

Introduction

I. Town Profile

The Town of Primrose is located in the southwestern portion of Dane County. The town lies in Wisconsin's Driftless Zone, a rolling landscape with steep river valleys that escaped glaciation during the last Ice Age 50,000 years ago. Primrose Brook, Deer Creek and Mount Vernon Creek, all coldwater fisheries, flow from west to east through the town, eventually joining the West Branch of the Sugar River east of the town line in the neighboring Town of Montrose. [At the 2020 census](#), the town had a population of 750 people.



II. Planning History

The Town of Primrose adopted the existing *Town of Primrose Comprehensive Plan* in 2009. The town plan was also adopted by the Dane County Board of Supervisors as part of the *Dane County Comprehensive Plan*.

To meet the requirements of the state's new comprehensive planning law, the Town undertook the task of updating and expanding its Land Use Plan. With the assistance of Dane County Planning and Development, the Town gathered public input and crafted the goals, objectives and policies to guide the Town over the next twenty years. This comprehensive plan is intended to aid the Plan Commission and Town Board in matters related to the growth and development of the Town.

III. Plan Updates

As per Wisconsin's comprehensive planning legislation, the Town will review and update the *Comprehensive Plan* at least every ten years. Changing conditions and experiences in the Town will be noted and adjustments will be made to the *Comprehensive Plan* text and maps.

