



Town of Rome
Nekoosa, WI 54457
www.romewi.gov

AGENDA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING

MONDAY, AUGUST 3, 2026

3:00 PM

**ROME MUNICIPAL BUILDING
1156 Alpine Drive
Nekoosa, WI 54457**

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Certify Posting of Meeting
4. Approve the Agenda
5. Citizen Comments – During the Citizen Comment period of the agenda the Comprehensive Plan Sub-Committee welcomes comments from any town resident, not a member of the Sub-Committee, on any item not on the agenda. Please know that pursuant to State law the Sub-Committee cannot engage in conversation with you but may ask questions. The Sub-Committee may refer the item to staff, a standing committee or a future agenda for discussion and action. Each person wishing to speak will have up to 3 minutes to speak. Speakers are asked to submit an orange card to the Sub-Committee secretary providing their name, address and topic for discussion.
 - a. The Sub-Committee will also take comment from the public on agenda items as called by the facilitator, but not during Citizen Comments. Please note that once the Sub-Committee begins discussion on an agenda item no further comment will be allowed from the public on that issue.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

6. Discussion and possible action – Review of 2016 Comprehensive Plan
7. Discussion and possible action – Review updates to Chapter 1 of the Comprehensive Plan provided by Chairman Lake

DATES AND ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA/MEETINGS

8. Next agenda items
9. Next meeting date and time

ADJOURNMENT

“Speak Your Peace” Commitment – A reminder that the town has adopted the Nine Tools of Civility which commits the Sub-Committee Members and the Public to be mindful of how we treat each other at meetings. Notification of this meeting has been posted in accordance with the Open Meeting Laws of the State of Wisconsin. The Comprehensive Plan Sub-Committee may take action on any item on the agenda. It is possible that the members of and possibly a quorum of members of other governmental bodies of the municipality may be in attendance at the above-stated meeting to gather information; no action will be taken by any governmental body at the above-stated meeting other than the Comprehensive Plan Sub-Committee. Please note that, upon reasonable notice, efforts will be made to accommodate the needs of disabled individuals through appropriate aids and services. For additional information or to request this service, contact Wendy Newson, Town Clerk, at 1156 Alpine Drive, Nekoosa, WI 54457, ph. 715-325-8046.

*Positively applying the tools of government to serve and protect our people,
strengthen our community and promote prosperity.*



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**MINUTES
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING**

THURSDAY, JULY 23, 2026

3:00 PM

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Deputy Clerk/Treasurer, Taylor Owczynsky at 3:00 p.m.

2. Discussion and possible action – Appointment of Officers

➤ **Chairperson**

Motion by Lewis/Hoeppner to nominate Mark Lake as the Chairperson of this committee. Motion carried.

➤ **Vice-Chairperson**

Motion by Lewis/Hoeppner to nominate Cyndee Lewis as the Vice-Chairperson of this committee. Motion carried.

3. Roll Call

Committee members present: Bruce Hoeppner, Cyndee Lewis, and Mark Lake

Committee members absent/excused: Jerry Wiessinger

Also present: Zoning Administrator, Emily Arndt and Deputy Clerk/Treasurer, Taylor Owczynsky

4. Certify Posting of Meeting

Taylor Owczynsky certified that on Friday, July 17, 2026, the Agenda for the Town of Rome Comprehensive Plan Sub-Committee meeting for Thursday, July 23, 2026 was posted at:

<i>Posted at the Rome Town Hall</i>	<i>3:40 p.m.</i>
<i>Posted at Kwik Trip, LLC</i>	<i>3:55 p.m.</i>
<i>Posted at Nekoosa Port Edwards State Bank</i>	<i>4:00 p.m.</i>
<i>Emailed to the Wisconsin Rapids Tribune</i>	<i>2:22 p.m.</i>

5. Approve the Agenda

Motion by Lewis/Hoeppner to approve the agenda as presented including the change of “Wednesday, July 23” to “Thursday, July 23”. Motion carried.

6. Citizen Comments – During the Citizen Comment period of the agenda the RTC Design Plan Sub-Committee welcomes comments from any town resident, not a member of the Sub-Committee, on any item not on the agenda. Please know that pursuant to State law the Sub-Committee cannot engage in conversation with you but may ask questions. The Sub-Committee may refer the item to staff, a standing committee or a future agenda for discussion and action. Each person wishing to speak will have up to 3 minutes to speak. Speakers are asked to submit an orange card to the Sub-Committee secretary providing their name, address and topic for discussion.

