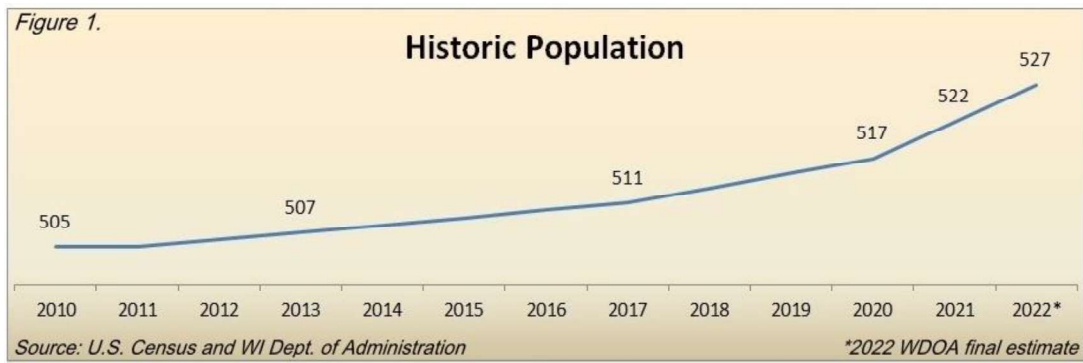


1. ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Town Demographics

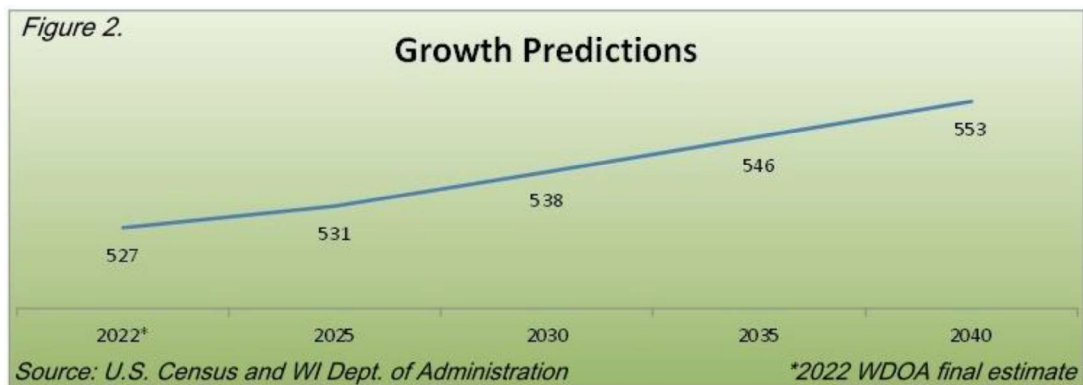
Population

According to the U S Census, Willard’s population has grown steadily since 2010. Over the past 12 years, the Town experienced a 4.35% increase, and Rusk County’s population has decreased by 3.47%. The Town is nearly 4% of the total population of Rusk County. Annually, the Wisconsin Department of Administration (WDOA) publishes population estimates for all municipalities in the state. 2022, WDOA’s final population estimate for the Town of Willard is 527. Figure 1 shows the greatest increase was 2020-2022 when the Town had an average 1% growth each year. This was probably due to people seeking escape from the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Town’s rural setting appealed to the desire for safety, seclusion, and outdoor recreation.



If the 3-year trend of 1% growth rate continues through the next 18 years, the Town could have as many as 560 residents by 2030 (and 605 by 2040).

If the pandemic induced trend is short-lived, the Town of Willard will have an average annual growth rate of 0.52%. Using data from 2010 through 2022, Figure 2 projects the Town will have at least 546 residents by 2030 (553 by 2040).



Age Distribution

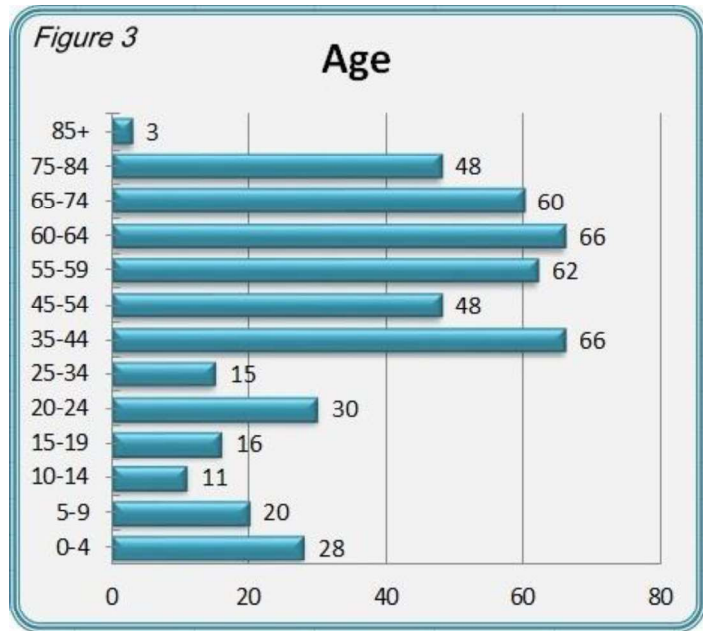
Between 2010 and 2020, the age group 20-24 doubled to 30 persons and the age group 55-64 increased by nearly 78%. Conversely, the age groups 5-14, 15-19, and those 85 and older decreased the most.

