



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

AGENDA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING

THURSDAY, AUGUST 20, 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 – Approval of the July 23, 2026 and August 3, 2026 meeting minutes
7. Discussion and possible action – Review of 2016 Comprehensive Plan
8. Discussion and possible action – Review updates of next chapters of the Comprehensive Plan

DATES AND ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA/MEETINGS

9. Next agenda items
10. 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.

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strengthen our community and promote prosperity.*



Town of Rome
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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



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

**MINUTES
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING**

MONDAY, AUGUST 3, 2026

3:00 PM

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chair Lewis at 3:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

*Committee members present: Jerry Wiessinger, Bruce Hoeppner, Mark Lake and Cyndee Lewis
Also present: Zoning Administrator, Emily Arndt and Deputy Clerk/Treasurer, Taylor Owczynsky*

3. Certify Posting of Meeting

I certify that on, Thursday, July 30, 2026, the Agenda for the Town of Rome Comprehensive Plan Sub-Committee meeting for Monday, August 3, 2026 was posted at the following locations:

<i>Posted at the Rome Town Hall</i>	<i>11:00 a.m.</i>
<i>Posted at Kwik Trip, LLC</i>	<i>4:05 p.m.</i>
<i>Posted at Nekoosa Port Edwards State Bank</i>	<i>1:35 p.m.</i>
<i>Emailed to the Wisconsin Rapids Tribune</i>	<i>1:09 p.m.</i>

4. Approve the Agenda

Motion by Wiessinger/Hoeppner to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

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.

No citizen comments received.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

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

Discussion regarding the 2016 Comprehensive Plan and the planned updates.

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

Discussion regarding the proposed updates to Chapter 1 of the Comprehensive Plan. The Town of Saratoga will be added as a reference for comparison within the sources when the application runs through the verbiage and data. Discussion of attempting to review more than one chapter at a time before the next meeting. Discussion on the possibility of looking into North Central Regional Plan Commission for updated exhibits/maps.

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Chairman Lake to bring back chapters two, three and four.

DATES AND ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA/MEETINGS

8. Next agenda items

**Review of next chapters*

9. Next meeting date and time

August 20, 2026 at 3:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Lewis/Wiessinger to adjourn at 3:56 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Taylor Owczynsky

Taylor Owczynsky
Deputy Clerk/Treasurer

COMPILED COMMENTS REGARDING THE GOALS, OBJECTIVES & POLICIES OF CHAPTER 2 (NATURAL, AGRICULTURAL, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES) OF THE TOWN'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

GENERAL COMMENTS:

1. Chapter 2 needs no changes other than a possible update on continuous snow cover shown as November through April, and the number of residences near the lakes.
2. All new FR, R1, & R4 changes to be changed on Map 9.
3. Update agricultural land use (# of acres).
4. Update the Woodlands # of acres, likely less.
5. Under Cultural Resources last paragraph: should the 14-mile Watershed Alliance and Visit Rome be added to the sentence at top of column two. The protection of the Tri-Lakes has become a priority with local government authorities, including the Tri-Lakes Management District, **the 14-mile Watershed Alliance, Visit Rome**, the Town of Rome, and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. If added here they should also be added to Objective 2 on page 16.

OBJECTIVE 1:

1. I'm not sure that we are utilizing the resource maps to help guide decisions on what protections we should be seeking in considering new developments.
2. ADD - Guide the location and design of development to minimize any adverse impact on the quality of surface waters, aquifers, wetlands, steep slopes, woodlands, and agriculture.

OBJECTIVE 2:

1. Development of town owned property at the end of Walden fits in this category, should Parks and Recs be putting more focus on this in other locations?
2. Add 14-mile Watershed Alliance, Visit Rome.

OBJECTIVE 3:

1. Gateway District zoning exists, but I don't believe it has accomplished much in the spirit of which it was intended. Should this be reviewed and a plan to help property/business owners come into compliance as time moves on? Should there be incentives offered by the town for compliance?
2. Work with businesses inside Gateway corridor to update appearance.
3. "main corridor" is very Important, behind the above Objectives. If theres quality drinking and recreational water plus abundant forested areas recreational residents will thrive and increase.
 - Enforce existing zoning and review annually for successes and failures and adjust policy accordingly to improve.
 - Possible change to an advance more in-depth planning Committee review/discussion of any corridor issues or major requests etc. the Zoning

Commissioner is aware of one or more meetings in advance to a decision meeting. Gives the group a chance to discuss or investigate potential outcomes.

OBJECTIVE 4:

1. Similar to objective 1, has this objective even been considered by Plan Commission and Town Board in approval of new subdivisions? There are various setbacks all over the LD, perhaps we should be better exercising our control when it comes to establishing boundaries around new developments.
2. ADD – Maintain low density development in areas where there may be environmental concerns. ADD - Before approving any changes in land use, consider the impact on wildlife habitat, potential locations of rare plant and animal species, and archeological sites.
3. ADD - Discourage incompatible development and alteration of floodplains, lakes, rivers and streams, wetlands, shorelands, steep slopes, and woodland areas so as to preserve the integrity of these resources and to promote the ecological value of these assets, and to minimize adverse impacts upon adjacent properties.