- a. The Sub-Committee will also take comment from the public on agenda items as called by the facilitator, but not during Citizen Comments. Please note that once the Sub-Committee begins discussion on an agenda item no further comment will be allowed from the public on that issue.

No Citizen Comments Received.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

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7. Discussion and possible action – Review of 2016 Comprehensive Plan

Discussion regarding the 2016 Comprehensive Plan in regards to the recommended updates from the 2022 Joint CDA and Plan Commission Sub-Committee. The full process for updating the Comprehensive Plan was discussed. Discussion of the possibility of using an Artificial Intelligence application to rework and tailor the Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Rome. Chairman Mark Lake has access to ChatGPT; after the Comprehensive Plan has been run through this software, Chapter 1 will be brought back to the sub-committee for review. The potential plan moving forward will include running chapter by chapter through the software and then bringing each chapter back to the Committee for their thorough.

8. Discussion and possible action – Review of Updates from the 2022 Joint CDA and Plan Commission Sub-Committee

Covered in agenda item above.

DATES AND ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA/MEETINGS

9. Next agenda items

Review proposed updates to Chapter 1 – Chairman Lake to bring back.

10. Next meeting date and time

August 3, 2026 at 3:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Lewis/Hoeppner to adjourn at 4:05 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Taylor Owczynsky
Taylor Owczynsky
Deputy Clerk/Treasurer

Chapter 1

Background and Demographics

Working Draft | Comprehensive Plan Amendment | July 2026

Chapter purpose. This chapter establishes an updated demographic baseline for community decisions. It uses the 2020 Census, Wisconsin Department of Administration 2025 population estimates, and the 2020-2024 American Community Survey (ACS). ACS values for small communities are estimates and should be interpreted as indicators of direction and scale rather than exact counts.

Background

The Town of Rome is in northern Adams County, Wisconsin. Wood County forms the northern boundary; Petenwell Lake and the Wisconsin River corridor define the western edge; the Town of Leola lies to the east; and the Towns of Monroe and Big Flats lie to the south. Rome encompasses approximately 62.3 square miles, including about 54.1 square miles of land and 8.2 square miles of water.

Rome's development pattern reflects its natural-resource and recreation setting. Residential neighborhoods, seasonal homes, visitor-serving businesses, and community destinations are concentrated around Lake Arrowhead, Lake Camelot, Lake Sherwood, Petenwell Lake, State Highway 13, and major local corridors. This pattern makes lake and groundwater stewardship, safe year-round access, emergency services, housing choice, and the long-term fiscal performance of dispersed development central comprehensive-planning issues.

Planning Process and Public Participation

Wisconsin Statutes section 66.1001 establishes the framework for local comprehensive planning. The Town adopted its prior comprehensive plan on May 26, 2016. This amendment updates the plan's factual foundation and policy direction for the next planning period. The final chapter should be coordinated with the Town's adopted public participation procedures and should summarize the meetings, engagement methods, public hearing, Plan Commission recommendation, and Town Board action completed for this amendment.

Adoption record placeholder. [Insert concise description of 2026 public engagement, hearing dates, recommendation, ordinance number, and adoption date after the process is complete.]

Demographic Overview

Rome is growing, but its demographic profile differs sharply from the state as a whole. The community combines a large retirement-age population, small household sizes, a major seasonal-housing market, and relatively high educational attainment and income. Those conditions influence demand for housing, health and emergency services, transportation, broadband, recreation, property maintenance, and opportunities to attract and retain working-age households.

Key Findings

- The Town’s decennial population increased from 2,720 in 2010 to 3,025 in 2020, an 11.2% gain. Wisconsin’s January 1, 2025 estimate is 3,254.
- The 2020-2024 ACS estimates Rome’s median age at 64.5; approximately 48.1% of residents are age 65 or older and 8.6% are under age 18.
- Approximately 46.6% of Rome’s housing units are estimated to be for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.
- An estimated 94.8% of residents age 25 or older have at least a high school diploma, and 37.4% hold a bachelor’s degree or higher.
- Rome’s estimated median household income is \$79,728 and per capita income is \$47,649, both above Adams County levels.
- The estimated poverty rate is 4.7%, compared with 14.1% in Adams County and 10.6% statewide.

