

# TOWN OF GIBRALTAR

## Door County, WI



## Comprehensive Plan



# TOWN OF GIBRALTAR

## Comprehensive Plan



Adopted: July 5, 2023

Prepared by:  
Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission  
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# Introduction

## Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan

This comprehensive plan for the Town of Gibraltar is an important long-range planning and policy tool to assist with decision-making from 2023 through 2043. The purpose of this plan is to guide development by reflecting the community's shared vision and priorities for future growth.

The Town of Gibraltar is obligated by statute to have a locally approved comprehensive plan. Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law (Wis. Stats. 66.1001) requires every governmental jurisdiction that regulates the use of land through a land division ordinance, shoreland zoning ordinance, general purpose zoning ordinance, or official map to have an adopted comprehensive plan. As part of these requirements, a comprehensive plan must be updated every 10 years at a minimum.

Prior to the establishment of this document, the Town of Gibraltar last adopted its comprehensive plan in 2010. Given existing statutory requirements, the Town was ready for a plan update. However, the objective of this plan is intended to address more than state requirements. It is meant to ensure its policies guiding development and funding decisions align with the community's current goals and vision for growth.

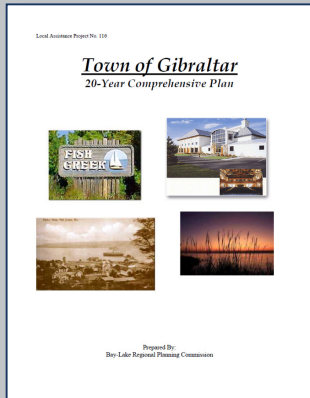
Accordingly, this plan establishes updated policies to guide decision making in Gibraltar over the next 20 years and creates a fact base to support the documented policies, any future changes to ordinances, and other planning initiatives or efforts undertaken through 2043.

## Planning Process

This plan was prepared by the Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission (BLRPC), with the assistance and participation from the Town of Gibraltar as well as its Plan Commission, and the citizens and stakeholders of Gibraltar. The process involved the following:

- A review of past and relevant planning efforts led by the Town of Gibraltar or other regional entities. Efforts reviewed and considered included Gibraltar's previous comprehensive plan, Waterfront Master Plan, Fish Creek Watershed Plan, the Town's Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, Door County's existing comprehensive plan, the Door County Housing Study, the Door County Hazard Mitigation Plan, and the Bay-Lake Region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.
- Discussions with Town staff and Town of Gibraltar Plan Commission. The Commission received updates about the comprehensive plan at several meetings and had the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback on the draft plan components.
- Stakeholder engagement and public outreach including surveys and open houses.
- Technical analysis, using data from multiple sources including the State of Wisconsin, the U.S. Census Bureau, and other publicly available data from public and private sources.

The Town of Gibraltar should continue to review this plan annually and update it every ten years, or when officials, the public, or stakeholders identify a pressing need. Completing updates will allow Gibraltar to integrate new ideas, developments, and outcomes not known at the time of this planning process.



2010 Town of Gibraltar  
Comprehensive Plan



## Stakeholder Engagement and Public Outreach

A comprehensive plan, while rooted in technical analysis, is also extensively based on the community's local values. To ensure that this document is a statement of the community's values, the Town of Gibraltar solicited input from the public, stakeholders, Gibraltar's Plan Commission and elected officials, and Town staff.

The project relied on a range of activities and efforts to access community input. The following summarizes the primary engagement and outreach activities.

- **Plan Commission Meetings:** The planning process accommodated multiple public meetings with the Town of Gibraltar Plan Commission. Commission members received elements of the comprehensive plan to review and comment on prior to each meeting. Commission members and the public also participated in planning workshops to provide input on various land use topics. The purpose of Plan Commission meetings was to receive feedback and provide direction on the content of the plan as it was developed.
- **Community Survey:** An online community survey was available for several months. The survey allowed respondents to share their perspectives about Gibraltar and to help the project team identify Gibraltar's strengths, issues, and opportunities. The community survey was open from the beginning of September 2022 until the end of October 2022. Survey results are available at the Gibraltar Town Office upon request.
- **Public Open Houses:** Several public open houses were held to communicate project status and to highlight key findings of the project to the public. The open houses were intended to be informative and educational. They allowed the project team to collect valuable feedback from the public.
- **Comment Period and Public Hearing:** The planning process accommodated a 30-day public comment period prior to one public hearing for the plan. The hearing was held by the Town of Gibraltar Plan Commission on June 20, 2023.

## View the Comprehensive Plan Online

In order to allow the public instant access to this comprehensive plan, the Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission established an ArcGIS Online Story Map. The Story Map is an interactive version of the Town's plan that may be updated on an as needed basis. The ArcGIS Online Story Map for the Town of Gibraltar Comprehensive Plan is accessible via the link below or by scanning the QR code using your mobile device.

<https://arcg.is/r9CH00>



# Town Profile

## Population (2020)

**1,228**

Source: 2020, Decennial Census

## Population Projection

**2040**

**1,000**

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration

## Median Age

**62.7 years**

Source: U.S. Census, Wisconsin Demographic Services Center (2020).

## Total Occupied Housing Units (Permanent Housing)

**601 households**

Source: 2020, Decennial Census.

## Total Occupied Housing Unit Projection 2040

**505**

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration.

## Average Household Size

**2.13 people per owner-occupied units**

**2.05 people per renter-occupied units**

Source: American Community Survey 2020, 5-year estimates

## Median Household Income

**\$68,571**

Source: American Community Survey 2021, 5-year estimates

## Median Earnings

**\$26,827**

Source: American Community Survey 2020 5-year Data Profiles

## Civilian Labor Force

**457**

Source: American Community Survey 2019, 5-year Data Profiles



Located in northwestern Door County, the Town of Gibraltar covers 34 square miles containing agricultural lands, undeveloped natural areas, a state park, commercial and residential developments. The Town is adjacent to the waters of the bay of Green Bay, and borders the Village of Egg Harbor, and Village of Ephraim, and Baileys Harbor.

## Town History

There is no dispute that the first person to settle in Fish Creek was Increase Claflin, a New Englander and a veteran of the War of 1812, he was the first white settler in Door County. Likewise, there is no dispute that the man who really founded the village of Fish Creek was Asa Thorp.

In 1853, Claflin, along with his wife, Mary Ann Walker, came west into the forests following the waterways of the Great Lakes. He was a fur buyer and trader. In 1844, after settling in three different areas, he set off north over the ice from Sturgeon Bay with a team of horses and a bobsled. He selected a homesite on the point of a well-protected harbor. Claflin built his family a stout log cabin with a big fireplace of granite boulders. His muzzle-loader kept his family in meat, and he traded horses for furs and other goods with Native Americans of the Potawatomi and Menominee Indian tribes.

The Menominee called the creek that emptied into this harbor “Ma-Go-She-kah-nig” generally translated as “trout fishing”. Claflin found fishing in the creek good, especially during spring spawning and came to call the area “Fish Creek.”

That same year, 1844, Asa Thorp, the son of a lock tender on the Erie Canal, worked the canal with his father and became enticed by the many stories of the west. Thorp set off for the famed hunting grounds with free land and opportunity. Asa landed in Milwaukee and moved on to Rubicon working as a cooper, (barrel maker). He claimed land in Rubicon but continued north to a Michigan fishing camp on Rock Island, working the summer making barrels and learning to sail.

Asa boarded a side-wheeler for the return trip to Fort Howard (now Green Bay). Steamships like these were forced to stop often to go ashore and collect wood for the boilers. Passing one of the harbors, Asa remarked to the captain about the lone cabin he saw, asking why its owner had not built a pier.

As soon as Thorp got back to Fort Howard, he seized the opportunity, heading for the Federal Land Grant Office to file an application for all the shore land around the cove called Fish Creek. The year was 1845. He returned to Lockport, NY, to share stories of the west with family and his fiancée. He planned to build the pier the captain spoke of and establish a cord wood refueling station.

Asa was unable to sell his Rubicon land quickly, so he asked his brother Jacob to go to Fish Creek in his stead. Finally in 1852, Asa and his wife Eliza returned to Fish Creek and within a year Asa, with help from his brothers, completed construction of the first commercial pier between Washington Island and Fort Howard. In the following years (Circa 1854) a sawmill, warehouse, and a stockpile of good lumber was ready for early settlers. His own home, built about 1855, was later expanded to house salesmen, lumbermen, and early settlers.

At the December meeting of the County Board, 1857, Gibraltar was set off as a township, consisting of all that part of the county north of what is now Sevastopol, except for Washington Island. The Town was organized the following spring by the election of officers; the first election being held at the house of Asa Thorp. Gibraltar was so named because of its general rough, rocky, and bluffy surface. Mr. Solomon Beery (from what is now Baileys Harbor) was the first Town Clerk, and Rev. E. M. Iverson, (from what is now Ephraim) was the first Superintendent of Schools in the Gibraltar Township.



Chambers' Island is named for Captain Talbot Chambers who received the honor in 1816 from the federal government for leading an exploratory expedition. By the 1850s the island had grown into a thriving community based on the lumber trade. At a meeting of the County Board, on November 9, 1858, Chambers' Island was set off as its own township. On the first Tuesday in April 1859 a Town meeting was held, and the Town was "put upon its feet". However, in 1869, the Township of Chambers Island failed to elect officers at an annual meeting and that resulted in the County Board attaching the island to the Township of Gibraltar, as it remains today.

Communities of people continued to populate the county, and townships were formed as the area grew. Towns were often settled by those of the same descent, language, customs, religion, or industry. This is very true of Door County. Fishermen that fished in the "old country" usually settled near a water resource. Those that were farmers moved inland at what became crossroads as trails and roads developed. Despite the rocky land, farms did well and orchards thrived. The human condition of familiarity was the design. Many of the first buildings were churches, with cemeteries and schools. This was true of **Juddville** and **Maple Grove**, two of the three unincorporated communities in Gibraltar. Both settlements had a church and a schoolhouse as some of the earliest buildings. Those buildings still stand today and are established on major crossroads of the peninsula.

**Fish Creek**, the largest unincorporated community in the township was founded as a fishing and lumbering village. These two industries developed and prospered on the strength of local timber supplies and a fine harbor. Two sawmills were located at the foot of the main pier and fish packing sheds dotted the shoreline. There was a cooperage where barrels were made in which the day's catch was packed, salted, and made ready for shipment to the larger cities and the towns. By the 1860's and 1870's Fish Creek was the chief fishing port of Door County.

Because transportation was nonexistent in the early days, the packaged fish were shipped on the boats that served Fish Creek. In addition to the smaller boats that plied the waters of Green Bay, several ships of the Goodrich Line of Chicago also made port in Fish Creek. The passengers aboard these excursion steamers asked if they could depart the ships while they were being refueled. This was the beginning of the tourist trade. The air was fresh and the temperature perfect. By the 1880's the trickle of visitors from the sweltering cities of St. Louis, Chicago, and Milwaukee became a wave. Hotels were built and cottages added. Hotel Thorp, built in 1870, was the second tourist hotel in Wisconsin.

Many of the businesses in which Asa Thorp was involved gradually disappeared during the final decades of the nineteenth century. Then in 1909 the State of Wisconsin chose 3,776 acres of forests, bluffs, and shoreline in the Town of Gibraltar to be its second state park. Not only did tourists fall in love with the beauty of the park, but they also fell in love with the quaint little community of Fish Creek that acted as a gateway to the park. Today, no one would dispute the fact that the tourist industry is the lifeblood of the community. Fish Creek still has much of the charm it possessed at the turn of the century. Most wood frame hotels, summer cottages and permanent homes that graced Fish Creek in 1910 are still standing, however, with few exceptions these buildings have been modernized and improved. Many of the private homes have become shops and eateries.

Asa Thorp would be pleased with the way the village he founded in 1853 has matured to serve the thousands of tourists that flock to Fish Creek every year.



# *Gibraltar Historical Association*

[Home](#) [About](#) [Museum](#) [Tours](#) [Programs](#) [Join](#) [Donate](#) [Contact Us](#)



## OUR HERITAGE

Welcome to the Gibraltar Historical Association. As you plan your visit to Door County, be sure to include a stop at *The Historic Noble House* in the heart of the village of Fish Creek, Wisconsin.

## MUSEUM

Here you can experience Victorian life first hand through guided tours as well as special events and displays that change seasonally.

## PROGRAMS

We welcome you to our *Gibraltar Talks* and encourage you to visit the History Center behind the Noble House. Become involved with our active members and share any memories or pictures you have of Fish Creek. We'd love to meet you!

The Gibraltar Historical Association is located within the Alexander Noble House Museum in Fish Creek. Shown above is the association's website where a variety of historical information and photographs can be found.

# Demographics and Housing

This section summarizes Gibraltar's population and housing trends and projections. These demographic characteristics are important in predicting future population and housing needs over the 2023-2043 period and their influence on the town's infrastructure and community facility capacities.

- Population Trends
- Population Forecasts
- Housing Inventory
- Future Demand for Housing





## Population Trends

The community's population base has experienced fluctuations over the last several decades (Exhibit 1). From 2000 to 2020, Gibraltar gained 144 residents, which represents a 13 percent change.

Gibraltar's population base is somewhat affected by regional trends. The town has experienced growth similar to its neighboring communities in Door County since 2000.

**Exhibit 1: Population Trends**

	Town of Gibraltar	Town of Baileys Harbor	Town of Egg Harbor	Village of Ephraim	Door County	Wisconsin
2000	1,084	991	1,232	330	27,961	5,363,675
2010	1,021	1,022	1,342	288	27,785	5,686,986
2020	1,228	1,223	1,458	345	30,066	5,893,718
<b>Change 2010 to 2020</b>						
Number	207	201	116	57	2,281	206,732
Percent	20%	20%	9%	20%	8%	4%

Source: U.S. Census, 2020

## Population Distribution by Age

The median age in Gibraltar increased from 53.0 years in 2010 to 62.7 years in 2020. Median age trends should be considered when planning for the community service needs of the town as the population is expected to grow and age.

- Under 5 years: **2.5%**
- Under 18 years: **12.7%**
- 18 years and over: **87.3%**
- 65 years and over: **42.5%**

Between 2010 and 2020, Gibraltar's senior population (65 years and over) increased by 16.5 percent, while Gibraltar's youth (under 18 years) and young adult (18 years and over) population declined by 1.3 and 1.7 percent.

Source: U.S. Census, 2020

### Median Age Town of Gibraltar

**62.7**

Door County: 53.3

Wisconsin: 39.6

Source: US Census, 2020

## Population Forecasts

Population projections are an important factor necessary to assess the Town’s future housing, community facilities, services, and transportation needs.

Wisconsin Department of Administration projects that Gibraltar’s population will decline by 18.6% in 2040. Most of the neighboring communities as well as Door County will see decline in population except the Town of Egg Harbor which shows a slight (2.2%) increase. State of Wisconsin also shows increase in population by 2040.

Exhibit 2: Population Projections

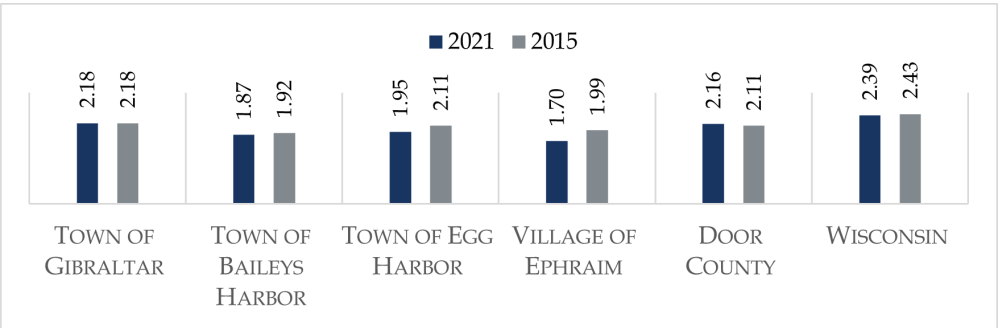
	Town of Gibraltar	Town of Baileys Harbor	Town of Egg Harbor	Village of Ephraim	Door County	Wisconsin
2020	1,228	1,223	1,458	345	30,066	5,893,718
2025	1,055	1,095	1,470	275	28,310	6,203,850
2035	1,040	1,110	1,520	255	27,755	6,476,207
2040	1,000	1,080	1,490	235	26,620	6,491,635
Change 2020 to 2040						
Number	-228	-143	32	-110	-3,446	597,917
Percent	-18.6%	-11.7%	2.2%	-31.9%	-11.5%	10.1%

Source: U.S. Census, 2020

## Housing Inventory

This section describes Gibraltar’s housing stock and occupancy characteristics. In some instances, this section compares the Town’s housing market to the county, state, and nearby local jurisdictions to understand Gibraltar’s role within the broader region.

Exhibit 3: Average Household Size



Source: ACS 5-Year Estimate, 2015 and 2021

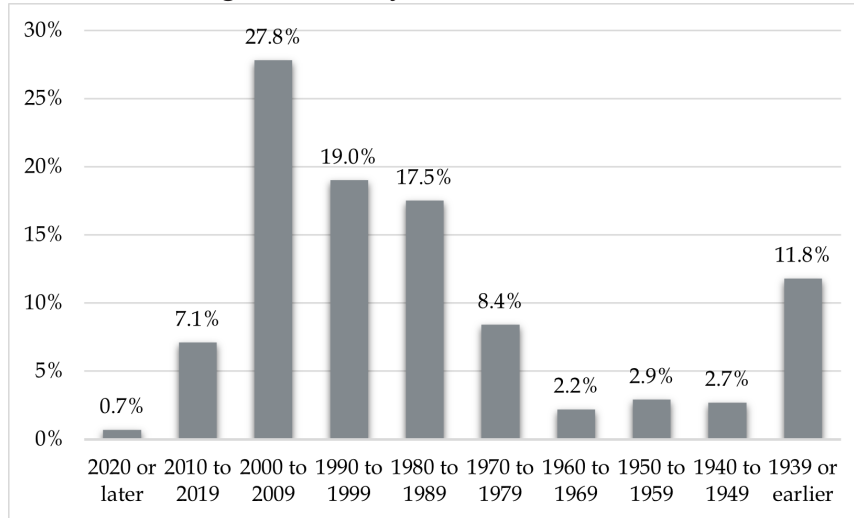
Household size similar to neighboring jurisdictions. Household size describes the number of people living in the household. Household size of Town of Gibraltar was 2.18 in 2021, which is similar to the household size of the neighboring communities (Exhibit 3).



## Housing Stock

The rate at which housing structures have been built has slowed in the past decade. Between 2010 and 2021, 106 new structures were built (less than six percent of the total housing), while 377 structures were built in the preceding ten years.

**Exhibit 4: Housing Structures by Year Built**



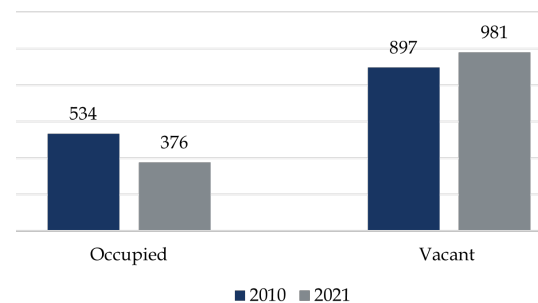
Source: ACS 5-Year Estimate, 2021

## Tenure and Occupancy

Between 2010 and 2021, the amount of vacant housing units in Town of Gibraltar increased by 9.6 percent (Exhibit 5). Of the 981 vacant housing units in the Town, 854 are used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. This accounts for 63% of the total housing units within Gibraltar. Other vacant units in the Town are used for rent (23 units), other vacant (23 units), for sale only (12 units), and migrant workers (8 units).

There were approximately 135 licenses in 2023 for short-term housing rentals in Gibraltar based on Town permits received.