OBJECTIVE 5:

1. I would argue this is being fulfilled by the work of 14 Mile Alliance, Tri-Lakes and the Town.
2. "High water standards" (Also related to Objectives #1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 9) In my opinion is the #1 goal. To improve or at minimum maintain water quality from all aspects from drinkability to our lakes and wetlands is key to this area for overall sustainability and planned growth
 - a. Ongoing well and waste planning to "improve or at minimum maintain" water quality for the future
 - b. Zoning
 - c. Cooperation and active pro-active participation with county & state

OBJECTIVE 6:

1. Should we be doing more upfront to help educate potential developers thereby encouraging them to take a vested interest in helping to protect the natural resources of the town? How might we accomplish this?
2. ADD – Use the Comprehensive Plan, zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations to control the density and location of developments in areas that may be environmentally sensitive.

OBJECTIVE 7:

1. We are failing at this, the public continues to lose access as properties sell.
2. "forest lands" maintaining is a Key factor to planned area growth based on recreation along with lakes.
 - a. Ties in with Objective #9 "agriculture" to find a sustainable balance with reference to amounts of forest and water use.

OBJECTIVE 8:

1. Similar to comments on objective 6, not sure that this is happening (outside of Sand Valley).

OBJECTIVE 9:

1. I don't think we've lost any agricultural land lately, is there an opportunity for 14-Mile, the town or other to reach out specifically to the ag operations in town? I think this happened in the past but I'm not sure that it accomplished much in relation to the objective.
2. ADD – Encourage agricultural practices which protect surface and ground water quality, including proper erosion control, manure management, and stormwater management strategies.

OBJECTIVE 10:

1. I think this one is fulfilled.
2. Should add **Maintain** designation as a Bird City under the Wisconsin Bird City Program.

COMPILED COMMENTS REGARDING THE GOALS, OBJECTIVES & POLICIES OF CHAPTER 3 (HOUSING) OF THE TOWN'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Potential objectives:

ADD - Maintain and/or improve the existing housing stock.

POLICY – Support efforts to enforce zoning, nuisance abatement and building code requirements on blighted residential properties.

POLICY – Encourage the preservation, timely and proper maintenance and rehabilitation of residences.

Housing inventory should be updated through 2020 if this data is now available.

Add condos to housing.

I have no new or changes to the plan.

GOAL 1:

Suggest replacing the word ~~decent~~ with quality.

OBJECTIVE 1:

Suggest removing ~~to take place~~ from the first sentence.

OBJECTIVE 2:

ADD – Encourage accessible housing designs and options for senior and special needs residents.

ADD – Encourage adequate housing options that allow residents to remain in the Town despite changes in household size, income, or mobility.

OBJECTIVE 3:

ADD - Encourage developers of rental units to build those units in areas of the town where, in the case of duplexes and other multi-family units, the housing type will be compatible with neighboring land uses.

OBJECTIVE 4:

ADD - Encourage environmental sustainability and resiliency as critical elements of future housing development to protect the environment and preserve the rural/natural character of the town while allowing new housing units to be constructed.

OBJECTIVE 5:

ADD – Connect property owners with available housing assistance, home improvements, and rehabilitation programs.

OBJECTIVE 6:

ADD – Minimize conflicts between residential and non-residential land uses by utilizing buffers and other subdivision design elements.

OBJECTIVE 7:

Objective 7 discourages concentration of rental or multi-family unit developments, we should consider adding similar objective to discourage camper lot developments or at least set guidelines/expectations.

Policy 1:

Fix typo in second sentence, replace ~~future~~ with future.

COMPILED COMMENTS REGARDING THE GOALS, OBJECTIVES & POLICIES OF CHAPTER 4 (TRANSPORTATION) OF THE TOWN'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

GENERAL COMMENTS:

- Does the town need any plan contingencies for alternate fuel vehicles (electric or hydrogen) powered (auto or heavy duty) within the scope of this plan?
- Would a small ride share parking lot be practical in our area to help control congestion and pollution?
- Should ATV traffic be part of transportation planning considering their use on town roads?
- Should snowmobile trail access along road right of ways be part of this plan to help enhance the trail system and support planning and recreation in the area? (coordination with the local club similar to the new trail pre-construction planning around the new Sand Valley golf course on Apache)

GOAL 1:

ADD Objective: - Coordinate with state, county and town governments on local street improvements and all issues concerning transportation in the Town.

ADD Policy. - The Town's transportation system shall create an efficient flow of commuters between communities and major traffic generators.

ADD Policy. - Work cooperatively with the Town of Rome Police Dept., Adams County Sheriff's Dept and Wisconsin State Patrol on identifying enforcement issues related to the Town's transportation system to identify areas of safety improvements for future capital projects.

Objective 1:

Combine policy 1 & 2. - Both policies state almost the exact thing.

ADD – Conduct periodic reviews of the condition and safety aspects of Town roads, and discuss issues regarding access at points of high-volume traffic to work towards alleviating congestion and reducing accidents at those points.

Objective 2:

Policy 2. - ADD: Apache and Archer Avenues.

Objective 3:

ADD – Only accept road dedications for roads built to the standards and requirements of the town's road ordinance.

Objective 4:

Policy 1. - Change wording to reflect the Gateway District

Policy 2. - Eliminate this policy since the same information is already included in Objective 2., Policy 2.

ADD – Apache and Archer Avenues

Objective 5:

ADD – Through the town's zoning ordinance and land division process, ensure appropriate location of access points and road connectivity to the existing road network.

Policy 1. ADD – Special attention should be given to the traffic speeds on STH 13 AT Apache Ave and the cross-traffic volume on Apache Ave on weekends.

GOAL 2:

Objective 7, Policy 1. – Looks good.

GOAL 3:

Objective 8:

This objective should contain the DRAFT committee.