Chapter 1: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

I. Background and Existing Conditions

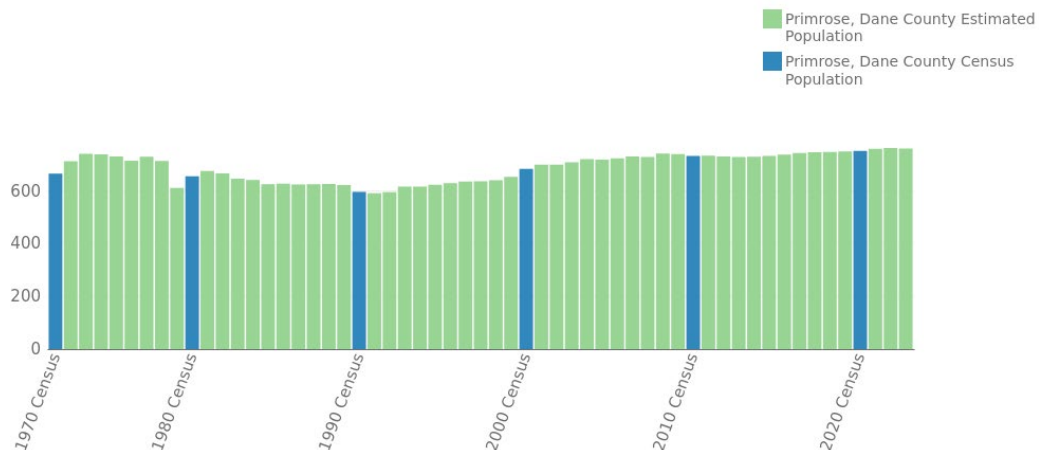
Population Trends and Projections

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

Chart 1-1: Population over Time

Population Estimates over Time

1970-2023



Data source: Wisconsin Population and Housing Estimates

Image produced by GetFacts.wisc.edu, a product of the Applied Population Lab

Table 1-1: Population Projections of Nearby Communities

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

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration

Demographic Trends

Age

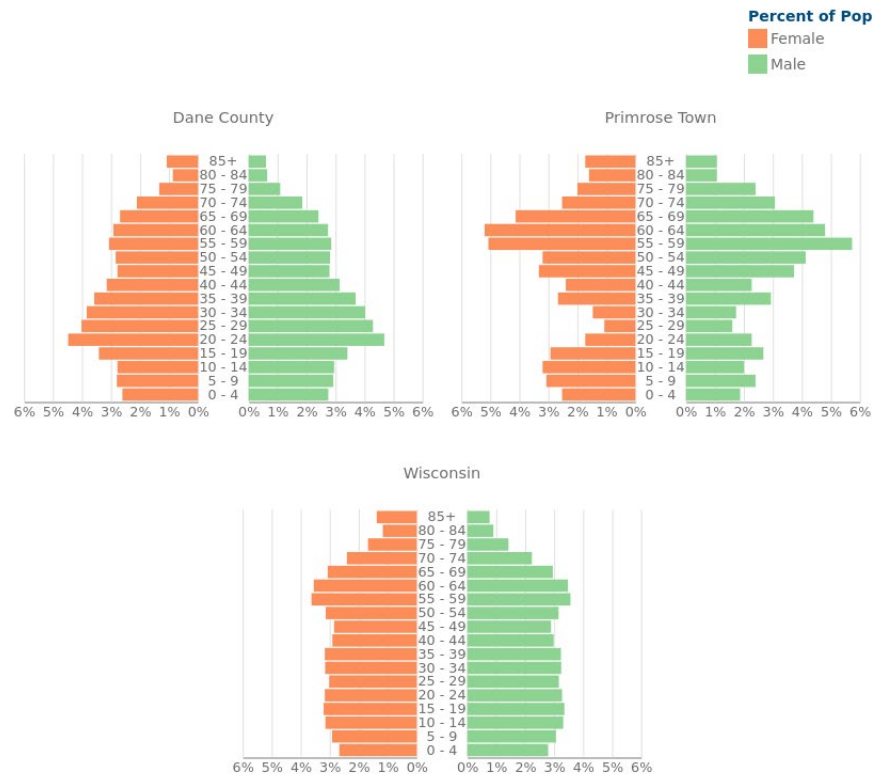
The median age of the Town of Primrose's population has increased from about 46.2 years in 2010 to 50.5 years in 2020. (2010 it was 46.1) By comparison, the median age in Dane County over the same period increased from 34.3 to 35.2 years of age.

As might be expected from the change in median age, the main difference in age demography of the Town of Primrose from 2010 to 2020 is an increase in all age groups 60 years of age and older. In comparison with Dane County, the Town of Primrose in both 1990 and 2020 censuses showed fewer individuals aged 20 years to 45 years. The Town of Primrose is likely to have an increasing proportion of its population over 65 years of age, with an increasing demand on social services, and more retirees living on a fixed income.

Chart 1-2: Age Pyramids

Age Pyramid

2020



Data source: 2020 Census Demographic Profile

Image produced by [GetFacts.wisc.edu](https://getfacts.wisc.edu/), a product of  the Applied Population Lab

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

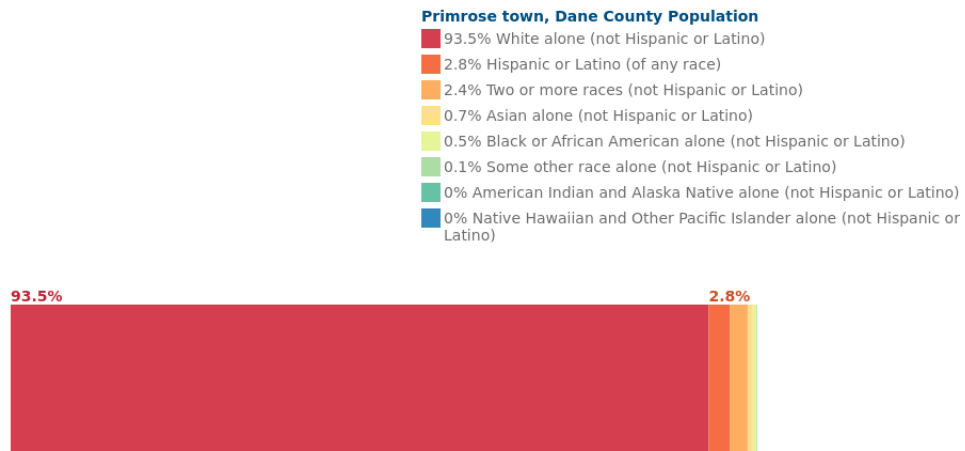
Ethnic Minorities

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

Chart 1-3: Race & Ethnicity

Population by Race and Ethnicity

2020



Data source: [2020 Census Demographic Profile](#)

Image produced by [GetFacts.wisc.edu](#), a product of  the Applied Population Lab

Education

According [to the American Community Survey](#), between 25% and 35% of Town of Primrose residents had a bachelor's degree or higher in 2022. This is lower than the 55.7% of Dane County residents who had at least a 4-year degree.