**Exhibit 5: Residential Occupancy Trends, Town of Gibraltar**



Source: ACS 5-Year Estimate, 2010 and 2021

## Housing Mix

- Single-Family Detached Housing: 59.7%
- Single-Family Attached Housing : 3.8%
- Duplex, Triplex, and Quadplex Housing: 22.4%
- Multifamily Housing (with 5+units per structure): 13.5%
- Mobile Homes: 0.7%

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimate, 2021

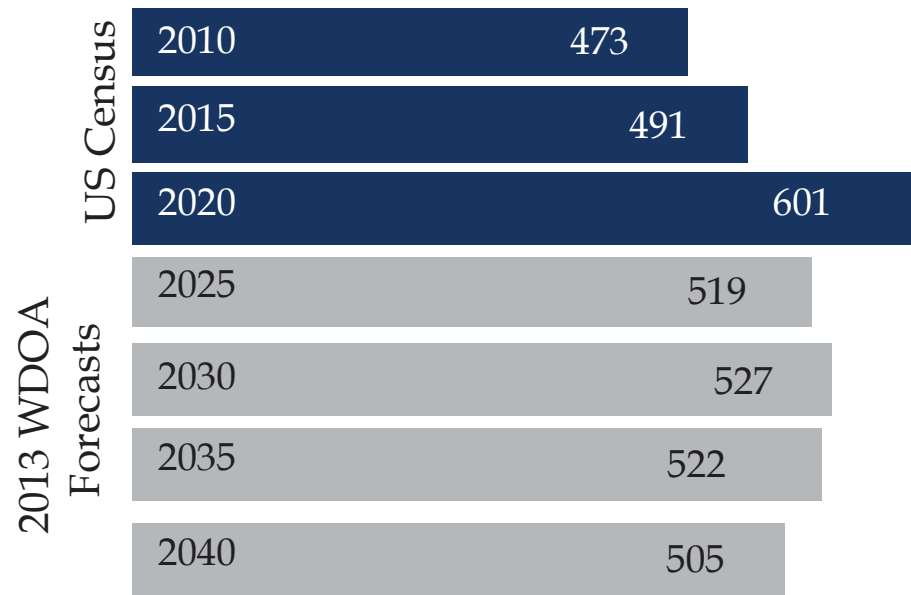
## Household Tenure (2021)

- Owner-Occupied 89.4%
- Renter-Occupied 10.6%

### Household Projections

According to the 2013 Wisconsin Dept. of Administration projections, households in Gibraltar are projected to decline over the next 20 years. According to the 2020 Decennial Census, Gibraltar contained 601 households. This number is projected to be at 527 in 2030 and drop to 505 by 2040 (see Exhibit 6).

Exhibit 6: Household Projections



### Housing Needs

According to the 2019 AECOM Door County Housing Study, the county has had a long-standing issue with a shortage of rental units and housing for seasonal workers. Also, the quality of these housing types was identified as a concern. The report’s analysis was done by three geographic areas of the county with the Town of Gibraltar being within the “Northern Door” area (i.e., everything north of the Town of Sevastopol). The study indicates the following housing needs in the Northern Door portion of Door County:

- Workforce Rental Apartments: 65 units, Rents need to be generally between \$500-1,000/month;
- Workforce Owner-Occupied Homes: 40 units, homes need to be priced between \$60,000- \$124,900;
- Senior Housing (Rental Apartments): 60 units;
- Senior Housing (Owner-Occupied): 295 units; 5) Seasonal Housing (beds): 70

# Cost and Affordability

The median house value in the Town of Gibraltar is \$389,100, which is higher than the county or state (Exhibit 7). Over 60% of houses are valued at \$300,000 or higher (Exhibit 7). Compared to the state, where 14 percent of households are valued under \$100,000, only three percent of households in Gibraltar are valued in that range.

Exhibit 7: Housing Value

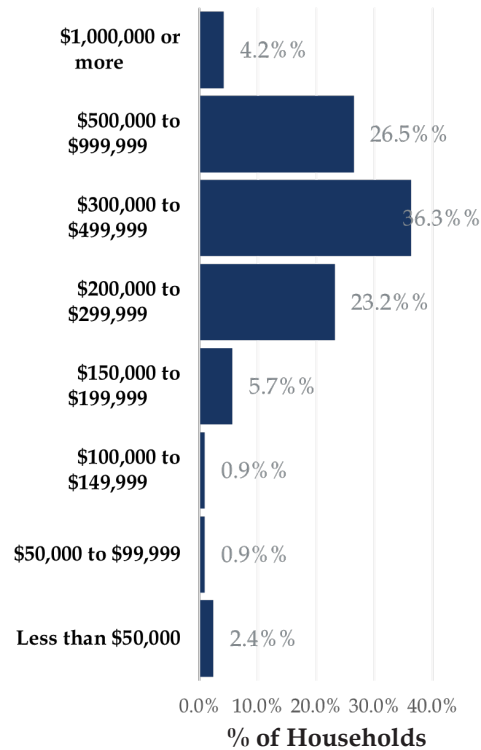
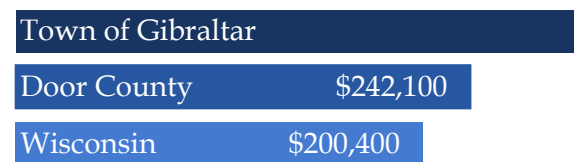


Exhibit 8: Estimated Median House Value



Source: ACS 5-Year Estimate, 2021

The median monthly mortgage costs more than double the median monthly gross rent. The median monthly mortgage cost is \$2,076, and the median monthly gross rent is \$883.

Median Monthly  
Mortgage Costs  
\$2,076



Median Monthly  
Gross Rent  
\$883

Source: Town of Gibraltar, ACS 5-Year Estimate, 2021

# Natural, Agricultural, and Cultural Resources

This section provides a summary of the natural and cultural resources in the Town of Gibraltar. An inventory gives the Town the background information it needs to develop strategies and plan for protecting, maintaining, and improving these resources. For a deeper dive into the natural and cultural resources of Gibraltar the Town should utilize the **Door County Comprehensive and Farmland Preservation Plan 2035** (2015) and the **Fish Creek Watershed Plan** (2017).

- Geology
- Hydrology
- Environmental Corridors
- Agricultural Resources
- Historic and Cultural Resources





## Geology

### Bedrock Geology

The primary bedrock layer found in Gibraltar is Silurian (Niagara) dolomite that is made up of historical deposition of marine sediments. This layer is seen throughout Gibraltar as exposed cliffs and ridges that are known as the Niagara Escarpment.

Features of this geologic layer can impact groundwater quality as surface water can more easily infiltrate the ground and be directly deposited into groundwater sources. Common sources of groundwater contamination are leaking private septic systems, animal waste, and pesticides and fertilizers. Door County maps karst features, specifically exposed rock, groundwater conduits, and sinkholes, on their online interactive mapping tool.

### Topography

The attractiveness of the Gibraltar area is due, in part, to a variety of topographic features. Controlled primarily by the underlying bedrock, these features can be grouped into three general categories of topographic expression. The first of these includes areas with relief more than 800 feet above mean sea level. The bluffs range in height from 120 to 170 feet in the northern portion of the Town, an area immediately south of Fish Creek, and an area within the southwest sections of the planning area.

Another group of topographic features includes the southern and eastern portions of the planning area draining to the east and southeast. This large area is characterized by a flat to gently rolling land surface occasionally marked by small depressions. The area slopes gently to the southeast.

The final topographic category consists of a low relatively level plain marked by several wetland areas in the Central area of Gibraltar. The area slopes northwesterly and is drained by Fish Creek.

### Soil Characteristics and Limitations

Soils in Gibraltar are mostly stony loamy sands to loams and tend to be shallow with exposures of the dolomite bedrock. The majority of Gibraltar is very limited for basements because of the depth to bedrock, slope, and the water table being close to the surface.

Scattered areas in the northern section and portions of the south are considered prime farmland in the Town according to the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.



Peninsula Niagara Escarpment  
by Gary Fewless, WI DNR



## Hydrology

### Watersheds and Sub Watersheds

Gibraltar is located wholly in the Upper Door County Watershed and has five sub-watersheds. Stormwater and snow melt from these watersheds ultimately flows into either Green Bay or Lake Michigan. As water flows across the land, it has the potential to pick up contaminants such as animal and human waste, pesticides, and fertilizers. To mitigate these impacts Gibraltar and the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point developed the *Fish Creek Watershed Plan*. This plan sets goals and objectives to decrease environmental degradation, increase fish and wildlife habitat, and increase accessibility to Fish Creek by taking a comprehensive watershed approach.

#### Vision for Fish Creek

*A Healthy Stream Ecosystem that Supports the Environmental and Economic Interests of the Community*

Fish Creek Watershed Plan, 2017

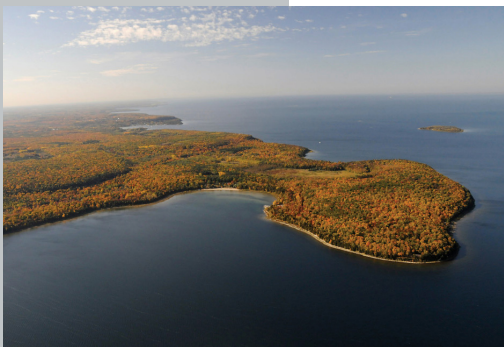


Thorp Pond by E. Epstein, WDNR

### Surface Waters

According to the WDNR Find a Lake and River Details, none of the surface waters in Gibraltar are listed as outstanding, exceptional, or impaired.

Mackaysee Lake and Mud Lake are both on Chambers Island and provide habitat for several species of fish. On the mainland, Thorp Pond is a 7-acre pond that has no public access, and Fish Creek and Ephraim Creek empty into separate harbors on Green Bay, which is the largest freshwater estuary in the world and located along Gibraltar's western shoreline. The Fish Creek Watershed drains a large portion of the township of Gibraltar. In December 2022, the Town used a WDNR River Management Grant to install a fish ladder on the concrete apron of the STH 42 culvert to allow fish to get past this barrier and into the wetlands to spawn.



Peninsula State Park by Dan Eggert, Peninsula Pulse

### Shoreline

Gibraltar has 28 miles of shoreline along Green Bay. The Niagara Escarpment can be seen throughout much of the shoreline. Most of the shoreline in Door County is developed with residential properties, but still maintains an extensive forest. In Gibraltar about half of the shoreline is undeveloped and located in the Peninsula State Park. Gibraltar's extensive shoreline draws in tourists and provides recreational opportunities.

## Floodplains

Floodplains are areas with the potential to experience flooding during weather events; 100-year floodplains have a 1% chance of flooding each year. Mapped floodplains in Gibraltar are located along Fish Creek, Fish Creek Harbor, Tennison Bay, and in Peil Creek in the south, and can be viewed on the Environmental Corridors Map of this document. Areas located in floodplains are predominantly wet environments that host streams, swamps, bogs, and river ecosystems. Development in these areas should be avoided because of the risk of property damage with flooding.

## Wetlands

According to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, wetlands are areas that have standing water long enough to support aquatic or hydrophilic vegetation. Wetlands are located throughout Gibraltar and tend to be in floodplains, lowland areas, and areas that water tends to pool.

Wetlands offer several beneficial ecosystem services such as water infiltration and retention during precipitation events, pollution filtration, carbon capture, fish spawning, recreational opportunities, and aesthetic benefits. The Fish Creek Watershed Plan has three main goals: Goal 1. Prevent the Degradation of Surface and Groundwater Quality in Fish Creek and its Watershed; Goal 2. Protect and Improve Fish and Wildlife Habitat; Goal 3. Fish Creek will be Accessible to the Community's Residents and Visitors. In addition the Plan directs the Town to continue its program to monitor Fish Creek through its Fish Creek Watershed Study and to continue its participation in the DNR's Water Action Volunteers program.

## Environmental Corridors

Environmental corridors refer to several features that protect biodiversity and provide for wildlife movement across the Town's landscape. These features include:

- Wetlands
- 100-year Floodplains
- Steep slopes (12% or greater), and
- The required setback area between a structure and a water body such as a river, stream, or lake.

Collectively, these features serve as a guidance tool to promote protection of areas with environmental significance from other land use influences. These areas within the town are illustrated on Map 1.

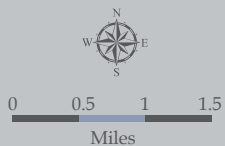


## Map 1: Environmental Corridors



### Environmental Corridors, Town of Gibraltar

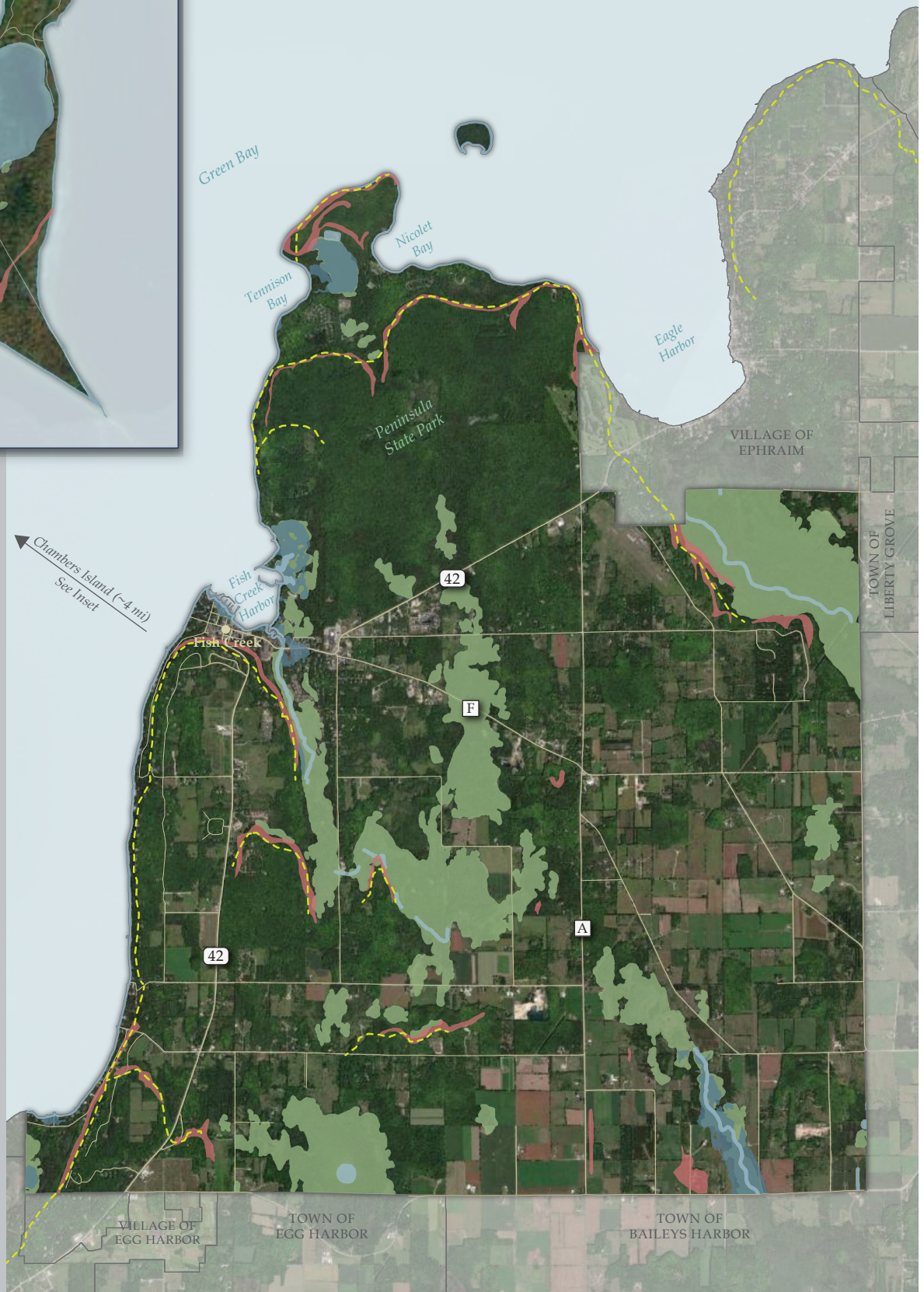
- Niagara Escarpment
- Steep Slope  
(12% or Greater)
- Surface Water  
(With a 75-Foot Setback)
- 100-Year Floodplain
- Wetlands  
(With a 50-Foot Setback)



**BAY LAKE**  
Regional Planning and Development

Sources: FEMA, 2009; NRCS, 2021; WDNR, 2021; Door County 2021, 2022; Bay-Lake RPC, 2022.

*Disclaimer: This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey and is not intended to be used as one. This drawing is a compilation of records, information, and data used for reference purposes only. Bay-Lake RPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.*



## Environmental Concerns

### Invasive Species

Invasive species have significant environmental and economic impacts. Established invasive species outside of their native ranges lack native predators to manage their populations and tend to outcompete native species and dominate ecosystems. This can lead to the degradation of habitats for native species and the reduction of recreational opportunities for people. Money spent on managing invasive species represents dollars that could have been utilized elsewhere if the species wasn't established in the first place.

### Threatened and Endangered Species

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) lists four species as either endangered, threatened, or proposed endangered in Gibraltar: Northern Long-eared Bat, Hine's Emerald dragonfly, land snail, Dwarf Lake Iris, and Pitcher's Thistle. The USFWS also lists Gibraltar as an area with critical habitat for the land snail, Hine's Emerald dragonfly, bald eagle, the goshawk, and the Dwarf Lake Iris. Additionally, the Monarch Butterfly is a candidate species, and the Tricolored Bat is proposed endangered.

### Climate

The Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts 2021 Assessment Report: Wisconsin's Changing Climate covers climate change impacts and solutions for air, land, water, the built environment, and people.

According to the report, Door County has seen an increase in 3° F and a 20% increase in annual precipitation since 1950. Temperature and precipitation projections show that Door County could see an increase in 2 to 8 degrees Fahrenheit temperature and about a 10% increase in precipitation by 2050. Days above 90° F are projected to increase to about 15 days per year. Fluctuations in temperatures and precipitations impacts agricultural cycles and people. Solutions for air and agricultural impacts include:

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Promote sustainable and restorative agricultural practices such as limited to no-till, cover crops, and rotational grazing
- Improve liquid manure storage and management

Communities on and near the coastlines of the Great Lakes are projected to continue to experience variable water levels, warmer waters, a decrease in water quality, and an increase in intense lake storms. These conditions impact the local economy and infrastructure, private and public property, and the entire ecosystem. Increases in water fluctuations will cause shoreline erosion and flooding that may require people to consider strategically retreating their homes or public infrastructure.

Solutions and mitigation strategies for coastal climate change impacts include:

- Increase resiliency planning efforts
- Preserve, protect, and/or restore the Town's water resources such as wetlands, floodplains, and shoreline to prevent flooding
- Increase stormwater retention
- Decrease nutrient and contamination runoff
- Monitor conditions
- Manage aquatic invasive species
- Consider nature-based solutions



Hine's Emerald Dragonfly, USFWS IPaC



Porous pavement and natural berm in the Village of Egg Harbor to prevent runoff and decrease water contamination, Rachel Lukas, Door County Pulse



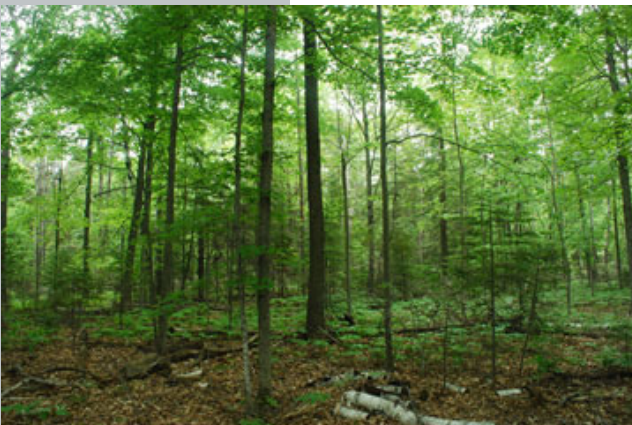
Impacts to human health will vary from local to the regional level and not everyone will be impacted equally. As temperatures increase, populations without access to air conditioning and especially older adults will see an increase in heat related injuries and fatalities. Increases in flooding events will cause physical damage to property, potentially cause groundwater contamination, and flood basements. Tick and mosquito populations will benefit from longer growing seasons. Solutions to mitigate human health impacts:

- Communicate and educate people on climate related health impacts

One of Gibraltar's primary economic drivers is tourism and the outdoor recreation opportunities that attract tourists. Seasonal temperature and precipitation changes could impact this industry. Extreme heat and intense storms during summer months make outdoor recreation difficult and potentially dangerous. Winter activities will be impacted by the projected decrease in snowfall with activities being limited to a shorter period or become not available at all. Solutions to mitigation impacts on tourism and outdoor recreation:

- Diversify outdoor recreation activities
- Increase beach safety and monitoring for hazardous impacts
- Increase access to outdoor recreation activities
- Protect vulnerable species through habitat restoration

The Town of Gibraltar is designated as a **Green Tier Legacy Community** focused on advancing sustainable practices. The efforts of the Green Tier Communities network will help the town integrate objectives into the future planning efforts and assist with building resiliency.



