

ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Development of the Town of Wascott’s Comprehensive Plan will begin with an overview of the community based on known information from the past to present and projections of the future covering a 20-year planning horizon. This element gives an overview of demographic trends and background information necessary to develop subsequent components of the comprehensive plan. This information includes such things as past, present, and future population; household and employment forecasts; demographic trends; age distribution; education and income levels; and employment characteristics. It also includes a section on overall goals, objectives, and actions to help guide future preservation and development over the 20-year planning horizon.

1.2 POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Looking at the characteristics of population for an area can help a community plan for the needs of the future. This section will look at both past population numbers and the predictions of future growth for the Town of Wascott and Douglas County.

Population Trends

Table 1.1 shows the population for the Town of Wascott from 1950 to 2000. Since 1960, the town has experienced an overall population growth, gaining a total of 430 persons over the 50-year period. Population in the town was relatively constant from 1950 to 1970 with the greatest percentage growth by decade from 1970 to 1980, when the town population increased nearly 70 percent or 210 residents.

It should be noted that beginning with the 1980 decennial census, prisoners housed at the Gordon Correctional Facility are included in the overall population figure. Estimated prisoner counts for the following decades were 40 in 1980, 55 in 1990, and 75 in 2000.

Table 1.1: Population Trends								
Location	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	Absolute Change 1950-2000	Percent Change 1950-2000
Town of Wascott	284	268	301	511	535	714	430	151.4%
% Of County Population	0.61%	0.60%	0.67%	1.15%	1.28%	1.65%		---
Douglas County	46,715	45,008	44,657	44,421	41,758	43,287	-3,428	-7.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

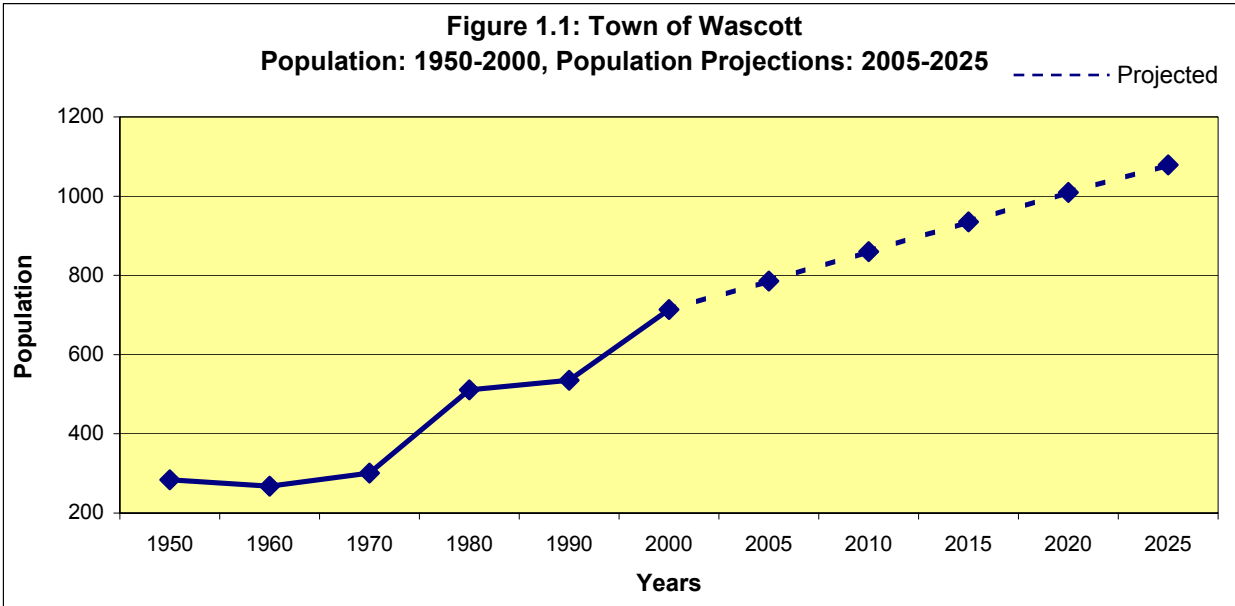
Douglas County suffered a loss in population every decade from 1950 to 1990 but experienced growth in the last decade. During the period from 1950 to 1990, the county lost a total of 4,957 residents and gained back 1,529 from 1990 to 2000.

Population Projections

Table 1.2 displays population projections for the Town of Wascott and Douglas County through 2025, as developed by the Demographic Services Center of the Wisconsin Department of Administration. These projections are based on past and current population trends and are intended as a base-line guide for users. Population projections identify a moderate growth rate through the year 2025 for both the town and the county. Figure 1.1 charts both the historical population as well as the projected population change through 2025 for the Town of Wascott.

