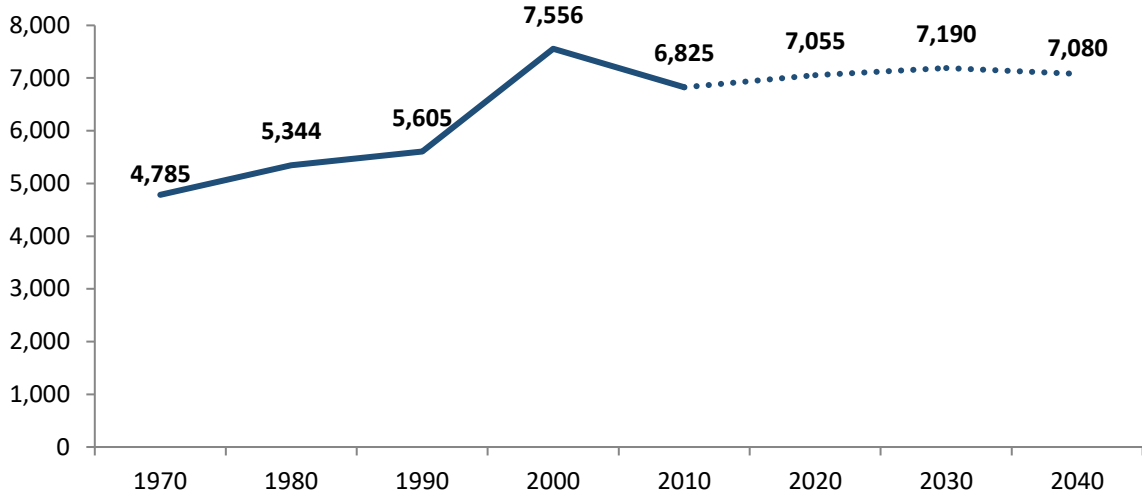
The WDOA Demographic Services Center projected in 2040 the population of the Town of Rib Mountain would be 7,080. This would be an increase of 3.7% over the thirty-year period. During the previous thirty-year period (1980 to 2010) the Town experienced a growth rate of 27.7%. As noted in the previous comprehensive plan, this was anticipated by the community, primarily due to limited land availability for new housing development. Figure 2.2 shows historical population growth as well as WDOA projections for the Town from 1970 to 2040.

Table 2.3: Population Projections

	2010 Census	2015 Projection	2020 Projection	2025 Projection	2030 Projection	2035 Projection	2040 Projection
T Rib Mountain	6,825	6,895	7,055	7,145	7,190	7,165	7,080
T Marathon	1,048	1,055	1,075	1,085	1,090	1,085	1,070
T Mosinee	2,174	2,210	2,310	2,385	2,440	2,475	2,490
V Rothschild	5,269	5,340	5,525	5,655	5,755	5,795	5,790
C Schofield	2,169	2,170	2,205	2,210	2,205	2,180	2,135
C Wausau	39,106	39,440	40,460	41,100	41,490	41,450	41,070
County	134,063	136,510	142,200	146,595	150,130	152,120	152,790
State	5,686,986	5,783,015	6,005,080	6,203,850	6,375,910	6,476,270	6,491,635

Source: US Census and WDOA Estimates 2015

Figure 2.2 Historical and Projected Population Growth, 1970-2040



Source: WDOA Demographic Services Center. Note 2000 Census year error, see Table 1.1

Like the population projections, the WDOA household projections are recognized as Wisconsin’s official population projections in accordance with Wisconsin Statute 16.96 and are based on the historical population trends of individual communities. Assuming a conservative rate of growth, the number of households is expected to increase by 266 within the Town, or 10.3% between 2010 and 2040 as shown in Table 2.4. This is slower than the expected growth rates in the County (19.8%) and in the State (22.3%).

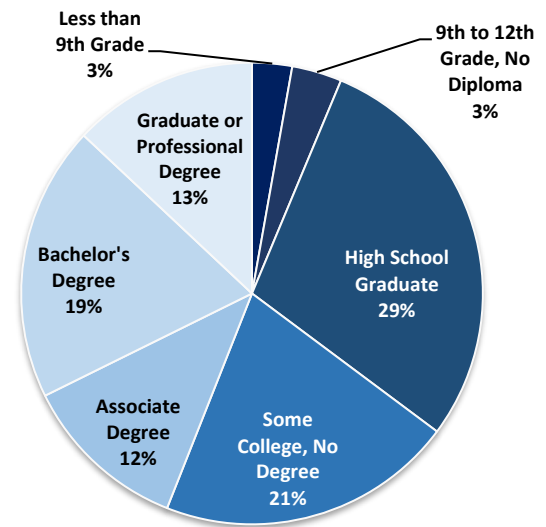
Table 2.4 Household Projections							
	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
	Census	Projection	Projection	Projection	Projection	Projection	Projection
T Rib Mountain	2,650	2,704	2,791	2,852	2,897	2,922	2,916
T Marathon	396	403	414	421	428	431	429
T Mosinee	814	836	881	918	948	973	988
V Rothschild	2,199	2,251	2,349	2,425	2,489	2,535	2,555
C Schofield	994	1,004	1,030	1,041	1,049	1,050	1,039
C Wausau	16,487	16,790	17,371	17,774	18,064	18,198	18,143
County	53,176	54,657	57,394	59,611	61,524	62,958	63,730
State	2,279,768	2,371,815	2,491,982	2,600,538	2,697,884	2,764,498	2,790,322

Source: U.S. Census and WDOA Projections 2013

Educational Attainment

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 93.7% of Rib Mountain residents, aged 25 and older, have a high school education or higher. This is a 2.0-point increase from 2000. This is also higher than the County at 88.4 %, and the State at 89.4%. In the Town, 32.2% of residents, aged 25 and older, have a bachelor’s degree or higher. This is also significantly higher than the number of persons with a bachelor’s degree or higher in the County and State with 20.8% and 25.8% respectively. Figure 2.3 shows the breakdown for educational attainment in the Town.

Figure 2.3 Educational Attainment, Rib Mountain, 2010



Source: 2010 ACS Five Year Estimates

Income Levels

Median income and per capita income are two important indicators of community prosperity. The median income is the income halfway between the highest and lowest reported incomes. When looking at the national level, incomes have generally not matched pace with inflation, resulting in lower buying power across the nation from 2000 to 2010. The Town of Rib Mountain was not an exception. In 2010, the median income was \$67,985. When adjusted for inflation, this was a 12.4% drop in income from 2000. Median household income also fell in the County and the State as displayed in Table 2.5. The Bureau of Labor Statistics Inflation Calculator was used to adjust incomes, based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

Table 2.5: Median Household Income, 2000-2014

	2000 Inflation Adjusted (2010 \$)	2010 (2010 \$)	2014 (2014 \$)	2000-2010 Net Change	2000-2010 Adj. Adj. % Change
T Rib Mountain	\$ 77,616	\$ 67,985	\$ 70,750	-\$9,631	-12.4%
T Marathon	\$ 64,898	\$ 69,931	\$ 71,528	\$5,033	7.8%
T Mosinee	\$ 69,765	\$ 61,838	\$ 58,110	-\$7,927	-11.4%
V Rothschild	\$ 64,002	\$ 57,948	\$ 54,042	-\$6,054	-9.5%
C Schofield	\$ 48,319	\$ 38,450	\$ 45,236	-\$9,869	-20.4%
C Wausau	\$ 46,639	\$ 41,304	\$ 40,464	-\$5,335	-11.4%
County	\$ 57,192	\$ 53,471	\$ 53,779	-\$3,721	-6.5%
State	\$ 55,452	\$ 51,598	\$ 52,738	-\$3,854	-7.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

In 2014, the median household income was \$70,750 in the Town, representing a 4.1% decrease from 2010, when adjusted for inflation.

Per Capita Income

Per capita income is the average obtained by dividing aggregate income by the total population of an area. Over the 10-year period from 2000 to 2010, the Town per capita income decreased 3.5%, inflation adjusted, compared to a 1.2% decrease for both the County and the State.

In 2014, the per capita income was \$40,449 in the Town. This was significantly higher than the County (\$28,555) and the State (\$29,907). This was also a 9.8% increase over 2010, when adjusted for inflation.

Table 2.6: Per Capita Income

	2000 Inflation Adjusted ('10 \$)	2010 ('10 \$)	2014 ('14 \$)	2000-2010 Adj. Net Change	2000-2010 Adj. % Change
T Rib Mountain	\$35,162	\$33,935	\$40,449	-\$1,227	-3.5%
T Marathon	\$23,941	\$30,915	\$28,875	\$6,974	29.1%
T Mosinee	\$ 27,770	\$26,991	\$27,201	-\$779	-2.8%
V Rothschild	\$28,157	\$30,509	\$28,174	\$2,352	8.4%
C Schofield	\$25,689	\$23,884	\$28,334	-\$1,805	-7.0%
C Wausau	\$25,613	\$23,436	\$24,459	-\$2,177	-8.5%
County	\$26,216	\$25,893	\$28,555	-\$323	-1.2%
State	\$26,935	\$26,624	\$27,907	-\$311	-1.2%

Source: U.S. Census, 2014 ACS Five Year Estimates, & NCWRPC.

Poverty

In 2010, 4.6% of the Town's population was under the Federal Poverty Line (FPL). This is lower than the County (8.7%), State (11.6%) and National (13.8%) levels. In 2014, the poverty rate had fallen 1.1 points to 3.5% of the population.

Table 2.7: Poverty Rate

	2000	2010*	2014*
T Rib Mountain	1.7%	4.6%	3.5%
T Marathon	4.7%	6.9%	7.2%
T Mosinee	4.0%	6.5%	9.4%
V Rothschild	4.0%	2.8%	7.5%
C Schofield	7.3%	15.1%	7.4%
C Wausau	11.4%	15.1%	20.2%
County	6.6%	8.7%	11.4%
State	8.7%	11.6%	13.3%

Source: U.S. Census, *2014 ACS Five Year Estimates

Resident Employment

In 2010, 3,648 Town residents were employed. During the same time the Town had an unemployment rate of 4.1%. A total of 3,805 people was in the labor force, representing a Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) of 70.6% in 2010, which was lower than the County LFPR of 72.2%.

The LFPR is the percentage of adults, aged 16 years and older, that are employed or actively looking for work. Labor Force Participation Rates have been dropping across the country as more baby boomers are retiring and more young adults delay entering the workforce to pursue educational opportunities. In 2000, the Town's LFPR was 76.5%.

Occupations

Table 128 below shows Town residents employment by industry from the U.S. Census Bureau. Educational, Health and Social Services is the largest industry employer of Town residents, with 20.1% of the Town working in this industry. Manufacturing, finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing industries followed as the next largest employment industries for Town residents.

Table 2.8: Employment by Industry

Industry	2000	2010	2014*	2000-10 Net Change	2000-10 % Change
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	12	18	38	6	50.0%
Construction	310	229	148	-81	-26.1%
Manufacturing	885	723	379	-162	-18.3%
Wholesale trade	131	100	115	-31	-23.7%
Retail trade	506	631	534	125	24.7%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	119	108	172	-11	-9.2%
Information	52	14	11	-38	-73.1%
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	583	422	595	-161	-27.6%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, & waste management services	271	219	232	-52	-19.2%
Educational, health and social services	998	734	805	-264	-26.5%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	141	204	65	63	44.7%
Other services (except public administration)	130	95	190	-35	-26.9%
Public administration	45	149	157	104	231.1%

Source: U.S. Census, *2014 ACS Five Year Estimates

Worker Commutes

In 2010, about 4.5% of working Town residents worked in Rib Mountain. Approximately 71% of Town residents worked within Marathon County, and about 29.1% traveled to other communities outside of the County. The City of Wausau employed 44.3% of Town workers while the Village of Weston employed 5.1%. About 1.9% of residents traveled outside of the State to work. The mean travel time to work was 15.4 minutes.

Chapter 3: NATURAL, AGRICULTURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

“The Town of Rib Mountain is committed to protecting its natural character for generations to come and to foster a sense of sustainability and responsibility for the natural environment in both its residents and visitors alike.”

Chapter Intent

- Discusses current and past initiatives by others
- Describes the current conditions of the natural environment and cultural resources in the Town
- Identifies existing issues
- Describes goals and objectives to address the identified issues

This Chapter describes local land and water conditions as well as agricultural resources and cultural heritage. It is important to consider the patterns and interrelations of natural resources on a broader scale beyond the Town’s borders as these resources 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. An overview of recent natural resource planning efforts is described below, followed by a description of local natural resource conditions.

The natural character of the Town is highly valued residents and the protection and enhancement of these resources is a continuing priority. However, Rib Mountain has limited regulatory authority over many natural resources, so the Town will continue to work with Marathon County and WDNR to protect and enhance natural resources within the Town, including threatened and endangered species.

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

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 2010 to 2020. 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 and Preservation Plan

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. Although there are limited agricultural areas in the Town, this program is of overall importance to the county in general and may have an impact on Town residents, for example, related to emerging trends such as the local foods movement.

Marathon County Forest 10-Year Comprehensive Use Plan

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

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 Groundwater through Comprehensive Planning

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.

Natural Resources

Marathon County is characterized by its abundance of natural resources, including water, soil, and biological resources. The Town contains two of the significant natural areas in Marathon County - Rib Mountain State Park and Nine-Mile Forest Unit.

Water Resources

Marathon County contains a plethora of water resources. Many have remained in a fairly pristine condition and others are in need of 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 to domestic, agricultural, and commercial uses. If groundwater is not protected, contamination could result, endangering the quality and supply of water in the Town.

Streams and Rivers

The Wisconsin River forms the eastern border of the Town of Rib Mountain and the Big Rib River meanders along the northern Town border. Black Creek runs through the Nine-Mile Forest Unit. See Natural Resources Map.

The Big Rib River is used for recreation, including fishing and paddling. However, the river is also a source of water for Granite Peak Ski Area for snow creation. In the 2016-2017 ski season, Granite Peak Ski Area drew more than 135 million

gallons of water from the river to create snow. This has impacts on wildlife in and along the river. Such intensive water use has been a point of controversy as the ski area seeks to expand in the near future.

An Outstanding Resource Water (ORW) is a lake, stream or flowage having excellent water quality, high recreational and aesthetic value and high-quality fishing. ORW waters are free from point source or nonpoint source pollution. An Exceptional Resource Water (ERW) is a lake, stream, or flowage exhibiting the same high-quality resource values as outstanding waters, but may be affected by point source pollution. Several streams in the County are classified as ORW or ERW. There are no Outstanding Resource Waters or Exceptional Resource Waters in the Town of Rib Mountain.

Watersheds

The Town of Rib Mountain 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 two watersheds which cover the Town of Rib Mountain.

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. The Lower Rib River watershed includes the portion of the Town north of Rib Mountain and the Mosinee Flowage watershed includes the portion of the Town south of Rib Mountain.

Floodplain

Floodplains consist of land likely to be covered by floodwater during a regional 100-year flood. Floodplain areas are based on information compiled by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM). The floodplain includes the floodway and the flood fringe. Generally, "floodway" consists of the channel of a river or stream and those portions of the floodplain adjoining the channel that are needed to carry the regional flood discharge. "Flood fringe" consists of that portion of the floodplain outside of the floodway covered by floodwaters during the regional flood and is generally associated with standing water rather than flowing water.

In the Town of Rib Mountain, large areas in the 100-year floodplain are located along the Big Rib River and a narrow band of floodplains edges the Wisconsin River and Black Creek. See Natural Resources Map.

Wetlands

Wetlands are defined as 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. Wetlands include marshes, wooded swamps, and wet meadows. Soils in these 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 in that location.

Wetlands are found in several places in the Town. The majority of the southwest portion of the Town around Black Creek, which makes up much of the Nine Mile area, is wetland area. The northern border of the Town is also predominantly wetland around the Big Rib River. See the Natural Resources Map.

Wetlands perform many indispensable roles in the proper function of the hydrologic cycle, and local ecological systems. In a natural condition, they control floodwater by moderating peak flows, and some may act 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 as well as functioning in the reduction of water nutrients through uptake of these compounds into plant tissues. They 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 also serve as breeding and nesting grounds for waterfowl and many other animals that depend on aquatic habitats; they

are an important recreational, education, and aesthetic resource. In many instances, wetlands serve as the combined roles of flood moderation, water purification and aquatic habitat, wetlands are important to the maintenance of downstream habitat as well.

Groundwater

The depth to groundwater varies from shallow to moderately deep throughout the Town. The volume of groundwater available for domestic and business uses also varies from sufficient to limited in some areas. High bedrock in some areas limits the supply and access to groundwater.

Soil Resources

Geology

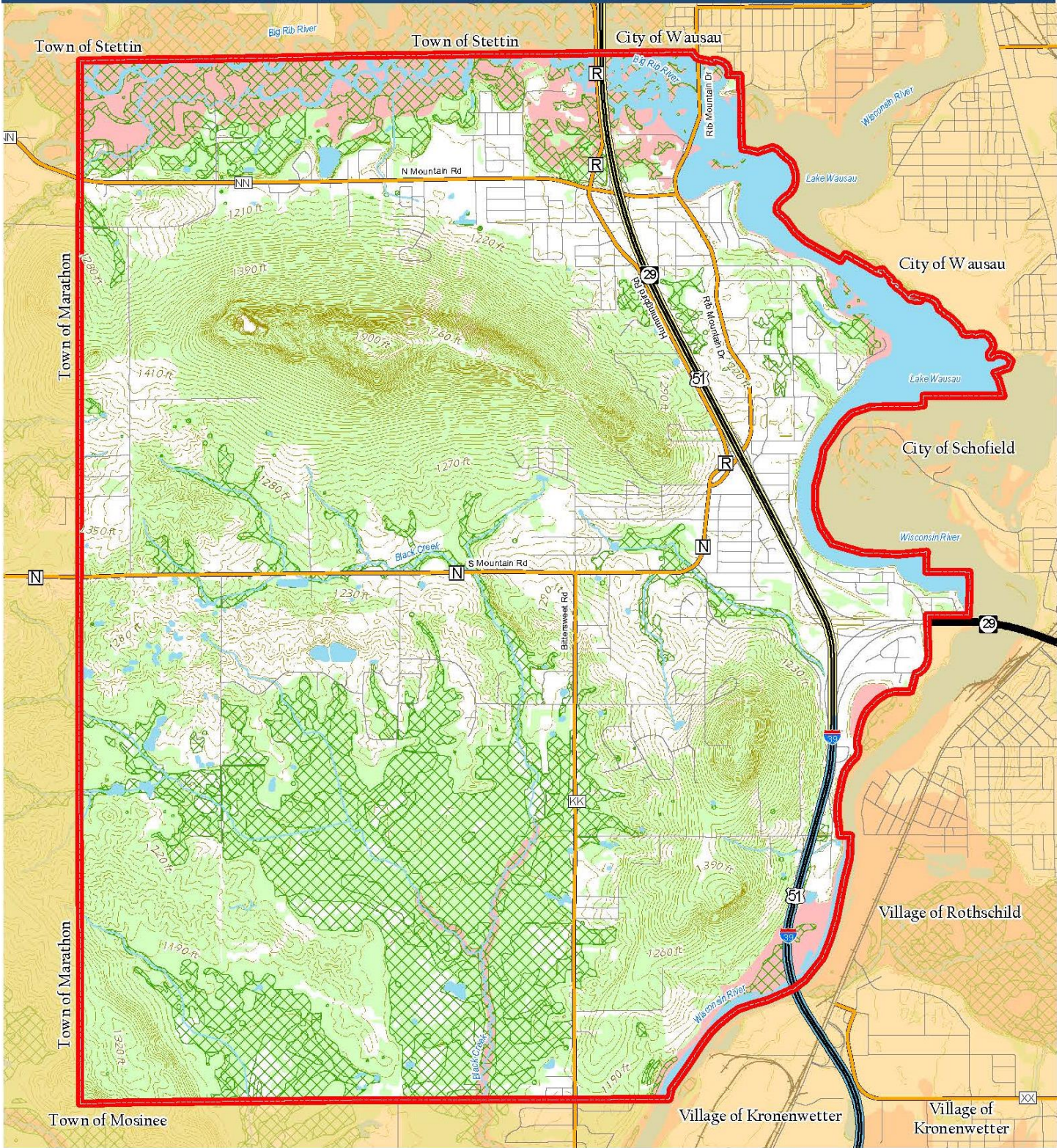
The most notable geologic features in the Town are Rib Mountain and Mosinee Hill. Rib Mountain, formerly called Rib Hill, is a four-mile-long ridge of ancient rock dating back about 1.7 billion years. It is among the oldest geological features on earth. It is composed of very hard metamorphic rock called quartzite. Rib Mountain reaches to 1,924 feet above sea level, making it the fourth tallest peak in Wisconsin.



Adjacent to Rib Mountain are Mosinee Hill and Hardwood Hill. Mosinee Hill is within the Town of Rib Mountain, while Hardwood Hill is within the Town of Marathon. Mosinee Hill is located 1.5 miles south-southeast of Rib Mountain and consists of two peaks (the Upper and Lower) joined by a “saddle”. The two peaks reach elevations of 1,610- and 1,472- feet above sea level respectively. All three hills are composed of rock of the same composition and have similar geology as Rib Mountain.

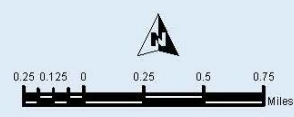
Soil Types

There are five different soil associations present in Rib Mountain. Areas adjacent to the Big Rib and Wisconsin rivers consist of Mahtomedi-Fordum-Sturgeon. Most of the Nine-Mile Creek area contains Cathro-Seelyville soils. The area encompassing and surrounding Rib Mountain consists of Fenwood-Rietbrock-Rozellville soils. Other soil associations include Mosinee-Meadland-Dancy and Marathon-Mylrea-Moberg. Susceptibility for soil erosion is generally consistent with the average soil loss rate in Marathon County overall and is not a major concern.



- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------|
| Town Boundary | Railroad |
| Roads | Natural Features |
| Interstate | Woodlands |
| U.S. Highways | Wetlands |
| State Highways | Floodplain |
| County Highways | Contours 10ft |
| Local Roads | Water |

Source: WI DNR, FEMA, NCWRPC
 This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey of the actual boundary of any property depicted. This drawing is a compilation of records, information and data used for reference purposes only. NCWRPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.



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Prime Farm Soils

Areas most suitable for agricultural production, with minimal limitations and requiring minimal inputs for successful production have been identified as “prime farm lands” by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The USDA further defines prime farm lands into land capability classes. Land Capability Classification (LCC) is a system of



grouping soils primarily on the basis of their capability to produce common cultivated crops and pasture plants without deteriorating over a long period of time. Prime farm lands in Marathon County have been classified into the USDA Land Capability Class II.

Soils can also be categorized according to other factors, such as how well 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 agriculture. 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.

Areas of Group 1 and 2 prime farmland soils are mostly concentrated around the base of Rib Mountain extending a little south of CTH N. It should be noted that not all prime farm soils are used for farming; some have been developed with residential or other uses. The “prime farm soils” designation simply indicates that these soils are good productive farmland.

Steep Slopes

Steep slopes are defined as slopes with gradients over 12%. Most of the steep slopes in the Town are associated with Rib Mountain. Generally, development is restricted or prohibited on steep slopes.

Non-Metallic Mining

The Town has one non-metallic mining area on the west side of the Town. This is a large land area just north of the County's Nine Mile Recreation Area. Active mining operations are being phased out, and the Town needs to consider the best use(s) of the site as reclamation process moves forward.

There are about 400 operating or abandoned sand, gravel, decomposed (“rotten”) granite and stone excavation sites in Marathon County. In 1989 the County adopted a Non-metallic Mining Ordinance that requires reclamation of these sites to a purposeful and acceptable landscape appearance and use. The program is administered by the Marathon County Conservation, Planning and Zoning Department and includes incentives to reclaim abandoned excavations.

Contaminated Sites

The Bureau for Remediation and Redevelopment Tracking System (BRRTS) is an inventory of every known contaminated site, such as oil or chemical spill, in the state of Wisconsin. These sites are also known as brownfields. 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 laundry mat. There are no listed open sites on the BRRT currently in the Town.