White Cliff Fen and Forest by Josh Mayer, WDNR

## Woodlands

Gibraltar has extensive woodlands throughout the town with the majority being located near the shorelines. According to the WDNR Northern Lake Michigan Coastal Ecological Landscape report, the remaining forests in Door County are mostly located in areas where bedrock is close to the surface and low-lying areas that are too wet for farming. The largest forests in the center portion of Door County tend to be wet conifer or hardwood swamps, while forests closer to and on the coastline tend to be mesic forests with northern hardwood species.

- Preserve, protect and/or restore large continuous tracts of forest to provide habitat for birds and wildlife.



## Significant and Scientific Natural Areas

The **Niagara Escarpment** is a defining feature in Door County and can be seen through Gibraltar. The escarpment is made up of dolomite that was exposed by the slow process of glaciers grinding down the softer shale found above the escarpment. The unique habitat is home to many rare, threatened, or endangered plant and animal species. Slow growing white cedars are located throughout the escarpment with some cedars being hundreds or even a thousand years old.

According to the WDNR, **Peninsula State Park** is one of Wisconsin's most complete state parks as it provides a diverse range of outdoor experiences and opportunities for visitors that include scenic overlooks of Green Bay, camping, beaches, and much more. The park was established in 1909 and is just above 3,800 acres in size and includes the 38-acre Horseshoe Island. Wetlands, grasslands, and forest ecosystems all exist in the park with forests being the most common ecosystem. The park contains a portion of the Niagara Escarpment and two State Natural Areas: the Peninsula Park White Cedar Forest (64 acres) and the Peninsula Park Beech Forest (83 acres).

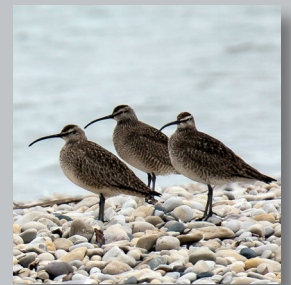
The **Thorp Pond State Natural Area** is a combination of several different and unique wetland ecosystems and can be found in the southern portion of Gibraltar. This state natural area is partially owned by the WDNR and private landowners. On DNR owned portion of Thorp Pond the public can hunt, fish, forage, and cross country ski.

The **White Cliff Fen and Forest State Natural Area** contains an undisturbed white cedar and hardwood forest that surrounds a calcareous fen and is 100 acres in size, according to the WDNR. This property is fully owned by the Door County Land Trust and contains hiking trails.

The **Peil Creek Headwaters**, protected by The Nature Conservancy, is a critical wetland habitat for the Hine's emerald dragonfly.

A unique feature of Gibraltar are the **islands** located off the coast of the Town. These islands include the Strawberry Islands chain, Chambers Island, Horseshoe Island, Adventure Island, Pirate Island, and Hat Island. Each of these islands provide valuable natural areas and resources for plant and animal life and habitats.

- **Chambers Island** is the second largest island (3,200 acres) in Door County located roughly 7.5 miles northwest of Fish Creek. The island is home to hiking and biking trails, beaches, a historic lighthouse, and its own inland lake. The Door County Land Trust maintains the Chambers Island Nature Preserve that is over 800 acres. Chambers Island is a high priority wildlife habitat primarily because of the number of species of birds which migrate and nest on the island, as well as its unique mix of hemlock and hardwood forests and wetlands. The entire island is also listed as a significant natural area by the National Estuarine research reserve (NERR) report.



Birds on Chambers Island,  
Naseem Reza, Fox 11

## Agricultural Resources

Farmland and farming operations are mostly located in the interior and near the western shoreline of Gibraltar. Products from these operations include, but are not limited to, timber, grain crops, berries and fruits, dairy products, and meat. Fruit and berry farming is unique to Door County and is ranked 6th in Wisconsin and 196th out of 2,748 counties in the nation according to the 2017 Agricultural Census. Fruit and berry production supports several related industries that include wineries, bakeries, and farmers markets that attracts tourists each year.

- Gibraltar contains approximately 5,400 acres of agricultural land.
- Door County contains 114,508 acres of farmland.
- In 2017 Door County fruit, tree nuts, and berry sales were \$5.5 million, with total produce sales reaching \$78 million.

Farmers in Door County utilize a mixture of land use practices to increase soil fertility and crop yield. Some new techniques that farmers have been using include reduced to no till, cover crops, developing nutrient management plans, and low disturbance manure application. These techniques not only mitigate environmental impacts but also reduce the amount farmers need to spend on fertilizers and other products while increasing yields.

## Door County Farmland Preservation Plan

The *Door County Comprehensive and Farmland Preservation Plan 2035*, effective January 2015, identifies areas that are of prime agricultural importance for which the landowners may partake in allowable tax credits under the Farmland Preservation Program.



No-till crop sowing at Brey Cycle Farms in Door County, Door  
Kewaunee Demo Farm Network Year 1 Annual Report

## Historic and Cultural Resources

Unlike many of the small communities on the peninsula, the Township of Gibraltar includes numerous historical, cultural, and archaeological features. These three essential resources are the qualities that entice visitors to our community, that drive the economy, and that sustain us into the future.

### Historic Resources

There are numerous buildings of historical significance within the Town of Gibraltar. The structures include homes, cottages, commercial buildings, farmhouses, and barns. Many of the sites are in the village, along the shoreline, and scattered throughout the rural farms and orchards.

#### Buildings on the National Register of Historic Places

The *Alexander Noble House*, built in 1875, is a ten-room home in the Greek Revival style located at the base of the Fish Creek hill. It is the oldest house still on its original site and was the first stick built house with lathe and plaster walls.

The *Vorous General Store*, (now Hide Side Boutique), is a vernacular Italianate commercial building built in 1895. The store rests on a stone foundation and it has a flat roof obscured by the parapet front and side walls.

The *Thorp House Inn* built by Freeman and Jesse (Kinsey) Thorp in 1903 is Victorian influenced with a steep, multi-gabled roof, dormers with windows and a wrap-around front porch including large bay windows.

The *Welcker Historic District* is a historic district that has been identified by our township. It includes the White Gull Inn and four cottages; the Whistling Swan; five cottages that are now part of the Cedar Court complex; the Lundberg House; the Church of the Atonement (1877) and the Community Church (1916).

The *Cottage Row Historic District* has also been identified by our township. It includes a strip of land between the Fish Creek bluff and the bay of Green Bay. It is comprised of summer residences the bulk of which were built before the 1920s. More recently there have been some changes made to these structures with some removed completely and new structures built.

The *Chambers Island Lighthouse* and the *Eagle Bluff Lighthouse* were built at the same time (1868) and of the same design. The Chambers Island light helps guide mariners from Lake Michigan to the Port of Green Bay. It is located on a 40 acre park that belongs to the Town of Gibraltar and is open to the public. The Eagle Bluff lighthouse is located in Peninsula State Park on a sheer bluff of the Niagara Escarpment. It was built to guide mariners through the Strawberry Island Channel. The lighthouse has been restored and is open to the public.



Alexander Noble House  
Museum

### Historic Stone Walls

Our township shares yet another distinctive historical feature of stone walls, patios, stairs, and grottos. These functional additions to properties are most prevalent along Cottage Row, but also can be seen in some parks and residences. Stone fences can be seen along country roads and surrounding fields depicting the 40-acre parcels from yesteryear. Winter's frost revealed stone every spring which was collected and added to fence lines. Split granite hardheads and beach stone were used decoratively in fireplaces, hearths, and foundations.

Stone walls, many built artfully by Henry Eckert, include:

- Cottage Row
- Noble Square
- Clark Park
- Champagne Rock
- Sunset Park
- Hide Side Leather
- Kinsey Property
- Anderson House

### Archaeological Sites

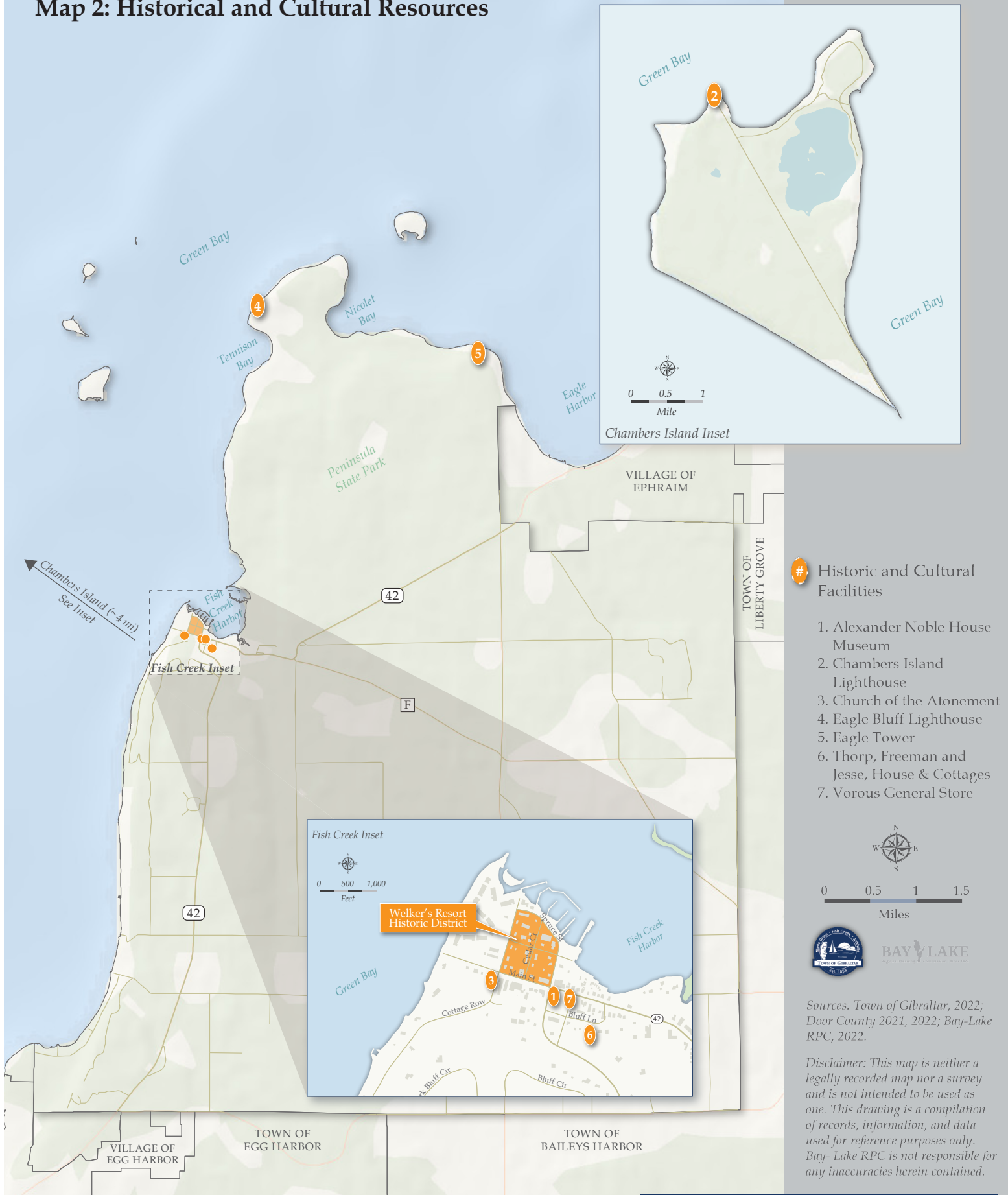
The township of Gibraltar has long been of interest to archaeologists. Archaeological digs in Fish Creek Park & at Nicolet Bay showed evidence of early people having lived there as long ago as 600-400 BC. One dig revealed a burial that was dated back to an encampment in 700-800 AD. Chambers Island too is a site where many historical artifacts such as arrowheads, spearheads, and ax heads have been found dating back 12,000 years ago to the Paleo Indians.



Chambers Island Lighthouse  
(Source: Town of Gibraltar)



## Map 2: Historical and Cultural Resources



## Cultural Resources

Cultural resources are omnipresent throughout the township as it has become the birthplace of many of the major art centers in Door County. The beauty of Fish Creek has attracted and created a canvas for every form of art, from the written word, to song, to visual images. The heritage of the arts dates to the beginnings of steamboat transportation and tourism.

### The Peninsula Arts Association

From 1937 - 2017, the nonprofit PAA provided financial support to launch the careers of many artists on the peninsula and gave legs to the organizations that still dominate our cultural landscape of today. Its mission was to bring artists together “and give other residents of the county a chance to share their inspiration”.

### Peninsula Players Theatre

Founded in 1935, Peninsula Players is the oldest American professional resident summer theatre company. It started as a theatre colony and outdoor playhouse in what is now Fish Creek Park. In 1937, it moved to the beautiful setting and facility on Peninsula Players Road.

### Peninsula Music Festival

The festival began in 1953 to bring classical music concerts to the community and visitors. First housed in the Gibraltar Area School’s Gymnasium, it was later moved to the new Door County Auditorium.

### Peninsula School of Art

Peninsula School of Art represents the influence of the arts beginning in 1960, when a colony of artists joined Madeline Tourtelot and began sharing and starting informal classes for all ages and all mediums. Since 2005, the nationally known Door County Plein Arts Festival has been provided by the Peninsula School of Art. Additionally, they have added an Artist in Residence program, built a new Children’s Addition and a new Adult Workshop-Studio.



Peninsula School of Art



### **Northern Sky Theater**

Northern Sky began as the Heritage Ensemble in 1970 to bring the art of storytelling through song to citizens and visitor alike. The popularity of this outdoor, folklore theater in Peninsula State Park grew and an indoor facility was built to extend the season. Both sites are used.

### **Door County Auditorium**

The Door County Auditorium is home of a year-round venue for performing arts, entertainment, cultural and educational activities. It is home to The Peninsula Music Festival, Door County Talks, Fireside Coffeehouse Series, Link Art Exhibits and Gibraltar Schools theater and music programs.

### **Write On, Door County**

Write On is the newest of the cultural art centers with a widespread campus and facility to inspire writers and poets, and educational writing center. The center provides classes, programs, and special events for all ages and experiences.



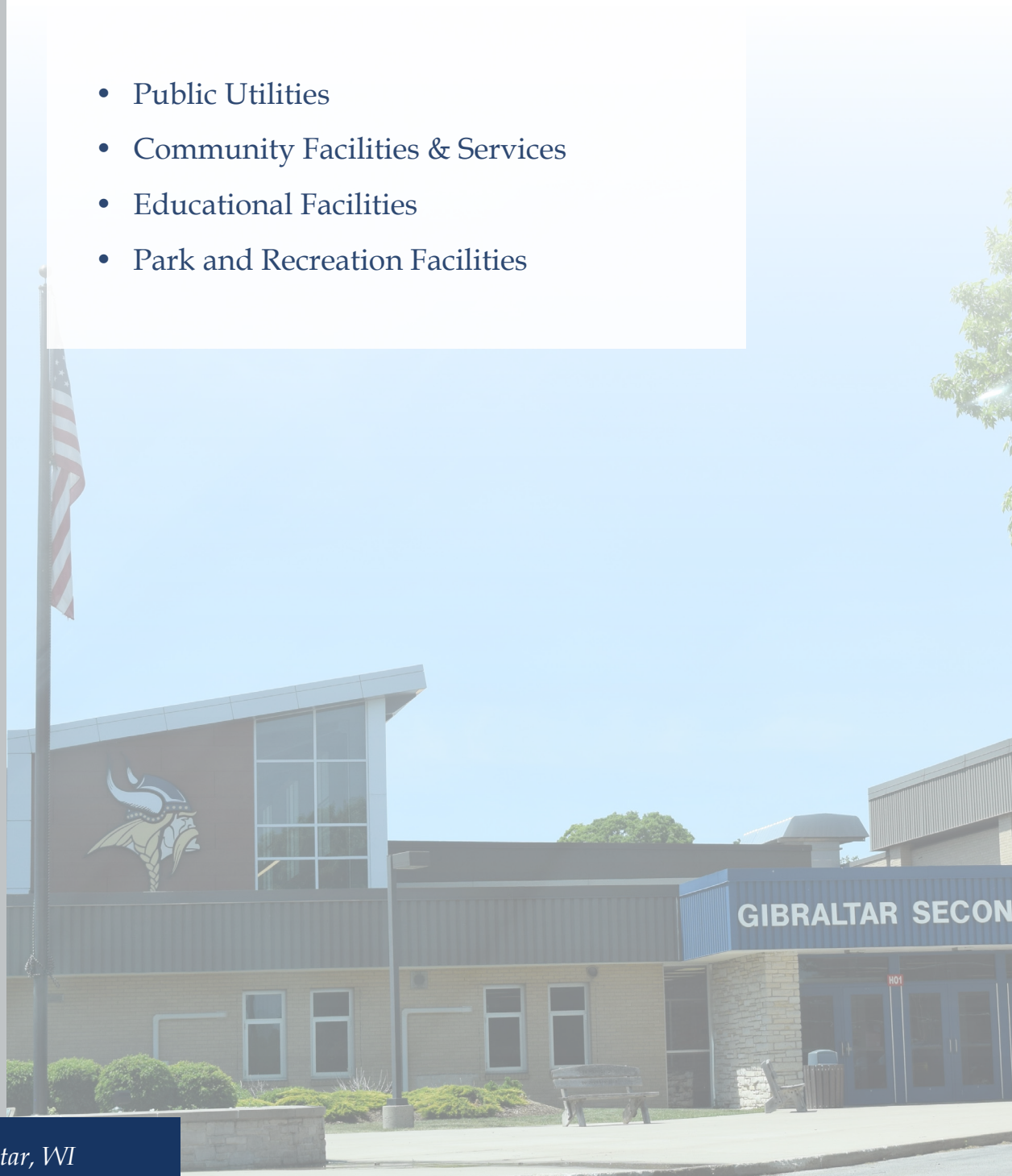
Write-On Door County

# Utilities and Community Facilities

Outlined in this section is an inventory of public utilities and community facilities in Gibraltar. Utilities and community facilities are assumed to be adequate to meet the community's needs over the 2023 to 2043 planning period, unless otherwise noted.

Capacity and sufficiency determinations were based on conclusions formed by thorough engagement with town staff. The sufficiency of privately-owned facilities were not evaluated in this plan.