Policy 3 should be removed since this seems like an unreal expectation.

ADD – Collaborate with Adams County, neighboring municipalities, and Regional Plan Commission to help fund, design and construct interconnected bicycle and pedestrian trails and routes.

ADD – Encourage pedestrian friendly design of new developments to support alternative modes of transportation.

ADD – Develop a plan to add bicycle lanes to all Town minor collector roads.

ADD - Maintain a safe pedestrian environment in Rome Town Center.

COMPILED COMMENTS REGARDING THE GOALS, OBJECTIVES & POLICIES OF CHAPTER 5 (Utilities and Community Facilities) OF THE TOWN'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

GENERAL COMMENTS:

- In the intro, Rome Town Center should replace Alpine Business Park.
- Emergency Medical Services, eliminate Nekoosa Ambulance Service and replace with Lifestar.
- Health Care, Eliminate Riverview Family Clinic since it has been closed for several years. Replace Riverview Hospital with Aspirus Hospital.
- Recreation, Update the description of Sand Valley.

GOAL 1:

- Objective 1, Policy 1, Replace first responders with paramedics. Combine Policy 2 & 3.
- Objective 1 ADD – Provide the safest, most efficient fire protection possible by continuing to monitor fire department success, analyze needs for more or different equipment, and continue encouraging town residents to join the fire department volunteer staff.
- ADD OBJECTIVE: Promote efficient and coordinated sewer and water expansion.
- ADD POLICY: Through local zoning, encourage high-density residential development to locate in areas that can be served by municipal water systems. Encourage medium and low-density developments in areas of the Town where soil conditions can sustain private wells.

GOAL 2:

- Objective 1, ADD TO POLICY 3 (bold language) – Develop a Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP) **so the Town is eligible for local, state and federal grant funding to expand recreation opportunities.**
- Objective 1, Policy 3 – completed.
- Objective 2, Policy 1, Should read Tri Lakes Management District.

COMPILED COMMENTS REGARDING THE GOALS, OBJECTIVES & POLICIES OF CHAPTER 6 (ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT) OF THE TOWN'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

GENERAL COMMENTS:

- I would like to see Tables 15, 16 & 17 with updated numbers-through 2020-currently at 2010.
- In Shaded box last paragraph Recreation and Tourism, I would change the first word "Many" to "Most".

GOAL 1:

OBJECTIVE 1, Policy 2 mentions a Business Retention Committee-does that exist? A little info on them please, if they do.

Policy 1 rewrite: Work with Adams County Economic Development and Rome CDA to conduct a business retention survey.

Policy 2 rewrite: Work with ACED and Rome CDA to address business needs and recognize local businesses.

Under Objective 1

Add Policy 5 - Continuously communicate with existing businesses to assure their needs are being met and assist in removing obstacles to growth.

UNDER OBJECTIVE 2

Policy 2 rewrite: Continue to support ACED and chambers to promote economic development activities.

Policy 5 Use existing electronic resources to market available sites and buildings including Rome Town Center.

UNDER OBJECTIVE 3

Encourage and promote the tourism industry through support to community-based organizations like "Visit Rome". "D.R.A.F.T.", "Sno-Bandits", and others that serve the tourism industry.

Add Policy 4 Ensure the rural atmosphere by adopting proper setbacks and buffers for development.

Objective 4 Continue to work with the Planning Commission

Policy # 1 Recommend development and non-development districts.

Policy #2 Recommend overlay districts that will enhance the local economic interests.

COMPILED COMMENTS REGARDING THE GOALS, OBJECTIVES & POLICIES OF CHAPTER 7 (LAND USE) OF THE TOWN'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

GENERAL COMMENTS:

- To Goal Number 1 add at the end "While maintaining a rural atmosphere."
- I spent a lot of time going over the goals objectives and policies and I agree with others who have said the Comprehensive Plan is a very good document and only needs some subtle updating.
- Map #9 Future Land Use is the most important map in the Comprehensive Plan. Focus should be on organizing this map and developing objectives from future land use determinations.

GOAL 1

OBJECTIVE 1:

ADD POLICY: Maintain adequate capacity of public facilities and services to be able to accommodate projected demand for new land development.

OBJECTIVE 2:

ADD POLICY: Minimize intrusion of incompatible land uses.

ADD POLICY: Encourage developing areas where existing development is located rather than developing new areas, or where certain public services do not exist.

ADD POLICY: Establish and maintain a land use pattern that achieves a desirable balance among quality of life, economic growth, protection of natural resources and efficient delivery of public services.

Add: Policy 4. Restrict the development of new residential subdivisions in forestry land unless adjacent to existing residential subdivisions. Considerations needs to be given to protecting the forestry lands for the future development of a County Forest.

OBJECTIVE 3:

Add Policy 5. Reserve lands for future acquisition for the County Forest Program.

ADD OBJECTIVE: Protect Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) from unsuitable development to avoid potential adverse impacts on the natural environment of the town.

- MOVE: "Policy 3" from Objective 2 to this Objective
- ADD POLICY: Encourage development in areas that will not have a negative environmental impact on the area's groundwater, surface water and natural resources.

COMPILED COMMENTS REGARDING THE GOALS, OBJECTIVES & POLICIES OF
CHAPTER 8 (INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION) OF THE TOWN'S
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

GENERAL COMMENTS:

- I have reviewed Chapter 8 earlier today and feel it covers the subject matter as intended.

GOAL 1:

OBJECTIVE 1:

No comments

OBJECTIVE 2:

After review the only thing I would add is under Obj.2, Policy 1, I would include language about fire and ambulance service.