These properties create many problems for communities, including potential harm to human health and the environment; reduced tax revenue and economic growth, neighborhood deterioration and blight; and attraction of illegal activity, including vandalism and dumping. Brownfield investigation, cleanup and redevelopment can reduce many of these problems. Communities gain by recycling land infrastructure for new businesses and employment, housing,

parks, athletics fields and other local needs. Additionally, residential property values near remediated sites increase anywhere between 4.9% and 32.2%.

Biological Resources

Vegetation

The Town contains a significant amount of woodlands, many owned by the State (Rib Mountain State Park) or County (Nine-Mile forest unit). A portion of the County owned woodlands are logged. Vegetation in developed areas of the Town generally consists of urban landscaping of lawns, trees, shrubs and private gardens. However, many of the more rural, large lot residences are heavily wooded.

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 bear, badger, wolf, 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. In addition, Nine Mile Creek provides significant wildlife habitat area in the Town of Rib Mountain.

Threatened and Endangered Species

The following is a list of threatened and endangered species and natural features on the Natural Heritage Working List that have been documented for the Town of Rib Mountain. Bald eagles are not represented, and sensitive species have been removed, where applicable, including cave bats.

Endangered Community Types

The Natural Heritage Inventory listed three communities in the Town of Rib Mountain:

- Northern Sedge Meadow. This open wetland community is dominated by sedges and grasses. There are several common subtypes: Tussock meadows, dominated by tussock sedge (*Carex stricta*) and Canada bluejoint grass (*Calamagrostis canadensis*); Broad-leaved sedge meadows, dominated by the robust sedges (*Carex lacustris* and/or *C. utriculata*); and Wire-leaved sedge meadows, dominated by such species as woolly sedge (*Carex lasiocarpa*) and few-seeded sedge (*C. oligosperma*). Frequent associates include marsh bluegrass (*Poa palustris*), manna grasses (*Glyceria spp.*), paniced aster (*Aster lanceolatus*), joy-pye weed (*Eupatorium maculatum*), and the bulrushes (*Scirpus atrovirens* and *S. cyperinus*).
- Shrub-Carr. This wetland community is dominated by tall shrubs such as red-osier dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*), meadowsweet (*Spiraea alba*), and various willows (*Salix discolor*, *S. bebbiana*, and *S. gracilis*). Canada bluejoint grass (*Calamagrostis canadensis*) is often very common. Associates are similar to those found in Alder Thickets and tussock-type Sedge Meadows. This type is common and widespread in southern Wisconsin but also occurs in the north.
- Fast; Soft; Cold Streams. This community generally consists of cold-water streams that run fast and have soft or gravelly bottoms, not rocky. These streams are well suited for trout.

Flora

The inventory listed two plants as of special concern in the Town:

- Missouri Rock-cress (*Boechera missouriensis*)
- Drooping Sedge (*Carex prasina*)

Fauna

Five animals were listed on the Heritage Inventory:

- Acadian Flycatcher (*Empidonax virescens*)
- Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*)
- American Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*)
- Black Redhorse (*Moxostoma duquesnei*)
- Broad-banded Forestsnail (*Allogona profunda*)

Cultural Resources

A cultural resource is a broad term encompassing many aspects of heritage. 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. Cultural resources are those elements that signify heritage and help to evoke the sense of place that makes an area distinctive. Cultural resources include buildings; sites and landscapes that help communities retain their sense of identity in an increasingly homogenized society.

Brief History of the Town of Rib Mountain

The Town of Rib Mountain was originally part of the Town of Weston. In 1905, the area west of the Wisconsin River was separated and initially renamed Erickson (after the Town Chairman), but soon renamed Flieth. Flieth Street, now part of Wausau, commemorates this early name. The name was changed to Rib Mountain in 1930.

Like other nearby towns, lumbering was an early activity in the Town, followed by farming. The Town has experienced much change as a result of its location along the River, and due to its proximity to Wausau. The Town was first connected to Wausau by the 100-foot McCleary Bridge across the Big Rib River. Built of steel, the bridge's height made it accessible only by steep ramps at each end. The McCleary Bridge (also known as the "Snake Bridge") was reconstructed in the early 1900s. At that time, the Big Rib River still flowed its natural course and construction of the new bridge occurred on dry land in some areas. The 1909 construction of the Rothschild Dam created Lake Wausau and the water impoundment at the mouth of the Big Rib River.

The Town is home to Rib Mountain State Park, created when 160 acres were donated to the State of Wisconsin. A road to the top of the mountain was completed in 1931. By the mid-1930s, another 160 acres were added to the park, and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) made improvements to develop the ski area on the mountain. Rib Mountain is one of the highest points in Wisconsin and has become an important economic and recreational contributor to the region.

Growth in the Town of Rib Mountain over the last several decades was influenced in part by construction of Highway 51 (then referred to as the "Highway 51 Bypass"), which was completed in 1963. The new highway and interchanges greatly improved access to the Town, fostering development of new commercial and housing areas along its route in Rib Mountain and also in the Town of Stettin to the north.

Properties Listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)

There are no properties in Rib Mountain listed on the NRHP. The Town does not have a local historic preservation commission.

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. The inventory may be reviewed at www.wisconsinhistory.org/ahi/index.html. There are 11 historic properties in Rib Mountain that have been previously surveyed and included in the AHI.

The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has identified 12 archaeological sites and historic cemeteries in Rib Mountain.

Cemeteries, Burial Mounds and Other Burials

Wisconsin Statute 157.70 provides for the protection of all human burial sites, including all marked and unmarked burials and cemeteries. Suspected burial mounds or unmarked burials must be reported to the State Burial Sites Preservation Office. If human remains are uncovered during excavation, all work must cease pending review of the Burial Sites Preservation Office. All cemeteries and burials in Marathon County should be catalogued under Wis. Stat. 157.70 to provide maximum protection of these sites. The one known cemetery in the Town is the Bethlehem/Zion Lutheran Cemetery on CTH NN.

Natural, Agricultural and Cultural Resource Issues

- **Development on Rib Mountain.** Conflicts exist between environmental groups, area residents, and Granite Peak Ski Area owners regarding development on Rib Mountain. The owner of Granite Peak Ski Resort is interested in expanding the ski area to the west along with developing condominiums on their private 25-acre site at the base of the hill. Opposition groups are concerned about development impacts on the natural character of Rib Mountain and the surrounding environment.
- **Development at High Elevations.** Very steep topography limits development in some areas, particularly on Rib Mountain and the Mosinee Hill area south of CTH KK. While development may be restricted on areas with steep slopes, development is not necessarily prohibited on more level areas located at higher elevations. Because the Town does not restrict driveway construction on steep slopes, access can be provided to building sites located on more level ground at higher elevations. However, such sites generally must be accessed via private driveways because the maximum grade allowed for public roads is 12%. Development at high elevations can pose challenges for public water service and private wells are generally not realistic.
- **Water Withdraws from Big Rib River.** The quantity of water drawn from the Big Rib River annually by the ski hill for snow making operations have become a controversial issue due to potential impacts the water withdrawals could have on local flora and fauna and the resort's plans for expansion.
- **Surface Water Quality.** During the summer months, particularly on the warmer years, there is a large build-up of algae. This can become a hinderance to users of the water and to the wildlife. It would be beneficial to the metro area to work with the Lake Wausau Association to educate homeowners on the water on how to treat and maintain their waterfront properties to have a minimal impact on the water quality.
- **Lack of Current Information.** Although a brief countywide historic properties survey was carried out in 1975-77, no update has occurred. Many properties identified at that time may be gone, while other properties not previously surveyed may now be evaluated in a new context. It is beneficial for the Town to have current information regarding cultural resources in order to maximize planning and make the best use of historic properties.
- **No Historic Recognition Process.** There is no process to recognize historic buildings or begin to plan for their protection. Once historic properties are identified, the Town does not have an established mechanism for recognizing them or integrating them into ongoing planning processes.

Natural, Agricultural and Cultural Resources Goals, Objectives and Actions

The following goals, objectives and actions are intended to provide a policy framework and guide for the future development of the Town.

Goal I: Protect and enhance threatened and endangered community types, floodways, shorelands, steep slopes (unique topographies), shoreland-wetlands and wetlands in the Town.

The Town of Rib Mountain will strive to protect the natural environment from negative impacts of development and other activities.

Objectives:

1. Continue working with the WDNR and Marathon County to ensure appropriate preservation of wetlands and shorelines.
2. Encourage restoration of native vegetation along the Big Rib River to minimize the potential for bank erosion.
3. To the extent possible, limit uncontrolled runoff, overuse of fertilizers, and other contaminants that could negatively affect water quality.

Action:

1. Work with the Lake Wausau Association to educate property owners on best management practices for lawncare adjacent to water bodies.
4. Consider researching and implementing a stormwater utility to help fund necessary stormwater management maintenance activities (if and when the State of Wisconsin no longer prohibits the creation of this utility).

Goal II: Protect and enhance the woodlands in the Town.

The Town of Rib Mountain recognizes the importance of its woodland resources to the Town's environmental and aesthetic quality and places a high value on preservation of these resources.

Objectives:

1. Minimize clear-cutting of mature trees and woodlands
2. Actively enforce the Town's ordinances regarding clear-cutting on private property and revise, as necessary to maintain consistency with the County's clear-cutting regulations for Nine-Mile Forestry Unit.
3. Consider establishing buffer requirements between areas disturbed (e.g., graded) for new development and woodlands to minimize destruction or encroachment into the woodland edge. The buffer should be maintained in a natural condition.
4. Continue to serve as the liaison to foster communication between private property owners in the Town and the County, WDNR, and others regarding the Managed Forest Law (MFL), Forest Crop Law (FCL), and other programs aimed at protection and preservation of woodlands.

Goal III: Preserve the natural character and scenic quality of Rib Mountain.

The Town of Rib Mountain recognizes and values Rib Mountain as a prominent feature contributing to the Town's aesthetic and natural character.

Objectives:

1. Minimize intensive development in areas that could affect views of, or the natural character of Rib Mountain.

Action:

- a. Create a protective overlay zoning district and apply to areas that are determined to require such protection.
- b. Restrict clear cutting and selective cutting practices of property identified as "Environmental Protection" on the Future Land Use Map to exclusively manage dead or diseased vegetation, when not in conflict with Managed Forest Laws.
- c. Actively enforce the Town's ordinance regarding development of steep slopes on private property and revise, as necessary to maintain best management practices.

2. Continue to work cooperatively with the Ski Resort and the State to manage and coordinate development to minimize impacts on the natural character or appearance of Rib Mountain.
3. Prohibit non-metallic and metallic mining on Rib Mountain or any of the areas identified as “Environmental Protection” on the Future Land Use Map.

Goal IV: Preserving historically significant buildings and sites.

The Town of Rib Mountain supports the preservation of historically significant buildings and sites.

Objectives:

1. Work with the County Historical Society to identify and map historic resources so they may be considered in future planning.
2. Ensure that any known cemeteries, human burials or archaeological sites are protected from encroachment by roads or any development activities.
3. Work with the County Historical Society and State Historic Preservation Office to determine if structures are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Chapter 4: HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

“The Town of Rib Mountain will ensure all have access to quality, affordable housing in safe, welcoming neighborhoods.”

Chapter Intent

- Discusses current and past initiatives by others
- Describes the current conditions of the housing stock and livability in the Town
- Identifies existing issues
- Describes goals and objectives to address the identified issues

Housing characteristics and trends are important components of a comprehensive plan. The physical location of housing determines the need of many public services and facilities. 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

While quality housing is an essential aspect of livability, there are few housing studies or plans at the local level. Two plans, at the State and regional levels relate to housing in the area.

Wisconsin Realtors Association’s Workforce Housing Report

The association released a study on September 3, 2019 finding a lack of workforce housing throughout the State of Wisconsin. The report claims Wisconsin is, “On the cusp of not being able to adequately provide housing for today’s growing workforce needs.” The claim is backed by the falling number of building permits being issued for new home construction, the rising cost of new home construction, a decline in home ownership and a continued decline in overall affordability. The report can be found on the WRA’s [website](#).

Wisconsin State Consolidated Housing Plan

The Consolidated Housing Plan is required by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in the application process required of the State in accessing formula program fund of Small Cities Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships, Emergency Shelter Grants, and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS. “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.”

Regional Livability Plan

The 2015 Regional Livability Plan (RLP), written by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, addresses issues of livability in the areas of housing, transportation, economic development, and land use. The RLP identifies a number of issues affecting community livability related to housing:

- an aging population,
- smaller household sizes,
- a lack of housing options, and

- an increase in housing costs related to incomes.

Housing Data

The majority of the housing data in this section is taken from the 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census as well as the 2014 American Community Survey. As discussed in the demographics section, there was a miscalculation in the 2000 U.S. Census in Rib Mountain when the Bureau included several areas outside of the township in the Rib Mountain count. This resulted in a 611-person difference in the Wisconsin DOA population estimate and the U.S. Census count. This miscalculation also affected the housing unit count in the U.S. Census in Rib Mountain, although there is not DOA estimation for housing units for municipalities.

The 2000 U.S. Census counted 2,769 housing units, which would have indicated a 0.3% decrease from 2000 to 2010. The counted number of housing units is high. The NCWRPC estimates the number of housing units was closer to 2,563. This was estimated by dividing the DOA 2000 population estimate by the 2000 Census average household size, 2.78. This yields 2,498 households. The number of households was then multiplied by 102.6% to account for the 2000 Census housing vacancy rate of 2.6%.

There is a difference of 206 housing units between the NCWRPC estimate and the U.S. Census 2000 housing unit count. This would mean that between 2000 and 2010 there was an increase of 7.7%. However, as with demographic markers, there is no substitute for the housing unit data in 2000 provided by the Census Bureau. Therefore, the statistics on housing units in this section are left unaltered for consistency.

Housing Inventory

The following information provides a summary overview of the type, character and conditions of the housing stock in the Town of Rib Mountain.

Table 4.1: Total Housing Units					
	2000	2010	2014	2000-2010 Net Change	2000-2010 % Change
T Rib Mountain	2,769	2,761	2,664	-8	-0.3%
T Marathon	374	415	400	41	11.0%
T Mosinee	784	864	802	80	10.2%
V Rothschild	1,988	2,332	2,476	344	17.3%
C Schofield	1,022	1,099	1,124	77	7.5%
C Wausau	16,668	18,154	18,345	1,486	8.9%
County	50,360	57,734	58,040	7,374	14.6%
State	2,321,144	2,624,358	2,635,602	303,214	13.1%

Source: U.S. Census, 2014 ACS Five Year Estimates

As shown on Table 4.1 the Town of Rib Mountain has 2,761 housing units, a decrease of 8 units since 2000. This represents a decrease of 0.03% in housing units, compared to a decline of 9.7% in population and a 1.7% decrease in the number of households. Marathon County and the State's housing units grew by 14.6 and 13.1%, respectively.

Housing Projections

Table 4.2 shows the projected number of housing units needed from 2020 to 2040. These housing projections were based on the DOA population and household projections from 2013. The calculation for number of households was determined by dividing the projected population by the projected household size for each five-year increment. The total needed housing units shown below also assumed that the town vacancy of rate of 4.0% would hold steady.

Table 4.2: Housing Units Projections

	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Rib Mountain	2,907	2,971	3,018	3,044	3,038

Source: DOA Household Projections 2013, NCWRPC 2016

Housing Age

The age of a community's housing stock typically reflects several important factors including size, offered amenities, and overall maintenance costs. Age of the house often also reflects different regional and national trends in housing development. Housing predating the 1940s, 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 after 1980 are typically much larger than housing built in previous decades. Additional bedrooms, bathrooms, and attached garage space are among the amenities found in newer housing units.

Table 4.3: Housing Units by Year Built

	<1940	'40s	'50s	'60s	'70s	'80s	'90s	'00	> 2010
T Rib Mountain	5.4%	0.5%	9.8%	12.3%	16.7%	18.3%	24.2%	12.2%	0.6%
T Marathon	15.8%	3.0%	3.5%	12.3%	20.8%	12.0%	22.3%	9.8%	0.5%
T Mosinee	9.6%	3.2%	3.1%	5.2%	15.5%	17.2%	31.9%	14.2%	0.1%
V Rothschild	8.8%	9.5%	11.2%	14.0%	22.4%	6.8%	11.6%	15.7%	0.0%
C Schofield	23.9%	8.5%	24.4%	11.7%	9.5%	6.9%	7.5%	7.3%	0.3%
C Wausau	26.1%	10.7%	16.7%	10.0%	10.6%	6.2%	6.6%	12.1%	1.0%
County	18.8%	6.1%	10.0%	9.0%	15.1%	9.6%	14.0%	16.5%	0.9%
State	21%	6%	11%	10%	15%	10%	14%	13%	7%

Source: U.S. Census, 2010 ACS Five Year Estimates

Table 4.3 shows housing age distribution in Rib Mountain and surrounding communities for 2014. Housing built in the 1990s makes up approximately 24% of the total housing stock. That is significantly higher than overall percentages for the County as homes built in the 1990s make up 13% of the County's overall housing stock. The 2000s saw housing growth slower than the County and the State in Rib Mountain.

Housing Units by Type

Single-family detached units were the dominant housing type in the Town, as in the County in 2014, as shown in Table 4.4. Single-family houses made up 94.3% of all housing units. This is significantly higher than the overall figures for the County (77%) or State (69%). Only 1.5% of housing units in Rib Mountain are structures with more than 10 units.

Table 4.4 also compares housing unit types in Rib Mountain with nearby communities, both rural (the Towns of Marathon and Mosinee) and urban (the Cities of Schofield and Wausau and the Village of Rothschild). Rib Mountain has more housing types of three or more units (2.6%) than the Town of Marathon (1.0%), but fewer than the Town of Mosinee (2.9%). The urban communities have a significantly higher proportion of housing types of three or more units than the Town of Rib Mountain. Wausau has the most multifamily units with 23.4%, followed by Schofield (21.7%) and Rothschild (18.5%). With Rib Mountain's a mix of urban and suburban housing areas, the Town has a comparatively low percentage of multifamily housing.

Table 4.4: Housing Units by Type

Unit Type	Town of Rib Mountain	Town of Marathon	Town of Mosinee	Village of Rothschild	City of Schofield	City of Wausau	Marathon County
1, detached	88.0%	95.3%	88.9%	75.3%	62.1%	61.2%	74.4%
1, attached	6.4%	0.0%	1.0%	2.5%	3.5%	2.8%	2.6%
Duplex	2.7%	0.5%	1.0%	3.6%	11.6%	11.7%	5.7%
3 or 4	0.0%	1.0%	1.6%	0.0%	2.2%	4.3%	2.1%
5 to 9	1.1%	0.0%	1.2%	5.7%	3.6%	6.6%	5.1%
10 to 19	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.7%	14.0%	6.3%	3.9%
20 to 49	1.5%	0.0%	0.0%	6.1%	1.4%	2.9%	1.6%
50 or more	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%	0.4%	3.4%	1.5%
Mobile home	0.5%	3.3%	6.2%	0.0%	1.2%	1.0%	3.0%

Source: 2014 ACS Five Year Estimates

From a government perspective, multifamily housing can have many real benefits to a community. Rental apartment units in multifamily housing developments provide an alternative to owning a single-family house, more efficient living spaces for smaller families, and less required upkeep for items such as appliances and yards. The Town of Rib Mountain seeks to offer both existing and potential future residents with varied and affordable housing options while also maintaining its high quality of residential neighborhoods.

A variety of multifamily housing options are possible in a community.

- Duplexes are a type of semi-detached house in which separate houses share a common wall, usually side-by-side.
- Townhouses are side-by-side units, each with a separate owner and entrance, often with multiple floors. Any number of townhouses can be connected in a row.
- Apartment buildings can be small or large, having only one story and a few apartments or many floors and hundreds of apartments. Apartment buildings typically have a hallway interior to the building with inside entrances to each apartment unit. Units in such a building can be owned by a single party and rented to tenants or owned as a condominium by separate parties.
- Mixed use buildings include space for commercial, business, or office use and space for residential use. Different configurations of uses are possible, with the most common being business on the first floor with residential above or business in the front with residential in the back.

Another national trend in a residential development is accessory dwelling units. Accessory dwelling units (ADUs), also called secondary suites, are self-contained apartments attached to or on the same lot as the principal dwelling on a single-family lot. These units typically have their own entrance, kitchen, bathroom, and living area. Usually small one-bedroom or studio apartments, ADUs can be a means of increasing the variety of types of housing units available and can provide a way for seniors to downsize while still remaining in their neighborhood.

Occupancy Characteristics

In 2010, about 96.0% of housing units in the Town were occupied and 4.0% (111 units) were vacant. The County occupancy rate was 92.1%, and the State had 86.9% occupancy.

Homeownership

Owner occupied housing is the norm in Rib Mountain, with 87.8% of occupied housing units being owner occupied, as noted in Table 4.5. The homeownership rate decreased 2.3 percentage points from 2000 to 2010 in the Town. The County's homeownership rate dropped 2.2 percentage points while the state decreased 0.3 percentage points. Owner occupancy for the County was 73.5%, and the State's rate was 68.1%.

Table 4.5: Owner Occupancy

	2000	2010	2014
T Rib Mountain	90.1%	87.8%	84.1%
T Marathon	94.2%	92.2%	88.9%
T Mosinee	90.7%	88.0%	91.8%
V Rothschild	84.8%	74.0%	72.6%
C Schofield	68.2%	61.8%	57.8%
C Wausau	66.1%	58.2%	58.9%
County	80.0%	73.5%	73.5%
State	68.4%	68.1%	67.7%

Source: U.S. Census

Value Characteristics

The median value of single-family house in the Town of Rib Mountain was \$166,011 in 2000, when adjusted for inflation in 2010 dollars. The median value then decreased 3.2% in 2010. Nonetheless, the median value of a house in Rib Mountain is well above the median values for the County and the State (see Table 3.6). During the same 10-year period the median value increased by 18.9% for the State and 15.0% for the County.

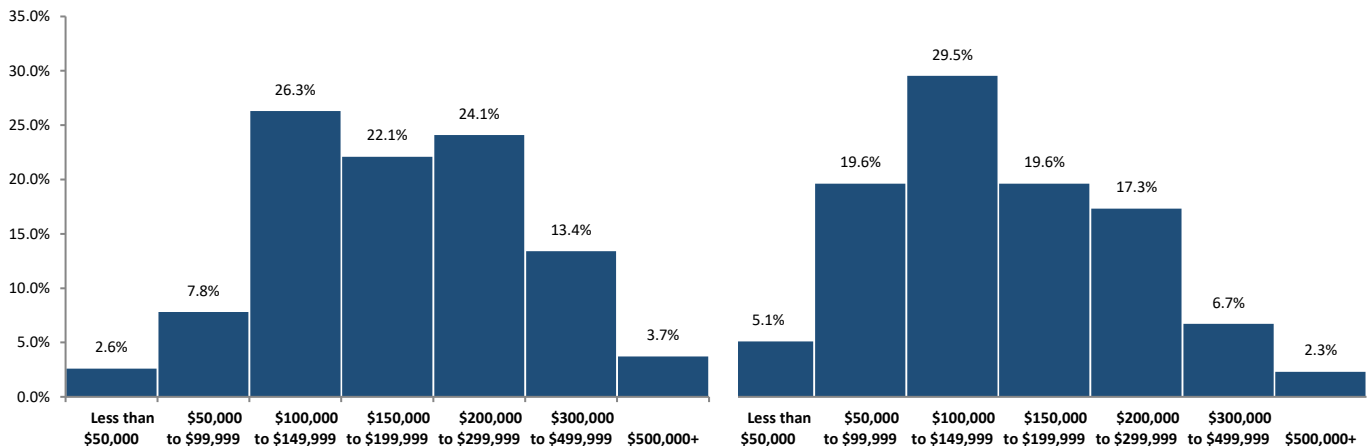
Table 4.6 Median Value

	2000 Inflation Adjusted ('10 \$)	2010 ('10 \$)	2014 ('14 \$)	2000-2010 Adj. Net Change	2000-2010 Adj. % Change
Rib Mountain	\$166,011	\$160,700	\$176,100	-\$5,311	-3.2%
County	\$121,311	\$139,500	\$142,900	\$18,189	15.0%
State	\$142,078	\$169,000	\$165,900	\$26,922	18.9%

Source: U.S. Census 2000 and ACS 2010 and 2014

Range of Values

Below, Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2 show the distribution of housing values in the Town and County in 2010. For example, the figure to the left shows that in Rib Mountain, 2.6% of all owner-occupied houses were valued less than \$50,000. The distribution of the Town values was slightly skewed to the right, with the greatest number of house values falling into the range between \$100,000 and \$149,999, which was the same for the County. However, in the Town, 41.2% of the housing units were above \$200,000 while only 26.3% of houses in the County were above \$200,000.