Population Change

Rome added 305 residents between the 2010 and 2020 Censuses. That 11.2% increase occurred while Adams County as a whole declined slightly. The 2025 state estimate indicates that Rome has continued to grow, adding an estimated 229 residents since 2020. Rome accounted for about 14.6% of Adams County’s 2020 population and approximately 15.0% of the County’s 2025 estimated population.

Table 1. Population Change and Current Estimate

Geography	2010 Census	2020 Census	2010-20 Change	2025 Estimate	2020-25 Change
Town of Rome	2,720	3,025	11.2%	3,254	7.6%
Town of Big Flats	1,018	948	-6.9%	949	0.1%
Town of Leola	308	287	-6.8%	286	-0.3%
Town of Monroe	398	391	-1.8%	400	2.3%
Adams County	20,875	20,654	-1.1%	21,752	5.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 and 2020 Decennial Census; Wisconsin DOA, Final Population Estimates, January 1, 2025.
https://doa.wi.gov/Pages/LocalGovtsGrants/Population_Estimates.aspx

Age Structure

Rome’s age profile is the chapter’s most consequential demographic finding. The latest ACS estimate places the median age at 64.5, nearly nine years above Adams County and more than 24 years above Wisconsin. Nearly one-half of residents are estimated to be age 65 or older. This profile supports continued attention to emergency response, aging-in-place, accessible housing, property maintenance assistance, year-round mobility, health services, and succession within civic organizations. At the same time, the small share of children and young adults underscores the value of housing and economic-development strategies that can accommodate working-age households and families.

Table 2. Age Profile, 2020-2024

Geography	Median Age	Under Age 18	Age 65+
Town of Rome	64.5	8.6%	48.1%
Town of Big Flats	52.3	12.9%	30.4%

Geography	Median Age	Under Age 18	Age 65+
Town of Leola	43.7	20.0%	24.7%
Town of Monroe	63.6	6.0%	39.7%
Adams County	55.7	13.5%	32.2%
Wisconsin	40.2	21.4%	18.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020-2024 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Tables B01001 and B01002. <https://data.census.gov/>

Race and Ethnicity

Rome remains less racially and ethnically diverse than Wisconsin overall, although the 2020-2024 ACS estimates a modest increase in residents who identify as Hispanic or Latino or as members of other racial groups. Because estimates for small populations can have large margins of error, trends should be monitored over time rather than interpreted as exact annual change. Inclusive engagement, accessible information, and fair access to housing and community services remain appropriate planning practices regardless of the current size of any population group.

Table 3. Selected Race and Ethnicity Indicators, 2020-2024

Geography	White, Non-Hispanic	Hispanic or Latino	Other / Multiracial*
Town of Rome	91.0%	3.0%	6.0%*
Town of Big Flats	87.6%	11.3%	1.1%*
Town of Leola	90.2%	0.0%	9.8%*
Town of Monroe	99.8%	0.0%	0.2%*
Adams County	87.6%	4.4%	8.0%*
Wisconsin	78.6%	8.0%	13.5%*

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020-2024 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table B03002. *Residual shown for orientation; race and Hispanic origin are defined separately by the Census Bureau. <https://data.census.gov/>

Educational Attainment

Rome's educational profile is a community asset. An estimated 94.8% of adults age 25 or older have completed high school, and 37.4% hold a bachelor's degree or higher. The bachelor's-or-higher rate is more than twice the Adams County rate and exceeds the statewide rate. This may support entrepreneurship, remote work, volunteer leadership, and demand for reliable broadband and professional services.

Table 4. Educational Attainment, Population Age 25 and Older, 2020-2024

Geography	High School Graduate or Higher	Bachelor's Degree or Higher
Town of Rome	94.8%	37.4%
Town of Big Flats	80.4%	9.9%
Town of Leola	95.5%	15.5%
Town of Monroe	93.6%	19.1%
Adams County	89.4%	17.5%
Wisconsin	93.6%	33.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020-2024 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table B15003. <https://data.census.gov/>

Households and Housing Occupancy

Rome has an estimated 1,655 households and an average of approximately 1.9 persons per household. Small households are consistent with the community's older population and reinforce the need for housing choices that are manageable, accessible, and close to services. The Town also has nearly as many housing units used seasonally as occupied year-round. This dual identity creates both opportunities and service-delivery challenges: seasonal residents support recreation and visitor-serving businesses, while peak-period demand can affect roads, emergency response, utilities, waste management, and natural resources.