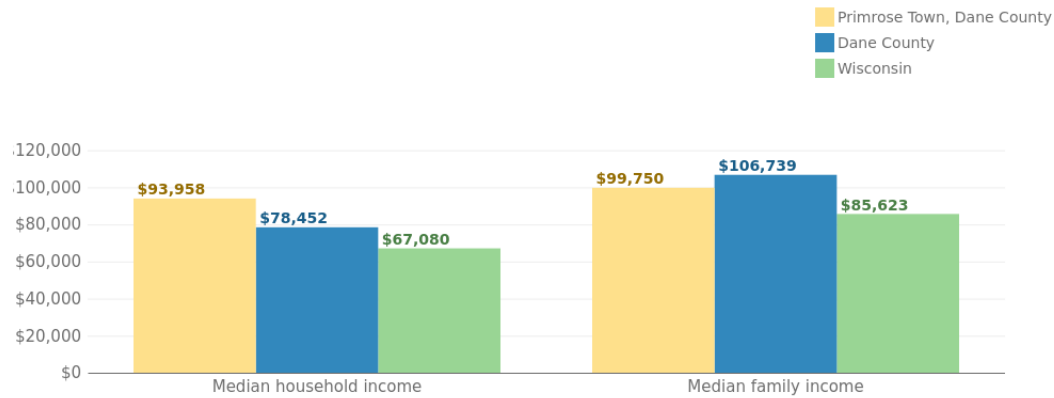
Income

Based on 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, the Town of Primrose' median household annual income was approximately \$93,958, substantially above the Dane County median of \$78,452.

Chart 1-4: Median Income

Median Income for Households and Families

2017-2021 5-Year Estimate



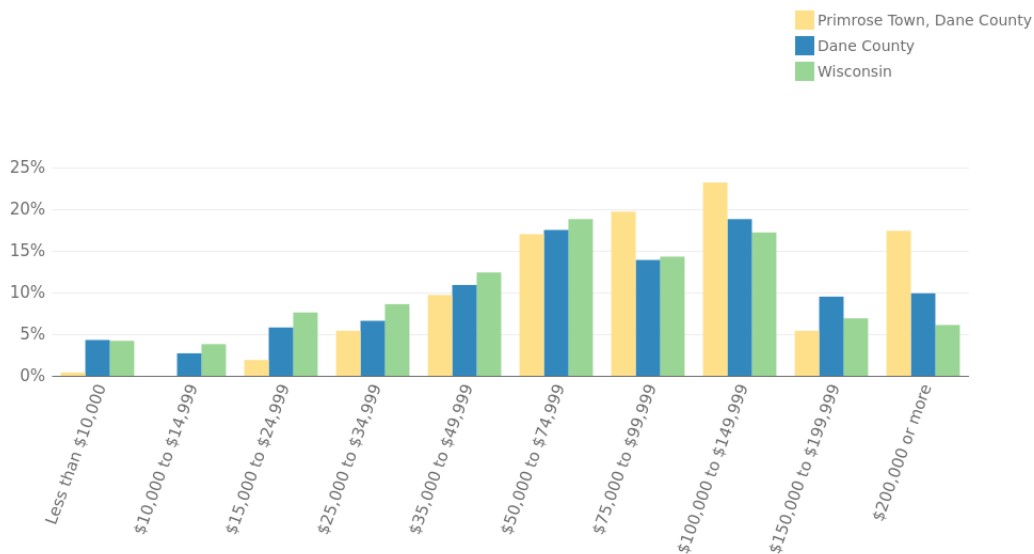
Data source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates: DP03

Image produced by GetFacts.wisc.edu, a product of the Applied Population Lab

Chart 1-5: Income Distribution

Household Income Distribution

2017-2021 5-Year Estimate



Data source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates: DP03

Image produced by GetFacts.wisc.edu, a product of the Applied Population Lab

More recent [American Community Survey data](#) suggest median income increases of approximately 8% in 2022, compared with the 2021 5-year estimates.