Figure 4.1: Range of House Values in Rib Mountain, 2010**Figure 4.2: Range of House Values Marathon County, 2010**

Source: U.S. Census 2010

Housing Affordability

Monthly Housing Costs

Table 4.7 displays the monthly housing costs by tenure. The median monthly housing costs for homeowners with a mortgage in the Town were 15.2% higher than the County and 4.0% higher than the State in 2014. This is unsurprising, given the median house value was higher than the County and the State. Monthly housing costs for those homeowners without a mortgage were also higher than the County and State medians.

	Owner Occupied		Renter Occupied
	Median Selected Month Owner Costs With Mortgage	Without Mortgage	Median Gross Rent
Rib Mountain	\$1,483	\$540	\$759
Marathon County	\$1,287	\$481	\$690
Wisconsin	\$1,431	\$533	\$772

Source: ACS 2014

Median monthly costs for renters were 10.0% higher than the County but 1.7% lower than the State. Gross rent is the contract rent plus the estimated average monthly cost of utilities (electricity, gas, water and sewer) and fuels (oil, coal, kerosene, wood, etc.) if these are paid by or for the renter.

Affordability

Several factors impact the varied levels of housing affordability in Marathon County. These factors include rent and mortgage payments, maintenance expenses, lot size, and required or desired amenities for the home. Household size and income are also key factors contributing to what housing options are available and accessible to residents. Multifamily housing options tend to be more affordable housing options.

Statistically speaking, those spending in excess of 30% of their total household income on housing costs may be facing affordability difficulties. The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recommends rental-housing costs not exceed 30% of the monthly income. HUD also indicates mortgage lenders are more willing to make loans if the scheduled mortgage payment is less than 29% of the monthly household income.

	Owner w/ Mortgage	Owner w/o Mortgage	Renter Occupied
Rib Mountain	31.3%	10.5%	13.7%
Marathon County	27.5%	11.5%	47.0%
Wisconsin	31.0%	15.8%	48.2%

Source: American Community Survey 2014

As shown in Table 4.8, 31.3% of homeowners with a mortgage paid more than 30% of their income on housing costs, which was slightly higher than the State and County. However, owners without mortgages have a slightly lower incidence of being cost burdened while the percentage of cost burdened renters is significantly less than the percentage of County and State renters who are cost burdened.

Senior Housing

In Marathon County, housing for seniors and populations with special needs is primarily provided in the urbanized areas in and around Wausau. The Aging and Disability Resource Center of Central Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, and the Marathon County United Way all maintain a list of these housing options throughout the County. The Town of Rib Mountain is home to several senior and assisted living residential facilities, including Azura Memory Care and Wellington Place at Rib Mountain. As the number of elderly persons increases in the coming years, there will most likely be an increased need for these types of housing options.

Table 2.2 in Chapter 1 shows the population at or near retirement age for the Town of Rib Mountain as well as several nearby communities. In 2015, the Town had 1,209 persons age 65 and over, which is 18% of the total population. This represents a higher percentage of senior citizens within Rib Mountain than in the surrounding communities.

Aging-in-place is the preference of most people, with the AARP finding that 73% of seniors would like to stay in their current residence and community as long as possible. However, remaining in their own house as they age raises some particular issues for seniors regarding housing including: housing costs, maintenance needs, accessibility features, transportation concerns, and in-home health care options. Addressing these issues can help seniors maintain independence and age-in-place longer:

- **Housing Costs:** Most seniors are living on reduced or fixed-incomes. Rent or mortgage payments are generally among the highest monthly household expenses. The increasing costs of housing-related expenses force seniors to cut back on other necessities such as food and medical care.
- **Maintenance Needs:** Owning a house comes with a certain amount of necessary maintenance, both inside and outside the house. Both the cost of such maintenance and the physical demands it requires can be a significant burden to seniors.
- **Accessibility Features:** Much of the current housing stock lacks basic accessibility features. Many seniors with disabilities are unable to afford accessibility modifications, preventing them from living safely and comfortably in their homes. Some of the features which can improve accessibility for those with impaired mobility or difficulty grabbing and turning knobs include: no-step entries and single floor living, switches and outlets reachable at any height, extra-wide hallways, and lever-style door and faucet handles.
- **Transportation Concerns:** Older adults are at risk of becoming house-bound. Particularly in suburban and rural areas, seniors who are unable or unwilling to drive may find themselves house-bound and disconnected from family and friends. Those with vehicles and able to drive have the additional stress of vehicle ownership and maintenance on their limited budgets. Further, pedestrian infrastructure is generally ill-suited to those who cannot or choose not to drive, making it impossible or unsafe to walk.
- **In-home Health Care Options:** In-home health services are expensive and affordable service-enriched housing is in scarce supply in most communities. Seniors who cannot access healthcare services where they live may be at high risk of premature institutionalization.

Communities can adopt policies to address these concerns and improve the ability of seniors to thrive in their homes. Incorporating livability principles through housing, transportation, and walkability initiatives can be a step to address several of the key concerns. Providing a range of smaller housing units within the community can ease the cost burden of owning or renting a house on a fixed-income. Requiring all new residential construction to include certain accessibility features and offering tax incentives or low-cost loans to help owners modify their homes are methods to address the need to accessibility features. Providing access to recreational, educational, and other opportunities and services can enhance the quality of life for seniors in a community. Increasing availability of public transit and paratransit programs can greatly assist older citizens in making necessary trips to stores and medical appointments.

A variety of senior living communities, with varying levels of care, are also options for seniors unable to live at home any longer. These options include independent living communities, assisted living communities, and nursing homes.

- Independent living communities cater to seniors who are very independent with few medical problems. Residents in these communities, also called retirement villages or senior apartments, living in private apartments with some communal amenities such as dining services and social events.
- Assisted living communities are designed for seniors who are no longer able to live on their own safely, but do not require the high level of medical care provided in a nursing home. Assisted living communities provide 24 hour per day staff for additional safety, some nursing services, communal dining, and assistance with tasks such as medications and housekeeping.
- Nursing homes provide around-the-clock skilled nursing care for the frail elderly who require a high level of medical care and assistance. Residents typically share a room and are served meals in a central dining area unless they are too ill to participate. Many nursing homes also provide short-term rehabilitative stays for those recovering from an injury, illness, or surgery.

A variety of home care services are also options which allow older people to remain in their homes while receiving the assistance they need to remain independent.

Livability

Livability is often defined as the sum of the factors that add up to a community's quality of life—including the built and natural environments, economic prosperity, social stability and equity, educational opportunity, and cultural, entertainment, and recreation possibilities. The Partnership for Sustainable Communities, a joint effort of HUD, the Department of Transportation, and the Environmental Protection Agency, has established six livability principles. The six principles are 1) provide more transportation choices, 2) promote equitable, affordable housing, 3) enhance economic competitiveness, 4) support existing communities, 5) coordinate and leverage federal policies and investment, and 6) value communities and neighborhoods.

Location of Housing

One aspect of a livable community is that housing is situated in close proximity to the locations people frequent on a regular basis such as jobs, grocery stores, and medical facilities.

Preservation and Rehabilitation of Older Housing Stock

Older housing is often located in traditional neighborhoods and has great character that adds to the identity of the community. Preserving and rehabilitating older housing units is important to the character of the community and the diversity of housing options.

Diversity of Housing Options

Having a diversity of housing options available in a community provides many benefits. Housing of different sizes and styles accommodates the diverse households within the community. Different sizes and styles also provide a variety of housing costs, allowing housing to be affordable to everyone.

Higher Density Housing

Housing in higher density neighborhoods allows for a larger percentage of people to locate near desirable amenities like schools, parks, and shopping areas. Dense housing also minimizes the costs to the municipality to provide services to the community.



A range of single-family residence styles available within Rib Mountain

Housing and Neighborhood Issues

- **Maintenance Free Living Options.** As the population ages, a greater need arises for housing options tailored to seniors, including resources to age-in-place and senior living facilities. The younger generation is also seeking similar living options, as they are opting to spend more of their free time traveling or pursuing other hobbies that they find to be more important. This is in stark contrast compared to previous generations who spent more time on projects and maintenance on their home and travelled significantly less.
- **Rising Housing Costs.** The national trend of rising housing costs and stagnant wages affects our every community. Almost one third of homeowners with a mortgage in the Town spend over 30% of their monthly income on housing costs.
- **Balancing Multifamily Housing with Residential Community Character.** The Town is known for its strong neighborhood fabric. Increasing desire for more additional housing options have led to some calling for more multifamily housing. The Town is now faced with how to balance these two concerns: maintaining the character of the community while entertaining options for some multifamily housing into the local housing market.
- **Agging Housing Stock.** In some of the older residential neighborhoods of the Town, the housing stock is aging and may be in need of renovation.

Housing and Neighborhood Goals, Objectives and Actions

The following goals, objectives and actions are intended to provide a policy framework and guide for the future development of the Town.

Goal I: Ensure the Town continues to have a high-quality housing stock.

The Town of Rib Mountain will strive to provide equal access to quality, affordable housing for all residents.

Objectives:

1. Encourage redevelopment and new development where appropriate to provide new housing and a broader array of housing options. Encourage the construction of homes that encompass a variety of styles, floor plans and finished appearances in color and material within the same neighborhood.
2. Consider establishing a revolving loan fund to help fund rehabilitation of aging housing stock.

Goal II. Foster strong neighborhood bonds and resident attachment

Objectives:

1. Support established neighborhood groups and encourage the creation of new groups until all residential areas are represented.

2. Continue to ensure timely and consistent code enforcement that is in such a manner that does not degrade neighborhood bonds.
3. As the Zoning Code is updated, limit the emphasis of motorized vehicles on new home design (i.e. large front porches, smaller front yards/setbacks, garages setback further from the right-of-way, sidewalks to the front door from the right-of-way) within more urbanized neighborhoods of the Town.

Goal III: Promote programs and policies that provide housing opportunities for all residents.

Objectives:

1. Promote home ownership opportunities for a wide range of income households within the Town of Rib Mountain.
2. Promote development of quality low- or no-maintenance living options (rental or owned) for residents' part of the:
 - a. Aging population, who have lived in or want to live in Rib Mountain; and
 - b. Younger population, who do not wish to spend their free time performing regular maintenance tasks on their homes.
3. Support efforts to lobby the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) to include condominium units in the First Time Home Buyer program
4. As the Zoning Code is updated, consider modifying the code to ease approval process for accessory dwelling units (ADU's).
5. Work with Marathon County and Wausau Metro Area organizations to provide information to residents regarding area housing agencies that provide senior housing or aging-in-place options.
6. Participate in any regional housing needs (or any related subject) study. If no such study is proposed, then start the process to establish such a study within the Town.

Chapter 5: UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

“The Town of Rib Mountain shall hold itself to the highest standards to provide its residents with high-quality water and sewer services, as well as to a premier system of parks and trails available throughout our community.”

Chapter Intent

- Discusses current and past initiatives by others
- Describes the current conditions of the utilities within the Town
- Inventories community facilities and parks
- Identifies existing issues
- Describes goals and objectives to address the identified issues

Previous Plans and Studies

Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP)

Town of Rib Mountain completed an Outdoor Recreation Plan Update in 2014. Rib Mountain maintains five parks, with some of the parks owned by the Town or developed in cooperation with the Wausau School District and the Rib Mountain Sanitary District. Town parks include: Rookery View Park, Chellis Park, Liberty Street Park, Flax Lane Tot Lot, Sandy’s Bark Park, and Fritz Doepke Recreation Area. This Plan identifies the lack of neighborhood parks in growing residential areas as a serious deficiency and makes specific recommendations for improvements relative to specific parks and/or neighborhoods. This Plan also references the Town's bicycle and pedestrian plans which are discussed in more detail in the Transportation Chapter.

Wausau Urban Area Sewer Service Plan 2040

Updated in 2017, the sewer service area plan helps the urban area communities look at wastewater collections systems to adequately accommodate growth in a cost-effective manner while protecting water quality through sound planning.

Rib Mountain Sanitary District Wellhead Protection Plan

The Rib Mountain Sanitary District maintains a wellhead protection plan for the purpose of minimizing the risk of contamination to the Town’s water supply. Wellhead protection is a preventative program designed to protect public water supplies by managing land use in the area surrounding the wells. For newly constructed wells, wellhead protection plans are required by the WI DNR. For existing wells constructed prior to 1992, such as Rib Mountain’s, wellhead protection plans are voluntarily completed at the utility’s discretion. This plan establishes wellhead protection areas around each municipal water supply well. These areas are designated for special protective measures intended to minimize the risk of the well becoming contaminated. The wellhead protection areas are established based on the area determined by a hydrologic study to contribute groundwater to the well. This plan is prepared in accordance with the Wisconsin Administrative Code, Chapter NR 811.12(6) for wellhead protection planning and was most recently updated in 2018.

Marathon County All Hazard Mitigation Plan

This document examines general conditions, including an inventory of utilities, community facilities and emergency services, throughout the county. Risk assessment is at the heart of the All-Hazards Mitigation program. In order to

mitigate the risks, it's necessary to assess their relative importance. The report looks at a series of mostly weather-related disasters; how they have affected the County in the past and how future instances are likely to affect the County and how local governments should respond to such occurrences. The report concludes with suggested mitigation measures that might be taken by local governments to reduce the risk from the identified hazards. Although unincorporated municipalities are not required to adopt such plans, the Marathon County program includes the Town in its update every five years. The most recent update was completed in 2017.

Public Utilities

Wastewater

As a separate taxing jurisdiction apart from the Town, the Rib Mountain Sanitary District provides public sanitary sewer infrastructure within the Town of Rib Mountain. Wastewater treatment is provided by the Rib Mountain Metropolitan Sewerage District, which treats wastewater for the southern portion of the Wausau Metropolitan service area (Weston, Rothschild, Kronenwetter and Mosinee). The Rib Mountain Metropolitan Sewerage District does not have any association and is not governed by the Town of Rib Mountain or the Rib Mountain Sanitary District, except for the fact that it treats the Town's wastewater.

The Town's wastewater collection system (pipe network and lift stations) is owned and maintained by the Rib Mountain Sanitary District, which transfers waste to the Rib Mountain Metropolitan Sewerage District treatment plant, located at the very southern extent of the Town along the Wisconsin River at 151401 Aster Road, Wausau, WI. The treatment plant was built in 1985 and is in excellent condition. It has capacity to serve anticipated future development within the service area and several upgrades have been made since it was originally built. The collection system, maintained by the Rib Mountain Sanitary District, is generally in good condition. Sewer pipes and mains are replaced and upgraded in conjunction with road reconstruction or in response to known problems.

Much of the eastern half of the Town of Rib Mountain is within the sanitary sewer service area defined in the 2025 Wausau Urban Area Sewer Service Plan, which was prepared by the Marathon County Planning Department and updated in 2017. Preparation of this plan was mandated by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) as one component of the Upper Wisconsin River Water Quality Plan and as a requirement for receiving wastewater treatment facilities grants and administrative approval of sewer extensions. The WDNR's involvement in this planning effort is promulgated in State Administrative Rules and in the Federal Clean Water Act.

The primary purpose of the plan was to establish a sewer service boundary for the Wausau Urban Area. This boundary sets the 20-year maximum limit for the extension of sanitary sewer services in a cost-effective, environmentally sound manner. Generally, property located within the sewer service boundary line is eligible to receive sanitary sewer service during the 20-year planning period and property lying outside this sewer service area boundary would not unless the boundary was amended.

Water

Public water is supplied by the Rib Mountain Sanitary District from four (4) wells located along the Wisconsin River. Each well is approximately 90 feet deep and produces about 500 gallons per minute. The water is treated to reduce naturally occurring minerals, pH adjusted for corrosion control, fluoride is added, and the water is chlorinated to assure bacteriological safe drinking water.

Public water supply is stored in a 500,000-gallon ground storage tank located on the east slope of Rib Mountain. The water distribution system is owned and maintained by the Rib Mountain Sanitary District.

Surface Water Management

Rib Mountain has storm water guidelines which are typically included in development agreements. Rib Mountain also has a wellhead recharge ordinance to ensure protection of its water supply.

In the region, surface water management is generally conducted at the watershed level. In 2001, Marathon County adopted a Land and Water Resource Management Plan in accordance with Wisconsin Statutes (Wisconsin Act 27, Chapter 92.10). This plan was updated in 2010. The primary intent of this plan is to identify a vision for natural resource management in Marathon County and outline strategies to protect the quality and quantity of soil and water resources.

Solid Waste Management

The Town of Rib Mountain contracts with a private company for weekly waste management. This also includes bi-weekly pick-up of recyclable materials. Municipal, commercial and industrial waste is accepted at the Marathon County Landfill in Ringle where fees collected at the landfill defray the cost of landfill operations.

The Marathon County Solid Waste Management Department is in charge of waste management for non-hazardous solid waste. It consists of the 575-acre landfill, recycling programs, composting, and waste-to-energy. The Department opened a Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility in May 1997 where County residents can drop off hazardous waste free of charge.

Private On-Site Waste Disposal Systems

Private On-site Wastewater Treatment Systems (POWTS) include a septic tank or aerobic treatment tank and some type of absorption field alone or in combination with passive or active treatment components or holding tanks. Areas determined unsuitable for septic systems, for reasons such as high bedrock or high-water tables, are not conducive to installation of conventional, in ground absorption fields and must use other methods. Some areas of Rib Mountain have private waste disposal systems. However, high bedrock and wetlands limit the use of conventional septic systems in some areas.

Regulations of POWTS

Regulations for POWTS in Marathon County are found in Chapter 15 of the County General Code of Ordinances. All premises intended for human occupancy and not served by public sewer are required to have a private sewage system. The WDNR reviews septic treatment and dispersal systems that handle over 12,000 gallons per day.

Permits for private sewage systems are issued by the Marathon County Conservation, Planning and Zoning Department. Soil and site evaluations are required to determine if the proposed septic system is suitable for the specific property and location.

Energy Utilities

Wisconsin Public Service Corporation (WPS), a subsidiary of WEC Energy Group, Inc., provides electrical power and natural gas to the Town of Rib Mountain. A major high-voltage power line also runs through the Town.

Telecommunications

Telephone and high-speed internet service to the Town of Rib Mountain are provided primarily by Charter Communications and Frontier Communications. High-speed internet access is not consistent throughout the Town. TDS Metrocom is working to deploy its fiberoptic network throughout the town beginning in the Summer of 2021. At the time of adoption of this document, the extent of the network to which it will be able to serve the Town's residents is unknown at this time.

Wireless telephone coverage in the area is delivered by most of the national providers and some regional providers. There are cell towers located on Rib Mountain (geographic feature) and throughout the town, as well as the Wisconsin Public Television Tower WAOW-TV and WSAW-TV Tower and various radio towers. There are also towers located on Mosinee Hill, south of Rib Mountain, which includes the sister station for WJFW-TV. The Town regulates the siting of telecommunication towers and collocation of wireless equipment.

Community Facilities

Primary and Secondary Schools

The Town of Rib Mountain is served by the Wausau School District. The Wausau School District has a pre-school center, 13 elementary schools (grades K-5), two (2) middle schools (grades 6-8), and two (2) high schools (9-12). Two of the district's facilities, Rib Mountain Elementary and South Mountain Elementary School are located in the Town. Residents of Rib Mountain are in the attendance zones for both those schools. The District reports most students attend the middle and high school on the side of the Wisconsin River where they reside; therefore, Rib Mountain students attend John Muir Middle School at 1400 Stewart Avenue and Wausau West High School at 1200 West Wausau Avenue. In 2015, 1,083 Rib Mountain students, ages three and older, were enrolled in K-12 public schools. The trend over the past decade has been fewer Rib Mountain children in the public-school system

Year	Student Population
2009	1,343
2010	1,351
2011	1,180
2012	1,129
2013	1,024
2014	1,111
2015	1,083

Source: ACS 2009-2015

Private Schools

Recently, a portion of the Faith Christian Academy program was relocated within the Immanuel Baptist Church at 152111 Tulip Lane. The facility houses the Middle School and High School, according to their website. In 2018 the Academy had a graduating class of 184 students. In 2015, 283 students from the Town of Rib Mountain were enrolled in grades K-12 in private schools.

Post-Secondary Educational Facilities

The University of Wisconsin Stevens Point at Wausau (Formerly UW-Marathon County), located in the City of Wausau, offers lower level (freshman and sophomore) college classes, leading to a baccalaureate degree. Associate Degrees are offered in Arts & Sciences, and Bachelor's Degrees (through collaborative degree programs with UW Oshkosh and UW Stevens Point) are offered in Business Administration, General Studies, and Nursing. Enrollment averages around 1,100 students.

Northcentral Technical College (NTC), also located in the City of Wausau, offers 40 one- and two-year programs and certificates in business, technical, health and industrial fields. Approximately 2,300 full- and part-time students attend classes, although more than 16,000 people take at least one class annually.

In addition to the public schools, the Wausau has one private college. Rasmussen College, located in Wausau, offers bachelor's degrees, associate's degrees, certificates and diplomas in fields like business, design, education, justice sciences, and nursing.

Libraries

The Town of Rib Mountain is served by the Marathon County Public Library system. The Wausau Headquarters Library is located on First Street in downtown Wausau. The main Wausau Library is open seven days a week and offers books, magazines and other materials, as well as internet access.

Public Protection

Law Enforcement

Rib Mountain does not have a local police department but has a Code Enforcement Officer to handle nuisance issues. The Town is served by the Marathon County Sheriff's Department for law enforcement and police protection services. In 2020, the Town has contracted with the Marathon County Sheriff's Department to employ a dedicated deputy to the Town. This officer will be supplied a Town of Rib Mountain branded patrol vehicle.

Fire and Emergency Medical Services

The South Area Fire and Emergency Response District (SAFER) provides Fire, EMS and rescue operations to the Town of Rib Mountain, Village of Weston, Town of Weston, Village of Kronenwetter and the Towns of Easton, Ringle, Guenther, Stettin, and Marathon. The District originated in 2014 and operates stations in both Rib Mountain and the Village of Weston. The EMS service area covers nearly 300 square miles with a population over 36,000; while first due fire coverage serves over 26,000 people and 125 square miles.