Table 1.2: Population Projections 2005 - 2025		
Year	Town of Wascott	Douglas County
2005	786	43,973
2010	860	44,734
2015	935	45,532
2020	1,009	46,281
2025	1,079	46,793
Absolute Change 2005-2025	293	2,820*

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration, Demographic Service Center



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Wisconsin Department of Administration

Important to understand is that while the population is projected to increase moderately, the average household size is expected to decrease. This trend is important because it means more housing units will be needed in the town to support the overall population.

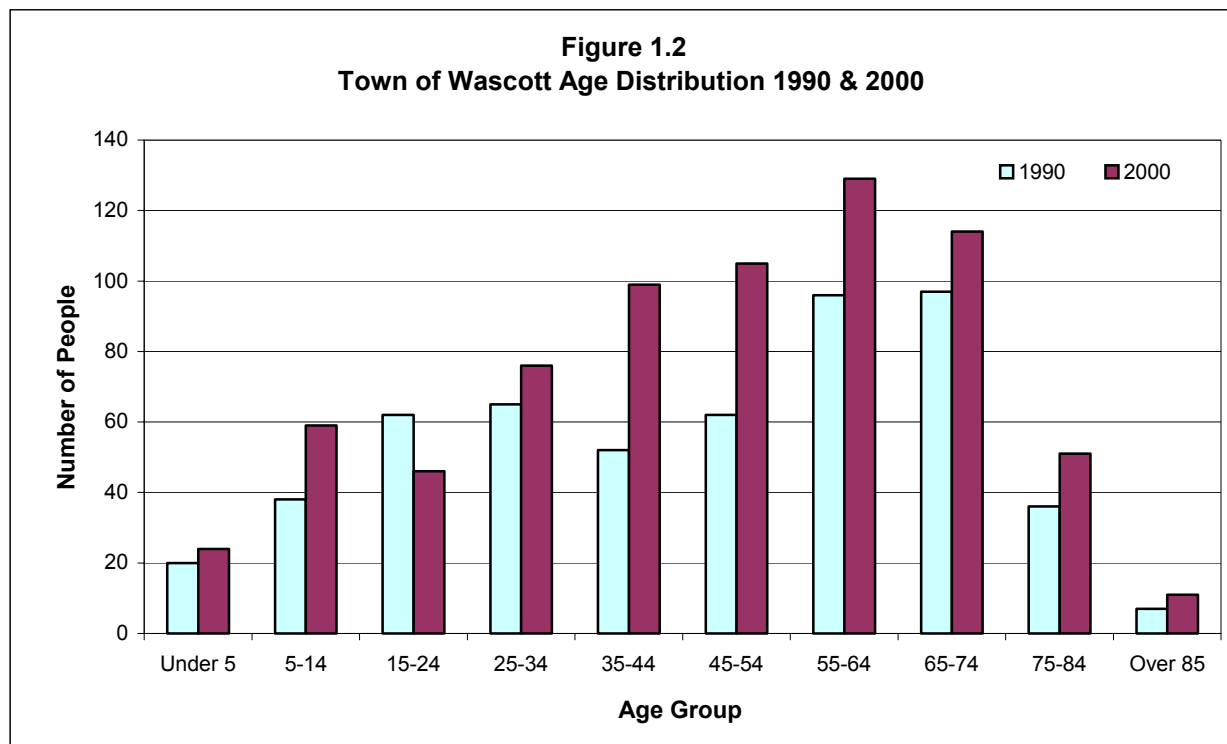
Factors for the overall increase in population may include: manufacturing and home-based business development; the conversion of seasonal residences into permanent residences; attractiveness of the area’s natural resources; and the overall ability of the town and region to provide a quality of life that’s comfortable with access to goods, services, and economic activities to satisfy its current population and attract new people.

Population Composition

Population figures and growth rates do not provide any insight about the characteristics of the population. To learn more about the people of the Town of Wascott, information about race, sex, and age of the population must be examined.

In 2000, there were 403 males and 311 females living in the Town of Wascott. An overwhelming majority (93.3%) of the residents reported their race as white in the 2000 U.S. Census. Persons of the Black or African American race made up 4.3 percent.