ADD to POLICY 1: add sanitary sewer to list of possible services for agreements.

Taylor Owczynsky

From: Mark Lake [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, August 3, 2026 4:41 PM
To: Emily Arndt; Taylor Owczynsky
Subject: Updated Chapter 1
Attachments: Rome_Comprehensive_Plan_Chapter_1_Eight_Towns_Draft.docx

Emily,

Here is the updated Chapter 1 that includes the surrounding eight Towns in keeping with the Regional Plan Commission Comparison.

Updated all seven demographic tables to include the eight-town comparison area:

- Adams County: Rome, Big Flats, Leola, Monroe
- Waushara County: Hancock, Plainfield
- Wood County: Port Edwards, Saratoga

The document uses 2010/2020 Census data, 2025 Wisconsin DOA estimates, and 2020–2024 ACS data.

Thoughts?

Best regards,

Mark C. Lake, [REDACTED]
WANGARD PARTNERS, INC. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | www.wangard.com | [News & Insight](#)

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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%
Town of Hancock	528	558	5.7%	560	0.4%
Town of Plainfield	550	496	-9.8%	498	0.4%
Town of Port Edwards	1,427	1,356	-5.0%	1,354	-0.1%
Town of Saratoga	5,142	5,060	-1.6%	5,052	-0.2%
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%
Town of Leola	43.7	20.0%	24.7%
Town of Monroe	63.6	6.0%	39.7%
Town of Hancock	58.8	17.6%	40.2%
Town of Plainfield	48.3	16.3%	18.0%
Town of Port Edwards	43.6	21.0%	22.7%
Town of Saratoga	51.0	18.6%	28.1%
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%*
Town of Hancock	96.8%	1.8%	1.4%*
Town of Plainfield	85.8%	6.8%	7.4%*
Town of Port Edwards	82.7%	12.2%	5.0%*
Town of Saratoga	93.3%	6.7%	0.0%*
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%
Town of Hancock	82.9%	15.2%
Town of Plainfield	83.4%	13.8%
Town of Port Edwards	87.8%	12.5%
Town of Saratoga	96.2%	14.7%
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%
Town of Hancock	259	2.57	427	60.7%	30.9%
Town of Plainfield	241	2.42	288	83.7%	13.9%
Town of Port Edwards	461	2.89	525	87.8%	5.7%
Town of Saratoga	2,229	2.28	2,431	91.7%	4.7%
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%
Town of Hancock	235	7.1%
Town of Plainfield	298	7.7%
Town of Port Edwards	658	1.3%
Town of Saratoga	2,186	3.6%
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%
Town of Hancock	\$71,750	\$40,607	6.3%
Town of Plainfield	\$74,250	\$40,235	7.6%
Town of Port Edwards	\$81,103	\$38,085	14.4%
Town of Saratoga	\$74,499	\$36,588	5.9%
Adams County	\$59,442	\$35,863	14.1%

Geography	Median Household Income	Per Capita Income	Poverty Rate
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. The regional comparison set includes eight towns: Rome, Big Flats, Leola, and Monroe in Adams County; Hancock and Plainfield in Waushara County; and Port Edwards and Saratoga in Wood County.

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>

Taylor Owczynsky

From: Mark Lake [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, August 3, 2026 5:29 PM
To: Emily Arndt; Taylor Owczynsky
Subject: Town of Rome - Comp Plan - Chapter 2
Attachments: Rome_Comprehensive_Plan_Chapter_2_Updated_Draft.docx

Emily/Taylor,

Here is Chapter 2. Went well, updated language, etc. incorporated new themes and got rid of repeats. Updated Objective and created section 2.6 Implementation Priorities as a guide for how to implement this section of the Comp Plan.

Actually like how it went through the process of removing hearsay and replaced some of the text with factual data.

Here is the unformatted workflow/thought process...

I am working on Chapter 2 of the Town of Rome, WI Comprehensive Plan. Please make the document relevant with modern language and themes. As a reminder, Please leave out pictures and Maps, we will add later.

Worked for 36s

I'll update Chapter 2 as a clean, editable companion to the revised Chapter 1—retaining its core planning purpose while refreshing dated language, policies, and themes. I'll omit all photographs and maps, and I'll distinguish current factual updates from recommendations that should be confirmed through the amendment process. I'm using the document and Library workflows because the source chapter and final Word draft need to remain part of the ongoing plan project.

Rome CP Chapter 2.pdf

PDF

Please upload the existing Chapter 2 file—PDF or Word format. I currently have the revised Chapter 1, but the original Chapter 2 is not available in the project files.

Once uploaded, I'll:

- Preserve the chapter's useful structure and local policy intent
- Update dated facts, terminology, goals, objectives, policies, and programs
- Incorporate modern themes relevant to Rome
- Coordinate the language with Chapter 1's findings
- Omit all photographs and maps
- Deliver a professionally formatted, editable Word draft with source notes and clearly identified placeholders where Town confirmation is needed

Rome CP Chapter 2(1).pdf

PDF

Please use this Chapter 2

Worked for 5m 32s

Rome CP Chapter 2 - Redlined Goals.pdf

PDF

Here is a list of goals that have been red-lined. Please incorporate, but retain redlines for now.

Worked for 3m 9s

Built, scrubbed, rendered, and audited Chapter Two

I'll fold the marked-up goals into the updated Chapter 2 while preserving the edits as visible redlines, so the Town can continue reviewing them. I'll first distinguish inserted, deleted, and unchanged language from the PDF markup, then apply those changes to the corresponding goals/objectives/policies in the Word draft and recheck the full document layout.