SAFER Station 1, Rib Mountain

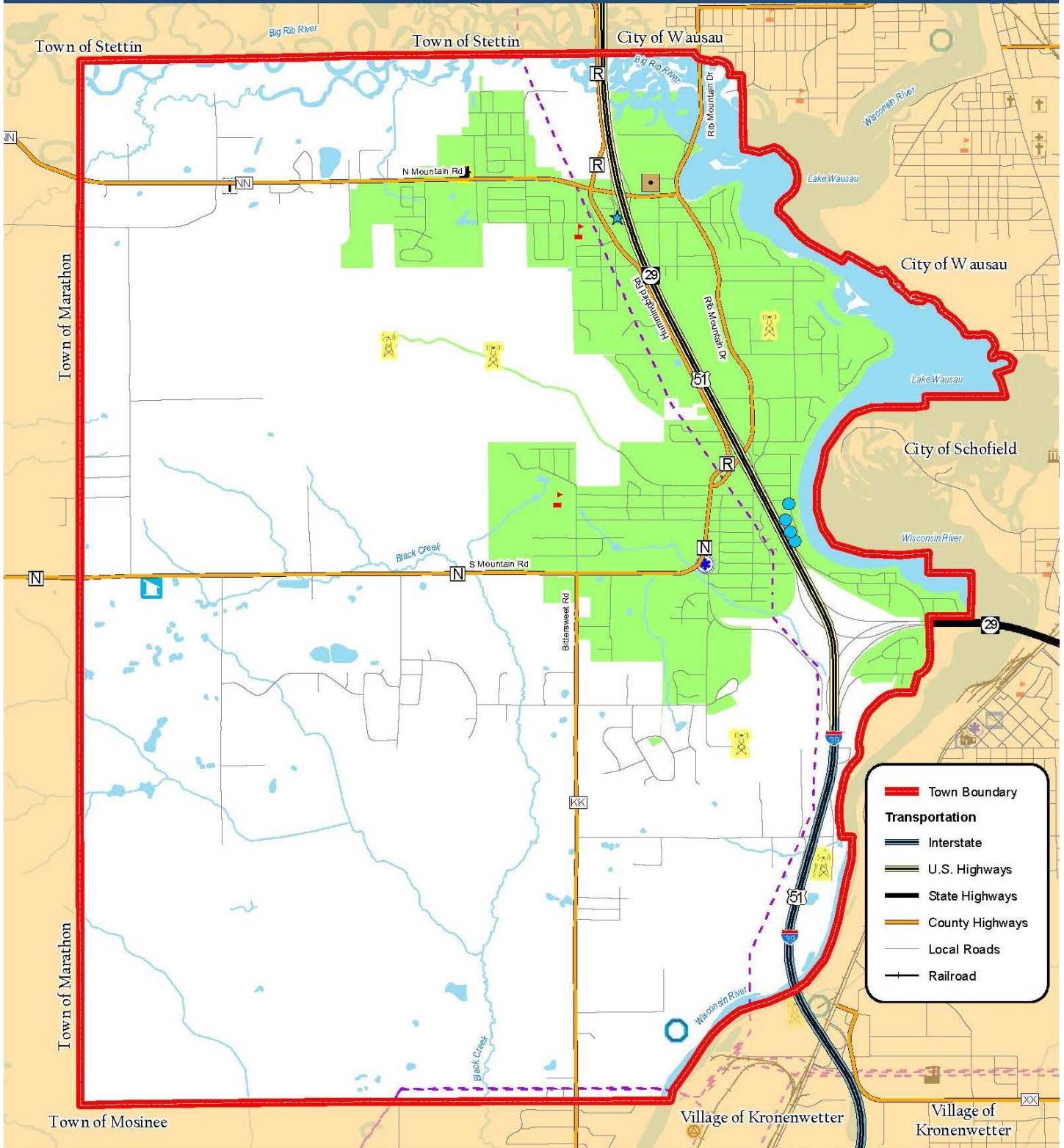
E-911 Dispatch Service

The Marathon County Sheriff's Department Communications Division provides E-911 Dispatch for all Police, Fire, and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) agencies in Marathon County. The Communications Division services 85 user agencies and also provides alert paging support for the Emergency Management Office, District Attorney, and Medical Examiner's Office.

Hospitals

Three major hospitals serve the Town. Aspirus Hospital is located in the City of Wausau and is a 321-bed facility that is a multi-specialty regional health center serving a 12-county region in north central Wisconsin. Marshfield Clinic's St. Clare's Hospital is a 104-bed hospital and medical office complex located in the Village of Weston. Marshfield Clinic's Marshfield Medical Center, located in the City of Marshfield, provides regional medical services to north central Wisconsin. Though further than Wausau and Weston, these facilities also serve the Town.

In addition to the hospitals and clinics described above, Marathon County is served by North Central Health Care (NHC), a public agency, also serving Langlade and Lincoln counties. The NCHC main campus is located at 2400 Marshall Street in Wausau. NCHC offers outpatient, day hospital, community support and inpatient services for mental/emotional problems; vocational, life skill training, early intervention, housing and care management services for the developmentally disabled; and assessment, individual and outpatient group counseling, intensive programming, day hospital, referral for residential and inpatient treatment, and education for alcohol and other drug problems. Services for detoxification and for persons suffering from problems with gambling addiction are also offered. NCHC also operates a nursing home, Mount View Care Center, which offers skilled nursing services at the main campus in Wausau. This facility has a licensed capacity of 320 and serves persons requiring either short-term or long-term skilled nursing care because of complex physical needs, psychiatric and neurological diseases, dementia, or behavior problems.



Town Boundary

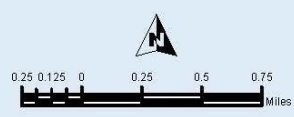
Transportation

- Interstate
- U.S. Highways
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Railroad

Utilities & Community Facilities

Post Office	Waste Water Treatment Plant
Ambulance / Fire Station	Public Water Supply Wells
Cemetery	Current Sewer and Water Service Area
City Hall	Communication Tower
Fire Station	High Voltage Powerline
Industrial Park	Substations
Landfill	Water
Library	
Police Station	
Public Works	
School	
Town Hall	
Village Hall	
WI State Patrol	
Yard Waste Site	

Source: Town of Rib Mountain, WI DNR, NCWRPC
 This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey of the actual boundary of any property depicted. This drawing is a compilation of records, information and data used for reference purposes only. NCWRPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.



North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

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Recreation

This section describes existing and proposed park and recreation facilities in the Town of Rib Mountain and major County and State facilities in the vicinity.

Local Existing Parks, Trails and Open Spaces

Town of Rib Mountain has a Park Commission and completed an Outdoor Recreation Plan Update in 2014. Rib Mountain maintains six parks, with some of the parks owned by the Town or developed in cooperation with the Wausau School District and the Rib Mountain Sanitary District. Town parks include:

Chellis Park (3 acres). This is a neighborhood park located on Woodsmoke Road. The park has woodlands, wetlands, and an active recreation area. Facilities include a picnic shelter, basketball court, playground equipment, turf field, and a walking and bluebird trail.

Liberty Street Park (14 acres). This park is owned by the Rib Mountain Sanitary District and leased to the Town of Rib Mountain for park use. Facilities include a playground, picnic shelter, two parking lots, a ball diamond, basketball court, two tennis courts, woodlands and open fields for unstructured play.

Rib Mountain Elementary (8.0 acres). Located at the corner of Robin Lane and Bob-O-Link Avenue this school ground is owned by the Wausau School District. Facilities include: playground equipment, tennis courts, a basketball court, and two baseball diamonds that are also used for soccer.

South Mountain School (25 acres). Owned by the Wausau School District, the Rib Mountain Park Commission is working with the District to develop a park on the school grounds. The facilities will include: soccer fields, a baseball diamond, basketball courts, play equipment, and a walking trail. Tennis courts and an ice-skating rink may also be added.

Flax Lane Tot Lot (.6 acres). This is a small neighborhood park that includes a half size basketball court.

Sandy's Bark Park (4 acres). Located along Highway R, Sandy's Bark Park is the Town's first Dog Park. Opening in 2018, the fenced in park features 2,000 feet of crushed gravel walking paths, benches, a water bottle filler / dog spigot, and is free and open to all. Primary funding for park came from The Richard Austin Trust, Marathon County Environmental Impact Fund, and the Community Foundation of North Central Wisconsin. This park is set to expand in near future due to the Town receiving an additional parcel of land, adjacent to the existing dog park.

Fritz Doepke Recreation Area (37.35 acres). The Town purchased a plot from Fred Doepke in 1999 off South Mountain Road. Planned park facilities include: two ball fields, a playground area, a basketball court, a skateboard park, fitness trail, bike/walk path, picnic shelter, and ice-skating area. There is also be a parking lot for about 100 cars.

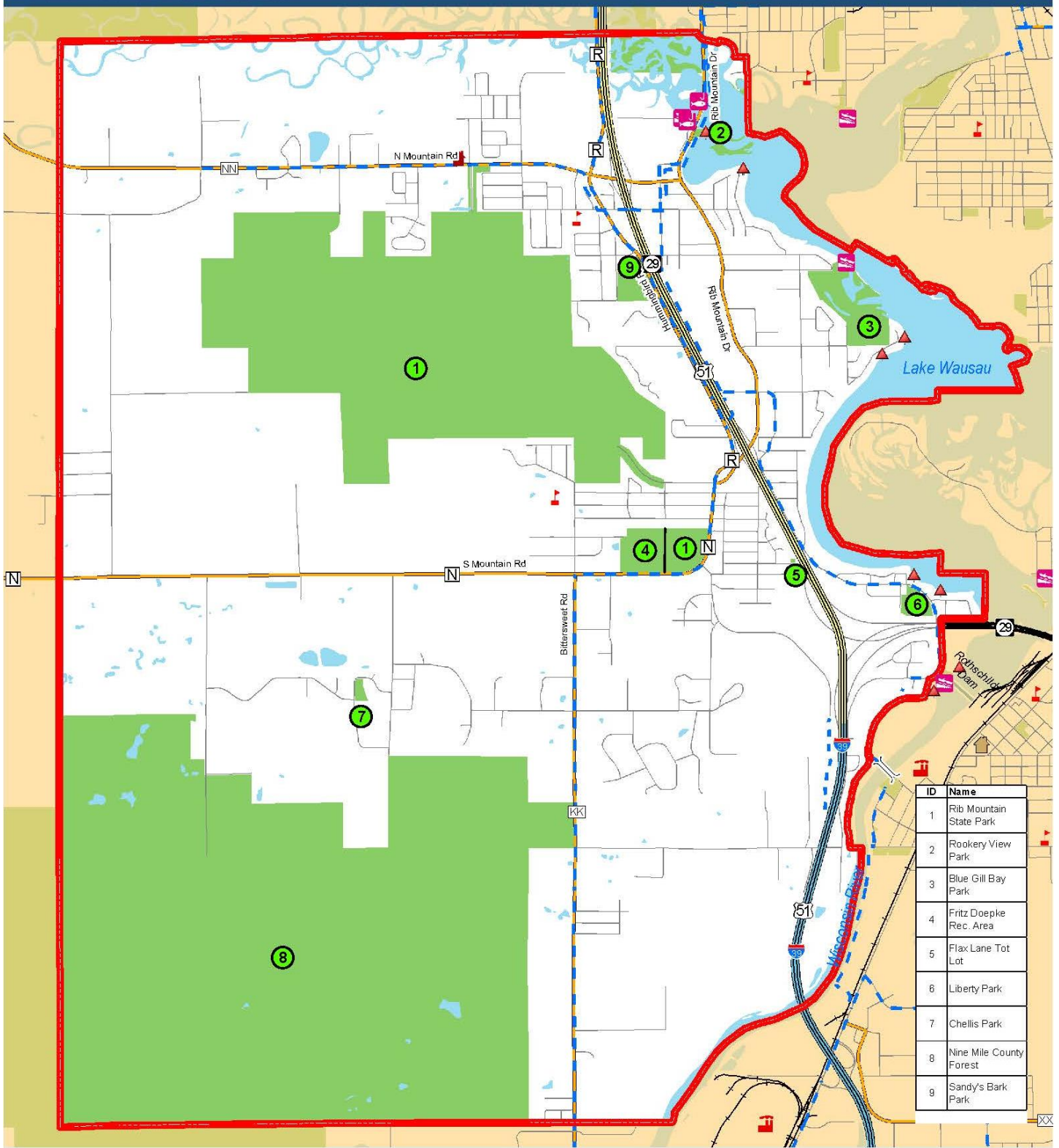
Rookery Park (2 acres). The property was purchased by Marathon County during the McCleary Bridge construction project and deeded to the Town shortly after with the understanding of the property to be a public park. The park opened to the public in 2003 and has a small boat landing.

Park System Needs

The Town of Rib Mountain *Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan* Update identifies the lack of neighborhood parks in growing residential areas as a serious deficiency. The *Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan* Update makes specific recommendations for improvements relative to specific parks and/or neighborhoods.

Trails and Connections

Rib Mountain and Lake Wausau are major recreational amenities for the Town, but it is important to include access to such amenities to the discussion of recreation. Trails and connections are a key part of ensuring residents can enjoy the many local natural features in and around the Town. Rib Mountain offers a wide variety of multi-use trails and paths throughout Town. These trails connect from Rothschild to the south all the way to Wausau to the north along the US 51 corridor. Further, the Town Board adopted a resolution requiring installation of bike and pedestrian improvements as part of any development project located along a planned bike or pedestrian route. The Town adopted the Rib Mountain Area Bike and Pedestrian Route Long-Range Plan in 2013.



ID	Name
1	Rib Mountain State Park
2	Rookery View Park
3	Blue Gill Bay Park
4	Fritz Doepke Rec. Area
5	Flax Lane Tot Lot
6	Liberty Park
7	Chellis Park
8	Nine Mile County Forest
9	Sandy's Bark Park

- Town Boundary
- Railroad
- Boat Launch
- Bike Routes
- Interstate
- U.S. Highways
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Power Plant
- School
- Town Hall
- Village Hall
- Ped. Bridge
- Carry In Access
- Fishing Pier
- Parks
- Water

Source: WI DNR, Wis DOT, NCWRPC
 This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey of the actual boundary of any property depicted. This drawing is a compilation of records, information and data used for reference purposes only. NCWRPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.

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North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission



County and State Parks, Forests and Trails

Several County and State park facilities are within or in close proximity to the Town of Rib Mountain, including:

Rib Mountain State Park. This park is located entirely in the Town of Rib Mountain. The park's main feature is Rib Mountain, which at 1,924 feet above sea level is one of the highest elevations in the State of Wisconsin. The 1,500-acre park surrounds the mountain and includes a picnic area, 13 miles of hiking trails, and a nature trail. A portion of park is leased to a ski resort, a private downhill ski area with 72 runs. In addition, about 16-acres at the top of the mountain are leased for communications towers and associated buildings.

Bluegill Bay Park. Bluegill Bay Park is a 68-acre County park located on the west shore of Lake Wausau between Cloverland Lane and Parrot Lane. The park provides access to Lake Wausau at its boat landing with piers and a boat trailer parking lot and is subject to overcrowding at times. The park's picnic area has tables, grills, shelters, flush toilets and parking available. A fishing area, including a handicapped pier is also available. Forty-eight acres of the park are undeveloped, and the County's tree nursery is also in the park.

Nine-Mile Forest Unit. This area is known as a recreation area with many miles of hiking, mountain biking, and cross-country ski trails. Skiing is promoted with a ski chalet and over 25 kilometers of one-way loops. The forest is open to hunting and snowmobiling. Nine-Mile has over 4,900 acres of mixed uplands, marshes, and water impoundments.

Utility and Community Facilities Issues

- **Quality Broadband Access.** Access to reliable, high-speed internet is vital to daily work and leisure activities. Ensuring that the Town has access to this service is important, particularly as technology continues to improve. The Town lacks adequate competition for high-speed internet services.
- **Limited Access to Lake Wausau.** The Town is bordered on its east side by the Wisconsin River and Lake Wausau. With this incredible amenity, more usable public access points could ensure residents can utilize the lake and river for recreational opportunities year-round.
- **Lack of Neighborhood Parks.** Growth in some residential neighborhoods has been very rapid as a result of high demand to reside within the Town. Keeping up with the demand for neighborhood parks is a challenge.

Utility and Community Facilities Goals, Objectives and Actions

The following goals, objectives and actions are intended to provide a policy framework and guide for the future development of the Town.

Goal I: Maintain high quality water and sewer services and standards within the Town.

Objectives:

1. Monitor growth and development trends to anticipate areas where new development is most likely to occur that will require public utilities.
2. Continue to work with the Rib Mountain Metropolitan Sewerage District to maintain and upgrade the wastewater treatment system.
3. Work with and encourage the Rib Mountain Sanitary District to maintain and enhance the water supply storage and distribution facilities and wastewater collection facilities and assist with creating a master public utility plan to keep pace with anticipated growth.
4. Continue to cooperate with the Rib Mountain Sanitary District to enforce water quality controls in the well recharge area.
5. In new rural residential development, encourage group sanitary facilities. In the current rural areas shown within the 2040 Sewer Service Boundary, that are not already connected to public sewer and water facilities

should also be encouraged to be served by group sanitary systems, but also easily convert and connect to future extensions of the public sewer system.

6. Restrict development in areas where development is only possible with holding tanks or holding-tank style private on-site wastewater treatment systems (POWTS).
7. Work with developers to find solutions to help lower the cost of initial construction of needed infrastructure improvements needed for residential development in areas that align with the needs highlighted in this plan.

Goal II: Support and maintain existing community facilities and services.

Objectives:

1. Evaluate cost-effectiveness of current agreements with adjacent municipalities regarding provision of fire and emergency response services.
2. Explore methods of cost sharing, such as equipment sharing, with surrounding municipalities to increase the efficiency by which services are provided.
3. Analyze future developments for their impact on the Town's tax base in relation to the cost of additional services the development would require.
4. Continue to work with the Marathon County Sheriff's Department to provide law enforcement and communications services through the Town's dedicated law enforcement officer (starting September 2020).
5. Support the SAFER District and its fire, EMS, and rescue operations as an active member of the organization.
6. Maintain regular communication with municipalities the Town has service agreements with to discuss opportunities to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of services.

Goal III: Maintain and improve parks in Rib Mountain to improve the quality of life in the Town through the regular modification and adoption of the Outdoor Recreation Plan as prescribed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

Objectives:

1. Strive to provide the metro area's premier park and recreation facilities while meeting the needs of current and future residents.
2. Supports development of an interconnected system of parks through trails and parkways.
3. Provide timely and sufficient maintenance of park facilities.
4. Establish a Park Facilities Maintenance Plan to proactively upgrade and replace equipment to ensure safety and accommodate residents' recreational needs. Work with community organizations to develop a community center or similar facility.
5. Routinely review and update the Town's park dedication and impact fee requirements to ensure they are reasonable and sufficient to address needs, and encourage new residential developments to include parks, green space and trails as appropriate.
6. Identify opportunities to purchase property for future park or trail development. Map these properties as "future park" to encourage preservation for future park development on the Official Map.
7. Support the development of a regional multi-use trail system and work with appropriate agencies, such as the WDNR, WDOT, Marathon County, and others, to identify possible trail routes in Rib Mountain to connect to a regional system and to the Mountain-Bay Trail.
8. Work with the Marathon County and surrounding municipalities in efforts to enhance the regional bike and pedestrian route system throughout the Wausau Metro Area.
9. Identify where trails should be installed in conjunction with new development or road construction and map these on the Official Map.

10. Establish requirements for provision of trail easements or the purchasing of right-of-way in conjunction with new development.
11. Continue to work cooperatively with the WDNR on efforts to improve Rib Mountain State Park.
12. Continue to work cooperatively with Granite Peak Ski Resort to ensure that development and expansion is done in an environmentally sensitive manner.

Goal IV: Adopt an updated Official Map

Objectives:

1. The map shall increase the connectivity of motorized and pedestrian traffic throughout the Town.
2. The map shall show locations of future neighborhood parks in locations per the current *Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan*.
3. The map shall show updated pathways for future trails and other pedestrian facilities specified throughout this plan.

Goal V: Establish a Stormwater Utility

Although under current State regulations it is not lawful for local municipalities to create a Stormwater Utility, the Town is still actively planning as if it were allowed by the State of Wisconsin.

Objectives:

1. Support local and statewide efforts to allow local municipalities to create a stormwater utility.
2. Establish a base fee for developed residential lots (Residential Equivalency Unit (REU))
3. Establish a town-wide master stormwater utility master plan.

Goal IV: Improve and enhance the Town’s overall access to the internet through quality broadband infrastructure, as defined by the Federal Communications Commission.

Being a suburban town, there are many areas throughout that do not have access to high-speed internet. Since the time the internet was created, it has been viewed as a luxury, but in today’s world, it has become a need for education and work.

Objectives:

1. Survey and Identify neighborhoods that have limited high-speed internet access and map them. This map should be available on the Town’s website once complete.
2. Work with the County on grant and construction opportunities to expand services in the rural neighborhoods.
3. Work with high-speed internet service providers on grant and construction opportunities to expand services in the rural neighborhoods.
4. Continue to work with the Wausau Metropolitan Planning Organization in their efforts to create a “dig once” policy and support any efforts at the State-level that align with such a policy.
5. Encourage competition in high-speed internet services through corporate competition and alternative technologies, such as 5G, to provide service directly to customers.

Chapter 6: TRANSPORTATION

“The Town of Rib Mountain is committed to provide a safe transportation network for all users, particularly bike and pedestrian users.”

Chapter Intent

- Discusses current and past initiatives by others
- Describes the current conditions of the transportation networks within the Town
- Inventory of the roads and their conditions through PASER ratings
- Identifies existing issues
- Describes goals and objectives to address the identified issues

The transportation system in a community consists of a variety of roads; some are owned and maintained by the local jurisdiction while others are part of the County or State road systems. In addition to roads, the transportation system includes facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as railroads, airports, and often in urban areas, public transit. This section describes the transportation system in the Town of Rib Mountain and related improvements or issues affecting the system.

Rib Mountain contains a quality network of local roads and County highways with direct access to I-39/51, the primary north-south regional transportation route through the Wausau urban area and a major route to northern Wisconsin. The major local road, Rib Mountain Drive, also provides a key connection to the rest of the urban area, crossing the Big Rib River / Lake Wausau.

Previous Plans and Studies

Transportation planning in Marathon County is coordinated between the Marathon County Department of Conservation, Planning and Zoning (CPZ) and the Wausau Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO); the body designated by the U.S. Department of Transportation to be responsible for transportation planning in the Wausau urban area. Marathon County provides staff support for the Wausau Area MPO.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The TIP is updated by the Wausau MPO, annually. The TIP is developed by the MPO in cooperation with the State, affected transit operators, and local communities within the MPO boundary to identify transit and highway projects to be funded over the next four-year period.

Long-Range Transportation Plan for the Wausau Metropolitan Area (LRTP)

The LRTP is prepared every five years by the MPO, the County, and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. The current LRTP was adopted in 2016 and identifies the current conditions in the area to recommend solutions to the issues regarding the deficiencies of the roadways in the area.

Local Arterial Circulation Plan

This 2000 vintage plan was produced by the Wausau MPO in conjunction with the Marathon County Department of Conservation, Planning, and Zoning and the Highway Department. The purpose of this plan is to guide public and private

sector decisions concerning the infrastructure, right-of-way, land use compatibility, and safety needs of the local arterial transportation system over the next 20 to 30 years.

Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan

This 2014 plan analyzes service gaps and needs in public transit and human services transportation then propose strategies to address the gaps and needs. A five-year work plan was written to cover 2014 through 2018.

Rib Mountain Area Bike and Pedestrian Long-Range Plan

The Town of Rib Mountain has mapped a number of short and long-term trail (off-street and route on-street) bikeway improvements in 2013, including: existing off-road facilities, existing road shoulder inventory, suggested bike routes on low-volume roads, planned off road facilities, and other proposed bike/pedestrian facilities. The Rib Mountain Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Subcommittee continues to recommend updates this plan as necessary.

Wausau MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

The Wausau MPO prepared a 20-year Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and Implementation Guide in 2015. The plan developed strategies for improving bicycle and pedestrian transportation throughout the Wausau area. Potential trails and routes are identified, and a suggested implementation schedule was developed. One improvement identified was a connection of the Mountain-Bay Trail in eastern Marathon County to Rib Mountain and central Wausau via shared-use paths and regional bikeways.

The plan identifies areas where additional connections are needed and shows both existing and proposed facilities. One of these segments is a route on County Road KK with the addition of an off-road bike path that would connect down to Foxglove Road. The plan illustrates recent improvements, including the State Park off-road pedestrian paths and the bike shoulders added to Park Road in 2010.

Regional Livability Plan

The 2015 Regional Livability Plan (RLP), written by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, addresses issues of livability in the areas of housing, transportation, economic development, and land use. The RLP identifies three major transportation issues.

- **Modes of Transportation to Work.** The Region's workforce is extremely dependent on the automobile. In 2012, over 80 % of the Region's workforce drove alone to work on a daily basis. Another 10 % carpooled, leaving less than 10 % for the non-automobile methods such as walking, biking, and using transit. The average commute time in the central sub-region, which includes Marathon County, was 18.7 minutes.
- **Age of Drivers in the Region.** The Region is seeing a change in the number of licensed drivers by age groups. Between 2004 and 2013, the Region saw a 20 % decrease in the number of drivers aged 17 through 19. During the same years, the region also had a 20 % increase in drivers over age 65. These changes could mean communities will have a need for multimodal options for the younger ages and options to increase safety as drivers age.
- **Transportation Maintenance Cost.** Costs of maintaining of the transportation infrastructure in the Region continue to increase. The current reliance on fuel tax and registration fees is inadequate, unstable, and may soon be outmoded. The inability to fund improvements and maintenance on transportation infrastructure will impact the ability to transport goods and provide safe, reliable, and efficient roads.