- Public Utilities
- Community Facilities & Services
- Educational Facilities
- Park and Recreation Facilities



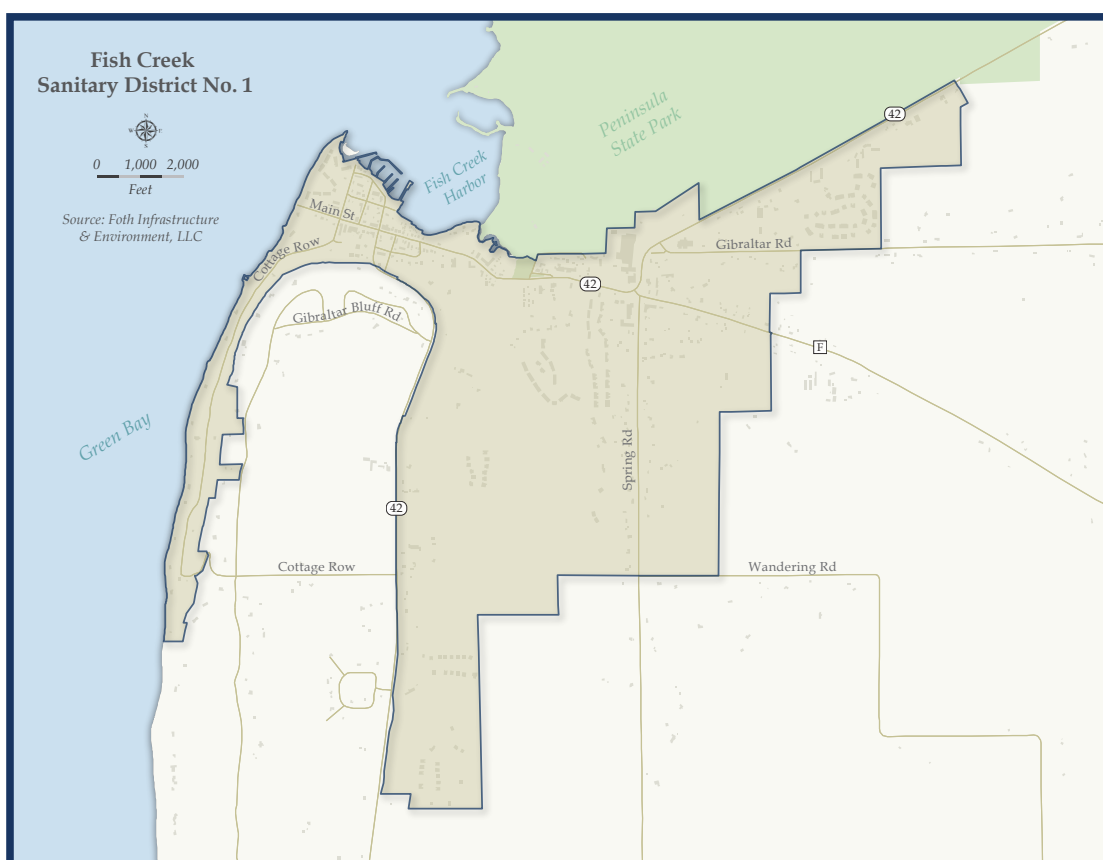
## Public Utilities

### Sanitary Sewer and Wastewater Treatment

The Town of Gibraltar created the Fish Creek Sanitary District 1 Wastewater Treatment Facility to enable the effective treatment of wastewater within the unincorporated village of Fish Creek and the more densely populated areas of the Town. The Fish Creek Sanitary District commenced operations in 1984 after construction of the core section of the wastewater collection system and a basic treatment plant. The treatment plant was upgraded in 1990 as the population continued to grow and the wastewater collection system expanded. The current service area is shown on Map 3.

Residents not served by public sewer utilize private on-site wastewater treatment systems (POWTS). A majority of the systems are conventional or mound systems with a scattering of experimental fill and at-grade systems and some in-ground pressure systems.

**Map 3: Sanitary District 1, Town of Gibraltar**



### Storm Sewer

The Town of Gibraltar allows stormwater to drain through a series of ditches and culverts along the Town roads as well as through a small storm sewer system in the village of Fish Creek that includes culverts, piping, and grates.



**Wastewater Treatment Facility Sign**

## **Water Supply**

Both surface and groundwater in Gibraltar is used for domestic, industrial, commercial, agricultural, and public purposes.

The Town of Gibraltar does not have a public water system. The primary source of drinking water for the Town of Gibraltar is groundwater. The Silurian dolomite system, containing the Niagaran and Alexandrian aquifers, is the major source of groundwater in the area.

Private wells have the potential to be affected due to the geology of the area, where groundwater is easily impacted by surface activities and surface waters. Due to Door County's high risk for groundwater contamination, the county has requirements above and beyond the typical state requirements for well-drilling in place, such as additional casing requirements.

## **Power Generation**

Wisconsin Public Service Corporation provides Gibraltar with electric power. Electrical power is transmitted through a 69,000-volt transmission line extending from Sturgeon Bay to substations located in Sister Bay and Egg Harbor. The system has a 14.4 kV phase to ground and a 24.9 kV phase-to-phase voltage capacity.

The Town is not supplied with natural gas service at this time. Residents and businesses have individual on-site tanks for liquid propane or fuel oil, as well as wood stoves and pellet stoves.

## **Renewable Energy**

Renewable energy is from sources that may be maintained in a constant supply over time including water, solar, wind, biomass, and geothermal energy. The Town encourages its residents and businesses to explore renewable energy sources that can reduce the negative environmental impacts of burning fossil fuels.

## **Solid Waste and Recycling**

The Town contracts with a private hauler for garbage pick up and recycling. There are two recycling drop off sites offered by Going Garbage for the residents of Gibraltar.

## **Telecommunications and Internet**

Broadband and cellular service in the Town is available from several providers. The Town has developed a Community Broadband Committee to work on internet service provider recommendations for the community.



## Community Facilities and Services

### Town Center

The Town Center located at 4097 Main Street, has undergone remodeling to the existing building as well as adding a new addition to the facility. The facility now houses conference rooms, the Fish Creek Visitor Center, Post Office, library, restrooms, and offices for town officials.

An expansion for public parking and boat trailer parking has been added adjacent to the Town Center. In recent years an electric car charging station has been added on the south side of the building.

### Old Town Hall

The Old Town Hall is located at 4176 Maple Street. The facility features a kitchen area, a stage for performances, restrooms, and is available for rent for private and non-profit events.

### Town Maintenance Building

The Town of Gibraltar Maintenance Building is located 3478 CTH F. The structure was built in 2017 and contains the equipment necessary for the upkeep of Town grounds/roads and Town-owned facilities.

### Town Parking Lot

The Town's public parking lot is located at 4097 Main Street (STH 42) just past the Gibraltar Town Center. The lot contains over 130 car parking spaces and over 60 boat trailer parking spaces.

## Protective Services

### Gibraltar Police Department

The Gibraltar Police Department is located at the Town Center. The department is staffed by the Police Chief during the non-peak parts of the year with an additional officer in the peak activity periods during the summer and fall. In addition the department coordinates with the Door County Sheriff's Department and the Town of Gibraltar Fire & Rescue Department as necessary.

### Gibraltar Fire & Rescue

The Gibraltar Fire & Rescue is located at 3496 CTH F, is comprised of local on call firefighters, including a full time fire chief.

There are mutual aid agreements with all fire departments in Door County and the surrounding counties of Kewaunee and Brown through the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS). MABAS is a mutual aid measure that may be used for deploying fire, rescue, and emergency medical services personnel in a multi-jurisdictional and/or multi-agency response.

### Gibraltar Fire and Rescue, Chambers Island Station

The Gibraltar Fire and Rescue station on Chambers Island is located at 10969 Island Drive.



Gibraltar Old Town Hall



Gibraltar Fire & Rescue



## Cemeteries

Blossomberg Cemetery is located inside Peninsula State Park and was established in 1904. The cemetery is limited to Town of Gibraltar property owners.

The Juddville Cemetery is located on the western side of State Highway 42 north of Peninsula Players Road.

## Care Facilities

Door County Medical Center, located in the City of Sturgeon Bay, is the only hospital in the county. The medical center provides a wide range of specialties, including Primary Care, the Women's and Children's Center, the Door Orthopedic Center, Behavioral Health, General Surgery, the Door County Cancer Center, a skilled nursing facility, and rehabilitation services facilities. A satellite clinic is also located in the Village of Sister Bay.

YMCA's Northern Door Program Center offers before and after school childcare, however, there are no full-time child development centers in the Town of Gibraltar. There are several preschools and child care centers in the adjacent communities that are dedicated to providing families with safe, quality childcare. Private childcare providers can also be found in surrounding communities.

The Town encourages the development of health and residential service facilities to include healthcare, elderly care, and childcare to meet the emerging needs of the community.

## Education Facilities

### Gibraltar Area School District

The Town belongs to the Gibraltar Area School District whose facilities are located in the Fish Creek. The Gibraltar Area School District includes an elementary school, middle school, and high school. The district serves the population of Door County found north of the Town of Sevastopol, not including

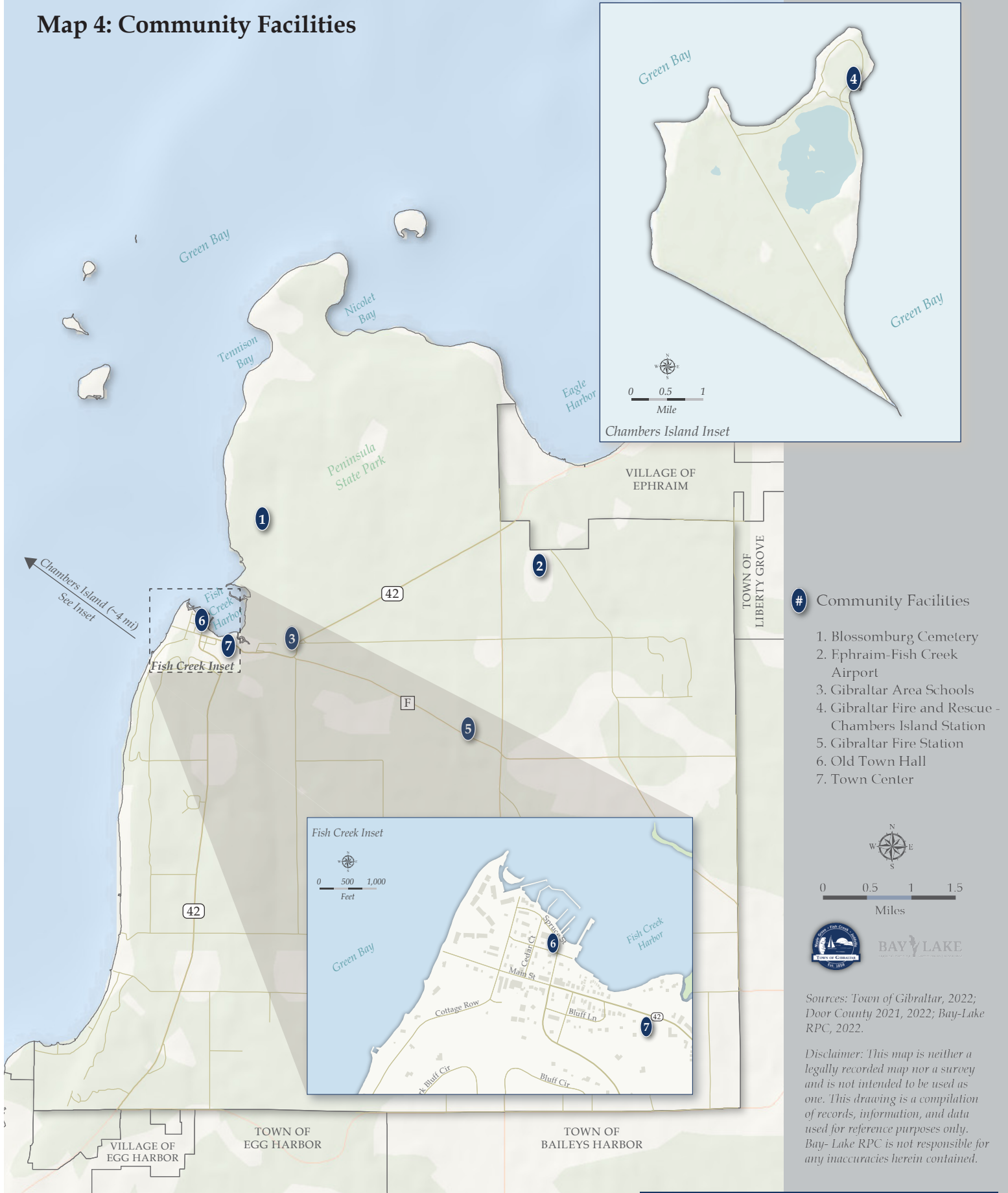
Washington Island. Communities served include Gills Rock, Ellison Bay, Sister Bay, Ephraim, Fish Creek, Egg Harbor and Baileys Harbor.



### NWTC Sturgeon Bay

Northeast Wisconsin Technical College (NWTC) has a Community & Regional Learning Center located in the Sturgeon Bay. The Sturgeon Bay facility offers programs and classes in business, healthcare, agriculture, diesel equipment, hotel and restaurant management, and much more.

## Map 4: Community Facilities



## Park and Recreation Facilities

**Champagne Rock Park:** Champagne Rock is located on the western side of Cottage Row. A narrow flagstone path of steps leads to an overlook of the water.

**Clark Park:** Clark Park occupies 1.16 acres of land adjacent to the Fish Creek Dock. The park consists of green space with a walkway that overlooks the harbor.

**Fish Creek Dock:** From the earliest days of the Town to the present day the Fish Creek Dock has always been a center of activity. Once serving the Town's lumbering and fishing trade, it evolved to serve visitors as a transportation hub and now as a center for water recreation. The marina offers seasonal, transient and a limited number of complimentary (2 hour) spaces for vessels. It currently provides two launch ramps, a dock house, a fuel dock and pump out station, restrooms, and showers. The Town has recently purchased an adjoining property (2022) to expand the marina and provide additional public access to the waterfront.

**Fish Creek Park:** Fish Creek Park (1998) is located on the east end of Main Street. Its purchase by the Town was made possible with a DNR Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Grant. It was previously the site of the Bonnie Brook Motel and is the birthplace of the Peninsula Players. Fish Creek, from which the Town takes its name, runs through this 27.9 acre park that contains wetland, wooded areas, and open space. It is known for its recreational walking trails, including the Peninsula Players Trail, and the Butterfly Loop. An information kiosk and a small gazebo are located at the beginning of the trails for visitors.

**Fish Creek Public Beach:** The Fish Creek Public Beach located on Main Street offers green space, a small playground, a dock with benches to view the water and a beach area with swimming accessibility. The new bathhouse has four family bathrooms and two changing rooms.

**Fish Creek Volleyball Courts:** The Town has three sand volleyball courts located on the edge of the Ephraim Gibraltar Airport property on County A between Highway 42 and Gibraltar Road. Northern Door Volleyball League holds their league games here. All other times during daylight hours the courts are open for public use.

**Noble Square:** Noble Square is adjacent to the Alexander Noble House Museum. It is a large, shaded area with benches, picnic tables, a gazebo where free concerts are held during the season and public restrooms.

**Sunset Park:** Sunset Park is known for its beautiful sunsets over the bay of Green Bay. It is located on the far western end of Main Street. It offers a wooded path with an open lawn area that can be rented for private events.

**Ula Park:** Ula Park is located next to the Harbor Guest House. An easement agreement between the Town of Gibraltar and the North Point Development Corporation resulted in the Town obtaining the park. This small park offers views of the harbor.

**Gibraltar School District Recreational Facilities:** The Gibraltar Area Schools are located on State Highway 42. The recreational facilities that the district offers are baseball diamonds, tennis courts, track, and football field.



Champagne Rock Park



Sunset Beach Public Park



Clark Park





**Door County YMCA:** The YMCA's Northern Door Program Center offers cardio, strength training equipment, and health and wellness services. The attached Aquatic Center features a six-lane pool and separate wading pool. This facility also offers several indoor and outdoor amenities for youth and adults.



**Peninsula State Park:** Peninsula State Park is one of many state parks within Wisconsin. The park is 3,776 acres with 8 miles of shoreline located within the Town of Gibraltar. It is owned and maintained by the Department of Natural Resources. The state park offers a variety of recreational opportunities. Some activities include camping, hiking trails, cross country and snowmobiling trails, beaches, and picnic areas. Other highlights within the state park are the 1868 Eagle Bluff Lighthouse, 18-hole peninsula golf course, the nature center, and Eagle Tower, a newly constructed 75-foot tower with a wheelchair accessible ramp. The newly constructed tower with a ramp that is wheelchair accessible opened up in April 2022. The new ramp winds its way 850 feet through the tree canopy, giving visitors a new vantage point to observe the park's flora and fauna. A large portion of the park is forested and is protected land as a state park. The large amount of undeveloped forested land makes the park a prime natural area for visitors.







An aerial view shows the Eagle Tower within Peninsula State Park, Image Source: Door County Pulse

# Economic Development

To better understand the factors that influence Gibraltar's economy, this section summarizes the town's economic development opportunities, considers socio-economic characteristics, economic base, and thoughts shared by the community.

- Socio-Economic Characteristics
- Economic Base
- Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
- Employment Forecast





## Socio-Economic Characteristics

### Labor Force

As of 2021, 53 percent of residents of the Town of Gibraltar are part of the civilian labor force (i.e., persons 16 years of age or older who are employed or seeking employment). The state average is 65 percent. There were approximately 159 workers aged 16 to 54 who worked full-time, year round in Gibraltar in 2021.

*Source: U.S. Census, ACS 5-year data, 2021*

### Seasonal Employees

The Exchange Visitor (J) non-immigrant visa category is for individuals approved to participate in work- and study-based exchange visitor programs.

In 2022, J-1 Visa, Summer Work Travel program had approximately 34 participants within the zip code 54202 and 30 participants in the 54212 zip code. Information on the summer work travel program can be found on the BridgeUSA page of the U.S. Department of State's website.

### Education

Over half of the town's population that are 25 years of age or older have at least a bachelor's degree level of education. This is over 20 percent higher than both the county's and state's education level.

### Commuting

Commuting patterns highlight the communities that have a strong economic base and the ability to attract workers from surrounding communities. Identifying and tracking these patterns is a labor market concept that refers to worker flows between communities.

In addition, commuting patterns demonstrate which areas lack local employment opportunities for their residents, or simply serve as "bedroom communities," which offer more affordable housing options in comparison to other locations.



Economic Base

Earnings

- Median earnings of the Gibraltar labor force is \$26,815.
- Average earnings for full-time, year-round workers in Gibraltar is about \$70,761.

Source: U.S. Census, ACS 5-year data, 2021



Occupation

The largest portion of Gibraltar’s working residents are employed in management, business, science, and arts occupations. These fields have grown by four percent since 2000, when 35 percent of residents held jobs in these occupations.

Exhibit 9: Persons Employed by Occupation

Occupation	2000		2016-2021	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	193	35%	142	39%
Service occupations	105	19%	78	21%
Sales and office occupations	129	24%	80	22%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	51	9%	33	9%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	70	13%	35	10%

Source: 2021: ACS 5-Year Estimates

Industry

In 2021, the industries with the greatest number of employees were arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services (see Exhibit 10).

From 2000 to 2021, the industries that experienced the most employment growth were professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services, which almost doubled in the percent of residents working in those industries.



**Exhibit 10 : Persons Employed by Industry**

	Town of Gibraltar		Door County		Wisconsin	
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	368		14,531		2,991,136	
Industry	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	2	0.5%	449	3.1%	63,359	2.1%
Construction	44	12.0%	1,285	8.8%	191,304	6.4%
Manufacturing	14	3.8%	2,170	14.9%	538,994	18.0%
Wholesale trade	0	0.0%	244	1.7%	74,744	2.5%
Retail trade	31	8.4%	1,733	11.9%	341,415	11.4%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	15	4.1%	641	4.4%	154,317	5.2%
Information	7	1.9%	194	1.3%	44,009	1.5%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	28	7.6%	706	4.9%	187,056	6.3%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	67	18.2%	1,309	9.0%	269,609	9.0%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	66	17.9%	2,599	17.9%	692,766	23.2%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	70	19.0%	1,886	13.0%	205,221	6.9%
Other services, except public administration	12	3.3%	968	6.7%	119,611	4.0%
Public administration	12	3.3%	347	2.4%	108,731	3.6%

Source: U.S. Census, 2021

## Tourism

The Town of Gibraltar thrives as a major tourist destination, especially with attributes that include Peninsula State Park, a variety of water-based and land-based recreation amenities, unique shopping experiences, the Niagara Escarpment, beautiful scenery, and the communities of Maple Grove, Juddville, and Fish Creek. The community of Fish Creek was voted the #1 small-town getaway destination by Midwest Living Magazine making the land use recommendations for this long-range planning project very impactful to the Town's current and future residents and many visitors.

Door County tourism by the numbers:

- Total Business Sales 2021: \$531 M; 33.7% increase from 2020
- Direct Visitor Spending 2021: \$423 M; 39.1% increase from 2020
- Employment in Tourism Industry 2021: 3,323; 21.1% increase from 2020
- Total Labor Income 2021: \$102.5 M; 27.5% increase from 2020
- State and Local Taxes 2021: \$42.7 M; 31.2% increase from 2020

## Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

This section summarizes Gibraltar's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats from an economic development perspective. Findings are based on economic analysis, field visits, and public input via an online workshop.

### Strengths

- *Established tourism base.* Door County is well known for its strong summer tourist season, with Fish Creek is one of the most popular destinations. The Town hosts arts, long-standing theaters, outdoor concerts, and more. The Fish Creek Information Center communicates information to visitors and exhibits historic information for residents and visitors.
- *Family-oriented community.* Gibraltar is a community where families enjoy quality amenities, parks to play in, quality school, safe neighborhoods, etc.
- *Location and natural features.* The Town has nearly 30 miles of Great Lakes shoreline on the bay of Green Bay and Wisconsin's "most complete" park, Peninsula State Park. The Niagara Escarpment, one of the state's most significant natural features, runs through the Town, creating striking landscapes and waterfront.
- *Historic charm and quaintness.* The Town is characterized by historic charm, quaintness, and safety. The Town values its history and has existing infrastructure to support day-to-day exploration by both locals and visitors.