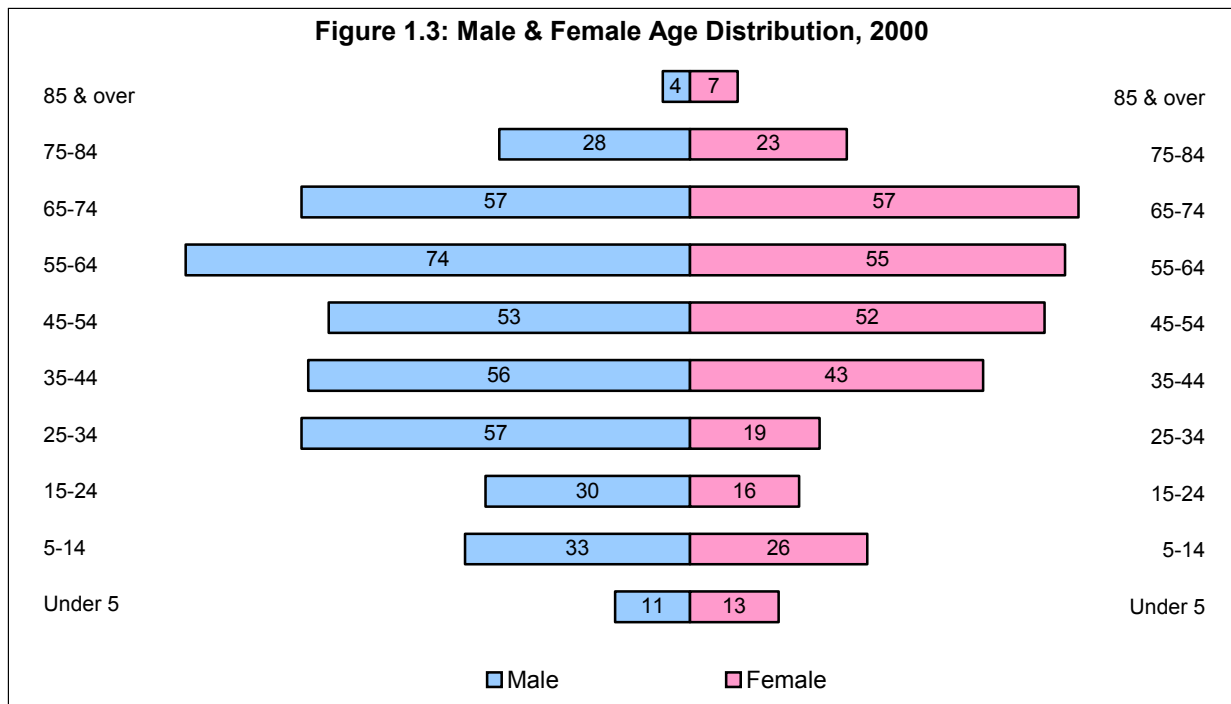
The median age of a Town of Wascott resident in 2000 was 50.6 years compared to 49.9 years in 1990. This average is much higher than the Douglas County median age of 37.7 years and the state median age of 36 years. With nearly 11 percent of the Gordon Correctional Facility representing the overall population, this “men only” facility influences the population distribution between male and female and impacts the median age and overall age distribution. With prisoners ranging in age from age 19 to 50, it is estimated that if the prisoners were excluded from the overall population, the median age of Wascott residents would be closer to 59. Figure 1.2 compares the age distribution for town residents in 1990 and 2000.



Source: U.S Census Bureau

In the years from 1990 to 2000, one age group in the Town of Wascott, 15-24 year olds, lost population compared to large increases in several other age groups. There was approximately a 90 percent increase in the 35-44 age group, a 70 percent increase in the 45-54 age group, and a 34 percent increase in the 55-64 age group. All of these increases in the older age groups are the cause of the high median age for the town.

The population pyramid in Figure 1.3 represents a visual depiction of the age distribution in 2000 for the town. The two largest age groups in the Town of Wascott are 55-64 and 65-74. A significant difference is visible between male and female age groups of 15-24 and 25-34. This variation is attributed to the majority of men housed within the Gordon Correctional Facility.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (SF 1)

1.3 HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

Definitions referring to household characteristics may assist the reader in further understanding household figures. According to the U.S. Census Bureau:

A **household** includes all the people who occupy a housing unit as their usual place of residence of which may be family or non-family households.

A **family household** is a group of two or more people who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption.

A **non-family** household consists of one person living alone or exclusively with people to whom he/she is not related.

Occupants may consist of a single family, one person living alone, two or more families living together, or any other group of related or unrelated people who share a housing unit.

A **housing unit** is a house, an apartment, a mobile home or trailer, a group of rooms, or a single room occupied as a separate living quarters, or if vacant, intended for occupancy as separate living quarters. Separate living quarters are those in which the occupants live separately from any other individuals in the building and which have direct access from outside the building or through a common hall.

Household Trends and Projections

National and state trends have all moved towards an increase in the number of households, along with a decrease in the average persons per household. The main reasons for this decrease in household size include but are not limited to: a decrease in birth rates, people waiting longer to get married, and an increase in the average life span thereby resulting in more elderly people living alone. The Town of Wascott has followed this trend. The town has experienced an increase of 82 households since 1990. However during this same period, the number of persons per household has decreased from 2.21 in 1990 to 2.18 in 2000.

Table 1.3 shows households by type for the Town of Wascott. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, there were 295 households in the town that are considered occupied by “year round” residents. The majority of these households (71%) were family households. Of these family households, the most common type was a married-couple family household, which makes up 65 percent of the total. Non-family households accounted for 29.1 percent. Of the 73 householders living alone, 38 percent were age 65 and over.