Connections 2030

This is Wisconsin's latest long-range, Statewide, multimodal transportation plan. It identifies a series of system-level priority corridors that are critical to Wisconsin's travel patterns and the state economy.

Road Network

Functional Classification

A functionally classified road system is one in which streets and highways are grouped into classes according to the character of service they provide, ranging from a high degree of travel mobility to land access functions. At the upper limit of the system (principal arterials, for example), are those facilities that emphasize traffic mobility (long, uninterrupted travel), whereas at the lower limits are those local roads and streets that emphasize access.

The functional classifications are generally defined as:

- **Principal Arterials** serve corridor movements having trip length and travel density characteristics of an interstate or interregional nature. These routes generally serve all urban areas with populations greater than 5,000 or connect major centers of activity. They carry the highest traffic volumes and are designed to accommodate longer trips.
- **Minor Arterials**, like principal arterials, also serve cities, large communities, and other major traffic generators providing intra-community continuity and service for trips of moderate length, with more emphasis on land access than principal arterials.
- **Collectors** provide both land access service and traffic circulation within residential neighborhoods, commercial areas, and industrial areas. The collector system distributes trips from the arterials through the area to the local streets. The collectors also collect traffic from the local streets and channel it onto the arterial system.
- **Local Streets** comprise all facilities not on one of the higher systems. They serve primarily to provide direct access to abutting land and access to higher order systems. Local streets offer the lowest level of mobility, and through-traffic movement on these streets is usually discouraged.

Jurisdiction

Jurisdiction refers to governmental ownership, not necessarily responsibility. For example, some State-owned roads are maintained by local jurisdictions. Additionally, the designation of a public road as a “Federal-aid highway” does not alter its ownership or jurisdiction as a State or local road, only that its service value and importance have made that road eligible for Federal-aid construction and rehabilitation funds.

Ownership is divided among the Federal, State, and local governments. States own over 20 % of the national road network. The Federal Government has responsibility for about five percent, primarily in national parks, forests, and Indian reservations. Over 75 % of the road system is locally controlled. In 2016, Rib Mountain had approximately 59.74 miles of roadways under both the jurisdiction of Rib Mountain and the County.

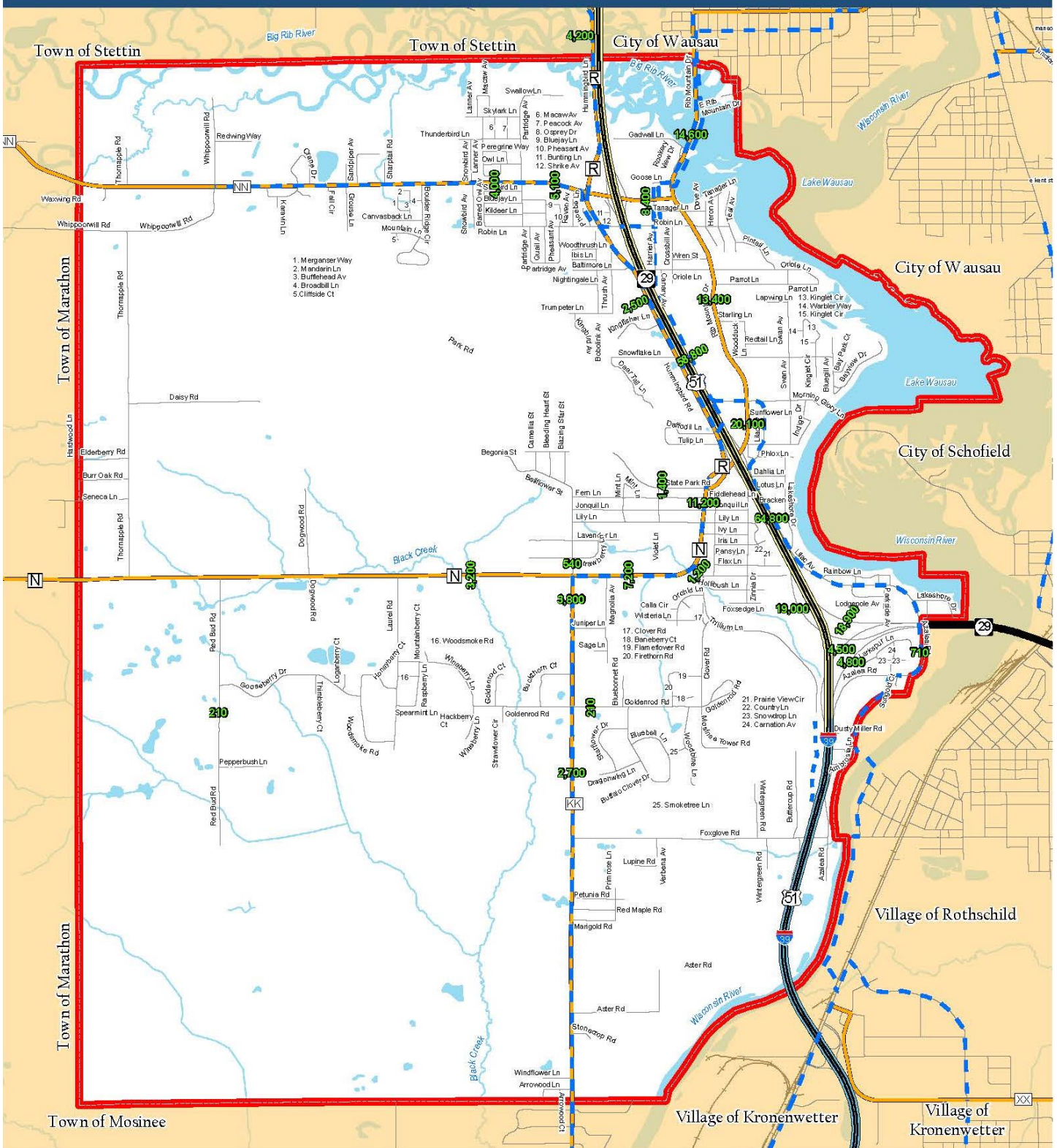
In some cases, local municipalities are responsible for conducting routine maintenance and minor repairs on State and Federal highways within their jurisdictional boundaries. In return, the State generally provides financing to those jurisdictions. However, major repairs and reconstruction are generally still the responsibility of the State Department of Transportation.

Major Road Facilities

Roadway facilities, including their Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) where available, within the Town of Rib Mountain are shown on the Transportation Map. The following is a brief description, including functional classification, of the major road facilities located in the Town.

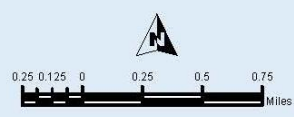
- **Interstate-39/US Highway 51/State Highway 29** is a principal arterial. It is designed to freeway standards providing a high level of service connecting to the Wausau Metro Area. US Highway 51 transitions into Interstate-39 to the south of the State Highway 29 interchange providing connections to Stevens Point and Madison. State Highway 29 provides expressway access to Green Bay in the east and Eau Claire and Minneapolis/St. Paul to the west. Freeway access in Rib Mountain is provided at two interchanges – County Road N and County Road NN

- **County Road N** (Rib Mountain Drive/ (formerly S. Mountain Road)) is a minor arterial between Thornapple Road and County Road KK, a major collector between County Road KK and Clover Road, a minor arterial between Clover Road and County Road NN (formerly N. Mountain Road). County Road N is classified as a principal arterial from its intersection with County Road NN (formerly N. Mountain Road) across Lake Wausau into the City of Wausau.
- **County Road NN** (formerly N. Mountain Road) is a minor arterial from the Town’s western border to US Highway 51/State Highway 29. East of the freeway interchange, County Road NN is designated as a principal arterial.
- **County Road KK** is a major collector running north/south through Rib Mountain terminating at County Road N. This highway represents a major route between the City of Mosinee and much of the Wausau Metro Area.
- **Hummingbird Lane (County Road R)** serves as a frontage road to US Highway 51/State Highway 29 and is designated as a major collector. There are plans to improve this roadway to create a “west arterial” to provide an alternative to US Highway 51 for north-south traffic movement.



- Town Boundary
- Railroad
- Bike Routes
- Water
- Interstate
- U.S. Highways
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- 500 Average Daily Traffic Count, 2019

Source: WI DNR, Wis DOT, NCWRPC
 This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey of the actual boundary of any property depicted. This drawing is a compilation of records, information and data used for reference purposes only. NCWRPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.



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Road Maintenance

The Town of Rib Mountain’s Streets and Parks Department maintains the local roadways within the Town and has a road improvement/maintenance plan in place. The Town also completes a Pavement Surface Evaluation Rating (PASER) analysis of roadway conditions, which is used in conjunction with the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to budget for road maintenance.

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) requires all incorporated communities to prepare a Pavement Management Plan (PMP) using a pavement rating system for their local roads. The data from these plans is intended to provide the foundation for the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR), which is a computer resource that enables communities and the State to assess Wisconsin’s local roadway system.

The PASER system, which was designed by the Transportation Information Center of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, is the rating system used most by Wisconsin communities. PASER rates road surfaces on a scale of 1 to 10. In addition to its use in the new WISLR, the rating system gives communities a detailed assessment of the appropriate maintenance method for each road segment under their jurisdiction. This assessment is then incorporated into the community’s PMP.

Table 6.1 illustrates the WISLR road assessment done in 2015 for paved roads in the Town. The Town also has 0.15 miles of gravel road which was in “Good” condition in 2015. Roads exhibiting a surface condition rating at or below “Fair” must be examined to determine what type of reconstruction or strengthening is necessary. The roads that display a surface rating of “Good” or better will only require preventative maintenance to promote safe travel conditions. This data collection effort will help ensure safe travel conditions along those routes.

Table 6.1: Rib Mountain Road Surface Condition Ratings (PASER), 2015

Rating	Condition	Miles	Description
1	Failed	0.0	Needs total reconstruction.
2	Very Poor	0.9	Severe deterioration. Needs reconstruction with extensive base repair.
3	Poor	2.2	Needs patching & major overlay or complete recycling.
4	Fair	8.2	Significant aging and first signs of need for strengthening. Would benefit from recycling or overlay.
5	Fair	15.4	Surface aging, sound structural condition. Needs sealcoat or nonstructural overlay.
6	Good	14.6	Shows sign of aging. Sound structural condition. Could extend with sealcoat.
7	Good	21.2	First signs of aging. Maintain with routine crack filling.
8	Very Good	8.0	Recent sealcoat or new road mix. Little or no maintenance required.
9	Excellent	6.6	Recent overlay, like new.
10	Excellent	7.4	New construction.

Source: WDOT (WISLR), 2015

The major road project in the Town over the most recent years has been the improvement of Rib Mountain Drive between Robin Lane and Morning Glory Lane. The project included pavement resurfacing, curb and gutter replacement, medians, lengthening turn lanes, traffic signals, improved street lighting, burying overhead utilities and installation of sidewalk. The project will improve the image of the corridor as well as safety for motorists and pedestrians and provide some easing of traffic congestion

Upcoming major road projects include reconstruction of Lilac Avenue from Rib Mountain Drive to Phlox Lane and reconstruct Red Bud Road from County Road N to Pepperbush Lane.

Future regional projects related to Rib Mountain within the metro area long range transportation plan include:

- Investigate the need for new bridge crossings of the Rib, Wisconsin and Eau Claire Rivers in the metro area.
- Full buildout of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for the metro area.

With the direct alignment of Foxglove Road with Military Road across the river in the Village of Rothschild, and some level of interest from both communities, this would be a good candidate location for a new river crossing. Between the Grand Avenue (Business 51) crossing in Schofield/Weston and the Highway 153 crossing in Mosinee, there is an extended stretch along the Wisconsin River with no street crossing. Communities along the river have periodically identified the need for another crossing. The river creates a significant barrier between communities and heavily influences traffic patterns. Compounding the problem is the Interstate-39/US Highway 51 corridor paralleling the river, essentially creating a second barrier. Foxglove Road has an overpass of Interstate-39/US Highway 51 already in place. The presence of overhead power lines and the railroad crossing between Business 51 and the River would also have to be addressed.

Other Transportation Modes

The Town of Rib Mountain is committed to improving transportation conditions and opportunities for pedestrians and bicyclists to improve the quality of life for its residents. In the 2014 Community Survey, participation responses indicated walking/hiking and bicycling were the top two recreational pursuits.

Pedestrian

In the Town, sidewalks exist along Rib Mountain Drive and Robin Lane. However, few other sidewalks in the residential areas and due to low traffic. The 2015-2019 Rib Mountain Outdoor Recreation Plan, which in part addressed pedestrian issues, did not recommend further installation of sidewalks. However, there was a recommendation to add at least 5-foot (6-foot or off-street path is preferred) asphalt paved shoulders to all arterial and collector roads within the Town of Rib Mountain, due to the high levels of traffic on these roads. Additionally, the Plan made a number of recommendations for possible pedestrian improvements to Rib Mountain Drive to better connect Rib Mountain Drive sidewalks.

Bicycle

A number of on-road and off-road bicycle facilities exist in the Town. The 2009 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for the Wausau Urban Area identified three bicycle routes through the Town, including one along County Road KK, connecting the City of Wausau to the City of Mosinee and a route on County Road NN which connects the Town to the City of Wausau as well as the Village of Marathon City. The third route is off-road along Hummingbird Road connecting both of the other routes as it goes south to the Villages of Rothschild and Kronenwetter, and the City of Mosinee. In 2010, an off-road pedestrian path and the bike shoulders were added from Park Road to Rib Mountain State Park.

County Road KK has 5-foot asphalt paved shoulders on both sides and is well used by bicyclists. However, after two bicyclist deaths along this road, the community wants a safer way to ride their bikes in the County Road KK area. A short-term recommendation from the Parks and Recreation Plan to make County Road KK safer was to add bicycle friendly rumble strip (approved by WisDOT & WI Bike Federation) to both white lines and the centerline. Long term, an off-street trail should be constructed to separate motorized traffic and bike/pedestrian traffic.

In 2016, the Town of Rib Mountain received a \$492,000 grant from Wisconsin's Transportation Alternatives Program for construction of the Trillium Trail. The proposed trail will connect the south end of Trillium Lane with Foxglove Road. The trail project is a vital connection to the existing metropolitan bike route system. The Trillium Trail will connect existing routes providing safe bicycle and pedestrian access over Interstate-39/US Highway 51 via Foxglove Road to the Wisconsin River pedestrian bridge and surrounding communities. Construction is scheduled for spring of 2020.

Another long-term plan called for a multi-use path connection from Doepke Park to South Mountain Elementary. Through a coordinated partnership with a local housing developer, a new 10-foot wide multi-use trail is being installed from the Hummingbird Road (County Road R) Trail past South Mountain Elementary School. This new trail provides off-street bike and pedestrian network from the South Mountain Elementary to the City of Wausau.

The ultimate goal is to connect the various Town destinations (e.g. State Park, Lake Wausau, Nine Mile, Rib Mountain Drive Commercial Corridor, etc.), creating loops throughout the community to provide better access to residents and visitors while providing alternatives to dangerous routes like County Roads KK, N and NN while addressing barriers like crossing Rib Mountain Drive. In addition to stand alone trail projects, the Town will continue to work with land owners and developers along planned bicycle and pedestrian routes to install appropriate accommodations as areas redevelop and roads are reconstructed.

Further, the Rib Mountain Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Subcommittee continues to promote safe biking and walking in the Town including sponsoring an annual bike rodeo and working with Rib Mountain businesses to install bicycle racks.

Transit

Maintaining public transit in the surrounding area has been difficult in the current budget climate, and there is currently no regular fix route transit service within the Town. However, there are a number of private taxi and specialized service providers in the area. A number of Town surveys over the years have indicated residents do not want to fund public transit service. Based on these results, Town officials feel transit service is not realistic without a Regional Transit Authority (RTA) or other funding source.

Transit service for the elderly and disabled is provided by Marathon County through North Central Health Care (NCHC). The services include flexible demand and volunteer driver services available with a 48-hour notice (requests less than 48 hours are fulfilled as resources allow).

The nearest intercity bus access is available at the MetroRide transit center in downtown Wausau. Service is provided by Jefferson Lines and Lamers Bus Lines to Minneapolis, Green Bay, Madison and Milwaukee with connections to points beyond.

Rail

No rail lines currently exist within the Town of Rib Mountain. However, limited freight rail service is available in the urban area from the Canadian National Railroad (CN). The rail line connects with the cities of Wausau and Tomahawk to the north and Mosinee, Stevens Point and Wisconsin Rapids to the south.

Airports

The Town is served by two airports; the Central Wisconsin Airport (CWA) and the Wausau Municipal Airport:

Central Wisconsin Airport

The Central Wisconsin Airport (CWA) is a regional non-hub airport, located east of Mosinee and accessible via I-39. It is the only airport within Marathon County or neighboring counties providing scheduled air passenger services. The airport is owned by Marathon and Portage Counties and is governed by the Central Wisconsin Joint Airport Board. It is currently served by three airlines; Delta, American, and United Airlines; and operates 10 daily departures.

Wausau Municipal Airport

The Wausau Municipal Airport, located in the City of Wausau, provides general aviation services and is fully equipped to receive large corporate jets, charters, and privately owned aircraft. Air charter, flight instruction, aircraft rental, scenic rides, as well as aviation line services such as refueling, are some of the services available.

Land Use and Transportation

Land use and transportation have a reciprocal relationship. Land use affects the demand for transportation to and from a given geographic area. Likewise, improved transportation facilities can affect land use decisions.

Traffic Generators

The commercial area along Rib Mountain Drive attracts customers from around the region and beyond. It consists of a “power center” type shopping mall with national chains, such as Walmart, Sam’s Club, Dick’s Sporting Goods, and others which are not found elsewhere in the metro region. It also includes several fast food restaurants, automobile dealerships and other commercial businesses. This is the primary commercial area within the Town and it also serves as a destination retail area for customers inside and outside the Region.

Travel Patterns

Rib Mountain is essentially a bedroom community where the majority of Town residents worked at jobs outside the Town. The following is a breakdown of where Town residents worked according to the U.S. Census Bureau:

- Rib Mountain 7.8%
- Rothschild/Schofield 7.7%
- Weston 6.8%
- Wausau 43.0%
- Other 34.7%

Rib Mountain witnessed a significant amount of retail development since 1994. As noted above, the major commercial development along Rib Mountain Drive draws customers from the large market area. Rib Mountain Drive also serves as a primary route into the City of Wausau. There is another commercial development node surrounding the US Highway 51/State Highway 29 and County Road NN interchange including several motels, restaurants, gas stations, indoor entertainment and miscellaneous commercial development. Most other developed areas in Rib Mountain are residential.

Connectivity

There are many cul-du-sacs and dead ends throughout the Town. Although residents see them as being quiet places within a neighborhood, they can be quite problematic. Poor connectivity can result in the creation of high-speed collector streets, congestion or complete disconnection during construction or emergencies, and creating exclusive neighborhoods. Maintenance during snow plowing and access for emergency vehicles can result in dangerous situations as well. The town is not in favor of the creation of anymore cul-du-sacs. All new developments should provide a high level of connectivity to neighboring developments for both motorized vehicles and pedestrians.

Access Management

Wisconsin was one of the first states to recognize the relationship between highway operations and the use of abutting lands. Under Chapter 233, WisDOT was given the authority to establish rules to review subdivision plats abutting or adjoining State trunk highways or connecting highways. Regulations enacted by WisDOT establish the principles of subdivision review. They require new subdivisions to: (1) have internal street systems; (2) limit direct vehicular access to the highways from individual lots; (3) establish building setbacks; and (4) establish access patterns for remaining unplatted land.

Marathon County issues driveway permits and implements access restrictions on all properties fronting a lettered County road. The County Trunk Highway Access-Driveway Policy addresses the requirements regarding culverts, access width, slope, visibility and spacing. The policy is available through the Marathon County Highway Department.

Traffic Calming

In areas where traffic levels have the potential to create safety concerns, consideration should be given to installing traffic calming measures. The purpose of traffic calming is to slow traffic to increase safety for non-motorized street users, particularly for the most vulnerable (i.e., children, seniors, and the disabled) and increase neighborhood livability. While traffic calming is generally targeted toward local residential streets, traffic calming strategies are also appropriate for busier streets in residential areas, high pedestrian activity areas, and older commercial areas where buildings and sidewalks are close to the street.

Narrowing streets can serve a valuable traffic calming function. However, this is usually done in conjunction with street reconstruction. In existing neighborhoods where it will be some time before streets are reconstructed, other traffic calming strategies may be useful; particularly where a special need is identified, such as near schools, parks and other high pedestrian use area.

Traffic calming strategies vary dramatically in type, design, and function. Generally, strategies should focus on slowing traffic to appropriate speeds and not divert traffic from one neighborhood street to another. Traffic calming devices are not appropriate in all situations and must be selected for local conditions and circumstances. In general, traffic calming devices that alter street width, or the perception of street width, such as installation of street terraces with trees, are more comfortable to drivers than strategies that alter the physical road environment, such as speed humps. Whether to install traffic calming devices, and which to use should be thoroughly discussed with affected residents, businesses and property owners prior to installation to ensure that the device serves the appropriate function and is accepted by the neighborhood and affected road users.

Transportation Issues

- **General Funding.** Given limited budgets, identifying, prioritizing and funding road maintenance needs and road improvements and ensuring the provision of a transportation network that is fiscally sustainable in the long-term is a continual challenge.
- **Trail Coordination.** The Town is interested in implementing its trail plan and coordinating development of the trail/bikeway system with neighboring communities to create a connected regional trail system.
- **Rib Mountain Drive Improvements.** As the face and economic heart of the Town, maintaining the public infrastructure associated with Rib Mountain Drive is essential. However, maintenance and improvement projects are challenging from both a logistical and financial perspective. Creative funding and improvement alternatives are necessary for continued success throughout the corridor.
- **Limited River Crossings.** Between the Grand Avenue crossing in Schofield and the Highway 153 crossing in Mosinee, an extended stretch along the Wisconsin River with no street crossing exists. The river creates a significant barrier between neighboring communities and heavily influences traffic patterns. An additional crossing on the south end of the Town could enhance traffic circulation in the urban area and relieve some congestion on the freeway.
- **Sidewalks.** The Town has a very limited sidewalk network. This causes issues with accessibility by those who have physical limitations or they do not have easy access to the existing trail networks, or portions of the trail networks are gravel.

Transportation Goals, Objectives and Actions

The following goals, objectives and actions are intended to provide a policy framework and guide for the future development of the Town.

Goal I: Continue to maintain and enhance a high-quality transportation network facilitating the safe and efficient movement of all users.

The Town of Rib Mountain places a high priority on maintaining a safe and efficient transportation system for all users of the right-of-way.

Objectives:

1. Work with Marathon County to investigate safety issues such as road geometry, speed limits, driveway access and other factors along heavily used county roads such as County Road N and County Road KK.

Actions:

- a. Continue to work with Marathon County Sheriff's Department to enforce speed limits within the Town.
 - b. Work with Marathon County to identify "problem" intersections and plan for design improvements.
 - c. Routinely review, and revise road design and access standards in the Town's subdivision ordinance.
 - d. Establish regular meetings (or correspondence) with adjacent municipalities to discuss issues regarding road safety and maintenance and coordinate action to address the problems.
 - e. Work with Marathon County and the State to control access along arterial and major collector roadways to maintain the traffic volume capacity and reduce the potential for traffic accidents.
 - f. Work with Marathon County and Village of Rothschild to explore the feasibility of a new Wisconsin River crossing at Fox Glove Road.
 - g. Prepare a corridor study for the long-range development of Rib Mountain Drive.
 - h. Work with Marathon County and Wisconsin DOT to evaluate, fund and develop safe bicycle and pedestrian crossing(s) of Rib Mountain Drive.
 - i. Continue to implement the Town of Rib Mountain and Wausau Area MPO bicycle and pedestrian plans to provide town residents and visitors with safe access to all areas of the Town.
2. Develop a "toolbox" of traffic-calming methods or devices that could be implemented to better manage traffic flow and speed limits in the Town.
 3. Continue to work with WDOT to address safety and congestion issues at the County Road N and US Highway 51/State Highway 29 interchange.