### Weaknesses

- *Workforce housing.* Because of the robust tourism season, workforce grows significantly for part of the year, but affordable housing is not readily available for seasonal employees.
- *Bicycle and pedestrian facilities.* There are limited parks and trails connection opportunities for cyclists and pedestrians to move safely within the Town and between adjoining communities.
- *Traffic congestion.* There is need for more efficient, effective, and safe movement of people and vehicles within the Town.
- *County zoning.* There is a lack of zoning control, citing violations, and administering corrective actions.

## Opportunities

- *Public transit.* To mitigate congestion and bolster accessibility, the Town could implement a shuttle in and around Town and to public parking. Public transportation interconnected with other communities would increase accessibility. Incentives could be provided for businesses to provide transportation.
- *Workforce housing.* Workforce housing grants or collaborative efforts with businesses could be considered to support the influx of seasonal workers during tourism spikes.
- *Parks and trails connections.* Consider feasibility and implement safe walking and biking route between Egg Harbor, Fish Creek, and Ephraim.
- *Tax Incremental District.* Tax Incremental District #1 provides opportunity for development and redevelopment projects.
- *Heritage tourism.* Promotion of the cultural, historic, and natural and agricultural resources that constitute the Town's numerous heritage tourism sites.

## Threats

- *Land use controls.*
  - Additions of large number of condos impact the small town charm and atmosphere.
  - Lack of zoning control may allow businesses or hotels to build in Fish Creek and change the feel of the downtown.
  - Short-term vacation homes are prominent and need to be regulated and controlled.
- *Lack of affordable housing.* Lack of affordable housing for seasonal employees impacts employees, businesses, and fire department or emergency service volunteers.
- *Converting downtown character.* Possible conversion of the uniqueness and quaintness of downtown Fish Creek to a typical modern urban streetscape.
- *Infrastructure degradation.* Mass tourism takes a toll on Town infrastructure. Expansion of infrastructure and services for part of the year requires more Town employees, maintenance, fire, and police at the expense of taxpayers.

## Affordable Housing

*as defined by the 2019 AECOM  
Door County Housing Study*

### Affordable housing, individual level:

Housing, including utilities, etc., which costs no more than 28-30% of your gross household income.

### Affordable housing, community level:

Housing which people of median income or below can rent or purchase for no more than 28-30% of gross household income, exclusive of other debt.

## Visit Fish Creek

Visit Fish Creek's efforts are made possible by the support of its many member businesses. The organization continues to promote the Town of Gibraltar and area communities to foster economic growth of the region.

Each of Visit Fish Creek's member-businesses are featured on its website: [visitfishcreek.com](http://visitfishcreek.com), along with image galleries, media links, etc.



# FISH CREEK



## Destination Door County

Formerly the Door County Visitor Bureau, Destination Door County's mission is to inspire travel that drives community enhancement. Through innovation and partnerships, we will share stories of Door County's people and places, deliver world-class experiences, strengthen the industry, work to ensure all travelers feel welcome, and preserve Door County's way of life and its natural resources.



## Door County Coastal Byway

The Door County Coastal Byway is a 66-mile scenic loop showcasing breathtaking views of Lake Michigan, the Bay of Green Bay and the Niagara Escarpment bluffs and quaint shore-side towns and villages, including Gibraltar and Fish Creek.

## Door County Economic Development Corporation

The Door County Economic Development Corporation (DCEDC) is a public/private partnership dedicated to improving the economic vitality of the county and its residents. DCEDC partners with companies and entrepreneurs to help build successful businesses in Door County and continuously improve the area's economic climate. It's a relationship that allows businesses to tap into the expertise of area leaders, and provides them with access to a variety of local, state and federal resources.



## Employment Forecast

Wisconsin's Department of Workforce Development (WDWD) projects that employment in the Bay Area Region (in which Gibraltar is located) will grow at an average annual growth rate of 8.78 percent between 2020-2030. The Town of Gibraltar can monitor business growth and development to better track future employment trends to determine if the Town is following historic trends of Door County or future projections for the larger Bay Area Region.

According to the WDWD's occupational projections for the state between 2020 and 2030, the following are the top 10 occupations forecast to have the greatest number of openings:

- Production Occupations
- Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations
- Office and Administrative Support Occupations
- Sales and Related Occupations
- Transportation and Material Moving Occupations
- Healthcare Support Occupations
- Business and Financial Operations Occupations
- Construction and Extraction Occupations
- Education; Training; and Library Occupations
- Personal Care and Service Occupations

The top two occupation groups in the state, for comparison, are Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations and Office and Administrative Support Occupations. The Office and Administrative Support Occupation also has a negative growth rate for both the state and the Bay Area.



# Transportation

The town's transportation system plays an important role in the facilitation of an area's land use, economy and all-around development. A well-designed and maintained transportation system provides efficient, reliable, and safe ways for residents to get to their businesses, places of work, homes, and schools. While planning for the location and density of future developments, priorities need to be set and evaluated for their impact on the town's transportation system.

This chapter provides an inventory of the transportation amenities in the Town of Gibraltar and identifies some of the methods of establishing and maintaining a comprehensive and balanced transportation system that serves residents, businesses, and visitors.

- Existing Transportation System
- Other Transportation Modes
- State and National Transportation Trends
- Applicable Transportation Plans



## Existing Transportation System

This section presents an inventory of transportation modes available in Gibraltar, as well as information and related maps.

### Roads and Highways

Gibraltar's primary transportation infrastructure is its roadways. Map 6 displays the Town's roadway network and highlights its functional classifications. The Town's functional classifications, as defined by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, include:

- **Minor Arterial:** Minor arterials carry moderate traffic volumes and serve inter-community trips. Gibraltar's minor arterial, STH 42, connects with collectors such as CTH's A and F.
- **Collectors:** Collectors collect and distribute traffic between local roads and arterials. They intersect neighborhoods and direct traffic to the arterial system for longer through trips. Gibraltar contains several collectors; including CTH's A and F.
- **Local Roads:** Local roads provide access to adjacent land and provide for travel over relatively short distances. All roads not classified as arterials or collectors are local function roads.

An account of mileage data, respective of Gibraltar's functional classifications is detailed in Exhibit 11.



### Map 6: Functional Classification of Roads

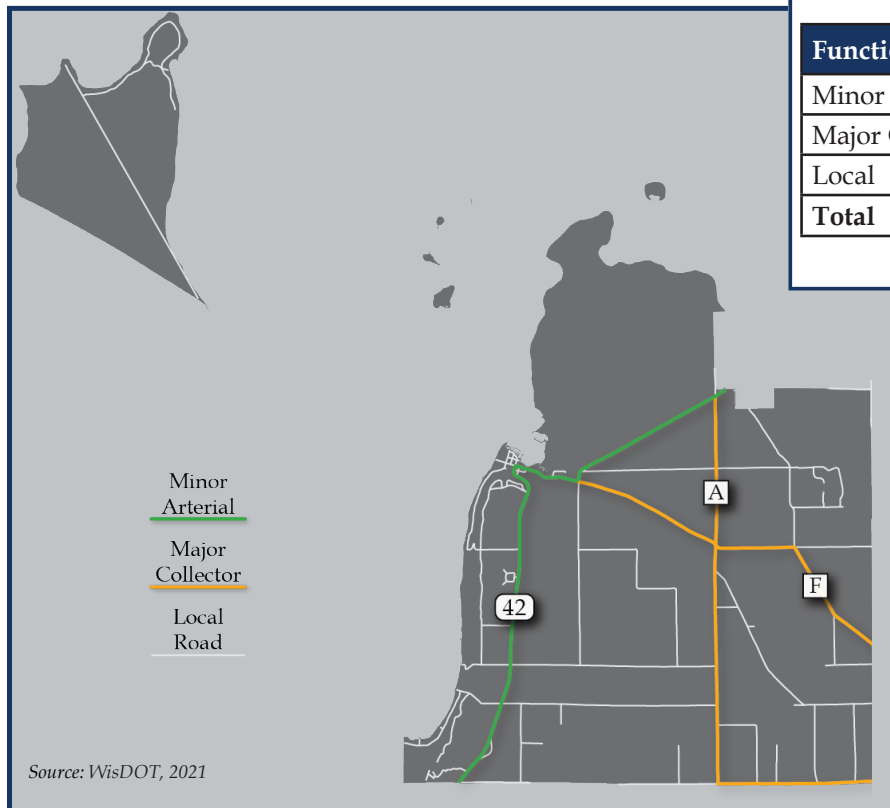


Exhibit 11: Road Mileage

Functional Classification	Mileage
Minor Arterial (State HWY)	7.44
Major Collector (County HWY)	12.34
Local	54.15
<b>Total</b>	<b>73.93</b>

Source: WisDOT, 2021



## Traffic Counts

State highway 42 runs through the west side of the Door County and connects the Town of Gibraltar to other parts of the region. According to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) the average annual daily traffic reached 5,100 on this stretch of STH 42.

For more information on average annual daily traffic throughout the town, WisDOT maintains an interactive website containing this information. The TCMMap (Traffic Count Map) can be found on WisDOT's website.

## Safety Analysis

The UW-Madison Traffic Operations and Safety (TOPS) Laboratory maintains a record of motorized and non-motorized crashes within Wisconsin. *Community Maps - Wisconsin County TSC Crash Mapping* provides Wisconsin's law enforcement agencies and county Traffic Safety Commissions with a statewide map of all police reported motor vehicle crashes from 2010 to the current year.

For the most up-to-date crash information for Gibraltar, visit the WisTransPortal system that serves the computing and data management needs of the TOPS Laboratory.

## Other Transportation Modes

### Air Transportation

The nearest commercial-passenger and air freight service for residents of Gibraltar is provided by Austin Straubel International Airport located near the City of Green Bay.

Ephraim-Gibraltar Airport is a public use airport located on the east of Fish Creek and is owned by the Village of Ephraim and the Town of Gibraltar. The airport has two runways and is used for single-engine aircraft and helicopters.



Ephraim Gibraltar Airport

### Active Transportation & Connectivity

The *Fish Creek Waterfront Master Plan* highlights some transportation-related key issues such as congestion, public access to the water, and wayfinding. New trails, better signage, and improved access to the water are some of the proposed elements of the plan.

Some of the proposals for enhancing walkability and bikability proposed in the plan are new trail segments to connect the bike trails. Retaining the intimate feel of the Town was recommended by proposing enhancements such as a new park, public art, a pedestrian overlook, and access to Fish Creek.





## Transportation Service Providers

Door County provides Door 2 Door Rides (D2D), a shared-ride taxi service open to all travelers. D2D operates county wide except for Washington Island, providing accessibility to transit for non-motorized owners, elderly and disabled. D2D offers on demand, shared rides in wheelchair accessible vans through a third-party contractor. Passengers who are 60 years old or older, students between the ages of 3 and 22, and disabled passengers pay a half-priced fare.

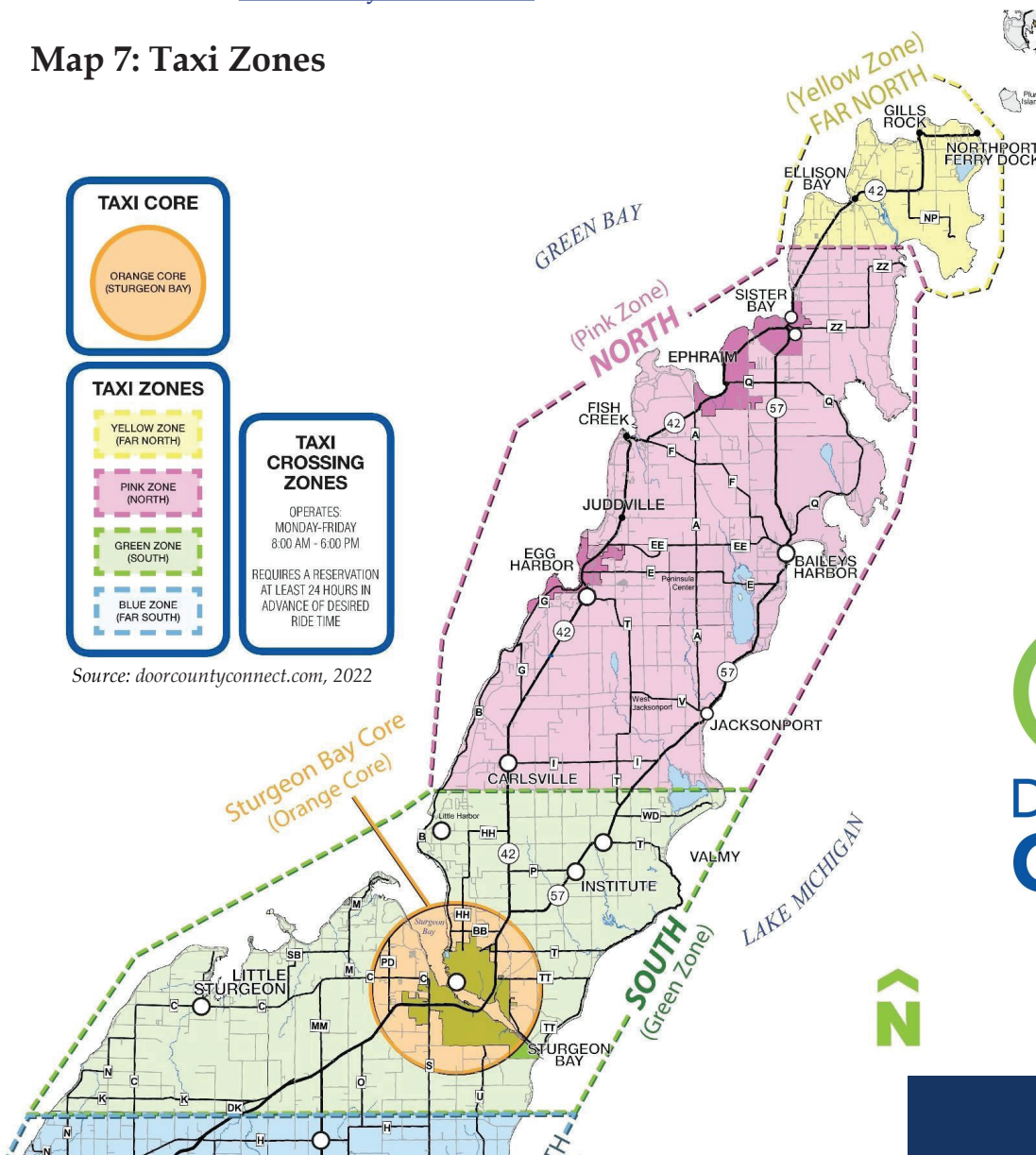
D2D service is broken down by zone areas. The Town of Gibraltar lies in the Pink Zone along with Towns of Egg Harbor, Jacksonport, Baileys Harbor, and the southern portion of Liberty Grove. The northern edge of the Pink Zone is Highview and Seaquist Roads. It includes the villages of Egg Harbor, Ephraim, and Sister Bay. Service is available Monday – Friday. 8am – 6pm.

Door County also partners with Door-Tran, a local non-profit organization. Door County Connect shares a wheelchair accessible van, the County Veteran's Services Office covers fuel costs, and Door-Tran staff and volunteer drivers provide the ride. Because of this three-way partnership, Door County veterans can access a no cost ride when traveling outside of the County for medical services. For more information visit [doorcountyconnect.com](http://doorcountyconnect.com)



Door County Connect Transportation

## Map 7: Taxi Zones



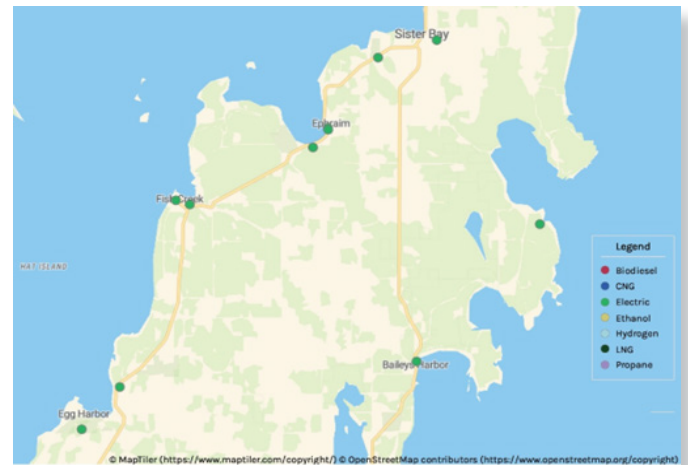
## State and National Transportation Trends

This section summarizes trends in transportation policy and modal preferences. Gibraltar must be aware of these trends, and be prepared to financially support all transportation and technological shifts, as well as its mandated services.

**Active Transportation.** Walking and bicycling as a mode of transportation is increasingly common. Increased investments in traditional transportation infrastructure and the public realm have encouraged and guided preferences for walking and biking. However, in many cases, distance and barriers to destinations can limit active transportation as a viable travel mode (particularly for workforce commuting and safe access to the Gibraltar school facility in Fish Creek).

**Electric Vehicles.** The electric vehicle (EV) market is expanding. As consumption of EVs grows, so too will the need for charging stations in accessible locations. Based on 2020 data from Clean Wisconsin, there are about 550 public EV charging stations located throughout Wisconsin, with two of these stations located in the town. These stations were funded through public, utility, and private investments. In the long-term, availability of EV charging stations will influence travel, tourism, and the environment. Map 8 displays the location of charging stations in the community of Fish Creek and nearby areas.

**Map 8: EV Charging Locations**



Source: AFDC, 2022

**Ride-hailing services.** On-demand transportation services, like Uber and Lyft, offer flexible routing and scheduling to individuals who are willing to pay a service fee to get picked up and dropped off at their chosen location. Ride-hailing services are increasingly popular among younger generations, urban dwellers, people without a vehicle and people with disabilities.

## Applicable Transportation Plans

This section documents the applicable local, county, regional, and state transportation plans that contain projects that may impact the Town's transportation infrastructure.

### Local, County, and Regional Transportation Plans:

**Town of Gibraltar Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.** This plan guides the development of shared-use paths, demarcates on-street facilities, provides design guidelines and policies for facilities, and highlights funding opportunities for the Town to pursue.

**Door County Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Recreational Facilities Master Plan.** This plan is intended to guide the development of a network of bicycle routes linking towns and villages within the County as well as to the larger regional network.

**Door County Coordinated Public Transportation Plan.** The aim of this plan is to improve transportation services for persons with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with lower incomes by ensuring that communities coordinate transportation resources provided through various programs. .

**Connect. Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for Northeast Wisconsin.** The bicycle and pedestrian plan for the Bay-Lake region provides details about the region's bicycle and pedestrian network and facilities, including documentation of specific shared-use/multi-use pathways by county. The plan lists a range of objectives and strategies to improve the region's bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

### State Transportation Plans:

**Connect 2050, Wisconsin's Statewide Long-Range Transportation Plan (2022).** Connect 2050 is Wisconsin's existing state-wide transportation plan. It describes Wisconsin's multi-modal transportation system and documents policies and actions to maintain, improve, and strengthen the overall system.

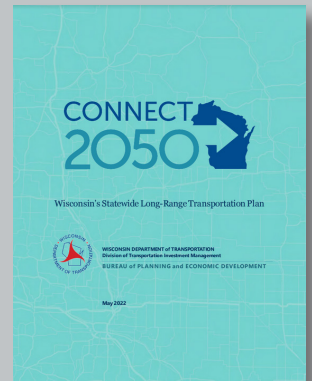
**Wisconsin State Freight Plan (2023).** Wisconsin updated its freight plan in 2023. The State Freight Plan is a long-range multimodal plan that addresses the state's freight transportation needs and provides a vision for WisDOT's freight program.

**WisDOT 6-year Highway Improvement Program.** This highway improvement program covers only the 11,750-mile state highway system which is administered and maintained by WisDOT.

**Wisconsin Pedestrian Policy Plan (2020).** Wisconsin's Pedestrian Policy Plan includes a vision and plan of action to encourage pedestrian travel.

**Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan (2020).** Wisconsin's existing bicycle plan includes a vision and a plan of action to increase bicycling and to reduce crashes involving bicyclists and motor vehicles.

