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INTRODUCTION

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PLAN PURPOSE

The Town of Buchanan Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP) is updated every five years, serving as a 20-year strategic guide for the development of parks, open spaces, and recreation activities in the Town. The purpose of this document is to assess current park conditions, plan for future park improvements, and establish goals and objectives for implementation.

In addition, approving this plan will allow the Town to participate in the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program, administered by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR). This program provides up to 50 percent matching funds for the acquisition and development of parkland.¹ An update of the CORP is required every five years to be eligible for these grants.

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PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE PLANNING

This is Buchanan’s fourth comprehensive outdoor recreation plan, but its first since forming a permanent Parks Committee to specifically oversee park projects and improvements in July of 2022. The first CORP was adopted by the Town Board for the years 2009-2012, the second from 2013-2017, and most recently from 2018-2022. It is the goal of both the Town Board and the Park’s Committee to maximize grant availability to assist in park project funding, so the current document is being updated to cover the years 2025-2029.

PARKS COMMITTEE

The Town Board did not sit idly on its hands during the time between the expiration of the prior CORP and the adoption of this one. In fact, it took significant steps to prioritize improvements to the Town’s parks. In 2022, it created a permanent Parks Committee which meets monthly and reports directly to the Town Board. The Committee membership is made up of interested Town citizens who serve two-year terms.

In addition to creating the Committee, the Board substantially increased the budget allocation dedicated to improvements to parks. Throughout 2023 the Parks Committee undertook the planning process to map out improvements to Springfield Park. A master plan was approved by the Board and phase one of that plan was completed in the fall of 2023. The 2024 budget includes funding for the completion of Phase 2 of that project which includes new basketball, tennis, and pickleball courts, a paved trail connecting the park to nearby residential streets, and all new play equipment.

The objective of the Town over the next five years is to make substantial improvements to its other two neighborhood parks, as well as further develop a trail system that will allow for simpler and safer transportation and outdoor recreation options within the community.

EXISTING PLAN REVIEW

In addition to reviewing previously adopted CORPs, the documents listed below have influenced the preliminary research and final recommendations in the Town of Buchanan CORP update.

PARKS AND RECREATIONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT (ADOPTED 2009)

In 2009, a needs assessment study was conducted in order for Buchanan to enact an impact fee on new development for the funding of park acquisition, improvement and development. This ordinance analyzes the Town’s population and facility needs. Fees collected are to be used only for capital purchases related to parks and recreation.²

TOWN OF BUCHANAN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (ADOPTED 2018)

The Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Buchanan was updated and adopted in 2018. This long-range plan covers a variety of topics such as housing, transportation, economic development, land use, environmental resources, and intergovernmental cooperation.³

APPLETON AND OSHKOSH MPO BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PLAN (ADOPTED 2021)

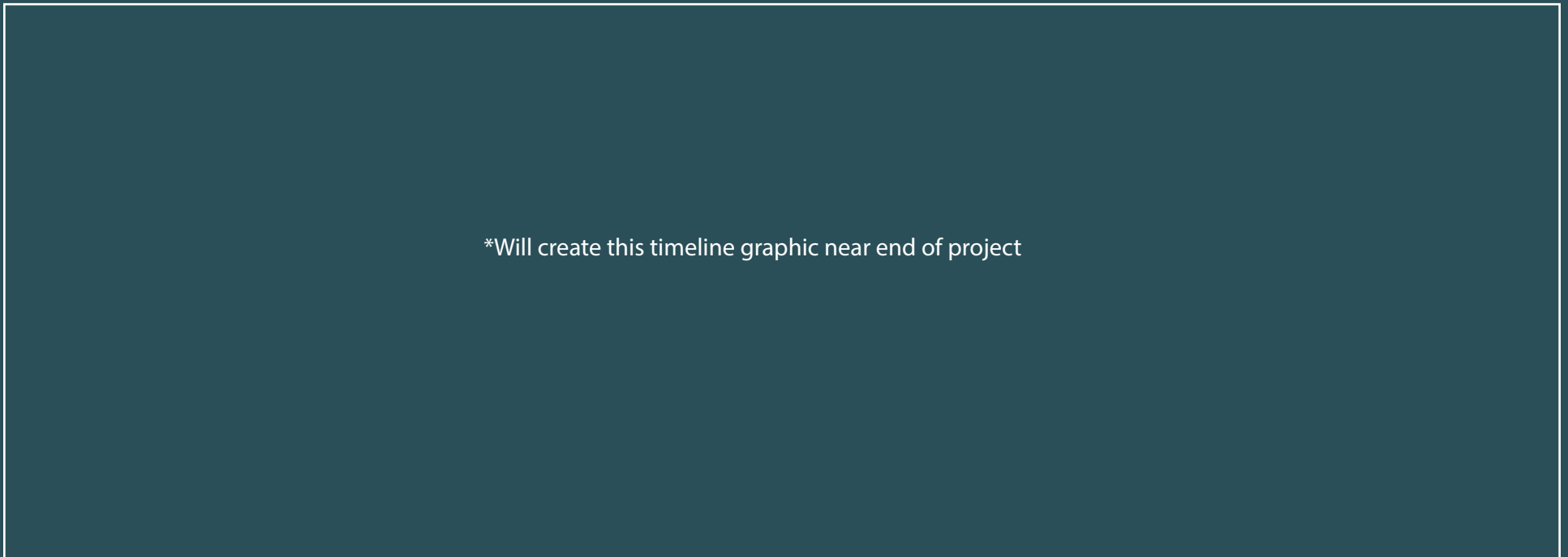
This plan was adopted in 2021 and examines ways to connect Fox Cities communities to each other via bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, creating a balanced network for all transportation modes. The Town of Buchanan is included in the boundary of the Appleton (Fox Cities) Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).⁴