Goal II: Maintain and improve Town roads.

The Town of Rib Mountain strives to ensure that roads are well maintained and designed to accommodate current and anticipated traffic volumes.

Objectives:

1. Continue to use the annual budgeting process to prioritize and allocate funding for road maintenance and improvements.
2. Conduct a bi-annual road analysis, using Pavement Surface Evaluation Ratings (PASER) to rate local road conditions and prioritize maintenance scheduling.
3. Continue to seek adequate and consistent sources of revenue to fund needed road improvements.

Actions:

- a. Work cooperatively with Marathon County and WDOT to seek and obtain funding for road improvements.

- b. Consider adopting guidelines that require developers to finance some of the road improvements necessary for new development.

Goal III: Minimize the impact of new development on the local road network within the Town.

The Town of Rib Mountain strives to minimize the impacts of new development on existing development and infrastructure.

Objectives:

1. Ensure subdivision and road ordinances provide adequate road design and access management requirements.
2. New developments shall not construct any cul-du-sacs or dead ends, unless they are shown to connect to future development, neighboring development or where nature features do not make a connection feasible.
3. Establish criteria that requires developers to contribute additional funds for improvements that are required to be upgrade on roads that serve the new subdivisions and commercial development.
4. Require new commercial and subdivision development to incorporate bicycle and pedestrian facilities where shown within the adopted Bike and Pedestrian Plan and shown on the Official Map.

Actions:

- a. Routinely review, and revise as necessary, road design and access standards in the Town's subdivision ordinance. Incorporate inclusive design standards for trails to be required in conjunction with construction of new roads and/or subdivisions.

Goal IV: Adopt an updated Official Map

Objectives:

1. The map shall eliminate cul-du-sacs where possible and increase connectivity throughout the Town.
2. The map shall show locations of future neighborhood parks in locations per the current *Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan*.
3. The map shall show updated pathways for future trails and other pedestrian facilities specified throughout this plan.

Chapter 7: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

“The Town of Rib Mountain is dedicated to providing a sustainable environment of commerce that embraces the successes of both regional-level business to the small business entrepreneur.”

Chapter Intent

- Discusses current and past initiatives by others
- Describes the current economic conditions in the Town
- Identifies existing issues
- Describes goals and objectives to address the identified issues

The condition of the local economy directly influences local growth and development; and therefore, must be considered when planning for a community’s future. Employment patterns and economic trends generally occur on a regional scale as oftentimes residents of one community work in another. Similarly, changes in a major industry can impact jobs and growth far beyond the community where the business is physically located.

Previous Plans and Studies

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

Marathon County is one of 10 counties included in the North Central Wisconsin Economic Development District, as designated by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA). The North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) is the agency that is responsible for maintaining that federal designation. As part of maintaining the designation, the NCWRPC annually prepares a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) report. The report serves to summarize and assess economic development activities of the past year and present new and modified program strategies for the upcoming year.

Key components from this regional level plan include an inventory of the physical geography of the region and its resident population. Labor, income, and employment data are reviewed as well as an in-depth analysis of the economic status of the Region.

Regional Livability Plan

The 2015 Regional Livability Plan (RLP), written by NCWRPC, addresses issues of livability in the areas of housing, transportation, economic development, and land use. The RLP identifies three economic development issues:

- **Available Labor Force and Employment.** Businesses need a workforce with the proper education and skills to meet the demands of the changing job market. High labor needs combined with an older workforce preparing for retirement will result in a labor force shortage and inability to meet the workforce needs of area businesses. The future availability of a quality labor force is a major concern for the business community.
- **Living Wage.** Over the past 10 years, the Region’s cost of living (i.e. home prices and rent) have increased faster than per capita and household incomes. Consequently, many working adults are seeking public assistance and/or hold multiple jobs in order to meet the basic needs of their families. Occupations paying a living wage provide families resources for savings, investments, education, and the purchasing of goods which improves the local economy and increases the quality of life of the region’s population.
- **Broadband.** High-speed broadband connections are crucial for government services, healthcare, education, library systems, private businesses, and residents. Improving the region’s telecommunication network can assist existing businesses, attract new businesses, and allow residents to access education opportunities.

Metro Area Economic Assessment

In 2017, discussion began regarding a regional economic strategy for the Wausau metropolitan region. Community leaders from around the region came together to discuss economic development issues at the invitation of the Marathon County Economic Development Corporation (MCDEVCO). Slow population growth, labor shortages, low wages, and other issues were discussed. None of the local communities or the County has a formal economic development strategy beyond the existing economic development sections from their individual comprehensive plans and other similar plans. One of the primary conclusions of these initial discussions was dealing with these challenges for individual communities was difficult and collaboration might be the best approach.

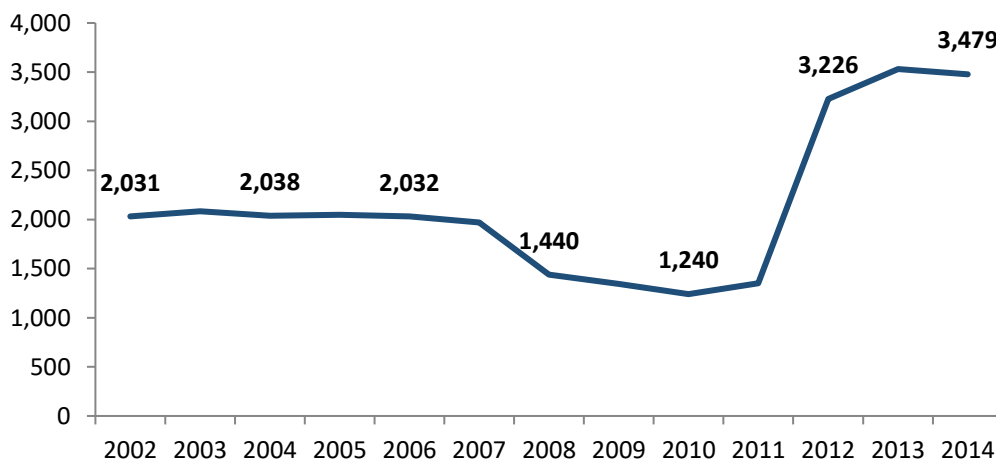
The Metro Region Economic Development Assessment is the first step in creating a formal regional economic development strategy for the communities of Kronenwetter, Marathon City, Mosinee, Rib Mountain, Rothschild, Schofield, Wausau and Weston. Combined, these communities are the urbanized core of Marathon County. The purpose of this assessment is to provide background for a future regional economic strategy. This assessment combines community demographic, labor force, and local economy data to provide an illustration of the larger area trends within the metro region. This assessment was presented to community and business leaders throughout the metro region beginning in late 2017. As a result, the Wausau Region Chamber of Commerce announced plans to fully fund and complete the Regional Economic Development Strategy. This effort has been taken over by the Chamber and the Wausau Prosperity Group.

Facing the issues of a low-growth population, transitioning industries, labor shortages, and low wages will be challenging. By working together, the Metro Region municipalities are better equipped to solve these issues by pooling resources and cooperating with each other, rather than competing against each other.

Local Economic Environment

The Town of Rib Mountain has a progressive attitude toward economic development and retention of local businesses. Access from Interstate-39/US Highway 51 helps make the commercial area along Rib Mountain Drive a regional retail destination. As a result, Rib Mountain is home to a concentration of national commercial and retail businesses drawing customers from throughout the region and beyond.

Figure 7.1 Jobs in Rib Mountain, 2002 - 2014



As shown in Figure 7.1, in 2010 over 1,200 people were employed at jobs located in the Town, with 37.1 % of jobs in the Retail Trade Industry. At the height of the economic recession, this figure was a low for the Town with most of the job losses seen in Retail Trade, Construction, Wholesale Trade, as well as Transportation and Warehousing.

By 2014, over 3,400 jobs existed in the Town, representing a 71.2 % increase over 2006. Most of these jobs are concentrated in the commercial area around Rib Mountain Drive (County Road N) and County Road NN. Since 2006, the Retail Trade industry has grown just under 50 %, adding 525 jobs. Accommodation and Food Services was the second largest growing industry in terms of net growth, adding 449 jobs. The Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation industry added 234 jobs, while Health Care and Social Assistance industry provided 223 additional jobs when compared to 2006. Table 6.1 below provides additional detail on employment in Rib Mountain from 2006-2014.

Employment Projections

Employment projections were taken from the Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI), which use a shift share analysis to create projections. Unfortunately, this data is not available at the municipal level, but rather by zip code. In 2014, the 54401-zip code, which includes Rib Mountain and portions of Wausau, contained 27,332 jobs. In Rib Mountain there were 3,479 jobs, or 12.7 % of the jobs in the zip code. EMSI predicts 29,049 jobs to be available in this zip code by 2024. Under the assumption Rib Mountain will continue holding 12.7 % of these jobs, 3,698 of those jobs would be in the Town, representing an increase of 219 jobs, or a 6.2 %.

Table 7.1: Employment in Rib Mountain by Industry

Industry Group	2006		2014		Change	
	Count	Share	Count	Share	Net	%
Ag., Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0%
Mining, Quarrying, & Oil/Gas Extraction	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0%
Utilities	6	0.3%	9	0.3%	3	50%
Construction	80	3.9%	67	1.9%	-13	-16%
Manufacturing	0	0.0%	33	0.9%	33	3300%
Wholesale Trade	45	2.2%	53	1.5%	8	18%
Retail Trade	1,059	52.1%	1,584	45.5%	525	49.6%
Transportation and Warehousing	47	2.3%	42	1.2%	-5	-11%
Information	7	0.3%	0	0.0%	-7	-100%
Finance and Insurance	117	5.8%	100	2.9%	-17	-15%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	18	0.9%	21	0.6%	3	17%
Professional, Scientific, & Tech. Services	22	1.1%	76	2.2%	54	245%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	46	2.3%	0	0.0%	-46	-100%
Waste Management & Remediation	8	0.4%	45	1.3%	37	463%
Educational Services	44	2.2%	62	1.8%	18	41%
Health Care and Social Assistance	131	6.4%	354	10.2%	223	170%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	0	0.0%	234	6.7%	234	1400%
Accommodation and Food Services	194	9.5%	643	18.5%	449	231%
Other Services (excluding Public Admin.)	24	1.2%	124	3.6%	100	417%
Public Administration	184	9.1%	32	0.9%	-152	-83%

Source: Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics Data, 2016

Economic Development Areas within the Town of Rib Mountain

Rib Mountain is home to several unique economic areas, largely separated by US Highway 51.

Rib Mountain Drive. Rib Mountain Drive is the Town’s primary commercial corridor. Traffic counts on Rib Mountain Drive (and US Highway 51 which parallels and feeds this area) are the engine driving the economy in Rib Mountain. The intention is to keep high-intensity commercial activity on the east side of US Highway 51 to maintain the unique character of other parts of the Town.

The Rib Mountain Drive commercial corridor is maturing and limited greenfield development opportunities exist. The Town remains vigilant in monitoring the effects of current commercial/retail trends on the corridor. Responding to changing retail trends and commercial developer, along with determining what can be done to maintain the vitality of this corridor as a core commercial area is the Town's principle economic development concern moving forward.

Hummingbird Road (County Road R). Hummingbird Road, or County Road R, parallels US Highway 51 on the west side and is the Town's secondary commercial area developing with a less-intensive local commercial or "suburban office" style of development. The intent is to provide an alternative commercial environment to Rib Mountain Drive, while providing a buffer zone between the high-intensity uses on Rib Mountain Drive and other low intensity areas of the Town. Intended uses in this area include, but are not limited to, professional office, personal and professional services, and healthcare facilities.

County Road NN. The area along County Road NN between Rib Mountain Drive and Hummingbird Road consists primarily of highway oriented commercial (e.g. fuel stations and convenience stores) focused on the US Highway 51 Interchange.

Other Areas. The remainder of the Town is comprised of primarily residential development around the various recreational amenities of the Town with some sporadic commercial sites and the occasional church or school. The intent is to maintain and enhance the current residential character of these areas. Only neighborhood serving commercial activities (e.g. small offices, daycare facilities) appropriate to the area should be allowed. Such developments should not be regional draws likely to pull in traffic from a wider area.

County Economic Environment

Originally, the Marathon County economy was based on forest resources and diversified agriculture. Increased population and infrastructure – railroads, roads and dams for power enabled the area to evolve beyond simple agricultural and logging operations. Resources once leaving the area unprocessed were now transformed into finished products within the County, providing employment opportunities and adding value in forest products and agricultural processing. A number of related manufacturing operations grew up in the area, some based on forest products and agricultural products, others supplying the existing industries with fabricated metal products. As these industries progressed, so did industries such as transportation, communications, public utilities, government, trade, finance, insurance and real estate. The County now enjoys a well-diversified economy.

Key Economic Sectors

Key sectors of a regional economy can be identified by size; by growth or decline in employment; by a concentration of the industry in the local area exceeding the national concentration. An industry showing a higher concentration of employment than the national average is considered a “basic industry” and is identified by a technique called “Location Quotient” analysis. Basic industries are those sectors exporting a product or service from the local community into the national or international economy. They are a critical part of the economic engine for a region, affecting the growth and health of many dependent sectors such as retail, transportation, construction, and local services.

In 2016, there were 70,780 jobs in Marathon County with a Gross Regional Production of \$6.97 billion. Table 6.2 shows a select number of industries by employment in Marathon County in 2011 and 2016. In 2016, the Manufacturing Industry (NAICS 31) was the largest employment sector with 16,505 workers. Health Care and Social Assistance (NAICS 62) and Retail Trade (NAICS 44) were second and third with 9,707 and 9,050 workers respectively.

In terms of job growth, Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction (NAICS 21) was the fastest growing industry from 2011 with a growth rate 304 %, adding 76 jobs. The Management of Companies and Enterprises industry (NAICS 55) was second, employing an additional 609 workers, representing an 85 % increase. The third fastest industry was Real Estate and Rental and Leasing (NAICS 53) increasing 43 %, or 142 workers. The Manufacturing (1,741 jobs), Health Care and Social Assistance (1,618 jobs), and Retail Trade (796 jobs) Industries added the most jobs overall. Construction came in fourth, adding 716 jobs.

It should be noted the number of employees in certain sectors, particularly those workers engaged in Crop and Animal production, which includes forestry, may be understated because this information utilizes the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development data; those who are self-employed or work in family businesses are not reflected in this data.

Table 7.2: Jobs by Industry-Marathon County

NAICS	Description	2011 Jobs	2016 Jobs	2011-16 Change	2011-16 % Change
31	Manufacturing	14,764	16,505	1,741	12%
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	8,089	9,707	1,618	20%
44	Retail Trade	8,254	9,050	796	10%
90	Government	7,257	7,316	59	1%
72	Accommodation and Food Services	4,582	4,448	-134	-3%
52	Finance and Insurance	4,726	4,379	-347	-7%
42	Wholesale Trade	4,155	4,379	208	5%
23	Construction	1,980	2,696	716	36%
48	Transportation and Warehousing	2,171	2,142	-29	-1%
56	Professional, Scientific, & Tech. Services	1,877	1,953	76	4%
Totals:		64,940	70,780	5,840	9%

Source: Economic Modeling Specialists International, 2016

Six industries lost jobs from 2011 to 2016. The Finance and Insurance (NAICS 52) lost 346 jobs, decreasing 7 %. Other Services (NAICS 81) decreased its employment by 14 %, or 269 jobs. Accommodation and Food Services (NAICS 72) shrank by 134 jobs while Information (NAICS 51) lost 85 jobs. Transportation and Warehousing (NAICS 48) and Educational Services (NAICS 61) lost 29 and 23 jobs respectively.

In 2014, Marathon County generated \$10.8 billion in export revenue. Export revenue is money received in the region through foreign and external domestic sources. Manufacturing was the highest export industry accounting for over \$5 billion dollars, or 47 % of total export revenue. Finance and Insurance was the second highest export industry accounting for over \$1.2 billion, or 11 % of total export revenue. Health Care and Social Assistance was the third highest export accounting for over \$834 million. The ability to export goods and services is essential to the County's economy as it introduces new money, rather than simply circulating money already within the Region. This influx of new revenue is redistributed throughout the economy at local restaurants, suppliers, and retailers.

Job Growth

Between 2011 and 2016, Marathon County added 5,840 jobs, an increase of 9 %. The State of Wisconsin experienced a job growth of 8.8 % and the Nation increased 10.3 %. Based on National Growth Effect (7,264), an Industry Mix Effect (-

1,413), and the Competitive Effect (158) the Region would expect to add 5,851 jobs in this industry over the next 10-year time period, based on a shift share analysis.

While a location quotient analysis provides a snapshot of the economy at a given time, shift-share analysis introduces trend analysis (change over a period of time). This is an analysis technique examining economic change and incorporates a “what-if” component. The theory behind shift-share is local economic trends can be determined to be “up” or “down” relative to national trends, called the National Growth Component. It also identifies if the growth is in fast or slow growing industries or sectors, call Industrial Mix; and finally, it identifies how competitive an area is for attracting different economic sectors, called the Competitive Share. Both models use the same employment data.

The industrial mix effect represents the share of regional industry growth explained by the growth of the specific industry at the national level. The national growth effect explains how much the regional industry’s growth is explained by the overall growth in the national economy. The regional competitiveness effect explains how much of the change in a given industry is due to some unique competitive advantage that the region possesses, because the growth cannot be explained by national trends in that industry or the economy as a whole. As a result of the regions unique competitiveness, the county should continue to grow.

Economic Development Issues

- **Redevelopment Challenges.** Given the limited supply of vacant land for new commercial development, redevelopment will become more prevalent in the future. Redevelopment projects are often more expensive and require a different level of creativity compared to traditional greenfield development. The success of future redevelopment projects will go a long way in determining the viability of the Town’s commercial corridor moving forward.
- **Limited Development Area.** The primary factors limiting the potential for new development in Rib Mountain are its natural features. Steep slopes and abundant wetlands and park land limit the amount and intensity of development in much of the western half of the Town. As a result, limited vacant land remains suitable for new development. Most new commercial and light industrial development is anticipated, and planned, to locate in and around existing commercial areas.
- **Rib Mountain Drive Development.** As the face and economic heart of the Town, concerns exist regarding how the corridor will evolve overtime. Since 1993, Rib Mountain Drive has undergone major land use changes and traffic volumes have burgeoned and are expected to continue to increase in the future. In 2013, average daily traffic was 13,900 and was projected to be 16,100 by 2036. With a concentration of commercial development drawing customers from around the region and beyond, Rib Mountain Drive is one of the highest traveled corridors in the metro area. What can be done to maintain the vitality of Rib Mountain Drive as a core commercial area in light of a changing retail market?
- **Lake Wausau.** The lakeshore has the potential to be promoted as a major amenity/attraction for the Town. The Town needs to balance the benefits and potential downfalls of further development along the shoreline, while improving access to Lake Wausau promoting and recreational opportunities.

Economic Development Goals, Objectives and Actions

The following goals, objectives and actions are intended to provide a policy framework and guide for the future development of the Town.

Goal I: Revitalize and redevelop older industrial and commercial areas of the Town.

The Town of Rib Mountain encourages and supports redevelopment to foster high-quality and well-planned commercial development.

Objectives:

1. Identify commercial and/or industrial properties that should be targeted for redevelopment.

Actions:

- a. Promote redevelopment of lands east of Lilac Avenue and West of Swan Avenue.
 - b. Promote redevelopment of lands along County Road NN from Partridge Avenue to County Road N
 - c. Promote redevelopment of land around Starling Lane and Wood Duck Lane
 - d. Promote redevelopment of the Mountain View Shopping Center
2. Proactively explore opportunities to provide support and assistance to help established businesses remain and expand in Rib Mountain.
 3. Ensure public infrastructure (e.g., water, sewer, roads/access) is adequate to support redevelopment of existing commercial and industrial properties.

Actions:

- a. Compile a map or list of parcels with potential for redevelopment. Continue to maintain communication with affected property owners regarding their plans and whether they intend to sell the property.
- b. Identify and prioritize public infrastructure improvements needed to foster new commercial development. Work with Marathon County (through the MPO) to initiate improvements.
- c. Consider establishing TIF district(s) to finance public infrastructure improvements, property acquisition, etc. to foster redevelopment.
- d. Prepare a corridor study for the long-range development of Rib Mountain Drive.
- e. Encourage redevelopment / improvement efforts along lake shore.

Goal II: Encourage new commercial development in appropriate locations as identified on the Future Land Use map.

The Town of Rib Mountain will strive to maintain and encourage new, high-quality commercial development that enhances the Town's tax base.

Objectives:

1. Contain regional commercial to Rib Mountain Drive.
2. Proactively identify the type and amount of commercial development needed in Rib Mountain to serve local and regional needs.

Actions:

- a. Conduct a community market survey to obtain input on the types and scale of commercial development that should be encouraged to locate in Rib Mountain.
 - b. Establish access management requirements for new development, redevelopment, and road reconstruction projects.
3. Creation of design overlay districts for the Rib Mountain Drive commercial corridors.

Goal III: Maintain a diverse mix of goods and services that serve the Town and the surrounding region.

The Town of Rib Mountain will strive to maintain a diverse economic base.

Objectives:

1. Continue to support, yet contain regional-oriented commercial development along Rib Mountain Drive.
2. Identify locations to encourage neighborhood-oriented mixed-use in areas of the Town prime for redevelopment with established neighborhoods.

Actions:

- a. Continue to work with Marathon County and the WisDOT to implement adequate access management improvements along Rib Mountain Drive to support current and anticipated regional traffic.
- b. Identify and zone parcels to encourage new neighborhood-oriented mixed-use, as shown in the Suburban Flex future land use designation. Priority should be given to areas with sufficient residential densities to support this type of development.
- c. Continue to work with the other communities and business leaders in the metro area on the regional economic develop strategy, as well as working and cooperating with MCDEVCO on the Municipalities agreement

Chapter 8: LAND USE

“The Town of Rib Mountain shall oversee the (re)development of the Town to be sustainable and responsible, while ensuring existing neighborhoods continue to thrive and remain the first choice for residents to raise their families.”

Chapter Intent

- Discusses current and past initiatives by others
- Describes the current land uses within the Town
- Describe and show new future land uses within the Town
- Identifies existing issues
- Describes goals and objectives to address the identified issues

The Town of Rib Mountain anchors the southwest corner of the Wausau metropolitan area which generally extends between Brokaw on the north and Mosinee on the south. It is located on the west side of the Wisconsin River and encompasses one of the most significant physical features in the County – its namesake, Rib Mountain.

Land Use is a crucial component of livability and provides a basis for the formulation of policy to coordinate a sustainable pattern of development. The existing natural landscape and land use patterns influence future land use and development. Much of the Region has population and housing densities well below the state average, which in turn places more reliance on automobiles to get to and from work, shopping and other activities. Balancing the needs of the community with land use issues requires that each situation be considered individually and that the community seeks the solution which fits the unique challenges that it faces.

Previous Plans and Studies

Rib Mountain Community Development Plan

The Town adopted this plan in 1989, replacing an earlier community plan prepared in 1978. The plan is based on the following eight goals:

1. Protect and enhance the quality of Rib Mountain’s residential living environment.
2. Identify and designate areas for small-lot suburban housing which are located in a healthy, safe, convenient, efficient, and attractive environment, while controlling the overall rate of residential growth.
3. Establish commercial areas that provide goods and services in a convenient, safe and attractive environment.
4. Restrict industrial areas to those locations where industrial activities will not degrade the Town’s natural or residential living environment.
5. Provide a safe and efficient transportation network that will facilitate the movement of people and goods.
6. Provide a diversified local recreational system that will meet the needs and desires of Town residents.
7. Develop a pattern of land use that will protect the natural environment of Rib Mountain.
8. Maintain a comprehensive, continuous, and coordinated community planning effort.

Shaping Growth in Rib Mountain

This report focused on implementation of the 1989 Community Development Plan through community prioritization of plan recommendations. No changes or updates were made to the goals outlined in the 1989 plan.