Table 1.3: Households, 2000	
	Town of Wascott
Total Households	295
1. Family households	209
a. Married-couple family	192
i. With own children under 18 years	38
ii. Without own children under 18 years	154
b. Female Householder, no spouse present	6
i. With own children under 18 years	1
ii. Without own children under 18 years	5
2. Non-family households	86
a. Householder living alone	73
i. Householder 65 years and over	28

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (SF 1)

Table 1.4 displays both actual numbers of households and projections for the Town of Wascott from 1980 through 2025. Household projections for the town show a gain of 186 households from 2000 to 2025. This figure does not include seasonal and vacant units that may be added to 2025.

Table 1.4: Households 1980-2000 Household Projections 2005-2025								
Town of Wascott	1980	1990	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Households	184	213	295	332	373	411	448	481

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, WI Dept. of Administration

1.4 INCOME & POVERTY LEVELS

More than any other type of data, income data indicates how an area is doing economically. Income is measured several ways, and this section will explain and compare some of those statistics for the Town of Wascott and Douglas County.

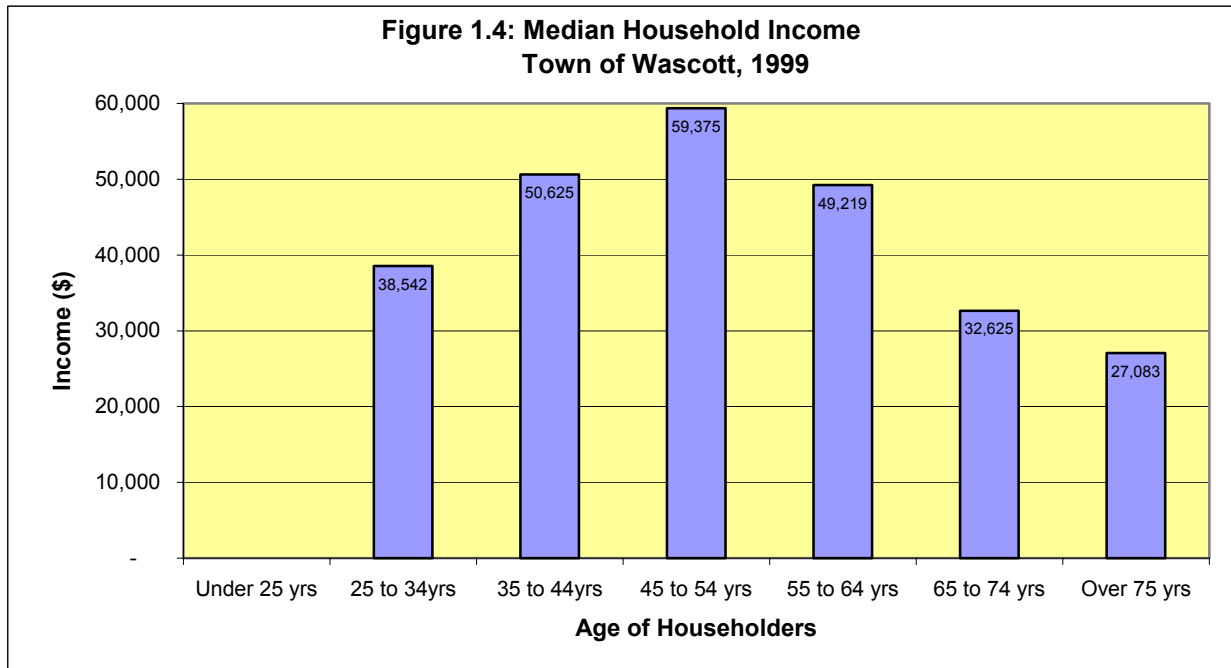
Household Income

Table 1.5 reports the average annual income for households in the Town of Wascott as of 1999 and reported by Census 2000. Of the town's households, 57.2 percent report an annual income of over \$35,000. Over 38 percent of households had an income over \$50,000.

Annual Income	Percent of Households
Less than \$10,000	5.5%
\$10,000 - \$24,999	23.1%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	14.1%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	19.0%
\$50,000 - \$99,999	34.1%
\$100,000 and over	4.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (SF 3)

The median household income (MHI) in 1999 for the Town of Wascott as reported by the 2000 U.S. Census was \$40,714, compared to a MHI of \$35,226 for Douglas County and \$43,791 for the state. As illustrated in Figure 1.4, householders age 35 to 44 and 45 to 54 had a median household income over \$50,000.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000

Per Capita, Per Capita Personal Income, and Poverty Rates

Per capita income (PCI) is defined as all resident *money* income divided by population. It is composed of generally traceable money from wages, interest, dividends, welfare program payments, etc. It does not take into account money received from sale of property, money borrowed, exchange of money between relatives in same households, tax refunds, gifts, and insurance payments, which per capita personal income (PCPI) figures do take into consideration. Thus, PCPI figures are always higher than PCI. PCPI is not available at the community level. The U.S. Census Bureau reports PCI and the Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce, calculates PCPI at the county level on a yearly basis.