Table 5. Households and Housing Occupancy, 2020-2024

Geography	Households	Persons / HH	Housing Units	Occupied	Seasonal
Town of Rome	1,655	1.92	3,223	51.3%	46.6%
Town of Big Flats	570	2.24	953	59.8%	35.3%
Town of Leola	135	2.04	209	64.6%	34.4%
Town of Monroe	220	1.90	595	37.0%	60.3%
Adams County	9,517	2.22	17,008	56.0%	38.3%
Wisconsin	2,479,480	2.39	2,778,572	89.2%	6.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020-2024 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Tables B11001, B25001, B25002, and B25004. <https://data.census.gov/>

Employment and Labor Force

The ACS estimates 1,105 employed residents in Rome and a 2.2% unemployment rate among the civilian labor force. A large share of residents age 16 and older is not in the labor force, which is expected in a retirement-oriented community. For planning purposes, the more important issue is maintaining access to workers and services during seasonal peaks, supporting home-based and remote work, and expanding housing options that can serve local employees.

Table 6. Employment Status, 2020-2024

Geography	Employed Residents	Civilian Unemployment Rate
Town of Rome	1,105	2.2%
Town of Big Flats	567	7.8%
Town of Leola	106	17.8%
Town of Monroe	128	7.9%
Adams County	8,493	4.5%
Wisconsin	3,031,042	3.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020-2024 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table B23025. Small-area estimates may have substantial margins of error. <https://data.census.gov/>

Income and Poverty

Rome's estimated median household income of \$79,728 is above Adams County and slightly above Wisconsin. Its per capita income is also comparatively strong, reflecting in part the Town's older and smaller-household profile. The estimated poverty rate is 4.7%, substantially below county and state rates. Income statistics do not eliminate local affordability concerns: fixed-income households, service-sector workers, housing costs, transportation costs,

and seasonal price pressures may affect residents differently. Future policy should pair communitywide indicators with local housing and cost-burden data.

Table 7. Income and Poverty, 2020-2024

Geography	Median Household Income	Per Capita Income	Poverty Rate
Town of Rome	\$79,728	\$47,649	4.7%
Town of Big Flats	\$48,036	\$35,227	13.5%
Town of Leola	\$54,375	\$36,920	11.6%
Town of Monroe	\$50,833	\$30,342	19.4%
Adams County	\$59,442	\$35,863	14.1%
Wisconsin	\$77,485	\$43,373	10.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020-2024 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Tables B19013, B19301, and B17001. Income is reported in 2024 inflation-adjusted dollars.
<https://data.census.gov/>

Planning Implications

The demographic baseline does not prescribe a single growth strategy, but it identifies several themes that should be carried through the plan's housing, transportation, economic development, utilities, community facilities, natural resources, and land-use chapters.

- Plan for aging in place through accessible housing, emergency response capacity, health-service connections, and safe mobility.
- Broaden housing choice for smaller households, year-round workers, and families while protecting the character and environmental quality that attract residents and visitors.
- Recognize seasonal occupancy in facility sizing, traffic management, public safety, waste services, and natural-resource protection.
- Support reliable broadband, flexible work arrangements, entrepreneurship, and year-round economic activity.
- Use lake, groundwater, forest, and shoreline protection as economic and quality-of-life strategies, not only environmental regulations.
- Refresh the demographic tables at major plan checkpoints and avoid relying on a single ACS release for small-population trends.

Data Notes and Sources

Decennial Census counts are complete enumerations used for the 2010 and 2020 population table. The Wisconsin Department of Administration produces annual municipal estimates using census counts and contemporary administrative indicators. All other demographic, social, economic, and housing figures in this chapter are 2020-2024 ACS five-year estimates. The ACS combines five years of survey responses to improve reliability for small geographies, but values remain estimates with margins of error. Percentages may not total 100% because of rounding and category definitions.

U.S. Census Bureau, data.census.gov: <https://data.census.gov/>

U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey methodology: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/methodology.html>

Wisconsin Department of Administration, Population and Housing Unit Estimates:
https://doa.wi.gov/Pages/LocalGovtsGrants/Population_Estimates.aspx

Wisconsin Statutes section 66.1001, Comprehensive Planning: <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/66/x/1001>