2005 Comprehensive Plan

In 2005, the Town adopted its first comprehensive plan, establishing a new set of goals and objectives. The 2005 plan was completed as part of a massive planning effort coordinated by Marathon County that resulted in individual comprehensive plans for Marathon County and most of its 62 local units of government including the Town of Rib Mountain. That comprehensive plan serves as a base for preparation of this comprehensive plan which is essentially an update.

Regional Livability Plan

The 2015 Regional Livability Plan (RLP), written by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, addresses issues of livability in the areas of housing, transportation, economic development, and land use. Land use strategies are developed for promoting efficient development patterns and keeping governmental costs (and taxes) down, such as multi-modal transportation connections, traditional neighborhood designs as an alternative to subdivisions, new urbanism concepts with mixed-uses, services within walking distance, transit-oriented development, and clustered housing concepts which allow opportunities for trails or open space.

Inventory and Trends

Existing Land Use

The Town of Rib Mountain is characterized by the presence of two significant natural features; Rib Mountain and Nine-Mile Forest Unit, a large wetland complex used for recreation and scientific study. Most development in the Town has taken place to the north and east of the mountain, extending toward the Wisconsin River. Much of the community consists of residential development with most commercial development concentrated along County Road N (Rib Mountain Drive) and at interchanges on US Highway 51 (County Roads N and NN). The area south of the mountain and north and east of Nine-Mile Forest Unit consists primarily of large lot, single family housing.

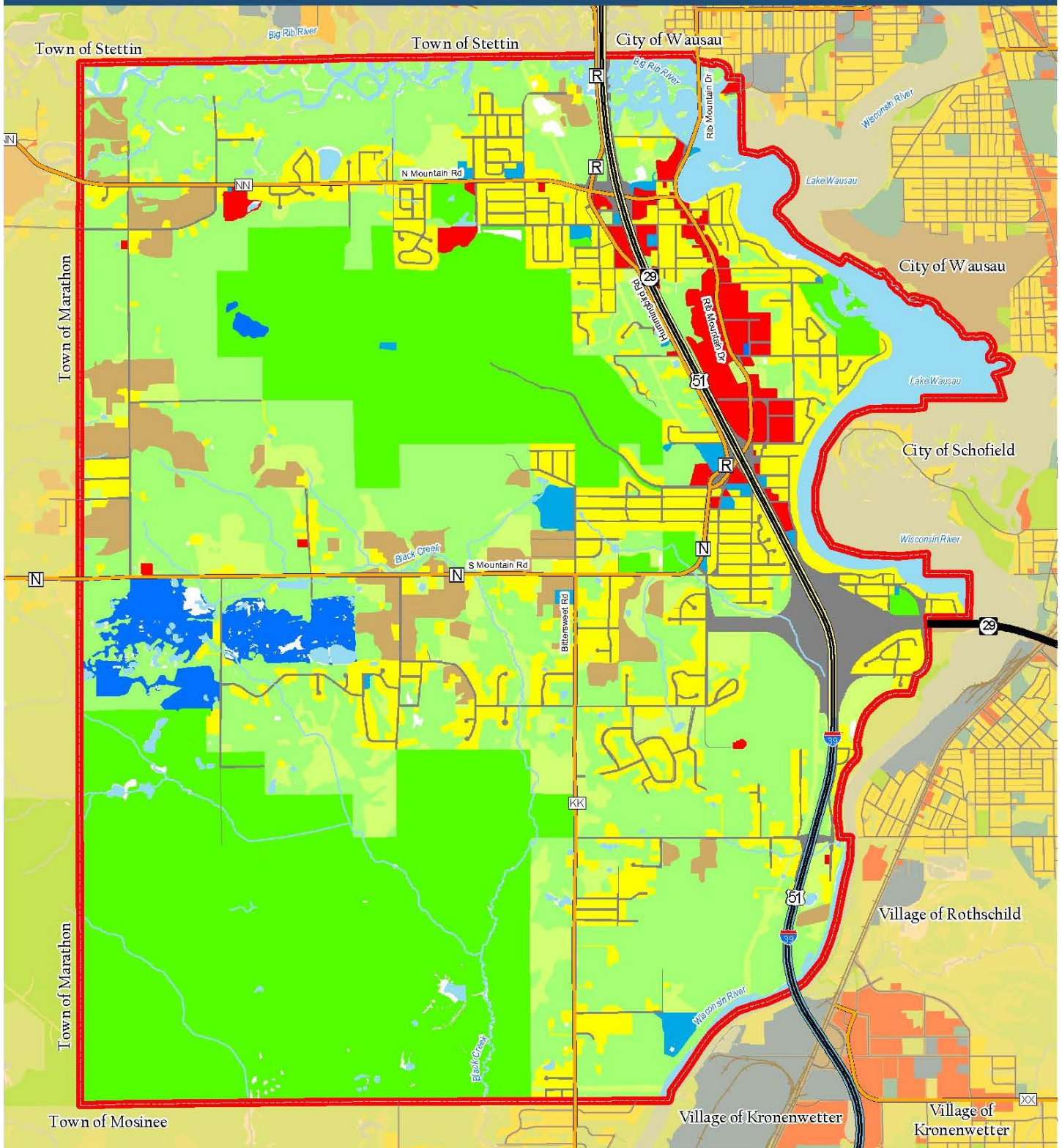
For purposes of this plan, tax assessment land use categories were used to represent existing land use. Table 8.1 describes the various land use cover categories and the Existing Land Use Map illustrates the existing land cover.

Table 8.1: Existing Land Use, 2015		
Land Use Type	Acres	%
Agriculture	674.98	4.10%
Commercial	339.50	2.06%
Governmental	121.67	0.74%
Industrial	331.87	2.02%
Multi-family Residential	1,041.76	6.33%
Outdoor Recreation	4,859.41	29.54%
Residential	2,075.62	12.62%
Transportation	1,096.92	6.67%
Water	990.10	6.02%
Woodlands	4,919.36	29.90%
Total Acres	16,451.00	100.00%

Source: NCWRPC GIS

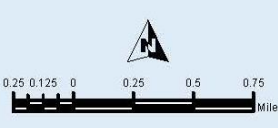
Land Supply

Significant portions of the Town are already developed; however, adequate land area remains for future development under reasonable projection scenarios. The commercial corridor to the east of Interstate-39 is nearly built out, but continues to see redevelopment, and the construction of County Highway R has opened some new opportunities for



Town Boundary	Land Use	Open Lands
Transportation	Agriculture	Outdoor Recreation
Interstate	Commercial	Residential
U.S. Highways	Governmental / Institutional	Transportation
State Highways	Industrial	Woodlands
County Highways	Multi-Family	Water
Local Roads		
Railroad		

Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, 2015 Airphoto Interpretation
 This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey of the actual boundary of any property depicted. This drawing is a compilation of records, information and data used for reference purposes only. NCWRPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.




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commercial development. Some parcels have been slow to reach their development potential due to owners that have been holding out for prices above market value.

Land west of Interstate-39/US Highway 51 primarily consists of residential development. Land is generally more open and potentially available in these areas subject to market factors. However, extensive areas are affected by environmental constraints such as steep slope, floodplain and / or wetland. The Town is interested in possible development of neighborhood type commercial in certain locations on the west side that could serve needs of residents living in a local area, but not be a regional draw generating additional traffic within existing neighborhoods.

Opportunities for Redevelopment

Rib Mountain Drive Commercial Corridor. As indicated above, the commercial corridor along Rib Mountain Drive continues to see redevelopment. Older commercial buildings are being converted or demolished for new retail and restaurant uses throughout the corridor. As the corridor nears complete build out, redevelopment projects become vital to continued success.

Harrier Avenue/Oriole Lane Neighborhood. One of the Town’s longest standing residential neighborhoods can be found near the north end of the Rib Mountain Drive commercial corridor. Generally, this area is bound to the north by Tanager Lane, west by Harrier Avenue, east by Rib Mountain Drive, and to the south by Oriole Lane. The neighborhood is entirely surrounded by commercial development and in close proximity to the County Road NN/US Highway 51 interchange. As a result, the Town often sees land use conflicts with proposed commercial redevelopment projects. When considering the existing residential uses along with strong commercial interests, this neighborhood appears to lend itself well to a mixed-use district. Future commercial encroachment on existing residential lands should occur from the outer edges of the neighborhood, rather than the center.

County Road NN. The area from Partridge Avenue to the west to County Road N to the east has many opportunities for redevelopment. There are many businesses that have rehabilitated single-family homes for their required purposes. New projects, such as the Hilton Garden Inn have set the bar for the standard the Town is expecting to occur. The rehabilitation of single-family homes to businesses is a practice the Town would like to see to be discontinued.

Former Quarry Sites. The Town is also looking at the desired future re-use of former quarry sites. These sites are most prevalent along the west end of South Mountain Road and along Red Bud Road, just north of the County’s Nine Mile Recreation Area. Active mining operations are being phased out, and the Town is interested in identifying viable future uses of these sites. A combination of recreation and residential development are encouraged.

Land Demand

An estimate of land needed for future development was based on the most recent sewer service area plan developed for the Wausau Urban Area. The methodology utilizes Wisconsin DOA population projections, average residential development density, employment projections from a local economic development study and average employment per acre. No agricultural land is expected to be added within the Town, and conversion of at least some of the existing agricultural land to other uses is inevitable. See Table 8.2 for estimated land demands.

Table 8.2 Estimated Land Demand in Acres				
Category	Projected Additional Acreage			
	2025	2030	2035	2040
Agricultural	0	0	0	0
Residential	10	10	10	10
Commercial	26	26	26	26
Industrial	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1

Source: NCWRPC.

Land Values

Table 8.3 displays the assessed land values in the Town of Rib Mountain. In 2019, the assessed value of land and improvements was \$856,154,900.

Table 8.3 Assessed Land Value, 2019		
Classification	Acres	Total Value – Land
Residential	2,577	\$143,655,300
Commercial	559	\$88,463,000
Manufacturing	1	\$100,400
Agriculture	746	\$119,200
Undeveloped	832	\$408,200
Forest	2,598	\$9,615,700
Ag-Forest	686	\$1,324,000
Other	16	\$152,000
Total	8,015	\$243,837,800

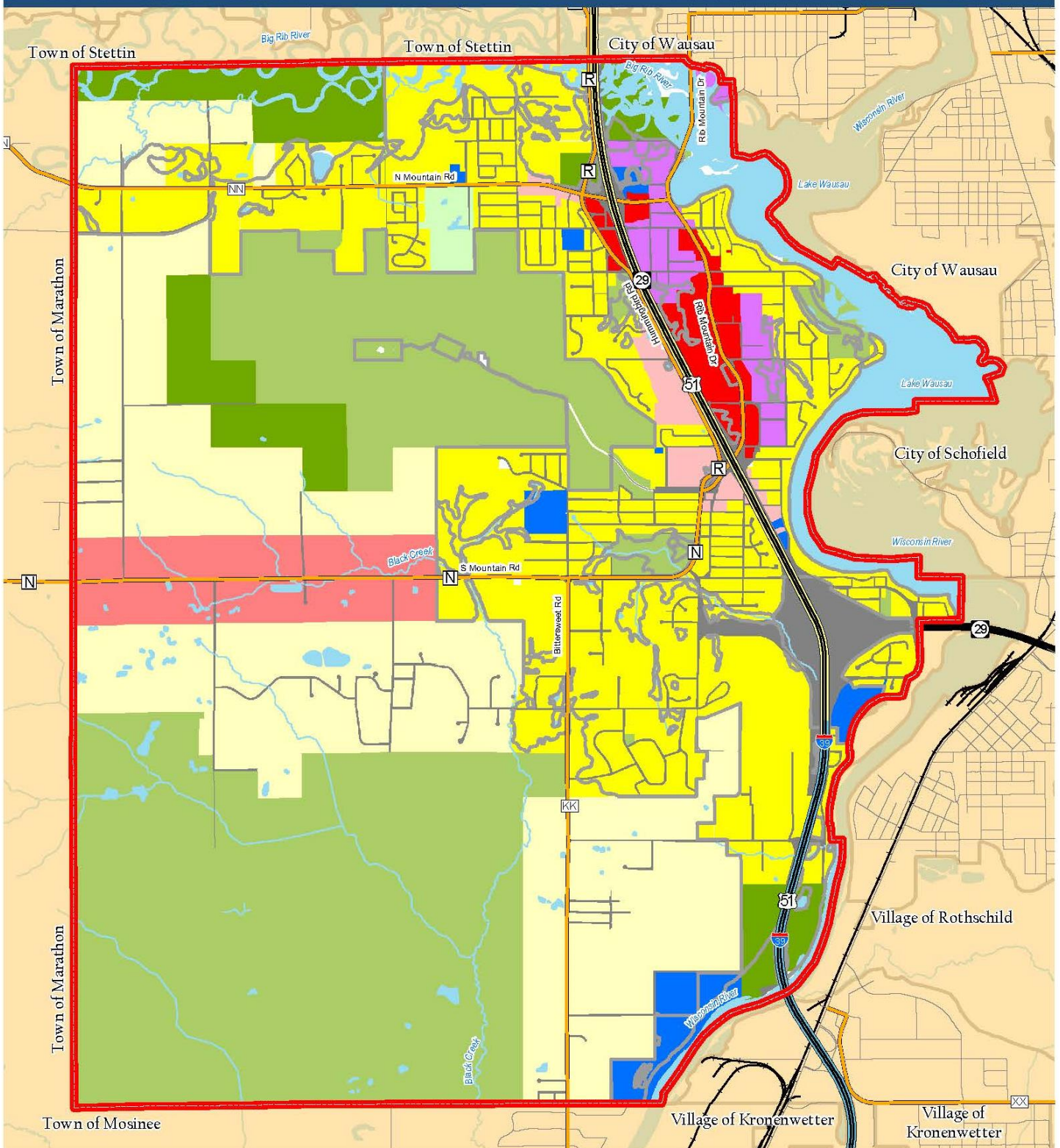
Source: Wisconsin Department of Revenue, Final Statement of Assessments 2019

Future Land Use

The Town of Rib Mountain Future Land Use Map represents the anticipated future pattern of land uses. The map includes distinct land use categories to guide where new residential and non-residential development should be encouraged to locate or where development should be discouraged. See the Land Use Descriptions in Table 8.4 for a general overview of each land use category on the plan map.

As shown on the Future Land Use Map, a large portion the Town consists of land devoted to outdoor recreation, park and open space uses. Outdoor Recreation land uses occupy the largest proportion of land area in the Town. This is due to the presence of Rib Mountain State Park, Granite Peak Ski Resort, and Nine Mile Forest Unit / Recreation Area. Woodland also constitutes a fairly large amount of area.

Residential land uses (Rural Neighborhood and Suburban Neighborhood) comprise the largest category of developed land. Much of the residential area in the northeast part of the Town is served by public sewer and water with traditional suburban style density. Residential areas in the south and west parts of the Town are generally low density and are not served by public sewer and water. Commercial land uses comprise about 5% of the Town and are concentrated along Rib Mountain Drive and the west side of US Highway 51. Quarry and/or gravel pits occupy over 400 acres in the west part of the Town. Mining operations are slowly winding down in this area, and the Town needs to carefully consider how this land is to be re-used after the reclamation process is complete.



Town Boundary	Railroad	Regional Commercial
Transportation	Future Land Use	Outdoor Commercial Recreation
Interstate	Rural Neighborhood	Outdoor Recreation
U.S. Highways	Rural Mix	Environmental Protection
State Highways	Suburban Neighborhood	Government & Public Utilities
County Highways	Suburban Flex	Transportation/ROW
Local Roads	Local Commercial	Future Sewer Service Boundary
		Water

Source: Town of Rib Mountain, WI DNR, NCWRPC
 This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey of the actual boundary of any property depicted. This drawing is a compilation of records, information and data used for reference purposes only. NCWRPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.



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Table 8.4 Future Land Use Designations, Descriptions and Development Policies










Future Land Use Designation & Map Color	General Description of Land Uses	Typical Implementation of Standard Zoning District	Density	Development Policies
Rural Neighborhood 	Large lot, low-density residential development, home occupations, recreational and limited agricultural uses served by private on-site wastewater treatment systems (POWTS) and private wells. This area is outside of the 2040 sewer service boundary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CR-5 Countryside Residential ▪ ER-1 Estate Residential ▪ SR-2 Suburban Residential 	Maximum of 1 dwelling unit per ½ acre on a conventional or mound waste water system, or as permitted by the designated zoning district.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Limit development in environmentally sensitive areas by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Discouraging the use of holding tanks; ○ Discouraging driveways longer than 1,000 feet; ○ Discourage the construction and use of private roads. 2. New development occurs in a manner that does not impede future, orderly development or subdivisions. 3. Encourage cluster development or conservation subdivisions. 4. Encourage use of group waste water treatment systems. 5. Promote the interconnection of the road and trail networks within and among neighborhoods.
Rural Mix 	Limited to lower impact, medium to small-scaled, commercial development, locally owned business, specialty sales and service, low-impact indoor or outdoor commercial entertainment uses with large lot, low-density residential development, home occupations, recreational and limited agricultural uses served by private on-site wastewater treatment systems (POWTS) and private wells. This area is outside of the 2040 sewer service boundary.	A mix of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EO Estate Office ▪ CR-5 Countryside Residential ▪ ER-1 Estate Residential ▪ SR-2 Suburban Residential 	Maximum of 1 dwelling unit per ½ acre on a conventional or mound waste water system, or as permitted by the designated zoning district.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Limit development in environmentally sensitive areas by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Discouraging the use of holding tanks; ○ Discouraging driveways longer than 1,000 feet; ○ Discourage the construction and use of private roads. 2. New development occurs in a manner that does not impede future, orderly development or subdivisions. 3. New commercial development shall be conscious of established neighborhoods 4. Encourage cluster development or conservation subdivisions. 5. Encourage use of group waste water treatment systems. 6. Promote the interconnection of the road and trail networks within and among neighborhoods.
Suburban Neighborhood 	Small lot, higher-density residential development, home occupation, small-scale institutional and recreational uses served by public water and sewer facilities. This area is within the 2040 sewer service boundary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SR-3 Suburban Residential ▪ SR-4 Suburban Residential ▪ MR-4 Mixed Residential ▪ UR-8 Urban Residential 	Maximum of 8 dwelling units per acre or as permitted by the designated zoning district.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New development is expected to connect to public sewer and water. 2. Encourage a mix of development projects that fosters the low property maintenance lifestyle 3. New higher-density development shall be conscious of established neighborhoods and should be encouraged along and near the major transit corridors. 4. Design and layout of new construction shall be mindful and enhancing of existing neighborhood or near-by neighborhoods. New subdivisions shall establish a neighborhood design plan. 5. Pursue infill development opportunities where feasible. 6. Promote the interconnection of the road and trail networks within and among neighborhoods. Higher-density development shall provide an off-street connection to the existing trail network when within proximity of such trail.
Suburban Flex 	Vibrant, pedestrian-orientated mixed residential and commercial development which allows for people to live, work, shop and obtain daily services within a walking distance. Carefully blended to include a mix of uses on one site or adjacent sites which integrate with one another. These areas shall be served public sewer and water facilities as this designation is within the 2040 sewer service boundary.	A mix of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MR-4 Mixed Residential ▪ UR-8 Urban Residential ▪ NC Neighborhood Commercial ▪ SO Suburban Office ▪ SC Suburban Commercial ▪ UC Urban Commercial 	Minimum lot sizes per the associated zoning district.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All development shall incorporate and integrate with adjacent existing residential uses, if none, a residential component of the project would be strongly recommended when located within or adjacent to an existing neighborhood. 2. Promote shared off-street parking 3. Promote the creation of 3rd places 4. Promote the interconnection of the road and trail networks within and among neighborhoods. 5. Promote infill and redevelopment projects at outdated sites. 6. New development should be multi-storied and mixed-used when practical. 7. Setbacks should be reduced where appropriate. 8. At the time of development, sidewalks should be constructed in the right-of-way, with the intent to connect to Rib Mountain Drive and Robin Lane or to any adjacent sidewalks. 9. Big Box or regional retail should be confined to areas closest to Rib Mountain Drive and not within established neighborhoods, specifically on the areas mapped east of Rib Mountain Drive.
Local Commercial 	Smaller scaled, low-impact and low-traffic/limited volume commercial development, offices, medical facilities, personal/professional services or sales scaled to provide at the local level. These areas shall be served by public sewer and water facilities as this designation is within the 2040 sewer service boundary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NC Neighborhood Commercial ▪ EO Estate Office ▪ SO Suburban Office ▪ SC Suburban Commercial 	Minimum lot sizes per the associated zoning district.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New development shall be conscious of all nearby established neighborhoods. 2. Sites should be designed for multi-modal transportation 3. New development should be conscious of and address on-site and nearby environmental and traffic conditions.

Table 8.4 Future Land Use Designations, Descriptions and Development Policies (Continued)

Future Land Use Designation	General Description of Land Uses	Typical Implementation of Standard Zoning District	Density	Development Policies
Outdoor Commercial Recreation 	A development scaled to a regional level, with a potentially high impact, pursuant to sports, amusement and recreational activities, available to the general public for a fee, where the principal use is outdoors, but which may include additional related principal or accessory uses that are indoors. A residential component may be incorporated, but shall not be the primary use. These areas shall be served public sewer and water facilities as this designation is within the 2040 sewer service boundary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OR Outdoor Recreational or any district determined to further the intent of this designation. 	Minimum lot sizes per the associated zoning district.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> All development shall emphasize human/nature interaction while preserving, protecting and enhancing the open spaces, forested spaces and conservancy areas around Rib Mountain and other environmentally sensitive areas. All development shall integrate with adjacent existing residential uses Require developments to address off-site traffic, environmental, and neighborhood impacts. Sites should be designed for multi-modal transportation. Promote the creation of 3rd places Promote the interconnection of the road and trail networks within and among neighborhoods.
Outdoor Recreation 	Parks, public recreational areas, public open spaces, and private lands and buildings available for public recreation and/or conservation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OR Outdoor Recreational or any district allowing for a park of any size 	Minimum lot sizes per the associated zoning district.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Allow for passive and active recreational activities Preserve, protect and enhance open spaces, forested spaces and conservancy areas around Rib Mountain, Nine Mile Forestry Unit, Bluegill County Park, Doepke Park, Wisconsin and Rib Rivers and other environmentally sensitive areas.
Environmental Protection 	Generally continuous systems of open space that include environmentally sensitive lands, natural resources, and wildlife habitat intended for long term preservation. More particularly, includes FEMA 1% regional (100-year) floodplains, WIDNR mapped wetlands, and 75-foot shoreland setback areas from navigable waterways, where state and federal regulations significantly limit development. Where overlapping with "Parks and Recreation," "Environmental Corridor" designation is not shown on the Future Land Use map.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBD 	No new building development typically allowed within Environmental Corridor, excepting for recreational amenities and/or education facilities specifically designed to provide citizen access to environmental corridors for the purpose of facilitating public appreciation of such corridors.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Allow for passive recreational activities Preserve, protect and enhance open spaces, forested spaces and conservancy areas around Rib Mountain, Nine Mile Forestry Unit, Bluegill County Park, waterfront on Lake Wausau, Wisconsin and Rib Rivers and other environmentally sensitive areas. Where development is proposed near mapped Environmental Corridors, determine the exact boundaries of the Environmental Corridor based on the features that define those areas. Remap these areas away from Environmental Corridor to allow more intensive uses if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> more detailed information or studies reveal that the characteristic(s) that resulted in their designation as an Environmental Corridor is not actually present, approvals from appropriate agencies are granted to alter land so that the characteristic that resulted in its designation will not exist, and/or a mapping error is confirmed.
Government & Public Utilities 	Large-scale public buildings, schools, substations, and special care facilities.	Multiple zoning districts; such uses usually listed as conditional uses.	Minimum lot sizes per the associated zoning district.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the impact on neighboring properties, parking, and traffic before approving any new or expanded institutional use. Consider the construction of park areas on large, unused portion of properties under the Town's control in areas that are identified as needing a park by the Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP). Continue to work with the Wausau Area School District to coordinate uses and activities.