When drawn as a chart, age distribution can hint at patterns of growth. A top-heavy pyramid suggests negative population growth that might be due to any number of factors, including high death rates, low birth rates, and increased emigration from the area.

A bottom-heavy pyramid, suggests high birthrates, falling or stable death rates, and the potential for rapid population growth.

According to Figure 3, Willard falls into the category of a **top heavy pyramid**. Age group 0-4 suggests steady birthrates. Age group 20-24 doubled which may indicate a less exodus of university-bound students, and some students utilizing college online learning to remain at home.

There is a noticeable lack of persons is seen in the 25-34 year-old age group. Many in this age group may have moved out of the area to find employment opportunities.



Race

In 2020, 96.8% of residents in Willard listed themselves as White. The remainder of the population consists of Hispanic or Latino (1%), Asian (0.6%), American Indian (0.2%), other (0.4%), and mixed (1.1%)

Household Characteristics and Forecasts

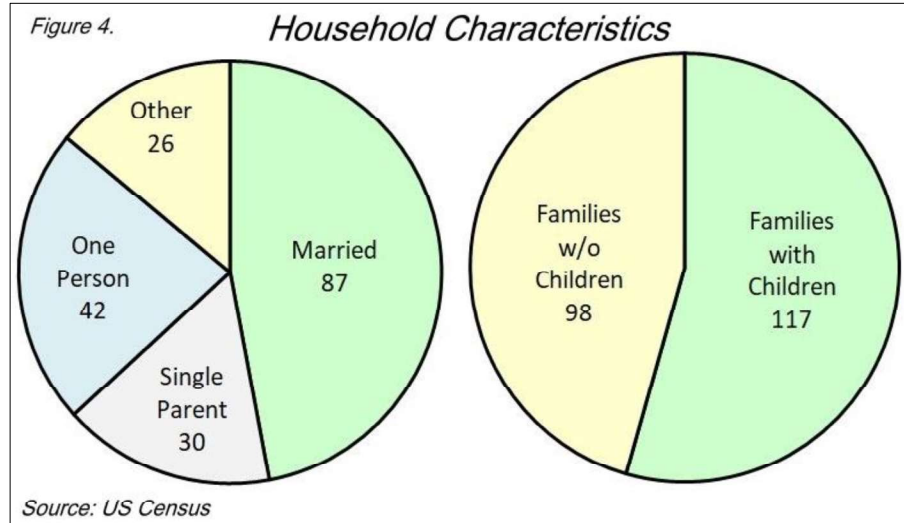
A household consists of all the people who occupy a housing unit. The 2020 US Census shows there were 344 housing units reported in the Town of Willard; however, the Town of Willard actual household count in 2022 is 404. The US Census reports only 215 of the households were occupied housing units. WDOA projections indicate a continued 2.8% increase in households for 2030 through 2040. Table 2 shows past, present and future household numbers for the Town of Willard.

Table 2 Past Present and Future Households					
	2010	2015	2022*	2030	2040
Willard	214	287	404	531	699

U.S. Census, WDOA, Town of Willard

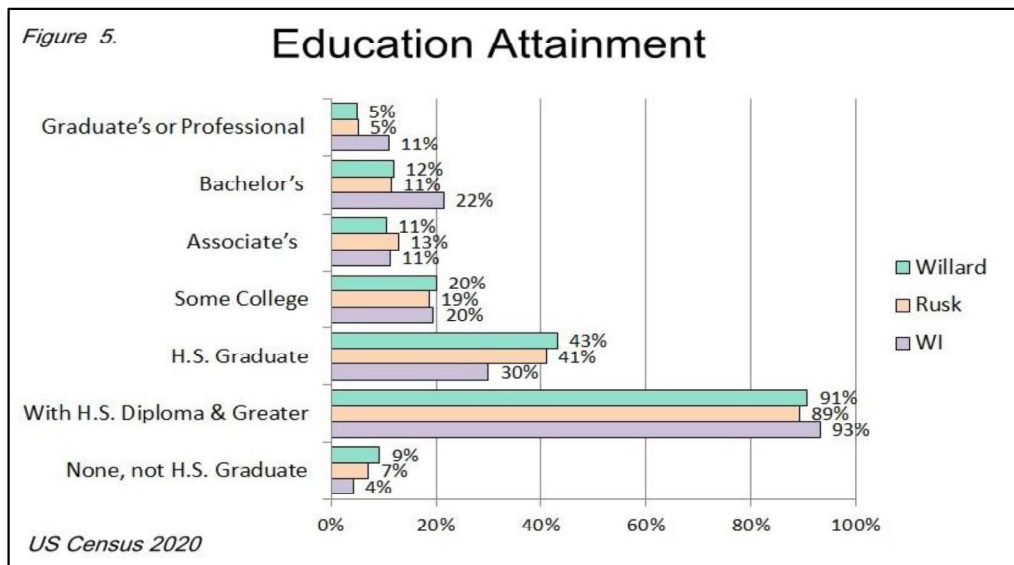
**Town of Willard real estate cross-reference count*