Extracted and rendered redlined PDF content

The redline adds five substantive directions that are not yet explicit enough in the modern draft: maintaining low density where resource concerns exist; naming the Fourteen mile Watershed Alliance and Visit Rome as partners; preserving a rural corridor image; strengthening agricultural conservation practices; and maintaining Bird City status. I'll integrate those concepts into the modern policy set and add a dedicated review section that preserves the supplied insertions in red underline and deletions in red strikethrough, rather than silently accepting them.

Updated Chapter Two draft, applied patches, and created contact sheet

The supplied markup is now preserved as actual Word tracked changes, not just colored text. I've also kept a separate review record so deleted language remains readable and the modernized policy text is not mistaken for an accepted clean copy. I'm making one final spacing correction in the replacement redlines, then saving the reviewed draft.

Built and validated the Rome Chapter Two document with code patches

Saving the revised Chapter 2 draft now.

Created updated Rome Chapter Two draft

Applied document library metadata

Updated Chapter 2 now includes:

- The substantive concepts from the Town's markup incorporated into the modern policies
- A dedicated redline review section preserving insertions and deletions
- Actual Word tracked changes enabled for continued review
- Updated section numbering
- No photographs or maps
- Full visual and accessibility review completed

Rome_Comprehensive_Plan_Chapter_2_Updated_Draft.docx

Rome_Comprehensive_Plan_Chapter_2_Updated_Draft.docxDocument

Best regards,

Mark C. Lake, AICP |

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Chapter 2

Natural, Agricultural, and Cultural Resources

Updated Draft | August 2026

Chapter purpose. Protect the natural systems, working lands, scenic character, and cultural resources that define Rome while directing growth to locations that can be served safely and sustainably.

2.1 Planning Context

Rome’s lakes, streams, wetlands, forests, sandy soils, groundwater, recreation lands, and cultural places are core community assets and essential infrastructure. They support public health, property values, tourism, outdoor recreation, habitat, and the Town’s identity. This chapter establishes a contemporary framework for stewardship, development review, intergovernmental coordination, and investment.

Since the 2016 plan, resource planning has increasingly emphasized climate resilience, watershed-scale management, private-well protection, septic-system performance, habitat connectivity, invasive-species management, equitable public access, and the use of current geospatial data. These themes are integrated throughout this chapter.

Current planning documents and data

Resource	How it should be used
Adams County Land and Water Resource Management Plan	Coordinate local priorities with the County’s current soil, water, agricultural, and conservation work plan.
Wisconsin DNR surface-water, groundwater, wetlands, fisheries, and Natural Heritage data	Use current agency datasets and field review rather than relying solely on generalized plan maps.
FEMA National Flood Hazard Layer	Use the effective flood-hazard information available at the time of review; recognize that mapped boundaries do not capture every drainage or extreme-rainfall risk.
USDA NRCS Web Soil Survey	Use the current authoritative soil survey for screening; require site-specific evaluation for engineering, septic, and conservation decisions.
Wisconsin Historical Society records	Consult current historic-property and archaeological records early; protect confidential archaeological-site locations.

2.2 Resource Inventory and Trends

Landscape, geology, and soils

Rome occupies roughly 39,500 acres on the Central Wisconsin sand plain. The 2016 plan described elevations ranging from approximately 930 feet near Lake Petenwell and the Wisconsin River to about 1,250 feet in the southeast. These legacy figures remain useful for context but should be recalculated from current GIS when the plan maps are updated.

Deep, permeable sands and localized high groundwater create both opportunity and vulnerability. Rapid infiltration can support groundwater recharge and low-impact stormwater practices, but it can also move nutrients and contaminants quickly toward groundwater. Poorly drained soils, wetlands, steep slopes, and shallow groundwater may require special

design or may be unsuitable for certain uses. Development review should pair current NRCS data with on-site soil, groundwater, and engineering information.

Climate and resilience

Rome retains a continental climate with cold winters and warm summers, but planning should no longer assume that historic averages alone describe future conditions. More variable precipitation, heavier rainfall events, heat, drought, wildfire smoke, and freeze-thaw cycles can affect roads, culverts, shorelines, forests, wells, septic systems, recreation facilities, and emergency operations. New and reconstructed public infrastructure should be sized and located using current design standards and a reasonable margin for future conditions.

Surface water and watersheds

Water is Rome's defining resource. Lake Petenwell forms the western edge of the Town. Lake Sherwood, Lake Camelot, and Lake Arrowhead are impoundments on Fourteenmile Creek and together form the Tri-Lakes system. Lake Arrowhead is a 295-acre man-made lake completed in 1978; a comprehensive Wisconsin DNR fisheries survey was completed in 2022. Chester Creek, Dead Horse Creek, Dorro Couche Lake, ponds, wetlands, and smaller drainageways also contribute to the Town's connected water system.

The Town lies primarily within the Fourteenmile Creek watershed, with portions in the Big Roche-A-Cri Creek and Sevenmile and Tenmile Creeks watersheds. Land-use and stormwater decisions made anywhere in these drainage areas can affect downstream water quality, aquatic habitat, dam operations, and recreation. Management priorities include phosphorus and sediment reduction, shoreland buffers, aquatic invasive-species prevention, dam and culvert resilience, construction-site erosion control, and coordinated monitoring.