Land Use Issues

- **Development Constraints.** The primary factors limiting the potential for new development in Rib Mountain are its natural features. Steep slopes and abundant wetlands limit the amount and intensity of development in much of the western half of the Town. As a result, much of the vacant land in this area is suitable only for low-density residential development.
- **Maintain Unique Areas of the Town.** The Town would like to protect and maintain the character of its principal use areas including the main commercial core east of Interstate 39/51, the suburban office area along County Highway R, and the residential area to the west of Highways 39/51 and R. The intent is to maintain the integrity of the commercial areas and to protect the character of the residential areas of the Town from encroachment of higher intensity commercial with elevated traffic levels.
- **Ski Hill Development.** Rib Mountain is one of the most prominent natural features in the region and the scenic and natural character of the mountain itself enhances the Town's appeal as a place to live. The Ski Resort on Rib Mountain is a major attraction, but is often at odds with local residents, State Park visitors and environmentalists. The facility is in the process of developing plans to expand its facilities. However, concerns exist regarding the impact of such development on the surrounding community and natural environment, including the Rib River and Lake Wausau. These concerns should be the primary considerations communicated to the State through the State Park Master Plan update process.
- **Rib Mountain Drive Development.** Town officials identify the need to maintain the viability of Rib Mountain Drive as a strong commercial corridor. A concerted effort to plan for the future of the corridor is needed in light of the ever-changing retail market to ensure an ability to adapt. Since 1993, Rib Mountain Drive has undergone major land use changes and traffic volumes have burgeoned and are expected to continue to increase in the future.
- **Surplus of Town Owned Lands.** The Town owns a number of unused or underutilized parcels of land. There has been some discussion that the Town should work to determine the best use of these parcels whether it be to retain for possible future use, to use to expand or enhance existing town services or amenities, to return to the tax rolls and encourage desirable private sector development, or some other purposes.
- **Floodplain Concerns.** The Federal Emergency Management Agency's recent adoption of updated floodplain maps for the Wausau area created new challenges for existing neighborhoods (e.g. Bayview Drive, Gadwall Lane) by changing floodplain designations. Existing homes, accessory buildings and public roads once considered to be outside of the floodplain are now designated as being within the floodplain.

Land Use Conflicts

Any plan should seek to avoid or minimize potential future land use conflicts through controlled development, planned use-buffers, public information and education components. In order to attain the desired outcome, it is important to identify the existing or potential conflicts between land uses in the Town. Some degree of undesirability may exist between certain land use combinations, such as a residential development in close proximity to a particular industrial or commercial development. Potential conflicts could include, but are not limited to, sight, sound, odor, or traffic.

Land Use Goals, Objectives and Actions

The following goals, objectives and actions are intended to provide a policy framework and guide for the future development of the Town.

Goal I: Enhance the quality of Rib Mountain's residential living environment.

The Town of Rib Mountain encourages high-quality, attractive development.

Objectives:

1. Identify specific types of higher density residential development, that would further the objectives of the Suburban Neighborhood future land use designation.
2. Conservation style subdivisions that provide a healthy, safe, convenient, efficient, environmentally conscious and attractive environment should be encouraged within the Rural Neighborhood designation on the Future Land Use map
3. Encourage higher, sustainable density residential development in order to minimize the Town's development-related costs (e.g., public safety services, paved roads, etc.) and develop criteria for future development to determine if the anticipated tax base increase would support the increased need on the provided services.
4. Provide adequate, parks and other amenities in new and existing subdivisions that create attractive and viable neighborhoods.

Actions:

- a. Update the Subdivision Ordinance standards to emphasize neighborhood design, connectivity and recreation. Continue to require developers to pay for all necessary public improvements (e.g., roads, parks, etc.).

Goal II: Provide tools for sustainable and responsible growth.

The Town of Rib Mountain strives to maintain comprehensive, continuous and coordinated community planning, and encourage new development to locate in close proximity to existing developed areas by adopting, consistently enforcing and updating various codes and ordinances needed to achieve plan goals.

Objectives:

1. Base land use decisions on Rib Mountain's adopted comprehensive plan.
2. Update the zoning and subdivision regulations on a regular basis to ensure they support the community vision expressed by the adopted future land use map.
3. Direct more intensive future growth to areas that are compatible with existing developed areas.
4. Identify and map areas to target for redevelopment that were previously mentioned in earlier chapters of this plan.
5. Ensure sensitive resources such as wetlands, rivers, wooded slopes or other items identified within Chapter 3 of this document are adequately buffered from development.

Goal III: Proactively plan for commercial uses.

The Town of Rib Mountain strives to ensure commercial development occurs in an environmentally sensitive manner with minimal impacts on surrounding properties, and encourages the concentration of commercial development in areas with good transportation access.

Objectives:

1. Contain heavy commercial uses to Regional Commercial areas as designated on the Future Land Use map, so that will not degrade the Town's natural or residential living environment.
2. As commercial areas redevelop, ensure that new development patterns are in a safe and attractive environment, with an emphasis on pedestrian movement.

Actions:

- a. Update the Town Zoning Ordinance to regulate locations and require screening of undesired activities of retail and other heavy commercial use operations.
 - b. Adopting a design overlay district along the Rib Mountain Drive commercial corridor that creates clear and easy-to-understand requirements and criteria for new (re)development projects within the corridor.
3. Explore opportunities for redevelopment around major intersections, including along US Highway 51/State Highway 29 at Rib Mountain Drive (County Road N) and County Road NN.
 4. Continue to encourage local commercial along Hummingbird Road.

Actions:

- a. Identify and zone areas near existing commercial to accommodate new commercial (re)development that is in a manner that is least disruptive to nearby established neighborhoods and the natural environment.
- b. Prepare a corridor study for the long-range development of Rib Mountain Drive.

Goal IV: Rewrite and adopt new Subdivision and Zoning Codes to further the goals and objectives of this Comprehensive Plan.

Objectives:

1. Form an ad-hoc committee made up of citizen members, appointed and elected official to review contentious topics that may or may not need further regulation or reduction of regulation.
2. When codes are rewritten, it should be done in a way that is easy for the user to understand, use and apply to their projects and everyday lives.
3. Allow for a certain level of flexibility that allows for creativity in a manner that does not impose on neighboring parcels or the overall value of established neighborhoods.

Chapter 9: INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

“The Town of Rib Mountain is committed to continue to work with neighboring municipalities and agencies to not only bring better services to its residents, but to those throughout the Wausau Metropolitan Area.”

Chapter Intent

This section describes existing mechanisms the Town of Rib Mountain uses to coordinate with other units of government, including: Marathon County, adjacent towns, the school district, the State of Wisconsin and the Federal government. It also summarizes existing major challenges and issues regarding intergovernmental cooperation and regional planning, including

- Opportunities to reduce or eliminate duplication of services;
- Incompatible goals, policies and development;
- Mechanisms for conflict resolution;
- Opportunities for joint planning and decision making.

Mechanisms for cooperation and coordination primarily take the form of intergovernmental agreements, leases and contracts, and regulatory authority. These can occur between the Town of Rib Mountain and other local, regional, State or Federal entities. Following is a brief description of the various functional areas and services that require intergovernmental coordination at various levels.

Local and Regional Level Cooperation

Rib Mountain cooperates with neighboring municipalities, the County, and the State on a variety of matters ranging from delivery of services to coordination of planning along common boundaries. The Town recognizes that cooperation with its neighbors can improve the quality and cost-effectiveness of services, foster coordinated development, and enhance its overall quality of life.

Shared Services

Fire and Emergency Response

The Town cooperates with the Villages of Kronenwetter and Weston as well as the Towns of Weston, Easton, Ringle, Guenther, Stettin and Marathon in membership in the South Area Fire and Emergency Response District (SAFER). The District originated in 2014 and operates stations in both Rib Mountain and the Village of Weston.

Utilities

Portions of the Town are located in the Wausau Urban Service Area and are served by public sewer and water. Wastewater treatment is provided by the Rib Mountain Metropolitan Sewerage District (RMMSD), which also serves the villages of Weston, Rothschild, and Kronenwetter and city of Mosinee. Sewage collection is provided by Rib Mountain Sanitary District (RMSD).

Cooperative Practices

School District

The Town is served by the Wausau School District, which operates two elementary schools located in Rib Mountain; Rib Mountain Elementary and South Mountain Elementary. The Town and the School District also cooperate on use of Town parks and school athletic facilities such as tennis courts.

Rib Mountain Sanitary District (RMSD)

The Town leases land from the RMSD for Liberty Street Park. The Town works with the Sanitary District on new business and developments within the wellhead recharge areas.

Marathon County

Rib Mountain currently receives law enforcement services from the County Sheriff's Department. In 2017, the Town and County signed an agreement for additional law enforcement services, on an as needed basis. Marathon County also provides 911 dispatch service, access permits, maintenance and improvement of County Highways, planning and permitting oversight regarding shoreland and floodplain regulation, private sewage system regulation, and animal waste and manure management. The Town has a signed agreement with the Marathon County Sheriff's department to have a dedicated officer to patrol the Town starting in September 2020.

Regional Agencies

The Town is a member of the Wausau Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), whose primary function relates to coordination of regional transportation planning. The Town is also a member, with all of Marathon County, in the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC). The NCWRPC provides land use planning, economic development, mapping, and other planning services to member municipalities in the Region.

Rib Mountain maintains membership in two regional economic development organizations, being the Marathon County Economic Development Corporation (MCDEVCO) and the Central Wisconsin Economic Development Fund (CWED). The Town and many neighboring municipalities also signed the Marathon County Municipalities Economic Development Agreement to help protect the prosperity of each participating community by setting principles and standards for economic development efforts.

The Town is also a member of the North Central Wisconsin Stormwater Coalition (NCWSC) with 12 other municipalities and Marathon County to coordinate compliance with mandated stormwater quality requirements.

State and Federal Agencies

The Town has limited direct contact with State or Federal agencies, with the exception of Rib Mountain State Park. However, State agencies regulate certain activities such as access onto State roads, shoreland, floodplain and wetland zoning oversight, navigable waters protection, compliance with water quality standards, farmland preservation tax credits and managed forest tax credit programs.

Intergovernmental Cooperation Goals, Objectives and Action

The following goals, objectives and actions are intended to provide a policy framework and guide for the future development of the Town.

Goal I: Coordinate development and planning activities with surrounding communities and agencies.

The Town of Rib Mountain will strive to cooperate and coordinate with its neighbors and the region to manage growth and development.

Objectives:

1. Communicate with surrounding communities when proposed development is on a boundary or where development in the Town could have impacts on the adjacent community.
2. Work with surrounding communities in preservation of surface waters, shorelands on the east side of Lake Wausau, the eastern banks of the Wisconsin River, the northern banks of the Rib River, floodways shoreland-wetlands and wetlands boarding the Town.
3. Communicate with adjacent communities when planning locations for public facilities that may serve more than one community.
4. Continue to collaborate with the Rib Mountain Sanitary District on review of new developments and businesses, along with other projects.
5. The Town will continue to agree and abide by the Marathon County Municipalities Economic Development Agreement
6. To continue to participate with the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to coordinate timing of road maintenance and improvements with surrounding communities.

Actions:

- a. Work cooperatively with adjacent municipalities to review and coordinate development along common boundaries.
- b. Establish a list of contacts for adjacent municipalities and routinely inform and invite them to review pending development proposals.

Goal II: Cooperate in providing cost-effective public safety services.

The Town of Rib Mountain supports the continued provision of cost-effective public safety services.

Objectives:

1. To continue to provide mutual-aid agreements with surrounding municipalities.
2. To continue cooperative efforts with the Villages of Kronenwetter and Weston as well as the Towns of Weston, Easton, Ringle, Guenther, Stettin and Marathon in the South Area Fire and Emergency Response District, SAFER, for more efficient and cost-effective fire, EMS/ambulance services.
3. Continue working with Marathon County Sherriff's Department and neighboring communities to provide and improve law enforcement services.

Actions:

- a. Establish regular discussions with surrounding municipalities to review service agreements and identify opportunities to improve efficiency and cost-effectiveness.
- b. Continue to participate in discussions with neighboring municipalities and the Wausau metropolitan area regarding service consolidation and opportunities to share services and/or public facilities.

Goal III: Encourage participation by Town Officials and residents in all levels of government.

The Town of Rib Mountain encourages local officials and residents to actively participate in government, planning, and policy related activities and organizations.

Objectives:

1. To encourage local officials to participate in county and state government activities and organizations.
2. Considered making changes the Town's Administration Code to add citizen members to Public Safety, Public Works, and Finance & Personnel, totaling 5 members each.
3. To encourage regular participation and feedback from residents and businesses through surveys, informational public meetings, newsletters or other activities.

Actions:

- a. Maintain Town membership in the Wausau Area Metropolitan Planning Organization.

- b. Conduct regular community surveys to solicit public input on various issues and concerns affecting the Town.

Goal IV: Continue to communicate with Marathon County officials on issues for which they are responsible.

The Town of Rib Mountain will continue to cooperate with Marathon County on issues for which the County is responsible.

Objectives:

1. To adjust contracts with the Marathon County Sheriff's Office for law enforcement services to accommodate a dedicate officer to the Town, and review as community needs change.
2. To continue to work with Marathon County on county road and bridge maintenance and improvements.

Actions:

- a. Work with Marathon County and other necessary agencies to help resolve the Floodplain issues of N. Lakeshore Drive.
- b. To continue to work with Marathon County on permitting oversight regarding shoreland, wetland and floodplain regulations, and private sewage system regulation.

Chapter 10: IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of this Plan depends on the willingness of local officials to use it as a guide when making decisions affecting growth and development in the Town. It is also important local citizens and developers become aware of the Plan and its usefulness. The tools and techniques recommended to implement the comprehensive plan are as follows:

Town Decision Making

The adopted plan should be used as a guide by the Town of Rib Mountain when making land use and development decisions. The plan contains a variety of goals, objective and actions which together comprise the framework for decision making by village officials. For purposes of this plan, goals, objectives and actions are defined as follows:

Goal: A goal is a statement that describes a desired future condition. The statement is broad in scope and describes general concepts or things the community hopes to accomplish.

Objective: An objective is a statement that describes a specific course of action to achieve a goal or address an issue.

Action: An action is a general course of action or rule of conduct to be followed to achieve community goals and objectives.

Decisions concerning private development proposals, public investments, regulations, incentives, and other actions should be consistent with the goals, objectives and actions outlined in this Plan.

Although this Plan is intended to guide the future of the Town, it is impossible to predict exact future conditions. As such, the goals, objectives and actions in this plan should be monitored on a regular basis to maintain concurrence with changing conditions and respond to unanticipated events.

Sharing and Institutionalizing the Town's Plan

The Town's Comprehensive Plan will have value only if it is understood, supported, and used by staff, officials, developers, residents, and others interested in the future of the Town to guide future growth and change. The Town will work to increase awareness and absorption of its Plan, such as by:

- Ensuring that up-to-date materials are easily accessible on the Town's website.
- Speaking to community organizations, economic development and business groups, school groups, and others about the Comprehensive Plan.
- Prominently displaying Rib Mountain's vision, the Future Land Use map, and other Plan materials at the Town of Rib Mountain's Municipal Center.
- Encouraging all Town committees and staff to become familiar with and use the Plan in their decision making.
- Incorporating major initiatives into annual budgets and the capital improvement program, as funding allows.
- Presenting and discussing implementation progress and performance to the Town Board and Plan Commission. These presentations may coincide with either budget development or Plan amendment cycles.

Tools for Implementation

Zoning

The Town of Rib Mountain has its own Zoning Ordinance. Zoning is the major implementation tool to achieve the proposed land uses found in Chapter 7. The general purpose of zoning is to minimize undesirable side effects resulting from development by managing and/or buffering incompatible uses and by maintaining standards to ensure development does not negatively impact the community's character. The Town's Zoning Ordinance is available online as Chapter 17 of the Rib Mountain Municipal Code.

The establishment of zoning districts and the zoning map indicates where specific types of development can and should be located. Zoning districts shown on the zoning map are coordinated with the Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map. While the zoning map and future land use map do not need to directly match at the time the future land use map is adopted, the intent is the future land use map will serve as a guide indicating how the property should eventually be zoned. Therefore, indiscriminate zoning changes may result in weakening of the comprehensive plan. In fact, changes to zoning district boundaries should only be made if they are consistent with the adopted future land use map.

However, there may be situations where changing the zoning district boundary makes sense and is in the best interest of the community. If amending the zoning map would result in a conflict with the future land use map, the future land use map should also be amended. However, the future land use map should only be changed if it does not accurately reflect the community's desired land use pattern.

Land Division

The Town of Rib Mountain also adopted and maintains its own subdivision ordinance. Subdivision regulations serve as an important land use regulation function by ensuring the orderly development of unplatted and/or undeveloped land. These regulations set forth reasonable regulations for lot sizes, road access, street design, public utilities, storm water drainage, parks and open space, and other improvements necessary to ensure that new development will be an asset. The Town Board makes the final decisions on the content of the subdivision ordinance. These decisions are preceded by public hearings and recommendations of the Plan Commission. The Town's Subdivision Ordinance is also available on the Town's website as Chapter 18 of the Rib Mountain Code of Ordinances.

Official Map

Towns with zoning authority if exercising village powers are allowed to adopt an Official Map under Wis. Stat. §§60.62(6)(a). The Town currently has an Official Map, which was adopted June 16, 2009. This map has not been updated or modified since then. An Official Map consists of Future Facilities such as streets, highways, historic districts, parkways, parks and playgrounds laid out. With such a map, permits may be limited on properties showing such improvements.

Other Tools

Additional tools and approaches can be utilized by the Town to achieve the goals of the Plan. These include, but are certainly not limited to, the following: capital improvements programming, fee simple land acquisition, easements (purchased or volunteered), deed restrictions, land dedication, utilization of surplus lands, and ordinances or programs regulating activities such as impact fees, building permits, erosion control, etc.

Plan Amendments

Periodic amendments can be made to this Plan. Amendments are generally defined as minor changes, such as slight changes to the text or maps. Frequent changes to accommodate specific development proposals should be avoided. An annual amendment cycle shall be established by the Town Board by resolution. The Comprehensive Planning Law requires that the same process used to adopt the Plan will also be used to amend the Plan

Criteria to consider when reviewing plan changes are as follows:

- The change is consistent with the overall goals and objectives of the Town of Rib Mountain Comprehensive Plan.
- The change does not create an adverse impact on public facilities and services that cannot be mitigated.
- Development resulting from the change does not create an undue impact on surrounding properties. Such development should be consistent with the physical character of the surrounding neighborhood or would upgrade and improve its viability.

- The change allows a more viable transition to the planned uses on adjacent properties than the current land use.
- The change does not have a significant adverse impact on the natural environment including steep slopes and groundwater, or the impact could be mitigated by improvements on the site or in the same vicinity.
- There is a change in Town actions or neighborhood characteristics justifying a change.
- The change corrects an error made in the original plan.
- There is a community or regional need identified in the Comprehensive Plan for the proposed land use or service.
- The change does not adversely impact any landmarks or other historically significant structures or properties unless mitigated through relocation, commemoration or dedication.

Plan Review and Update

Periodic updating of the plan is necessary for continued refinement to ensure the Plan reflects the desires of the Town’s citizens. An essential characteristic of any planning process is that it be ongoing and flexible. The Town should evaluate the plan on an annual basis, as provided in *Measuring Success in Achieving the Vision and Goals* section below, and determine if more complete review is required to bring it into line with changed conditions or altered priorities within the Town. State Statutes requires a Comprehensive Plan be updated at least every 10 years.

Measuring Success in Achieving the Vision and Goals

The Town will measure its success in actually achieving its vision and goals during the annual plan evaluation and amendment cycle. The following methods shall be used to measure success:

- Returning to the Town’s Vision Statement, which provides a quick way to assess whether the Plan is moving the Town in the desired direction. As a reminder the Town’s Vision Statement is:

“The Town of Rib Mountain is a unique convergence of quality, balanced commerce with attractive, distinct natural recreational opportunities which provides a welcoming environment to foster a safe, affordable community that enjoys a high quality of life”

- Comparing a set of data with the goals within each of Chapters 3 through 9 of this Comprehensive Plan, as laid out in Table 10.1.

Consistency Among Plan Elements

The State of Wisconsin planning legislation requires the Implementation Element describe how each of the required elements will be integrated and made consistent with the other elements of the plan. Upon formal adoption of the 2019 amended Comprehensive Plan, the Town will formally review its official Zoning Map to ensure consistency with the revised Future Land Use Map.

This Comprehensive Plan also references previous and concurrent related planning efforts to ensure they are considered in planning decisions in conjunction with the recommendations of this Plan. Recommendations from other plans have been summarized and incorporated in this plan as deemed appropriate, to foster coordination and consistency between plans. Some related plans, such as the Marathon County Hazard Mitigation Plan, are incorporated by reference in this plan and are essentially considered appendices of this plan even though they are separate documents.

Table 10.1 Annual Review of Benchmarks in Achieving Comprehensive Plan Goals

Goal	Benchmark	Progress
<p>Natural, Agricultural and Cultural Resources. <i>“The Town of Rib Mountain is as a community, where intersecting major highways provide a corridor for regional-level commercial development, and the attractive, distinct natural features of the area provide for a unique environment to foster a safe, family-orientated community that enjoys a high quality of life.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Less than 150 acres of forested land clear cut per year. 	
<p>Housing and Neighborhoods. <i>“The Town of Rib Mountain will ensure all have access to quality, affordable housing in safe, welcoming neighborhoods.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase in new housing units ▪ Stable or increasing school enrollment ▪ Creation of one new Neighborhood group ▪ Increase in population 	
<p>Utilities and Community Facilities. <i>“The Town of Rib Mountain shall hold itself to the highest standards to provide its residents with high-quality water and sewer services, as well as to a premier system of parks and trails available throughout our community.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase in trail mileage ▪ The construction of 1 new neighborhood park per 2 years ▪ Work with RMSD to complete one water or sewer project ▪ Increase in availability of high-speed internet to customers 	
<p>Transportation. <i>“The Town of Rib Mountain is committed to provide a safe transportation network for all users, particularly bike and pedestrian users.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No new cul-du-sacs constructed ▪ One gap in sidewalk or trail completed ▪ At least one local road improved 	
<p>Economic Development. <i>“The Town of Rib Mountain is dedicated to providing a sustainable environment of commerce that embraces the successes of both regional-level business to the small business entrepreneur.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An increase in per capita income, per Dept. of Revenue statistics ▪ Stable tax rate ▪ Expansion of at least one local business 	
<p>Land Use. <i>“The Town of Rib Mountain shall oversee the (re)development of the Town to be sustainable and responsible, while ensuring existing neighborhoods continue to thrive and remain the first choice for residents to raise their families.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase in property values ▪ Updates to Zoning Code ▪ Updates to Subdivision Code ▪ Corridor Study 	
<p>Intergovernmental Cooperation. <i>“The Town of Rib Mountain is committed to continue to work with neighboring municipalities and agencies to not only bring better services to its residents, but to those throughout the Wausau Metropolitan Area.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participate in intergovernmental committees when available 	

APPENDIX A: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

Chapter Intent

Public participation is an extremely important part of the comprehensive planning process, as many policies directly affect property owners and residents in the Town. Below is the resolution formally adopting the participation process and the process.

RESOLUTION 17-03 TOWN OF RIB MOUNTAIN

RE: Adoption of a Public Participation Plan for the 10-year update to the Rib Mountain Comprehensive Plan

Whereas, the Town is updating its Comprehensive Plan as outlined in Wisconsin Statutes; and

Whereas, public participation is critical for the development of the Plan; and

Whereas, it is necessary for the Town Board to approve the process to involve the public in the planning effort; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Town of Rib Mountain Board of Supervisors, Marathon County, Wisconsin, hereby approves and authorizes the Public Participation Plan as attached to this resolution.

Adopted this 7th day of March 2017

APPROVED:



Allen Opall, Chairman

ATTEST:



Jessica Trautman, Finance Director/Clerk

Town of Rib Mountain Public Participation Plan (PPP)

The Town of Rib Mountain 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 Town 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 Municipal Center for review by the public.
3. The draft plan and maps will be available on the Town 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 Town Board.

II. Implementation, Evaluation & Update:

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