As indicated by Table 1.6, PCI in 1999 for the Town of Wascott is slightly higher than the county but lower than the state per capita income. PCPI for Douglas County is only 80 percent of the state per capita personal income.

Table 1.6: Income Levels and Poverty Rates			
	Town of Wascott	Douglas County	State of Wisconsin
Per Capita Income, 1999	\$18,165	\$17,638	\$21,271
Per Capita Personal Income, 2001	NA	\$23,364	\$29,196
Percent of individuals below poverty level	8.6%	11.0%	8.7%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

Poverty rates are determined on the basis of money income and do not reflect the fact that many low-income people receive non-cash benefits. The poverty rate in the Town of Wascott (8.6%) is lower than the county and the state as indicated in Table 1.6.

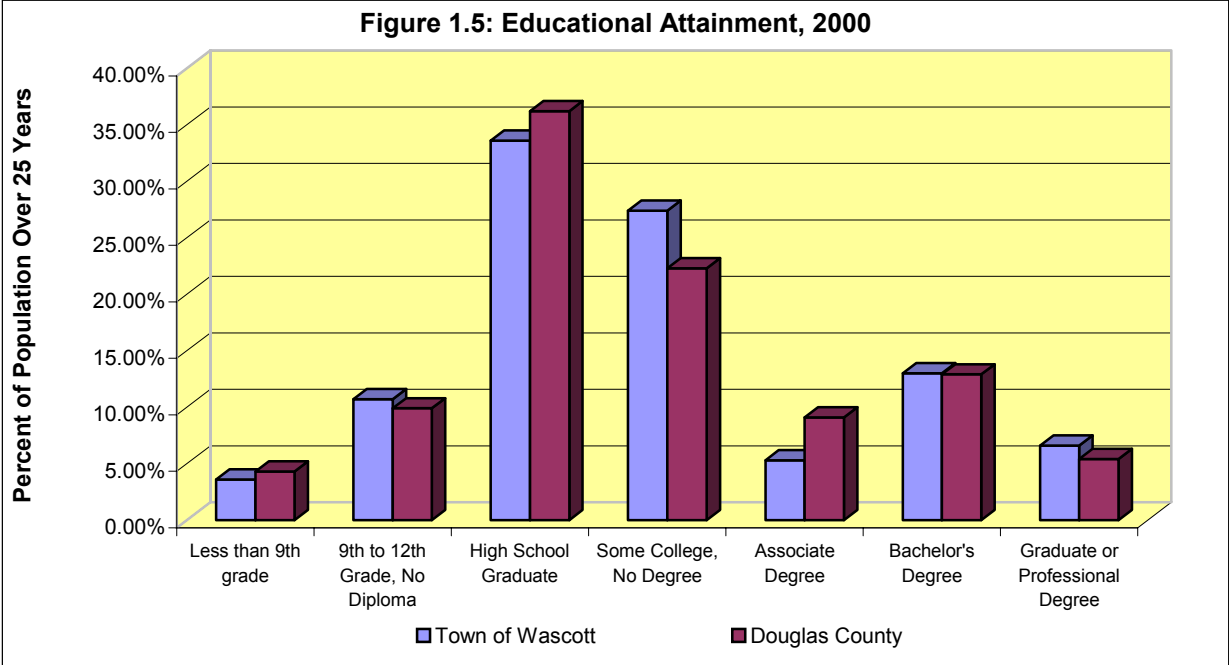
Table 1.7 shows different measures of income and poverty from Census 2000 data comparing the Town of Wascott with surrounding communities. In comparison, the town had the highest median household income and median family income and the second highest per capita income.

Table 1.7: Income Levels for Town of Wascott and Surrounding Communities						
	Town of Wascott	Town of Gordon	Town of Dairyland	Town of Minong	Town of Frog Creek	Town of Barnes
Median Household Income, 1999	\$40,714	\$34,412	\$35,313	\$36,667	\$36,750	\$28,250
Median Family Income, 1999	\$48,409	\$35,972	\$48,333	\$41,094	\$42,000	\$32,500
Percent of families below poverty level	6.9%	7.1%	7.6%	5.3%	3.6%	11.6%
Per Capita Income, 1999	\$18,165	\$18,065	\$18,155	\$20,679	\$15,750	\$16,406
Percent of individuals below poverty level	8.6%	8.0%	9.0%	7.9%	7.3%	16.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (SF 3)

1.5 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

A good indicator of the quality of life in a community is the educational attainment of its residents. Generally, a high level of educational attainment reflects a skilled population with higher earnings potential. Figure 1.5 illustrates the level of educational attainment for persons age 25 and over in the Town of Wascott and Douglas County in 2000. Only 19.6 percent of town residents hold a college degree compared to 22.5 percent for the state.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

1.6 EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS

A community’s labor force consists of all individuals age 16 and above who are employed, or unemployed and actively seeking work. No specific labor force data is available at the community level; therefore, county data is used.