Groundwater, wells, and on-site wastewater

Most residents and businesses depend on groundwater and many properties rely on private on-site wastewater treatment systems. Because Rome's sandy soils can transmit water and contaminants rapidly, private-well testing, proper well abandonment, septic maintenance, and careful siting of higher-risk land uses are continuing public-health priorities. Contemporary groundwater planning should address nitrate, pesticides, pathogens, petroleum compounds, and emerging contaminants such as PFAS, while recognizing that state and federal standards continue to evolve.

The Town should use monitoring and system-performance information to evaluate where education, inspection, replacement assistance, clustered treatment, or sanitary-service feasibility studies may be warranted. Any future utility decision should compare lifecycle cost, environmental benefit, growth implications, affordability, governance, and long-term operations.

Wetlands, floodplains, and shorelands

Wetlands are concentrated in the southeast, along Fourteenmile Creek, east of Lake Camelot, and near Lake Petenwell and Chester Creek. They store floodwater, filter pollutants, recharge or discharge groundwater, provide habitat, and support recreation. Wetlands and adjacent uplands should be treated as connected systems. Mapped inventories are screening tools; site-specific delineation and agency coordination may be necessary before disturbance.

Flood risk is concentrated along major waterways and shorelands, but intense rainfall can also create localized drainage, erosion, and access problems beyond mapped floodplains. Development should preserve natural storage, maintain safe access, avoid transferring runoff to neighboring properties, and incorporate setbacks and freeboard appropriate to the site and applicable regulations.

Forests, habitat, and biodiversity

Forests remain the Town's predominant land cover and provide habitat, groundwater protection, carbon storage, scenic character, timber value, and recreation. Large ownership changes or parcel fragmentation can alter public access,

wildfire exposure, habitat connectivity, and the feasibility of sustainable forest management. The Town should maintain working relationships with public, tribal, nonprofit, industrial, and family woodland owners and prepare for land transitions before major tracts are divided or converted.

Rome lies within the range of the federally endangered Karner blue butterfly. DNR guidance identifies open barrens, savannas, and prairies containing native wild lupine as essential habitat. Current Natural Heritage review, qualified surveys when required, and early coordination should be integrated into projects involving substantial ground disturbance, forestry, utilities, roads, recreation facilities, or land division. Similar attention should be given to other rare species, pollinators, native plant communities, invasive species, and wildlife corridors.

Agricultural and mineral resources

Agriculture occupies a small share of Rome compared with forest and recreation uses. Row crops occur primarily in the northeast, and cranberry production is associated with the eastern part of the Town. The planning objective is not simply to freeze land use, but to support viable farms, protect water and soil, reduce conflicts at the rural-residential edge, and allow compatible value-added or agritourism uses where impacts can be managed.

Nonmetallic mining can supply needed construction materials but may create truck traffic, noise, dust, groundwater, habitat, and reclamation concerns. New or expanded operations should be evaluated under applicable county and state requirements, with enforceable operational, transportation, monitoring, financial-assurance, and reclamation provisions.

Cultural, archaeological, and scenic resources

Rome's cultural landscape includes archaeological sites, Indigenous history, historic travel and settlement patterns, recreation traditions, community institutions, the Tri-Norse/Dyracuse ski-jump legacy, and places valued locally even when they are not formally listed. The 2016 plan reported 34 known archaeological sites, many near Lake Petenwell and the Wisconsin River; this is a sensitive, point-in-time inventory and must be verified through the Wisconsin Historical Society rather than mapped publicly.

Planning and project review should avoid disturbance to burial sites, archaeological resources, and historic properties; consult appropriate state and tribal contacts; and incorporate local history into placemaking and interpretation with permission. Scenic roads, wooded approaches, dark skies, water views, and community gateways also contribute to Rome's identity and visitor economy.

2.3 Key Issues and Opportunities

Planning issue	Updated direction
Water quality and quantity	Protect the Tri-Lakes, Lake Petenwell, streams, wetlands, and groundwater while supporting responsible growth and recreation.
Septic and private-well resilience	Improve testing, maintenance, replacement planning, homeowner education, and long-term service-area evaluation.
Climate-ready infrastructure	Design roads, culverts, drainage, parks, shorelines, and emergency access for heavier rainfall, heat, drought, smoke, and freeze-thaw stress.
Forest and habitat continuity	Limit avoidable fragmentation; support working forests, Karner blue habitat, pollinators, native communities, and connected corridors.
Public access and recreation stewardship	Maintain water and land access without degrading habitat, water quality, neighborhood character, or carrying capacity.

Planning issue	Updated direction
Land transitions	Plan proactively for the sale, subdivision, or conversion of large forest, agricultural, and recreation holdings.
Cultural-resource stewardship	Use early review and respectful consultation; celebrate locally meaningful places without disclosing sensitive site locations.
Current data and accountability	Refresh GIS and resource indicators, coordinate agency data, and report progress at least every five years.

2.4 Goals, Objectives, and Policies

The goals describe the desired long-term condition. Objectives identify the results the Town will pursue. Policies guide decisions, regulations, partnerships, and investments.

Goal 1 - Water resources and public health

Protect and improve surface water, groundwater, wetlands, flood-storage areas, and shorelands so they continue to support public health, habitat, recreation, and the local economy.

Objective 1.1 - Watershed protection

- Use watershed boundaries and current resource data in land-use and development review.
- Require erosion control and stormwater practices that manage runoff volume, rate, sediment, nutrients, and temperature using green infrastructure where feasible.
- Protect and restore shoreland buffers, wetlands, drainageways, and natural flood storage; avoid development that depends on repeated emergency protection.
- Coordinate monitoring and management with Adams County, Wisconsin DNR, Tri-Lakes Management District, Fourteenmile Watershed Alliance, Visit Rome, lake associations, dam owners, and upstream and downstream jurisdictions.