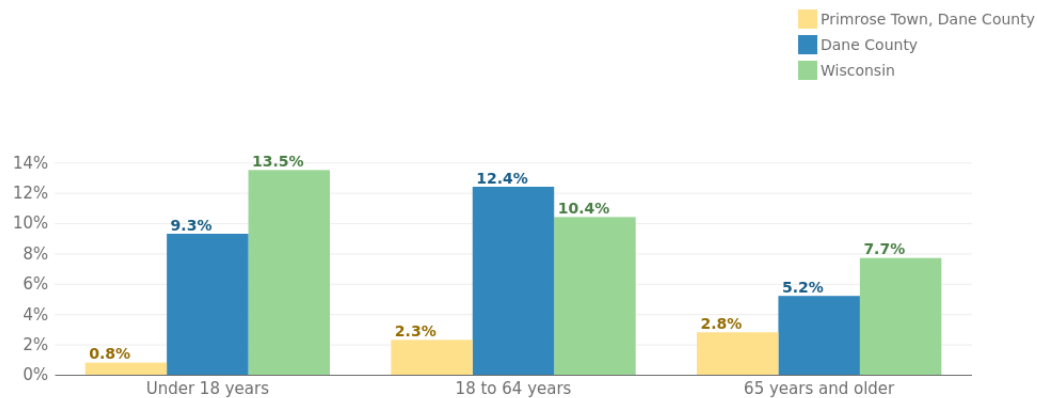
Poverty

Primrose had lower poverty rates across all age groups than either Dane County or Wisconsin as a whole.

Chart 1-6: Poverty Rates

Poverty Rates by Age

2017-2021 5-Year Estimate



Data source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates: DP03

Image produced by [GetFacts.wisc.edu](https://getfacts.wisc.edu/), a product of  the Applied Population Lab

Housing and Household Trends

The number of housing units in the Town of Primrose increased from 282 in 2010 to 310 in 2020, an increase of 9.8%. However, mean household size in 2010 was 2.59 persons, which decreased to 2.40 persons in 2020. This change mirrors a national trend in decreasing size of households. Based on Wisconsin Department of Administration projections adjusted for actual census counts, the number of households in the Town of Primrose is expected to grow by 13 by 2040.

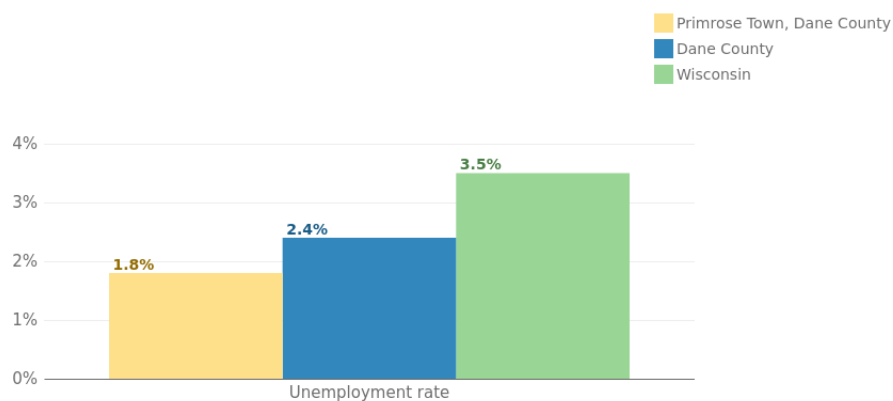
Labor Force and Employment Trends

The Town of Primrose's labor forces includes those individuals over the age of 16 who are currently employed or who are available for work. Between 2017 and 2021, Primrose enjoyed a lower unemployment rate (1.8%) than either Dane County (2.4%) or the State of Wisconsin (3.5%).

Chart 1-7: Unemployment

Unemployment Rate (for Population 16 Years and Over)