A recent publication by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development stated, “Demographic projections prepared by the Wisconsin Department of Administration suggest that the state will be faced with a significant labor shortage within the next 10 to 15 years as the number of people turning 65, fueled by the aging of the “Baby Boomer” generation surpasses the number of people turning 18 due to low birth rates and slowing migration patterns. Consequently, the number of workers entering the labor force will not be sufficient to replace those ending their working careers”.¹

¹ Mortarboards, Paychecks, and Crystal Balls: The Link Between Education and Wisconsin’s Labor Force. October 2002

Douglas County Labor Force

Table 1.8 highlights Douglas County labor force statistics for the last ten years on an average annual basis. The county’s labor force increased steadily until 1999 when it suffered a decline that took until 2002 to recover. Unemployment rates in 2002 and 2003 climbed to the highest level since 1994.

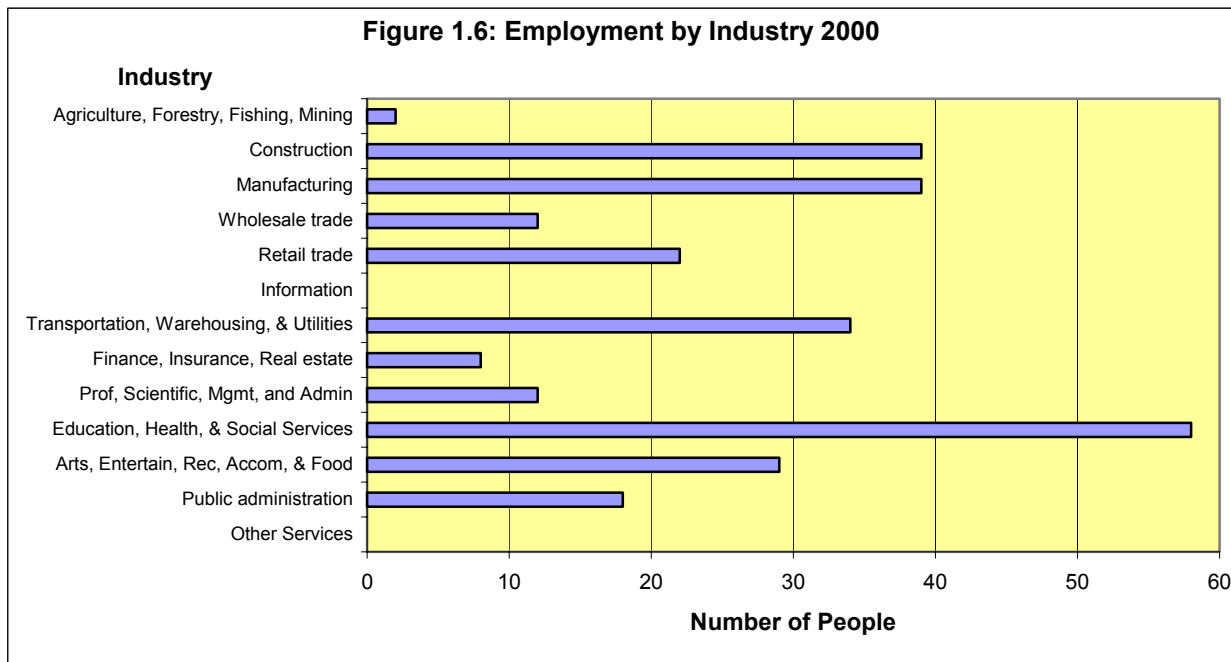
Table 1.8: Douglas County Labor Force Data										
	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Labor Force	21,500	21,897	22,733	22,928	23,052	22,201	22,594	23,018	23,049	23,568
Employed	19,867	20,631	21,542	21,717	21,956	21,285	21,540	21,876	21,684	22,188
Unemployed	1,633	1,266	1,191	1,211	1,096	915	1,054	1,142	1,365	1,380
Unemp. Rate	7.6%	5.8%	5.2%	5.3%	4.8%	4.1%	4.7%	5.0%	5.9%	5.9%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, LAUS

Employment by Industry

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 273 residents of the town (16 years and over) were employed. Figure 1.6 identifies employment by industry for Town of Wascott residents at that time. As indicated by the chart, the education, health, and social services industry sector employed the most residents (58) or 21 percent. The manufacturing and construction industry sectors each employed 39 town residents or 14 percent.

Of the 265 Town of Wascott residents that commuted to work, 220 or 83 percent work somewhere other than the town. See Element 6 for details of commuting patterns and areas where residents were employed.