Of the reporting households in the 2020 US Census, 117 were family households defined as households with two or more people related by blood, marriage or adoption. There were 98 non-family households. Of the 117 family households, 24 included children under age 18. The average household size was 2.79 people. See Figure 4 for more household characteristics.



Education Levels

The 2020 U.S. Census showed that 90.8% of Willard residents 25 years and older had a high school diploma, which is slightly more than Rusk County (89.2%) and slightly less than the State of Wisconsin (93.3%). Willard had a higher percentage of people with no high school diploma than the County or the State. Figure 5 provides a summary of educational attainment in Willard, Rusk County and the State of Wisconsin.



Income Levels

In 2020 the median household income in Willard was \$44,236 which was less than Rusk County's median income of \$51,978.

	Count	US Dollars	Percent
Full-Time with earnings	188	57,011	76.7%
Social Security Income	85	20,575	39.5%
Supplemental Security Income	4		1.9%
Public Assistance Income	19		8.8%
Retirement Income	69	20,286	32.1%
No earnings, or have loss	5		2.7%
Median Full-Time with earnings	188	35,147	
Median household income	215	44,236	

Source: 2020 U.S. Census Bureau

Employment Characteristics and Projections

In 2020, the Town of Willard had 412 people who were 16 years and older. Of those, 257 were in the labor force with 61.85% employed or self-employed and 3.89% unemployed. Of the total population, 154 were not in the labor force. Table 4 details the employment status in the Town of Willard according to the American Community Survey (ACS) estimates for 2020.

	Count	Percent
Population 16 years and older	412	
In Labor Force:	257	62.38%
Employed	234	56.80%
Self-employed	13	5.06%
Unemployed	10	3.89%
Armed Forces	1	0.24%
Not in Labor Force	154	37.38%

Source: 2021 American Community Survey

Figure 6 details the Town of Willard employment by industry. In 2020 the manufacturing industry employs 27.5% of the employed workforce in the Town. Education and Health Care employs the second most at 15.8%.

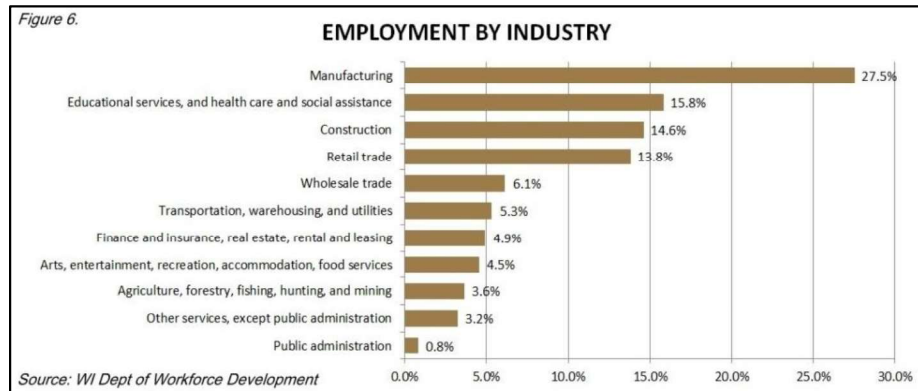


Table 5 details industry projections for Northwest Wisconsin from 2020 to 2030 as this data is not calculated at the Town or County levels. According to the data, Natural Resources and Mining is projected to grow the most in the region. Financial Activities and Information are predicted to decline. The Manufacturing and Construction Industries have projected modest growths at 4.41% and 7.42%, respectively.

Industry Title	Employment		Change	
	2020	2030 Projected	2020-2030 Count	2020-2030 Percent
Construction	2642	2838	196	7.42%
Education and Health Services	14521	14781	260	1.79%
Financial Activities	1864	1796	-68	-3.65%
Government	7255	7417	162	2.23%
Information	495	454	-41	-8.28%
Leisure and Hospitality	6767	7984	1217	17.98%
Manufacturing	11694	12210	516	4.41%
Natural Resources and Mining	1133	1662	529	46.69%
Other Services (except Government)	2988	3209	221	7.40%
Professional and Business Services	3044	3228	184	6.04%
Self Employed and Unpaid Family Workers (All Jobs)	5937	5729	-208	-3.50%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	12848	13025	177	1.38%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development