Objective 1.2 - Groundwater and drinking water

- Promote routine private-well testing and clear communication of results and health guidance.
- Support proper well construction, abandonment, spill prevention, and management of nitrate, pesticides, pathogens, petroleum, PFAS, and other contaminants.
- Evaluate water demand and cumulative groundwater impacts for high-capacity wells and water-intensive development using current agency review requirements.

Objective 1.3 - On-site wastewater

- Promote regular inspection, pumping, maintenance, and timely replacement of private systems.
- Use system-age, failure-risk, density, soil, groundwater, and water-quality information to identify priority education or service-study areas.
- Evaluate clustered or public treatment only through a transparent feasibility process addressing environmental benefit, affordability, governance, growth effects, and lifecycle cost.

Goal 2 - Resilient landscapes and biodiversity

Maintain connected forests, native communities, working lands, and open spaces that are resilient to development pressure, invasive species, wildfire, pests, and climate stress.

Objective 2.1 - Forests and open space

- Maintain low-density development where environmental constraints or resource sensitivity make greater intensity inappropriate.
- Direct higher-intensity development away from large intact resource areas and toward suitable, serviceable locations.
- Use conservation design, flexible lot arrangement, easements, acquisition, and partnerships to retain habitat connections and meaningful open space.
- Engage major landowners early when large tracts may be sold, divided, or converted; assess access, wildfire, habitat, fiscal, and infrastructure implications.

Objective 2.2 - Rare species and native habitat

- Use current DNR Natural Heritage screening and required field review early in project planning.
- Protect and manage Karner blue butterfly and wild lupine habitat consistent with current federal and state requirements.
- Encourage native landscaping, pollinator habitat, invasive-species control, prescribed fire where appropriate and professionally managed, and bird-friendly practices.
- Maintain the Town's designation and annual commitments as a Wisconsin Bird City.

Objective 2.3 - Climate adaptation

- Incorporate heavier rainfall, drought, extreme heat, smoke, wildfire, pest, and freeze-thaw risks into capital planning and development standards.
- Favor nature-based solutions that provide multiple benefits, including infiltration, shade, habitat, erosion control, and flood storage.
- Maintain emergency access and evacuation considerations in wooded, seasonal, and waterfront development areas.

Goal 3 - Working lands, recreation, and community character

Support compatible agriculture, forestry, mineral resources, tourism, and outdoor recreation while protecting neighbors, natural systems, scenic character, and public access.

Objective 3.1 - Agriculture and forestry

- Reduce fragmentation and conflicts that impair viable farm and forest operations.
- Support agricultural practices that protect surface water and groundwater, including appropriate erosion control, nutrient and manure management, and stormwater management.
- Support conservation practices, forest stewardship, local products, and compatible agritourism or value-added uses.
- Consider the needs of agricultural and forestry vehicles when reviewing transportation and land divisions.

Objective 3.2 - Recreation and access

- Maintain safe, inclusive, and environmentally responsible access to public lands and waters.
- Use carrying-capacity, parking, sanitation, shoreline, noise, habitat, and maintenance considerations when expanding recreation facilities.
- Coordinate trails and water access with landowner permission; do not assume continued public access across private lands.

Objective 3.3 - Community design

- Protect wooded approaches, scenic views, dark skies, and gateway character through context-sensitive site, lighting, landscaping, signage, and access standards.

- Maintain a positive rural visual image within and beyond public rights-of-way.
- Prioritize safety, multimodal access, and native landscape character along corridors; avoid formulaic design requirements that conflict with environmental performance.
- Use compact development patterns and shared infrastructure where they reduce land disturbance and are consistent with the future land-use strategy.

Goal 4 - Cultural resources and implementation

Recognize and protect Rome's archaeological, historic, scenic, and cultural resources through respectful consultation, current information, and accountable implementation.

Objective 4.1 - Cultural-resource protection

- Consult Wisconsin Historical Society records and appropriate tribal, state, and local partners early when a project may affect cultural resources.
- Comply with burial-site and archaeological-resource laws and keep sensitive location information confidential.
- Encourage adaptive reuse, documentation, interpretation, and voluntary preservation of locally significant places.

Objective 4.2 - Coordination and accountability

- Maintain a shared resource-data checklist for land divisions, rezonings, conditional uses, major site plans, and public projects.
- Review indicators and implementation progress at least every five years and update policies when laws, science, or local conditions change.
- Pursue grants and partnerships for water quality, habitat, forestry, recreation, cultural resources, hazard mitigation, and data modernization.

2.5 Town Redline Review Record

Review status. The following items reproduce the substantive insertions and deletions supplied in “Rome CP Chapter 2 - Redlined Goals.pdf.” Red underline indicates inserted language; red strikethrough indicates deleted language. These are retained as tracked changes for continued Town review. The modern policy set above incorporates the inserted concepts without treating the redlines as finally accepted.

Objective 1, new policy: Maintain low-density development in areas where there may be concerns.