Source: U.S Census Bureau

Considering the proximity of the Cities of Duluth and Superior, it is likely that some town residents worked in the medical or educational field, which would account for the 21 percent of residents that worked in the education, health, and social services industry sector. It is also probable that a number of residents worked in the Village or Town of Minong where a large manufacturer and school are located.

Town of Wascott Employers

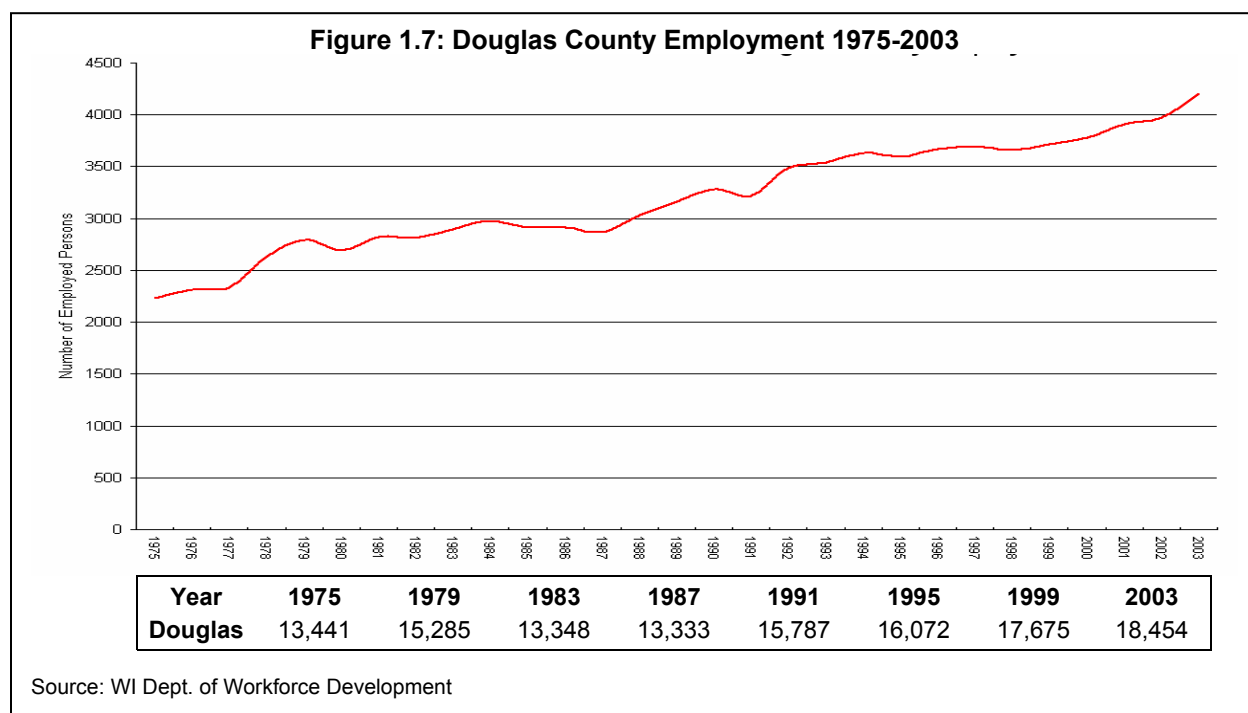
Employment opportunities are critical to the continued growth and economic stability for the town and residents of Wascott. Table 1.9 lists the top five employers located in the Town of Wascott as reported by Town of Wascott Planning Committee in February 2004.

Table 1.9: Top Five Employers in Town of Wascott in Order of Number of Employees		
Employer Name	Product or Service	Employment Size Range
Gordon Correctional Center	Prison	20
Town of Wascott	Executive and Legislative Offices	8-14
Pogo's	Food and Drink	8-14
Marv Thompson & Son Construction	Construction	6-10
Stop A Sec	Gasoline Stations with Convenience Store	5-9