2017-2021 5-Year Estimate

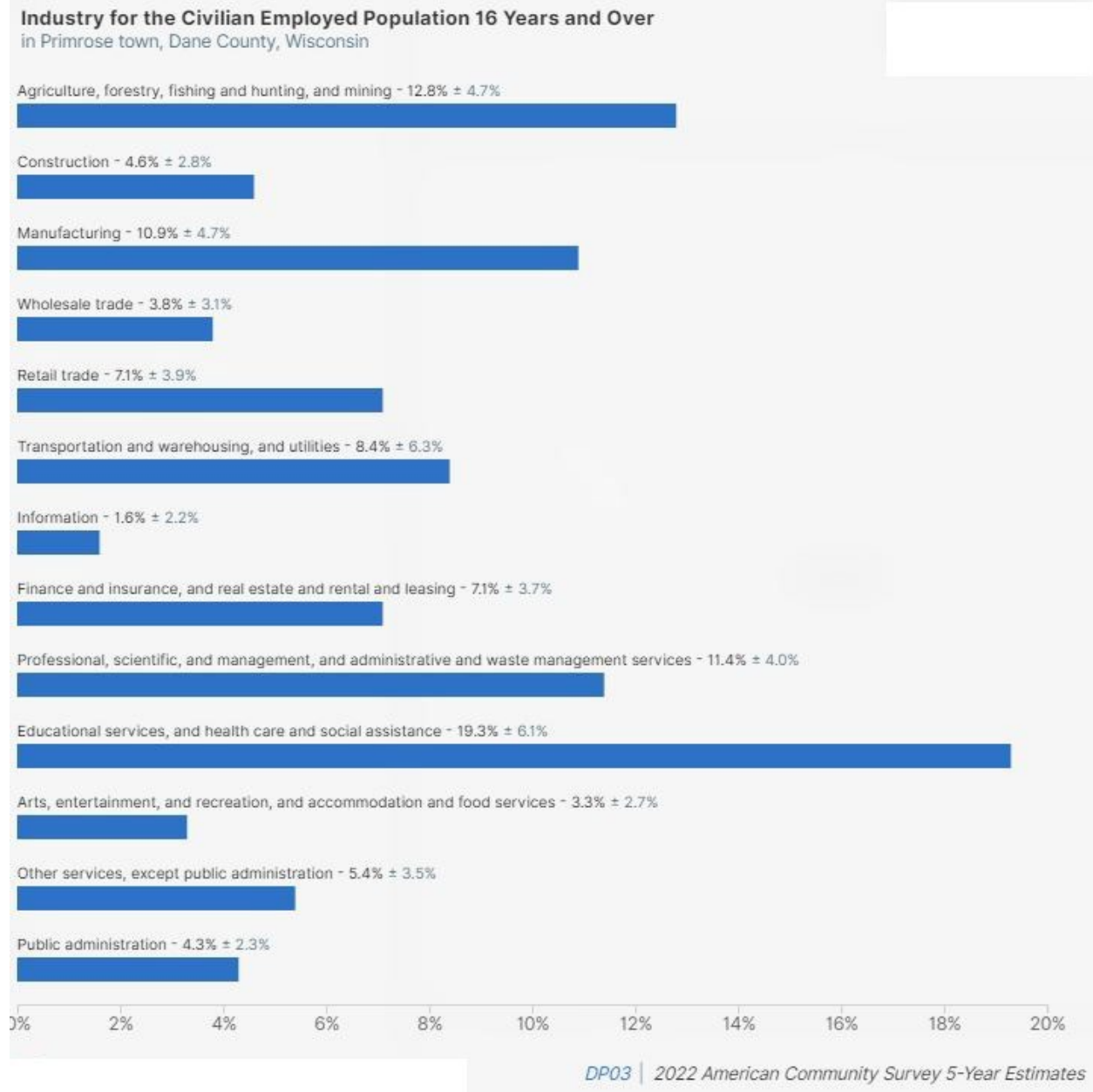


Data source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates: DP03

Image produced by GetFacts.wisc.edu, a product of the Applied Population Lab

Compared with the rest of Dane County, Primrose's agriculture and forestry sectors remain relatively important employment sectors. Over 12% of Primrose residents worked in the "agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting or mining" sectors in 2022, compared with 1% in Dane County as a whole ([American Community Survey, 2022](#)).

Chart 1-8: Employment by Industry



II. Key Planning Issues and Overall Goals

Public Participation Process

At the very beginning of the planning process, the town adopted a public participation plan (see Appendix A). This plan included development of a plan steering committee, and various methods of ensuring participation, including a community survey, and a public hearing.

The survey generated useful input into the comprehensive planning effort. One hundred fifty residents responded to the survey. Results indicated strong majorities supported the original goals. Detailed results included:

- 87% agreed or strongly agreed that the town should seek to “Maintain traditional farms and current farming practices.”
- 90% agreed or strongly agreed that the town should seek to “Encourage small sustainable agriculture.”
- 91% agreed or strongly agreed that “Preserving woodlands and wetlands are as important as farmland preservation.”
- 91% agreed or strongly agreed that the town should seek to “Maintain Primrose's current rural character (natural, undeveloped countryside, wildlife, and quiet environment).”
- 76% agreed or strongly agreed that the town should seek to “Site houses in less conspicuous places.”
- 40% agreed or strongly agreed that the town should seek to “Cluster new houses.”
- 82% agreed or strongly agreed that the town should seek to “Consult neighbors about development on adjacent properties.”
- 82% agreed or strongly agreed that “The dark night skies of the town are important.”

Detailed analysis of survey results is available in Appendix 1.

Overall Goals

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