Objective 2, Policy 1 partner list: Fourteenmile Watershed Alliance and Visit Rome, WI;

Objective 3, Policy 3: ~~positive visual image~~ positive rural visual image

Objective 3, proposed Policy 5: ~~Work with current businesses inside of the Gateway Corridor to update appearances.~~

Objective 4 statement: ~~Preserve and protect open space corridors, forested lands, wetlands, groundwater, and other natural resources within the Town.~~ Protect all present natural resources, prioritizing environmentally and natural-resource-sensitive areas from development. These areas include flood hazards, wetlands, groundwater, forested land, and open-space corridors.

Objective 4, Policy 1 addition: Maintain zoning that is consistent with county shoreland-protection requirements.

Objective 4, proposed low-density policy: ~~Maintain low-density development in areas where there may be environmental concerns.~~

Objective 4, consolidated development-siting policy: Guide the location and design of development to minimize adverse impacts on surface waters, aquifers, wetlands, steep slopes, woodlands, and agriculture, while prioritizing rare plant and animal species and archaeological sites to promote the ecological value of the land.

Objective 4, superseded habitat policy: ~~Consider impacts on wildlife habitat, potential locations of rare plant and animal species, and archaeological sites before approving land-use changes.~~

Objective 4, superseded landscape-integrity policy: ~~Preserve resource integrity, promote ecological value, and minimize adverse impacts on adjacent properties by discouraging incompatible development and alteration of vulnerable and valued landscapes.~~

Objective 4, new regulatory policy: Control the density and location of development in environmentally sensitive areas through the Comprehensive Plan, zoning ordinance, and subdivision regulations.

Agricultural objective, new Policy 2: Encourage agricultural practices that protect surface-water and groundwater quality, including proper erosion control, manure management, and stormwater-management strategies.

Bird habitat objective, Policy 4: ~~Seek designation as a “Bird City” under the Wisconsin Bird City Program.~~ Maintain designation as a “Bird City” under the Wisconsin Bird City Program.

Editorial renumbering shown in the source markup (Objectives 5-10 and related policies) should be finalized only after the Town accepts or rejects the substantive changes above.

2.6 Implementation Priorities

Action	Lead / partners	Timing	Priority
Update the Chapter 2 GIS inventory and baseline acreage calculations	Town; Adams County; planning/GIS consultant	At plan adoption / map phase	High
Create a natural-resource review checklist for development applications and public projects	Town; Adams County	0-2 years	High
Establish a coordinated private-well testing and septic education program; map aggregate trends without publishing private results	Town; County; health and lake partners	0-2 years, ongoing	High
Prepare a watershed and green-infrastructure action list for priority drainage, shoreline, culvert, and restoration projects	Town; DNR; County; Tri-Lakes partners	1-3 years	High
Assess large-tract land-transition, forest-fragmentation, wildfire, and emergency-access risks	Town; landowners; fire/EMS; DNR	1-3 years	High
Inventory public access points and evaluate accessibility, parking, sanitation, safety, habitat, and maintenance needs	Town; partner agencies	2-4 years	Medium
Develop voluntary scenic, dark-sky, native-landscape, and bird/pollinator design guidance	Town; community partners	2-4 years	Medium
Establish a confidential cultural-resource review protocol and local-history documentation program	Town; WHS; tribal and local partners	1-3 years	Medium
Publish a five-year Chapter 2 progress report using the indicators below	Town Plan Commission / Town Board	Every 5 years	High

Suggested indicators

- Acres of wetlands, floodplain, forest, agricultural land, and protected open space (GIS baseline and change)
- Private-well testing participation and aggregate exceedance trends, where data are available
- Septic-system outreach, inspections, replacements, and documented failures, where data are available
- Water-quality and aquatic invasive-species indicators used by DNR and local lake-management partners
- Acres of native habitat restored or managed and invasive-species projects completed
- Linear feet or acres of shoreland buffer, green infrastructure, drainage, or culvert improvements
- Public-access and recreation improvements completed
- Cultural-resource reviews, preservation projects, and interpretive initiatives completed without disclosing protected locations

2.7 Data Notes and Sources

Draft status. This chapter is prepared for comprehensive-plan amendment review. Photographs and maps are intentionally omitted. Acreages from the 2016 plan are retained only as contextual working baselines and should be replaced with measurements from the final adopted GIS layers. Policies should be reviewed with Town, County, and legal staff for consistency with current authority and adopted ordinances.

Town of Rome Comprehensive Plan (2016): Controlling source for the chapter structure, local resource descriptions, legacy acreage estimates, and prior goals and policies.

Adams County Land and Water Resource Management Plan, current 2025 update materials: County conservation priorities and implementation context.

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, 2024 Groundwater Coordinating Council report: Current statewide groundwater priorities, including nitrate, pesticides, PFAS, standards, monitoring, and water-stressed areas.

Wisconsin DNR, Fisheries Survey Report for Lake Arrowhead (2022 survey; report dated December 2023): Lake Arrowhead history, 295-acre surface area, fishery status, and contemporary lake-management context.

Wisconsin DNR, Karner Blue Butterfly Habitat Conservation Plan resources and 2026 monitoring information: Current endangered status, habitat needs, survey expectations, and management coordination.

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Web Soil Survey: Current authoritative soil survey information for planning-level screening; site investigation remains necessary.

FEMA Flood Map Service Center / National Flood Hazard Layer: Current official flood-hazard products; effective mapping should be verified when projects are reviewed.

Wisconsin Historical Society databases and State Historic Preservation Office guidance: Current historic-property, archaeological, burial-site, and consultation information; sensitive locations are not published in this chapter.

Web references accessed August 3, 2026: dnr.wisconsin.gov; datcp.wi.gov; websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov; msc.fema.gov; wisconsinhistory.org.