**Wisconsin Active Transportation Plan 2050 (in progress).** WisDOT is updating its *Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan* and *Wisconsin Pedestrian Policy Plan* and combining them into the *Wisconsin Active Transportation Plan 2050*. The active transportation plan will be a statewide long-range plan focused on human-powered modes of transportation, such as bicycling and walking. This plan will evaluate the state's active transportation opportunities and needs, resulting in policies and actions that will align with and further *Connect 2050*.





# Land Use

This element provides information on the Town of Gibraltar's current land use (2023) and describes Gibraltar's vision for future growth and development within the town. The Future Land Use Plan, presented in this element, will guide the Town's Plan Commission and Town Board in their land use and zoning decision-making process through 2043.

- Existing Land Use Inventory
- Development Considerations
- Future Land Use Needs
- 20-Year Land Use Plan





## Then and Now

In general, the land use within the Town of Gibraltar has undergone transformations throughout history. The below images compare the area of Fish Creek in 1938 and the present day.



1938 Aerial Imagery, Source: USDA through the Wisconsin Historic Aerial Imagery Program



2023 Aerial Imagery, Source: Door County

## Existing Land Use Inventory

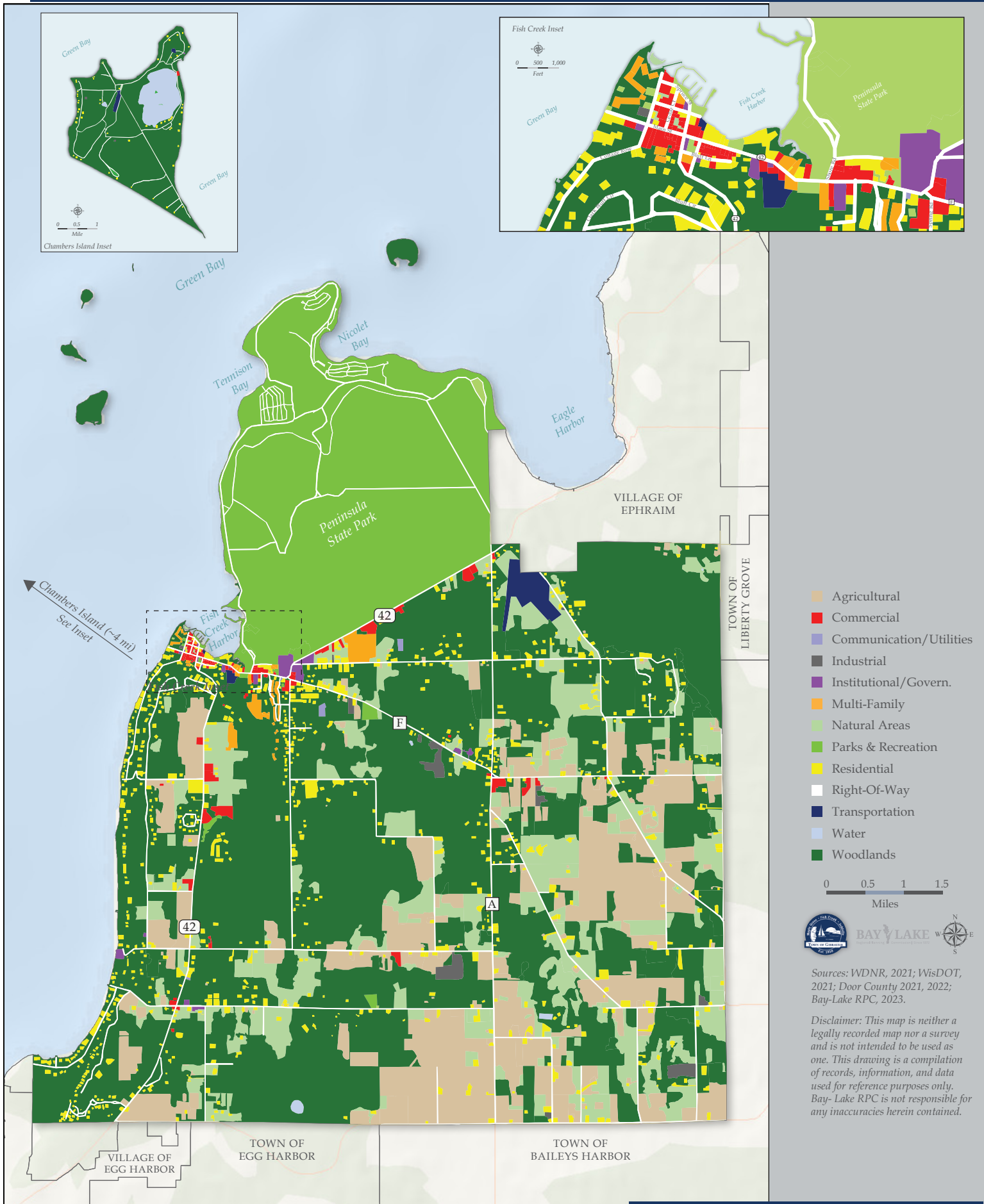
This section outlines the characteristics of Gibraltar's existing land use inventory. It also discusses trends that may influence development and future land use needs.

The Town of Gibraltar is roughly 44,135 acres in size, or just under 69 square miles. Not including agricultural lands, around 24 percent of Gibraltar's land is developed. The most abundant land uses in the Town are woodlands (52%), park and recreation (15%), and agriculture (12%). Exhibit 12 details the breakdown of existing land uses, and Map 9 on the adjacent page shows the distribution of land uses in the Town.

**Exhibit 12: Existing Land Use Characteristics**

Land Use Category	Acreage	Percentage
Agriculture	5,404.40	12.25%
Commercial	226.70	0.51%
Communication/Utilities	15.30	0.03%
Institutional/Governmental	90.70	0.21%
Industrial	161.50	0.37%
Multi-Family	175.20	0.40%
Natural Area	4,484.50	10.16%
Park and Recreation	6,707.20	15.20%
Residential	1,345.90	3.05%
Right-Of-Way	1,472.00	3.34%
Transportation	224.60	0.51%
Water	748.80	1.70%
Woodlands	23,077.80	52.29%
<b>Total</b>	<b>44,134.60</b>	<b>100.00%</b>





## Development Considerations

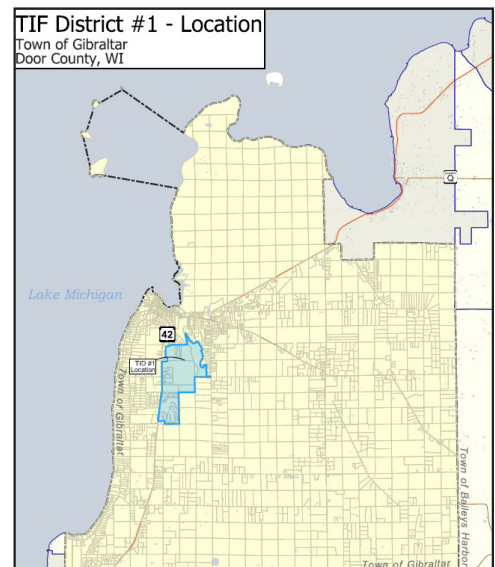
### *Supply of Vacant Lands*

As detailed in the existing land use portion of this plan, many locations of the Town are undeveloped and contain ample sites for future development while preserving the Town's vital natural features. As a best practice the Town is planning for development to be located in the TID District where there is connection to sewer. The district is located along Highway 42 south of Fish Creek in an area where commercial development and multiple occupancy development already exists. The Town is also considering future development of County F where sanitary sewer can be reasonably expanded. This promotes orderly and efficient growth patterns, while promoting the preservation of the Town's agricultural lands, woodlands, and environmental features. Over the 20-year planning period, the supply of suitable vacant lands will decrease as development continues to occur, particularly in and surrounding the Fish Creek area and along the Green Bay shoreline.

### *Tax Incremental District (TID)*

A TID is the land area associated with development and redevelopment projects. Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) is a tool available to cities and villages in Wisconsin under section 66.1105 of the Wisconsin Statutes for redeveloping blighted areas, promoting redevelopment through environmental remediation, and encouraging new industrial development. TIF can be used to cover costs of public works or improvements including costs for demolition, land assembly, public improvements, and new buildings.

In Gibraltar, the existing TID #1 is intended to help pay for the expansion of its sewer lines to the upper bluff portion of the Town along STH 42. This will foster additional development atop the bluff area.



Source: Cedar Corporation



### *Land Use Conflicts*

The Town of Gibraltar should anticipate and prepare for potential land use conflicts over the 20-year planning period. Several prominent issues/conflicts the Town of Gibraltar should expect to encounter include an aging population, fluctuating housing trends and patterns, shifting of seasonal/short-term housing, carrying capacity of the land, economic viability, transportation and commuting, provision of utilities, public services and infrastructure needs, the prominence and impacts of its strong tourism base, redevelopment of currently developed lands, agricultural preservation, and environmental stewardship.

### *Housing*

As referenced in the Demographics and Housing section of this comprehensive plan, the 2019 AECOM Door County Housing Study indicated that the county has had a long-standing issue with housing shortages and the quality of certain housing types.



Over the 20-year planning period, Gibraltar should explore a broad range of housing options that meet the needs of persons of all income levels and of all age groups, and persons with special needs. Housing diversity occurs when there is a broad range of available housing types, such as condos, townhomes, apartments, and different sized single-family homes, offered at a variety of price levels. Housing diversity helps to serve the needs of everyone in a community and can build great neighborhoods. Studies have also indicated that places with more diversity in types of housing are more stable and can make communities more resilient against economic downturns.

#### *Seasonal/Short-Term Occupancy*

Gibraltar's housing consists primarily of seasonal/short-term units. The census provides a limited amount of data regarding seasonal housing and population, therefore making it difficult to create projections in a community which is known for its prominent seasonal population and tourism. The Town of Gibraltar, by ordinance, requires all short-term rentals to have Town permits. There were approximately 135 licenses in 2023 for short-term housing rentals in Gibraltar based on Town permits received. The permit process helps Gibraltar remain aware of converted permanent residences to seasonal, and vice versa.

#### *Environmental/Agricultural Features*

Various environmental issues have had an impact on the Town of Gibraltar and its waterfront since its last long-range plan was approved in 2004. Over the past several years, the Town has been working with the WDNR and other entities to manage and improve the water quality and revitalize the waterfront properties. Recent efforts in the Town include stormwater improvements, beach renovations, and habitat restoration in Fish Creek.

Over the next 20-years, considerations should be placed on planning for environmental concerns such as fluctuating water levels, coastal hazards, resiliency, and sustainability. As the Town continues to thrive as a major tourist destination, especially with attributes that include Peninsula State Park, a variety of recreation amenities, orchards, vineyards, open spaces, and the Niagara Escarpment; ecotourism, agritourism, and geotourism, should be areas of emphasis as the Town determines growth and preservation over the next two decades. These features not only add significantly to the aesthetic appeal of Gibraltar, but they also provide important ecological and environmental functions such as stormwater retention and flood control.

#### *Land Trusts*

Land trusts are organizations that take legal ownership, stewardship, or partial control over property at the request of the landowner. Land trusts can include real estate (e.g., buildings or homes) or property notes and mortgages. They are typically used for the land involved in conservation or wildlife purposes, or for real estate development purposes. In the Town of Gibraltar, approximately 11,500 acres are in land trusts. Over 9,000 acres are private land trusts, while Door County Land Trust makes up over 2,000 acres, and Nature Conservancy has just under 300 acres in the Town.

### **Seasonal Housing**

The US Census Bureau defines "Seasonal housing units" as those intended for occupancy only during certain seasons of the year and are found primarily in resort areas.

## Future Land Use Needs

This section summarizes an analysis of future land needs to accommodate projected growth and development in Gibraltar over the 20-year planning period.

Wisconsin statutes require comprehensive plans to include projections, in five-year increments, for future residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural land uses in the community over the 20-year planning period. The following summarizes this land needs/build-out analysis.

### *Residential*

Statistics and data provided by the US Census Bureau and the Wisconsin Department of Administration are typically used to determine population and housing estimates and projections for communities. These forecasts, which are generated by models and equations, are created for a typical town, village, or city. However, given the Town of Gibraltar contains a high number of second homeowners and seasonal workers, projections for new growth, and the amount of land needed to accommodate it, can make it difficult to predict. Even more challenging is that the 2020 Decennial Census is portraying a decline in both the population and housing in the town since 2010, as well as projected losses to year 2040.

However, according to the US Census 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimate, between 2010 and 2021, 106 new structures were built in the Town of Gibraltar, while 377 structures were built in the preceding ten years. These numbers detailing housing development were utilized to plan for the discrepancy between the aforementioned projections portraying a housing decline and the credible housing growth that has recently occurred in the Town of Gibraltar. With an assumption of 100 additional housing units every decade as a constant, the town could anticipate approximately 200 new housing units by 2040.

To accommodate 200 units, based on an assumed average dwelling unit per 1.5 acres, the town will need about 300 net acres (or approximately 400 gross acres). If the 200 new units were delivered linearly, about 75 net acres (100 gross acres) would be needed to accommodate about 50 new dwelling units every five years. Gross acreage accounts for the fact that some of the developments may be hindered based on the nature of the area, and that residential growth needs to account for future roads, infrastructure, parks, and recreation areas.

Estimating future residential growth in the town depends primarily on the housing market, and whether the housing units added are for full-time residents or second homeowners. The US Census 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimate indicates that occupied housing in the town between 2010 and 2020 declined by 30%, from 534 to 376. While seasonally vacant housing (second homes) accounted for 63% of the total housing units within the Town of Gibraltar. It is assumed that the balance of occupied and seasonal housing stays the same throughout the next few decades, therefore it is anticipated that 74 of the estimated 200 future housing units (or 37%) by 2040 will be occupied housing (year-round units).

Note that these residential land use projections for the Town of Gibraltar are based on single-family units and do not account for higher density housing (e.g., duplexes, apartments, and other multi-family structures). The town envisions a variety of housing with consideration on a case-by-case basis and determined by type, location, density, surrounding developments, or other factors.

### *Commercial*

To calculate commercial land use projections, the current ratio of residential acreage to commercial land use (6:1) was compared based on the town's 2023 land use inventory. Using this methodology, and if occurring linearly, the town would need to accommodate approximately 12.5 acres every five years, or a total of 50 acres for future commercial development over the next 20 years. These allocations do not consider the redevelopment of existing commercial properties found in the town. To properly site commercial, enough land should be designated in order to provide adequate parking, landscaping, and to ensure adequate buffering from roadways.

### *Industrial*

Industrial lands are projected in the same manner as the commercial lands. According to the 2023 land use inventory, the current ratio of residential acreage to industrial land use acreage is 10:1. As a result, the town would need to accommodate approximately 7.5 acres every five years, or a total of 30 acres for future industrial development over the next 20 years. Also, like commercial lands, enough land should be designated in order to provide adequate parking, landscaping, and proper setbacks from roads.

### *Agricultural*

As of 2023, agriculture accounted for approximately 13 percent of land in the Town of Gibraltar. It is the town's intention to preserve as much of these remaining farmlands as possible over the next 20 years. Therefore, demand for agricultural land is assumed to be met through preservation of the town's existing farmland and by utilizing best management practices. As development pressures continue to increase, the town should consider directing growth to areas considered non-productive for farming, or to areas where services are more readily available.

20-Year Land Use Plan

Comprehensive plans contain a future land use plan to help guide growth management strategies over a 20 year planning period.

Gibraltar’s 20-Year Land Use Plan (Maps 10 and 11) is meant to provide a generalized visual interpretation of what the town wants to achieve, from a land use perspective, over the next 20 years. The land use plan, however, is not meant to be a prediction. The map serves as a component that can be amended as needed to address the community’s present-day needs and preferences.

Gibraltar’s future land use plan identifies nine plan designations to classify the general intent of future lands in the Town. The designations are described on the following page.

The creation for the Town of Gibraltar’s future land use plan for the 2023 to 2043 period was based on existing residential, commercial, and business uses, and the general development trends and patterns in and around the town. When identifying where future developments are encouraged, the impacts to existing utilities and facilities such as roads, sewers and water, and emergency services were also evaluated. Additional planning considerations included areas where lands would be difficult to develop or are unique to the community, such as floodplains, wetlands, and coastline.

Exhibit 13: 20-Year Land Use Plan Map Characteristics

Land Use Category	Acreage	Percentage
Residential	5,600	12.7%
Commercial	655	1.5%
Mixed Use	422	1.0%
Industrial	136	0.3%
Institutional/Governmental	382	1.2%
Parks and Recreation	6,975	15.8%
Agriculture	11,600	26.2%
Natural Areas	18,208	41.3%
Environmental Corridors*	-	-
Total	44,135	100.0%

Note:

\*Environmental Corridors are an overlay and are not calculated into total land use.



## Future Land Use Designations

### *Residential*

This category defines any residential area occupied by one or more dwellings. Gibraltar should explore a broad range of housing options that meet the needs of the community such as condos, townhomes, apartments, and different sized single-family or multi-family designations. Decisions on future housing developments should take into account compatibility with adjacent development, feasible infrastructure, and the surrounding natural environment, including the coastline.

### *Commercial*

Any uses related to retail sales, services, shopping centers, office parks, commercial open space/vacant lots, and vacant commercial.

### *Mixed Use*

Any area intended to flexibly allow a range of development opportunities including residential, commercial, and some institutional and light industrial activities.

### *Industrial*

This category signifies uses related to manufacturing, wholesaling, extractive, storage (open or closed), industrial open space/vacant lots, and vacant industrial.

### *Institutional/Governmental*

This category includes uses related to public facilities and spaces providing public services including governmental, educational, health, assembly, and religious institutions. This also includes anything related to the generation, processing, or transmission of utilities or communications and anything related to waste processing, disposal, and recycling.

### *Parks and Recreation*

Anything related to publicly accessible parks and recreation (e.g., zoos, campgrounds, parks, picnic areas, play fields and courts, pools, trails, boat launch sites, etc.).

### *Agricultural*

This category designates anything related to agriculture, including croplands, pastures, long term specialty crops, animal husbandry, fish hatchery/aquaculture, farm buildings and accessories, commercial forest, and vacant agriculture.

### *Natural Areas*

Lands including woodlands, wetlands, public and private conservancy areas, and other undeveloped lands.

### *Environmental Corridors (Overlay)*

This overlay includes any environmental features with characteristics critical to the area's ecological stability and sustainability. These environmental features include major waterways and drainage ways, 100-year floodplains, areas with steep slopes (>12%), floodplains, and wetlands. Together, these elements represent the areas of the community that are most sensitive to development. These features provide limitations to development and are generally regulated by either the federal, state, or local government. The corridors are illustrated as an overlay on the Town's Future Land Use Plan and should be utilized as a reference to aid in their protection.

- In Gibraltar, special attention must be paid to the unique characteristics of the Niagara Escarpment in order to protect the natural environment and avoid obstacles to development.