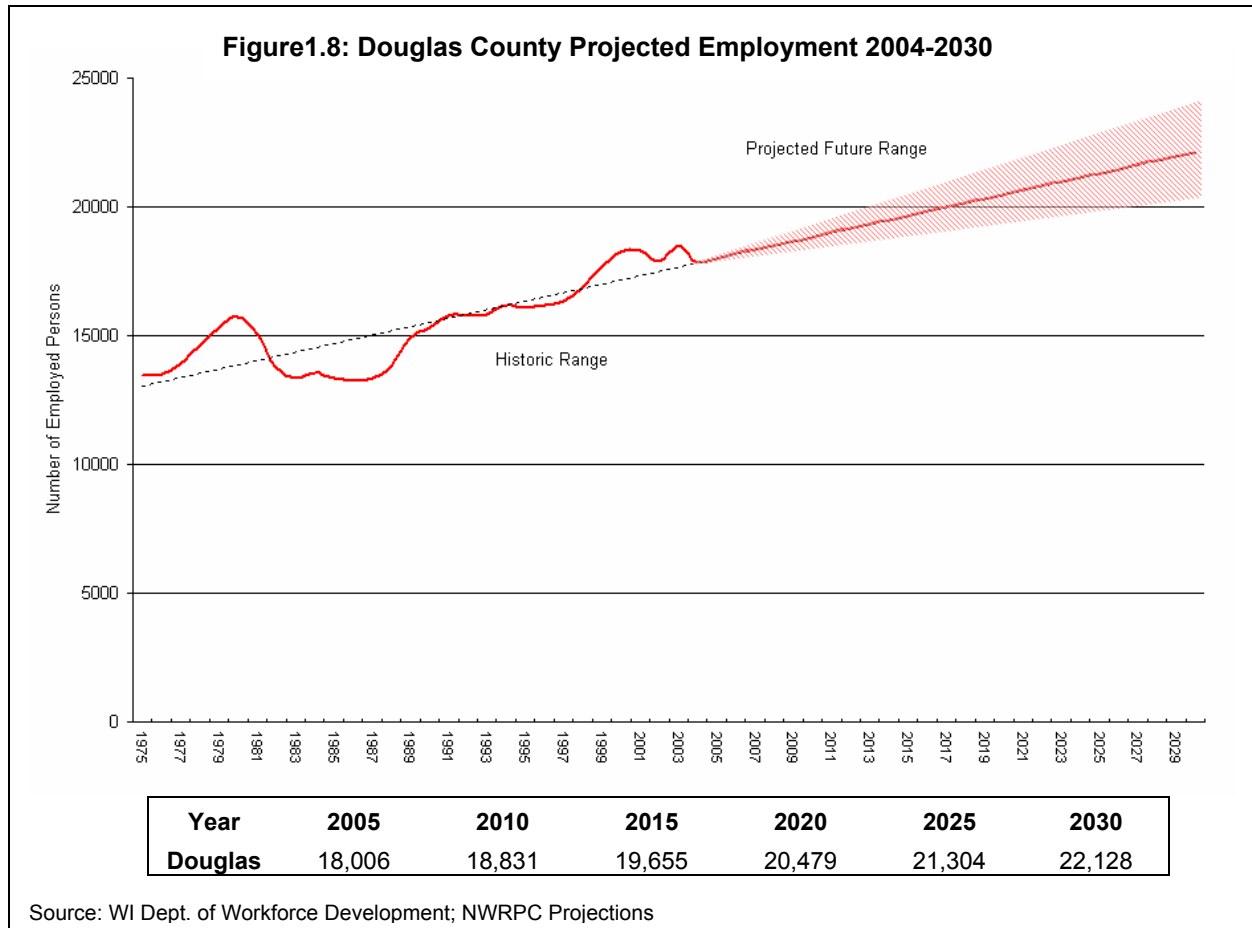
Source: Town of Wascott Planning Committee, February 2004

Douglas County Employment Forecast

Based on data from the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) highlighting the number of jobs with employers located in Douglas County from 1975 to 2003, employment projections were developed by NWRPC to 2030. Figure 1.7 shows the employed persons for 1975 to 2003 and Figure 1.8 shows not only the past employment data but also the employment projections for future years to 2030.



Employment projections for Douglas County were derived by analyzing the local employment data from 1975-2003. The “trend line” in Figure 1.8 depicts a “best fit” of the known data values and a projection of the future data values. The shaded area in Figure 1.8 represents a range of probability, meaning that it is more likely that the future value will fall somewhere within this range rather than directly along the trend line. This is a very simplistic model to be used for general planning purposes. The Wisconsin DWD will develop more detailed county projections.



1.7 OVERALL GOAL STATEMENT

The Town of Wascott has prepared a number of goals and objectives that include actions and policies in addressing land use activities. For purposes of this planning process, actions identified through the plan are also defined as policies. The goals and objectives are intended to assist the town board and local property owners in implementing actions deemed important and in the interest of the community. It is imperative that the goals, objectives, and actions described in this plan are implemented to fully achieve the desired outcome. A full set of the goals, objectives, and actions are included in the implementation element of this plan.

The overall goal is to remain a rural community that encourages a balance between the rights of its residents and the needs of its businesses by maintaining a positive town identity, preserving the natural integrity of the area while accommodating the influx of a diverse population, a

demand for varied available housing, the increased recreational traffic, and the need for more businesses. To do this, the overall objective of the Town of Wascott is to guide future development and redevelopment of the community in a manner consistent with the element goals, objectives, actions, and identified programs contained in this plan. The overall policy is to adopt and implement the comprehensive plan and continue to work with adjacent and overlapping jurisdictions. The overall programs outlined throughout the recommendations and action plan represent the methods to achieve the overall plan goal.