Map 10: 20-Year Land Use Plan, Town of Gibraltar



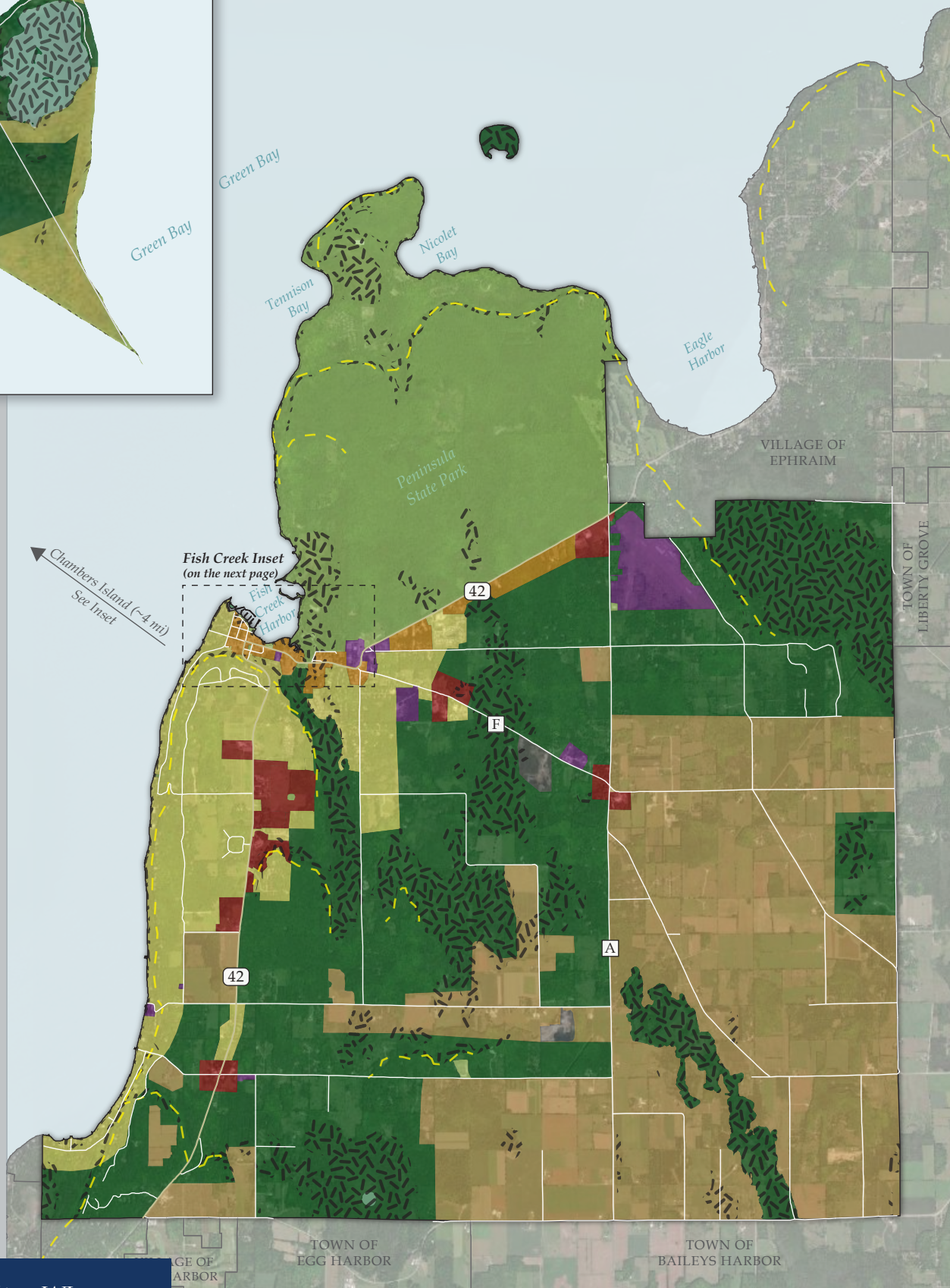
- Agricultural
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Institutional/Govern.
- Mixed-Use
- Natural Areas
- Parks & Recreation
- Residential
- Right-Of-Way
- Water
- Environmental Corridors
- Niagara Escarpment

0 0.5 1 1.5  
Miles



Sources: WDNR, 2021; WisDOT, 2021; Door County 2021, 2022; Bay-Lake RPC, 2023.

Disclaimer: This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey and is not intended to be used as one. This drawing is a compilation of records, information, and data used for reference purposes only. Bay-Lake RPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.





## Map 11: 20-Year Land Use Plan, Town of Gibraltar (Fish Creek)



### 20-Year Land Use Plan Performance

With the established 20-Year Land Use Plan map, Town officials will utilize the Goals and Actions found in the Implementation portion of this plan that contain the guiding development/preservation principles intended to achieve the Town of Gibraltar's long-term vision.

The 20-Year Land Use Plan map should be used as a measurable indicator of land use policy performance. As land uses change subsequent to planning, changes should be monitored in comparison to the 20-Year Land Use Plan map. This will help Town officials and Town staff to identify if land uses are changing in the locations and in the amounts desired, according to the plan. If land uses are not coinciding with the 20-Year Land Use Plan map, the Town may need to consider changes in land use recommendations, reassess the planning goals and actions, or amend the 20-Year Land Use Plan map.

As the Town of Gibraltar experiences growth and development guided by its 20-Year Land Use Plan, it will be important for decision-makers to be well informed on potential consequences prior to finalizing land use decisions. Some issues to contemplate include evaluating the benefits and drawbacks of a development; consideration of how the proposed development not only impacts the property, but also the impact on surrounding properties; cost alternatives to providing services and utilities; and what the development will look like; just to name a few.

# Intergovernmental Cooperation

This element provides information on the Town of Gibraltar's relationship with overlapping and adjacent jurisdictions and how these connections can impact town residents in terms of taxation, planning, the provision of services, and the siting of public facilities. An examination of these relationships and the identification of shared decision-making efforts can help the Town of Gibraltar address issues and opportunities effectively and efficiently.

- Inventory of Adjacent and Overlapping Jurisdictions
- Inventory of Existing Plans and Agreements
- Collective Decision-Making





## **Inventory of Adjacent and Overlapping Jurisdictions**

This section lists and describes each of the adjacent and overlapping jurisdictions that can impact Town residents.

### **Adjacent Communities**

The Town of Gibraltar is bordered to the northeast by the Village of Ephraim and the Town of Liberty Grove, to the southeast by the Town of Baileys Harbor, and to the south by both the Town and Village of Egg Harbor.

### **School District**

The Town of Gibraltar is located within and served by the Gibraltar Area School District. The Town of Gibraltar may be interested in providing feedback to improvements and expansions of the school district facilities, and Town residents can provide feedback on school activities and future projects. Similarly, the school district may want to provide input on Town plans or projects that impact families and students. The Town of Gibraltar and the Gibraltar Area School District may consider sharing facilities for events or meetings.

### **Door County**

The Town of Gibraltar is located in Door County, and therefore, the County has some jurisdiction within the Town. Specifically, the County has jurisdiction over the Town in zoning, land divisions, on-site sanitary sewer systems, police protection with the Door County Sheriff's Department, and public health issues. The County currently allows the Town to review and make recommendations on various zoning-related issues. The Town and County need to continue to build a good working relationship of both general agreement and respect.

### **Region**

The Town of Gibraltar is a member of the Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission (BLRPC). The BLRPC is the regional governmental entity of northeast Wisconsin. Gibraltar has a role to play in the region and will consider participating in regional planning efforts as they arise.

### **State**

The Town's relationship with the State of Wisconsin is an ongoing one which deals with many issues and state agencies. Primarily, Gibraltar's relationship with the state mainly deals with issues related to transportation (in coordination with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation) and natural resource (in coordination with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources). The Town of Gibraltar also maintains a good working relationship with the state by adhering to state laws, policies, and requirements. The Town will consider participating in state-led initiatives as they arise.

### **Federal**

The Town's relationship with the US government primarily deals with funding opportunities. The Town maintains a good working relationship with the US government by adhering to federal laws and requirements.

## **Inventory of Existing Plans and Agreements**

This section presents plans and formal agreements that currently guide collective decision making with overlapping and adjacent jurisdictions.

### **Annexation Plans**

Wisconsin Statute 66.021 provides the regulatory framework for cities or villages to annex lands, Annexation is the transfer of one or more tax parcels from a town to a city or village. Consent of property owners is but one of the procedures in annexation.

### **Extraterritorial Subdivision Regulation**

State Statutes allow an incorporated village or city to extend extraterritorial plat review over surrounding unincorporated areas. For the Town of Gibraltar, the villages of Egg Harbor and Ephraim have 1.5 miles of extraterritorial jurisdiction within the Town. Both villages currently have populations of less than 10,000 and have a right to exercise extraterritorial plat review jurisdictions into Gibraltar and thereby influence the division of land 1.5 miles beyond their borders.

### **Extraterritorial Zoning**

State Statutes allow an incorporated village or city to extend extraterritorial zoning over surrounding unincorporated areas. Extraterritorial zoning requires a joint effort between a town and a city or village to develop a plan for the area to be zoned. The extraterritorial zoning is then established according to the developed plan. Presently, extraterritorial zoning is not being administered in the Town of Gibraltar with its adjacent villages of Egg Harbor or Ephraim.

### **Intergovernmental Agreements**

Intergovernmental agreements enable cooperation between governmental jurisdictions, quasi-governmental jurisdictions, and districts. Intergovernmental agreements are the most common form of agreement made between communities, usually regarding police, fire, and rescue services. Intergovernmental agreements are also available for revenue sharing, determining land use within a designated area, and in setting temporary municipal boundaries. Gibraltar has several intergovernmental agreements in place including composting, equipment sharing, etc.

## Efforts for Cooperative Decision Making

This section lists an overview of efforts or services that currently or potentially will require collective decision making across jurisdictions, either formally or informally, via intergovernmental cooperation. Additionally, it includes ideas to improve communication, the transfer of information, and collective decision-making with overlapping and adjacent jurisdictions.

Gibraltar will be involved in efforts that require collective decision making with other communities and groups in the region, including, but not limited to:

- Shared emergency services (such as fire, police, ambulance)
- Preservation, promotion, and enhancement of natural resources and outdoor recreational facilities
- Development adjacent to the waterfront and in extra-territorial areas
- Preservation of historic character
- Protection of ground and surface water quality
- Economic development
- Official mapping, including planned street network and other applicable future infrastructure or utilities
- Annexation services
- Green Tier Legacy Communities

To improve collective decision-making efforts, the Town of Gibraltar may want to:

- Create a central database to share data gathered by overlapping or adjacent jurisdictions
- Attend joint meetings on specific issues of interest
- Attend regularly occurring meetings with overlapping or adjacent jurisdictions to discuss regional challenges and opportunities
- Continue to work with entities with a stake in the region including:
  - Visit Fish Creek, Gibraltar School District, WDNR, Sanitary District #1, Airport Commission, Harbor Commission, Door County departments, agricultural operators, Door County Economic Development Corporation, Destination Door County, Friends of Peninsula State Park, Door County Invasive Species Team, the Greater Escarpment Organization of Door County (GEO-DC), the Nature Conservancy, Green Tier Legacy Communities, the Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, and Extension Door County-University of Wisconsin-Madison.

# Implementation

The Implementation element provides a framework for the Town of Gibraltar to implement this Comprehensive Plan. Implementation can take many forms, including:

- Striving to achieve the goals, actions, and future land use plan of this comprehensive planning document.
- Using the plan's content to guide public and private decision-making on matters that relate to the development of the town and the prioritization of public revenues.
- Reviewing, evaluating, and amending the plan as demographics, the economy, political climates, or fiscal realities change.

- Role of the Town
- Evaluation and Monitoring
- Inventory of Existing Land Use Controls
- Town of Gibraltar - Vision 2043
- Goals and Actions



## Role of Town

Predominately, Town staff, the Town's plan commissioners, Town's elected officials, and the Town's committees will carry out implementation of this plan.

- **Town Staff:** Town staff, in various departments and services, will typically carry out the day-to-day operations of implementation. For example, staff may administer new program(s), facilitate presentations to discuss regulatory changes, or coordinate amongst partners to finance capital projects as recommended by the plan. Staff often provide technical advice to Plan Commissioners and elected officials to inform decision-making on topics related to the comprehensive plan.
- **Town Plan Commission:** The Plan Commission's primary responsibility is to implement the comprehensive plan and to ensure supporting Town regulations are consistent with the plan. When reviewing any petition or when amending any controls within the Town, the comprehensive plan shall be reviewed and a recommendation derived from its goals and actions (listed in the latter portion of this Implementation element), as well as the Future Land Use Plan. If a decision needs to be made in which it is inconsistent with the comprehensive plan, the comprehensive plan must be amended before the decision can take effect. The Plan Commission will need to ensure that the comprehensive plan is updated every 10 years. An annual review of the plan is recommended so the Plan Commission may stay familiarized with the plan's content, goals, actions, and strategies.
- **Elected Officials:** The Town's elected officials make decisions from the standpoint of overall community impact—tempered by specific, situational factors. Elected officials balance recommendations made by plans and policies, the objectives of applicants and the public, technical advice from staff, recommendations of advisory boards, and their own judgment. The comprehensive plan provides much of the information elected officials need to make a decision. While the prime responsibility of implementing and updating the comprehensive plan falls on the Town's Plan Commission, elected officials should become familiar with this plan and assert that resources are maintained to keep the comprehensive plan current and viable.
- **Town Committees:**
  - **Building Committee.** This committee is responsible for overseeing the routine maintenance and improvements of town-owned facilities.
  - **Parks & Land Committee.** The committee is responsible for overseeing the routine maintenance, improvements and strategic planning of town parks and public lands.
  - **Harbor Commission.** The commission oversees the operation and maintenance of the town dock.
  - **Airport Commission.** This commission oversees the operation and maintenance of the Ephraim-Gibraltar Airport, which serves the Northern Door area.

## Evaluation and Monitoring

This comprehensive plan should be reviewed annually to ensure that it reflects the existing conditions and development characteristics present at the time. When amendments are required, needed, or proposed, the Town of Gibraltar should notify the public and affected property owners to provide them with an opportunity to comment on proposed amendments. Proposed comprehensive plan amendments should consider the likely and possible future use of the affected area and associated impacts (i.e., land supply, transportation, environmental, economic, and social impacts). Changes should reflect the Town's 20-year vision and the goals and actions identified in the following pages of this Implementation element. Amendments should also coincide with the Town of Gibraltar's development/preservation strategies and Future Land Use Plan, as detailed in the "Land Use" element of this document.

The Town of Gibraltar should also consult with other governmental agencies, Door County, and neighboring communities to obtain their input, particularly on the goals and actions recommended in this plan.

Finally, at a minimum of once every ten years, the Town of Gibraltar should formally update its comprehensive plan, as required by statute. The update should continue to provide an opportunity for public and stakeholder input throughout the planning process and adoption of the updated plan by ordinance.

## Inventory of Existing Land Use Controls and Planning Efforts

### Door County Zoning Ordinance

The Town of Gibraltar does not have a zoning ordinance of its own. Rather, it falls under the jurisdiction of the Door County Zoning Ordinance.

### Door County Land Division Ordinance

The Door County Land Division Ordinance regulates the division of land to promote public health, safety, aesthetics, and general welfare. The ordinance provides for minor land divisions, major land divisions, design standards and the dedication and improvement of a parcel of land to be developed.

### Shoreland and Floodplain Zoning Ordinances

Shoreland/Floodplain ordinances have jurisdiction over all shorelands and identified wetlands in the unincorporated areas of a County. Door County administers its shoreland/floodplain ordinance in the unincorporated areas of the County. Shoreland zones are those areas within 300 feet of a navigable river or stream, 1,000 feet of a navigable lake, pond or flowage or to the landward side of the 100-year floodplain, whichever distance is greater.

### Door County Hazard Mitigation Planning

Hazard mitigation planning is conducting a risk assessment regarding the potential impacts of hazards to a community's people, economy, and built and natural environments. For the purpose of hazard mitigation planning, "risk" is the potential for damage, loss, or other impacts created by the interaction of hazards with community assets. Exposure of people, property, and other community assets to hazards can result in disaster, depending on the impacts.

## Town of Gibraltar - Vision 2043

*“With its back to a rock and its face to the sea’, the Town of Gibraltar offers a uniqueness in its location, history and amenities that cannot be replicated anywhere else along the peninsula. As we plan for the future, the Town of Gibraltar (to include the unincorporated communities of Fish Creek, Juddville, and Maple Grove) is committed to seeking opportunities for mindful growth with a balanced mix of economic opportunities that work to: enhance, not weaken or eliminate, the Township’s distinctive characteristics and strengths; honor its Door County heritage; preserve its historic legacy, infrastructure and aesthetics; protect its abundant natural, environmental and agricultural resources; identify and implement farmland preservation strategies, and continue the tradition of offering a welcoming, friendly, small-town atmosphere for residents, business owners, workers and visitors alike.”*

## Goals and Actions

This section organizes the comprehensive plan’s goals and actions by topic. The goals are intended to be accomplished through the actions outlined in an effort to realize the Town of Gibraltar’s 2043 vision.

### Environmental

Goal 1.1: The Town of Gibraltar actively works to sustain and maintain its freshwater ecosystem made up of both ground and surface water.

Actions:

- Action 1.1a: The Town actively works to preserve, protect and/or restore its wetlands for the purpose of catching and storing floodwaters and releasing them slowly; filtering snowmelt and rainwater and returning it into the groundwater; and providing a freshwater habitat for plants and wildlife.
- Action 1.1b: The Town actively works to protect its wetlands and ground water through control of its surface water runoff to protect the Town and its ecosystem.
- Action 1.1c: The Town actively works to capture stormwater runoff in its “Village Commercial” district and remove solid waste before directing it to the harbor.
- Action 1.1d: The Town maintains its curbs, gutters, Vortech units and culverts through regular inspections to assure they are working properly and the removal of any debris.

- Action 1.1e: As part of the design of future roads or the reconstruction of existing roads, the Town will work to incorporate efficient methods of controlling snow melt and storm water runoff using grassy swales and other natural methods.
- Action 1.1f: The Town actively works to encourage its Fish Creek residents to filter and capture stormwater using grassy swales, rain gardens and/or rain barrels, and other techniques before it flows to a storm drain and then the harbor.
- Action 1.1g: The Plan Commission actively works to implement the Fish Creek Watershed Plan by selecting the goals & outcomes from the plan to pursue each year, budgeting and/or securing grants as needed to complete the goals & outcomes and then annually reporting its accomplishments to the Town Board and the residents via the Town newsletter and website and at the Town's annual meeting.
- Action 1.1h: The Plan Commission annually budgets for the continued monitoring of Fish Creek, according to the Fish Creek Watershed Plan, and recommends the Town Board appoint a leader of a small group of volunteers and ensure that the monitoring is carried out according to the Fish Creek Watershed Plan and the guidelines of the DNR Watershed Action Volunteers.
- Action 1.1i: The Town annually considers the need to monitor the beach, harbor, and/or other creeks and watersheds within the Township.
- Action 1.1j: The Town annually educates the Town residents on the need to test any private well used for drinking water for the presence of bacteria; maintain their private wastewater systems according to the rules set by the County Sanitary Department; manage the waste of their livestock and pets; manage & reduce the use of fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides in their gardens and lawns; and manage & reduce their use of salt/sodium on surfaces in the winter; as needed to protect and maintain clean ground water for drinking.
- Action 1.1k: The Town actively works to protect and preserve its shoreline from flooding caused by high lake levels, wave action, and loss of soil and vegetation.
- Action 1.1l: The Town actively works to maintain and increase public access to the Green Bay shoreline and Fish Creek.
- Action 1.1m: The Town Board in cooperation with the Town Commissions and Committees actively work to implement the Waterfront Master Plan.
- Action 1.1n: The Town Board and the Harbor Commission will actively work toward becoming a certified member of the Wisconsin Clean Marina Program.

Goal 1.2: The Town of Gibraltar's trees and forests are preserved and restored for current and future generations.

Actions:

- Action 1.2a: The Town's Parks & Lands committee in collaboration with the maintenance staff actively works to preserve the Town's existing tree canopy and forests through annual inspections of trees for disease and the planned replacement of undesirable, non-native, dying or dead trees with appropriate native species.



- Action 1.2b: The Parks & Lands committee in collaboration with Town maintenance staff will maintain the safety of areas of the Town where the public walks by removing unsafe branches or tree limbs.
- Action 1.2c: The Town's Parks & Lands committee actively works to educate residents annually on the need to preserve and restore the trees and/or forests on their private property.
- Action 1.2d: The Town's Parks & Lands committee actively looks into the possibility of becoming a "Tree City" and decides whether to pursue it as an action of this comprehensive plan.

Goal 1.3: The Town of Gibraltar's parks, green spaces and recreation areas are preserved, and/or restored and open for use by all its residents, visitors, and future generations.

**Actions:**

- Action 1.3a: The Town's Parks & Lands committee in collaboration with the maintenance staff will oversee the maintenance, preservation, protection and any needed restoration of the Town's beach, parks, green spaces, and recreation areas.
- Action 1.3b: The Town's Parks & Lands committee shall implement the Town's Bike & Pedestrian plan, selecting objectives and policies from the plan to pursue each year, budgeting and/or securing grants as needed to complete those goals, then annually reporting the accomplishments to the Town Board and residents via the Town newsletter, website and at the Town's annual meeting. They shall also review & update the plan every 5 years.
- Action 1.3c: The Town's Parks & Lands committee shall implement the Town's Recreational Plan, selecting goals to pursue each year, budgeting and/or securing grants as needed to complete the work, annually reporting accomplishments to the Town Board and residents via the Town newsletter, website and at the Town's annual meeting. Park & Lands shall also review & update the plan every 5 years.
- Action 1.3d: The Town's Parks & Lands committee actively works to remove invasive plant, shrubs and tree species from Town parks and properties and replace them with native plants, shrubs, and trees.
- Action 1.3e: The Town's Parks & Land's committee actively works to educate Town residents on the problems caused by invasive species, the need for property owners to remove them from their private property and replace them with native shrubs, plants, and flowers.
- Action 1.3f: The Town's Parks & Lands committee actively works to create neighborhood parks and/or green spaces where they are needed.

Goal 1.4: The Town's wildlife/bird habitat, and wildlife corridors are preserved and/or restored and protected for all current and future generations.

Actions:

- Action 1.4a: The Town's Park & Lands committee actively works to restore native trees, bushes, and flowers on all Town properties, budget and/or secure grants to complete the work and report accomplishments to the Town Board and residents via the newsletter, website and the Town's annual meeting.
- Action 1.4b: The Town's Park & Lands committee actively looks into the possibility of becoming a "Bird City" and makes a decision whether to pursue it as an action of this comprehensive plan.
- Action 1.4c: The Town's Park & Lands committee in cooperation with the Town Board actively takes action to restore and protect the Town's wildlife corridors.
- Action 1.4d: The Town's Park & Lands Committee actively works with outside resources to determine if all environmental corridors, open space, forests, environmentally sensitive areas, vistas, geological features, archaeological sites, and endangered species within the Town have been identified, inventoried and/or mapped.

Goal 1.5: The Town of Gibraltar's dark skies are preserved and sustained for all current residents, visitors, and future generations.

Actions:

- Action 1.5a: The Town actively works to minimize light pollution on Town properties, to protect the safety and privacy of residents and visitors.
- Action 1.5b: The Town actively works to provide information to all residents on the problem of light trespass and the resulting need to eliminate light pollution on their private property.
- Action 1.5c: The Town continues to recommend that the County make downcast lighting a condition on all conditional use requests.
- Action 1.5d: The Town will create and adopt an ordinance that requires all new buildings and parking areas on private property to have downcast lighting and any replacement fixtures on private property to be downcast in compliance with the ordinance.

Goal 1.6: The Town preserves and protects its air quality for all current residents, visitors, and future generations.

Action:

- Action 1.6: The Town supports county, state, and federal measures to protect air quality including the County's prohibition on the burning of refuse as described in Chapter 31 - 31.05 of the County Code. A Town permit is required for any open burning of brush.

Goal 1.7: The Town actively works to support and sustain its generational family farm agricultural heritage.

Actions:

- Action 1.7a: The Town actively works to encourage new and existing farms and orchards to use agricultural practices that support clean ground water, healthy air, and soil.
- Action 1.7b: The Town actively works to support local farmer's markets.
- Action 1.7c: The Town actively encourages property owners to prohibit the spreading of liquid manure on any land they own in the Township of Gibraltar in order to preserve and protect the Town's ground water and surface water resources.
- Action 1.7d: The Town actively supports and promotes agritourism.
- Action 1.7e: The Plan Commission actively works with local farmers and other interested citizens to seek ways to preserve large tracts of farmland for future agricultural uses.

Goal 1.8: The Town works to sustain its existing quarry sites for current and future use.

Actions:

- Action 1.8a: The Town actively works to locate future quarries away from residential areas.
- Action 1.8b: The Town actively works to limit airborne dust from its quarries to protect its residents.

Goal 1.9: The Town works to preserve ecologically significant areas such as Lost Lake.

Actions:

- Action 1.9a: Any development in these ecological significant areas such as Lost Lake i.e. Thorp Pond on County EE near Quarter Line Road, the Ephraim/Gibraltar Swamp, the Fish Creek lowlands, including Button Marsh, the Hedemora Hills/ Little Sweden, and Peil Creek headwaters must consider primary, secondary, and cumulative impacts to the environment.

## Historical Resources, Town Heritage, Cultural Arts and Recreational Venues

Goal 2.1: The historical character of the Town's small communities, Fish Creek, Juddville, and Maple Grove and its outlying areas are preserved for its residents, visitors and future generations.

Actions:

- Action 2.1a: The Town actively works to preserve the historical character of the Township through the strict control of signage.

- Action 2.1b: The Plan Commission will actively work with the Gibraltar Historical Association to bring together the owners of the Town's historically significant buildings, and other interested citizens to seek ways to preserve the historical character of the Town's small communities of Fish Creek, Juddville, and Maple Grove and outlying areas.
- Action 2.1c: The Town actively supports the Gibraltar Historical Association, the Noble House, and Noble Square.
- Action 2.1d: The Park & Lands committee actively works to preserve & restore Chambers Island Lighthouse and its property seeking funding and budget to advance improvement.
- Action 2.1e: The Park & Lands committee actively seeks to identify and preserve existing and future archaeological sites in the Township.

Goal 2.2: The Character of the Town's rural outlying areas and residential districts are preserved for its residents, visitors, and future generations.

Actions:

- Action 2.2a: The Town actively works to preserve the rural character of its outlying areas through the strict control of signage.
- Action 2.2b: The Town actively supports the rural character of its outlying areas by working to minimize Highway 42 corridor development between Fish Creek and Egg Harbor and Fish Creek and Ephraim.
- Action 2.2c: The Town actively works to keep commercial retail businesses out of its residentially zoned districts in order to preserve their character as defined.
- Action 2.2d: The Town Board, Committees, and Commissions, with help from the office staff will actively monitor compliance with its STR Ordinance, follow up on violations and update the ordinance as needed to protect its residential neighborhoods and other Town interests.
- Action 2.2e: The Town Board, Committees, and Commissions, with help from the office staff will actively monitor any changes that the surrounding communities are proposing or making in their STR ordinances so it can take immediate action if necessary in protecting its residential neighborhoods and other Town interests.
- Action: 2.2f: The Town will remain part of the Door County Coastal Byway and Shall consider its requirements when making decisions that might affect the Town's membership in this organization.

Goal 2.3: The Town's cultural arts venues are supported and promoted for their contribution to the character of the Town that make it a desirable place to live, work, and visit.

Actions:

- Action 2.3: The Town actively works to support and promote its cultural arts non-profit venues.



Goal 2.4: The Recreational Opportunities of the Town are supported and promoted for their contribution to the character of the Town that make it a desirable place to live, work and visit.

Actions:

- Action 2.4: The Town actively works to support and promote its recreational venues and opportunities.

## Housing

Goal 3.1: The housing needs that have been identified by the Door County Economic Development Corporation in support of seasonal and year-round workers, young families, and the very elderly, are met with a sufficient supply of safe, quality, and attainable non-discriminatory housing both rental and private ownership.

Actions:

- Action 3.1a: The Town actively seeks developers/developments that are focused on helping the Town meet its identified needs for housing and mindful of the Town's desire to preserve the visual and environmental character of the Town.
- Action 3.1b: The Town actively works to meet its identified needs for housing by acquiring State and Federal funding for infrastructure, etc. to support their development.
- Action 3.1c: The Town actively works to meet its identified needs for housing by securing land and/or directing developers/developments to land contiguous with existing or future utility systems.
- Action 3.1d: The Town actively works to meet its identified needs for housing by identifying, remediating and/or eliminating any barriers.
- Action 3.1e: The Town actively works to seek out and support the development of assisted living and/or nursing homes in the Township.
- Action 3.1f: The Town actively seeks ways to support recent Gibraltar High School graduates and their families who wish to pursue year-round housing in the Town.
- Action 3.1g: The Town promotes and supports the use of "conservation subdivisions" whose purpose is intended to preserve natural resources, agricultural land, and open spaces in exchange for greater density than offered by a traditional subdivision. In essence it allows increased density through the clustering of houses on a portion of the property with shared well and sanitary system thereby reducing the cost, while leaving the remaining acreage as permanent open, natural, or agricultural space in keeping with the Town's rural character.
- Action 3.1h: The Town actively encourages green building practices.
- Action 3.1i: The Town actively monitors the efficacy of its short-term rental ordinance and updates it as needed. Including limitation of short-term rental or business license as deemed necessary.

- Action 3.1j: The Town actively works to seek ways and actions that it can take to preserve and restore its supply of long term, 30 days or more, rental units.
- Action 3.1k: The Town annually considers the need for a long term, 30 days or more, ordinance similar to its ordinance for short term rentals.
- Action 3.1l: Infill development of houses or commercial buildings need to reflect the character of the houses or businesses around it.

## Economic Development

Goal 4.1: The Town supports a diverse mix of year-round and seasonal business.

Actions:

- Action 4.1a: The Town actively works to secure quality broadband services to meet the needs of residents and businesses.
- Action 4.1b: The Town actively works to create the infrastructure needed to attract people who work from home to reside in the Township year-round.
- Action 4.1c: The Town supports a balance of mixed commercial and residential uses at the intersections of Juddville & Hwy 42, County A & Hwy 42, and County A & F.
- Action 4.1d: The Town encourages and supports a balance of commercial and residential uses in its “Village Commercial” and “General Commercial” zoning districts.
- Action 4.1e: The Town encourages the adaptive reuse of existing buildings for businesses in commercial districts and housing in both residential and commercial districts.
- Action 4.1f: The Town actively works to support the development of businesses that produce local agricultural, fishery and forestry products.
- Action 4.1g: The Town actively works to seek and support a balance of community based businesses that meet the everyday needs of local residents.
- Action 4.1h: The Town will actively work with Gibraltar Schools, NWTC, and local employers to develop career interests through internships, apprenticeships, and job shadowing that will encourage local graduates to work and live in our Town.
- Action 4.1i: The Town works actively with Gibraltar School to develop a program that allows students to job shadow the Town’s paid employees: administrator, treasurer, clerk, fire chief, police officer and maintenance workers.
- Action 4.1j: The Town actively works with businesses to support and promote “buy local” programs.
- Action 4.1k: The Town plans for the needs of those using the State Park’s multimodal trail between Gibraltar School and County A.
- Action 4.1l: The Town actively supports its marina business and updates/maintains its docks as needed.

- Action 4.1m: The Town and Harbor Commission annually consider the best use of its docks for commercial activity.

Goal 4.2: The Town supports tourism as the main source of its economy.

Actions:

- Action 4.2a: The Town will actively support “Visit Fish Creek”.
- Action 4.2b: The Town will actively work with Destination Door County.
- Action 4.2c: The Town will actively work with Gibraltar Historical Association and other history preservation organizations to identify, promote, and support heritage tourism opportunities.
- Action 4.2d: The Town will actively work with the Wisconsin Agricultural Tourism Association, or like organizations, to promote and encourage sustained agricultural use of land within the Township and farm-based agritourism.
- Action 4.2e: The Town will actively work with Door County Economic Development Corporation to seek ways to diversify its economy while preserving the historical character of its small communities and rural character of its outlying areas.
- Action 4.2f: The Town actively works to support Green Tier initiatives and collaboration.

Goal 4.3: Public improvements within the Town will take into consideration the aging population.

## Transportation

Goal 5.1: The Town of Gibraltar develops and maintains a safe and efficient transportation system that reflects the small town historical character of the communities of Fish Creek, Juddville, and Maple Grove and also reflects the rural character of the Town’s outlying areas.

Actions:

- Action 5.1a: The Town actively works to maintain the Town’s roads through the use of the Pavement Surface Evaluation System (PASER) to assess the overall condition of roadways and determine road maintenance, restoration and construction needs.
- Action 5.1b: The Town acts quickly to identify and resolve any safety issues.
- Action 5.1c: The Town actively works to alleviate congestion in the “Village Commercial” zoning district and other congested areas.
- Action 5.1d: The Town actively works with the State to solve the problem of pedestrians crossing Hwy 42 either way from the Noble House corner.
- Action 5.1e: The Town actively plans for the safety of bicycles and other recreation vehicles on high volume Town roads. (See the Town of Gibraltar’s Bike/Ped Plan)

- Action 5.1f: The Town actively works to support and promote the State's multi-modal path between Gibraltar School & County Highway A.
- Action 5.1g: The Town actively works to develop, maintain, support, and promote a system of pathfinding for pedestrians in the "Village Commercial" zoning district and connectivity trails with surrounding communities.
- Action 5.1h: The Town actively works to extend its path on the south side of Hwy 42 from the gas station to North Haven.
- Action 5.1i: The Town actively works to designate town roads as shared spaces with bicycles and pedestrians and marks the pavement to clearly communicate it to drivers.
- Action 5.1j: The Town actively works to make pedestrian cross walks more visible to drivers by marking them with colored pavement and markings on the pavement just before the crosswalks indicating that the road is shared with pedestrians and bicycles.
- Action 5.1k: All new roads and changes to existing roads should be designed to fit the character of the road's surroundings.
- Action 5.1l: The Town actively works to support the operations of the Ephraim/Gibraltar Airport while preserving the rural character of its outlying areas, including considering the impacts of light and noise pollution.

Goal 5.2: The Town's public parking lot will serve as a hub of transportation.

Actions:

- Action 5.2a: The Town will actively work to encourage bike riders to park their bikes in the public parking lot and traverse the downtown area through other modes of transportation by adding sufficient bike racks near the public parking area and nearby sidewalks.
- Action 5.2b: The Town actively works to promote, support and/or provide some mode of transportation between the public parking lot and the Town docks.
- Action 5.2c: The Town actively works to promote, support and/or provide some mode of transportation between the public parking lot and worker's places of employment.
- Action 5.2d: The Town actively works to promote, support and/or provide some mode of transportation between the public parking lot and selected pick up and drop off sites near businesses and popular sites of interest. (Inquire about Village of Sister Bay shuttle).



## Utilities and Community Facilities

Goal 6.1: The Town's residents and visitors have access to quality community facilities and Utilities.

### Actions:

- Action 6.1a: The Town supports and actively works with Sanitary District #1.
- Action 6.1b: The Town actively works to maintain its docks and support the operation of its marina.
- Action 6.1c: The Town actively works to provide for and support safe parks, and recreational sites within the Township.
- Action 6.1d: The Town actively works with the Park & Lands committee to provide parks and recreational sites that offer a variety of activities for residents and visitors and expanding these as needed.
- Action 6.1e: The Town actively works to provide ADA access to its waterfront and Fish Creek for residents and visitors.
- Action 6.1f: The Town actively works to include ADA access in any of its new and existing public spaces.
- Action 6.1g: The Town actively works to include energy conservation measures in all community facilities.
- Action 6.1h: The Town actively works to enhance broadband services in the Township.
- Action 6.1i: The Town actively works to support, maintain, and promote its beach.
- Action 6.1j: The Town actively works to provide clean public restrooms and showers as needed in its "Village Commercial" district for residents and visitors.

## Intergovernmental Cooperation

Goal 7.1: The Town of Gibraltar actively works with governmental agencies that make decisions that affect the Town.

Actions:

- Action 7.1a: When the Town of Gibraltar works with governmental agencies that are making decisions that affect the Town, it seeks to assure that all decisions are in agreement with the Town's 2043 Comprehensive Plan. If compromises are needed it works to assure that the interests of both parties are served.
- Action 7.1b: The Town supports and actively works with other governmental agencies – the County, Peninsula State Park, Gibraltar School, and other Towns through fire and rescue's mutual aid agreement, the Town's Police and Safety Department, and the Ephraim/Gibraltar Airport to promote economies of scale.

Goal 7.2: The Town of Gibraltar actively works to develop a sense of community with its neighboring towns.

Actions:

- Action 7.2a: The Town works to share information with its neighboring towns.
- Action 7.2b: The Town maintains its membership with the WDNR Green Tier Legacy Community program and actively supports it by attending state and local meetings, sharing information, and collaborating with its neighboring Green Tier Legacy Communities on sustainability projects of common interest. (See the Town website)
- Action 7.2c: The Town of Gibraltar actively works with neighboring towns to preserve, protect, and restore shared natural features like wetlands, wildlife corridors, etc.
- Action 7.2d: The Town actively works with neighboring towns to ensure compatible land use along shared borders.
- Action 7.2e: The Town of Gibraltar actively works with neighboring towns to resolve issues along its shared borders.
- Action 7.2f: The Town of Gibraltar actively works with adjoining towns and to maintain transportation corridors.
- Action 7.2g: The Town actively works with neighboring towns to maintain compatible land use patterns.

## Land Use

Goal 8.1: The Town's land use aligns with its 2023-2043 vision & values.

Actions:

- Action 8.1a: Ensure that all future growth and development occur in a planned and coordinated manner so that it meets the social and economic needs of the Town while also preserving the Town's visual, environmental, historic and rural/agricultural character.
- Action 8.1b: All new developments will be located within or adjacent to existing sanitary districts with a plan for hook up, be connected to storm drains and/or have a storm water drainage plan.
- Action 8.1c: The Town will actively work with the County to update the County Zoning Ordinance and other County ordinances to be consistent with the Town's 2043 Comprehensive Plan.
- Action 8.1d: The Town promotes and supports the use of "conservation subdivisions" whose purpose is intended to preserve natural resources, agricultural land, and open spaces in exchange for greater density than offered by a traditional subdivision. In essence it allows increased density through the clustering of houses on a portion of the property with shared well and septic thereby reducing the cost, while leaving the remaining acreage as permanent open, natural, or agricultural space in keeping with the Town's rural character.
- Action 8.1e: Recognize as Town policy the need to preserve ecologically significant areas such as Lost Lake i.e. Thorp Pond on County EE near Quarter Line Road, the Ephraim/Gibraltar Swamp, the Fish Creek lowlands, including Button Marsh, the Hedemora Hills/Little Sweden i.e. the old ski hill forest complex, and Peil Creek headwaters. Any developments in this area must consider primary, secondary, and cumulative impacts to the environment.
- Action 8.1f: The Town actively encourages mixed commercial and residential uses in its "Village" and "General Commercial" districts and at the intersections of Hwy 42 & Juddville Road, Hwy 42 and County A, and County F and County A, and consider future expansion of commercial zoning at some of these locations.
- Action 8.1g: The Town actively works to accommodate low impact home businesses in residential districts except on premise retail sales which must be located in commercial districts.
- Action 8.1h: When considering approval of new developments, conditional uses and zoning changes account for needed environmental protection and natural resource conservation.
- Action 8.1i: The Town supports the use of the TIF (Tax Incremental Financing).

## Town Communication with and Involvement of its Residents

Goal 9.1: The Town actively works in a timely manner to inform its residents of the ongoing work of the Town Board, its commissions and committees and actively works to engage its residents, whenever possible, in the work of the Town Board, its commissions and committees do.

### Actions:

- Action 9.1a: The Town actively works to implement the Communication Plan, share accomplishments on the website and/or in Town newsletters and through a report at the Annual Town Meeting.
- Action 9.1b: The Town actively works to communicate with its residents by posting information on its website, sending out newsletters, holding public information meetings and other available means.
- Action 9.1c: The Town Board, its commissions and committees work in a timely manner to identify volunteer opportunities and communicate those opportunities to the public on the Town website, in the Town newsletter, and/or other available means.

## Implementation

Goal 10.1: The Town of Gibraltar actively works to implement its Comprehensive Plan.

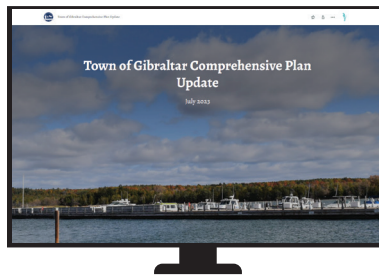
### Actions:

- Action 10.1a: When taking action on behalf of the Town, its committees, commissions, and board members actively work to cross check with the Comprehensive Plan to assure the action they are taking is in accordance with the Plan.
- Action 10.1b: The Town's committees, commissions and board shall keep track of what goals they have accomplished and what goals they intend to pursue in the following year and report this to the Town Board and to the residents at the Town's annual meeting.
- Action 10.1c: The Town Board actively keeps track of the Goals & Actions of the plan that have been accomplished and those that are being proposed to be acted upon for the following year.
- Action 10.1d: The Town shall annually review, and update ordinances as needed so they are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and all of its amendments.
- Action 10.1e: The Town will actively work to thoroughly evaluate all issues and possibilities before approving or rejecting any amendments to the Town's 2043 Comprehensive Plan.
- Action 10.1f: The Town will actively work to update the Comprehensive Plan every ten years.



View the Gibraltar Comprehensive Plan Online

<https://arcg.is/r9CH00>



This document was prepared by the  
Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission.

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# TOWN OF GIBRALTAR

## Door County, WI