PLAN PROCESS

The Town of Buchanan contracted with East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (ECWRPC) to facilitate the update of the Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. A project kickoff meeting was held on February 13th, 2024 with the Town of Buchanan Parks Committee, Town Administrator Michael Brown, and ECWRPC staff. Community engagement efforts took place from April 1st, 2024 to May 31st, 2024 via a project website, survey, and interactive map. The survey generated 91 responses, and the interactive map generated 20 responses. Community feedback is analyzed in detail in Chapter Four: Recreational Needs.

ECWRPC staff then worked with the Parks Committee to list goals and opportunities for the plan, incorporating key themes identified during community engagement efforts. The Parks Committee assisted in writing and reviewing plan chapters, as well as refining plan recommendations. A draft of the plan was completed on **Month Day, 2024**. Following review and comment by the Parks Committee, the Town Board, and the public, the final plan was adopted by the Town Board on **Month Day, 2024**.

FIGURE 1-1. PLAN TIMELINE



ABOUT BUCHANAN

The Town of Buchanan is an eclectic growing community in a state of uncertain transition. Its western border neighbors the urbanized Appleton and its eastern border is predominantly farm land.

Its citizens have deeply held divergent beliefs about what balance should be struck between embracing its historical roots as an agricultural area and modernizing its infrastructure. These disagreements have played out in Wisconsin's court system over the last several years and created a sharply divided local political environment. Uniting all sides though is a common sense of civic pride and desire for improvement.

A concerted and consensus-based effort to improve Buchanan's parks over the next five years presents a wonderful opportunity to build a unified sense of community in something that all Buchananites can use and enjoy together for decades to come.

SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

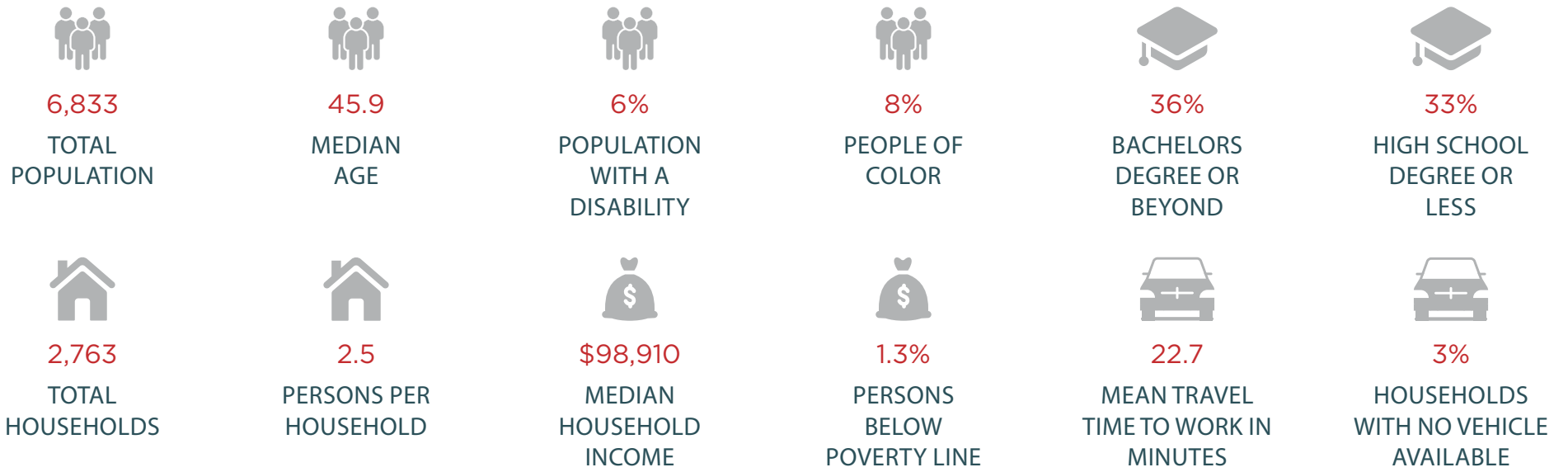
Located in Outagamie County, the Town of Buchanan spans 14.8 square miles with a total population of 6,833 people. Since 1980, the population of the Town of Buchanan has grown at a rate 7 times faster than that of Outagamie County as a whole.³

With significant access to water resources, the Fox River winds along the northwest border of the Town. The majority of land adjacent to the Fox River is utilized for residential or agricultural purposes. Additional demographic statistics for the Town are provided in Figure 1-3. An overview of the community is shown in Map 1-1.

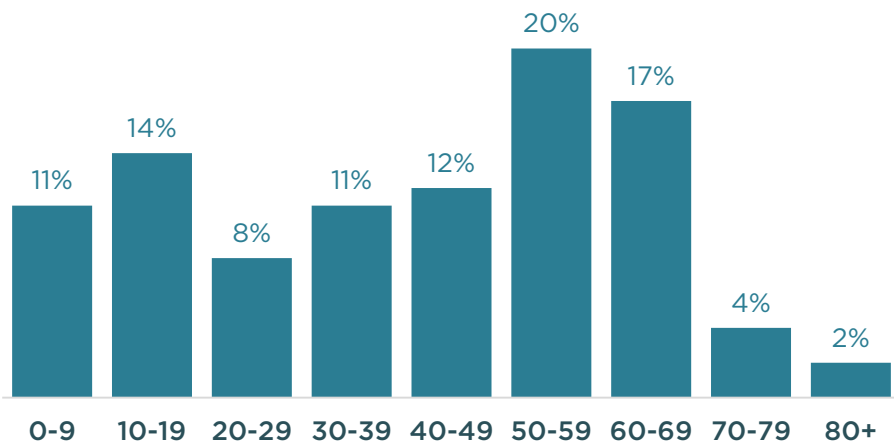
FIGURE 1-2. TOWN OF BUCHANAN LOCATION



FIGURE 1-3. TOWN OF BUCHANAN DEMOGRAPHICS

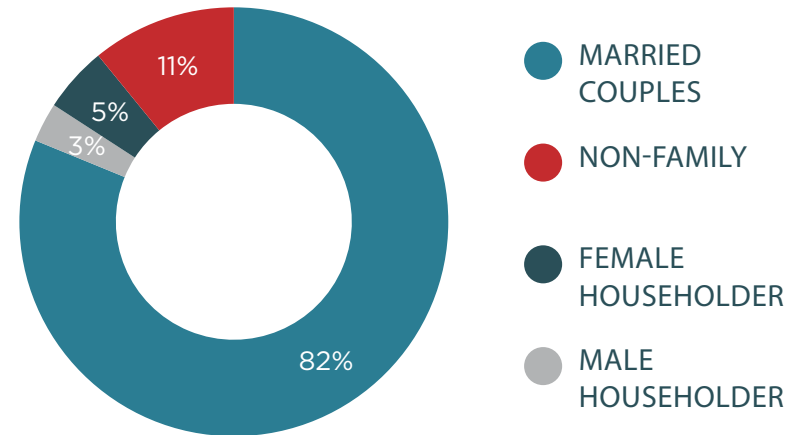


POPULATION BY AGE RANGE

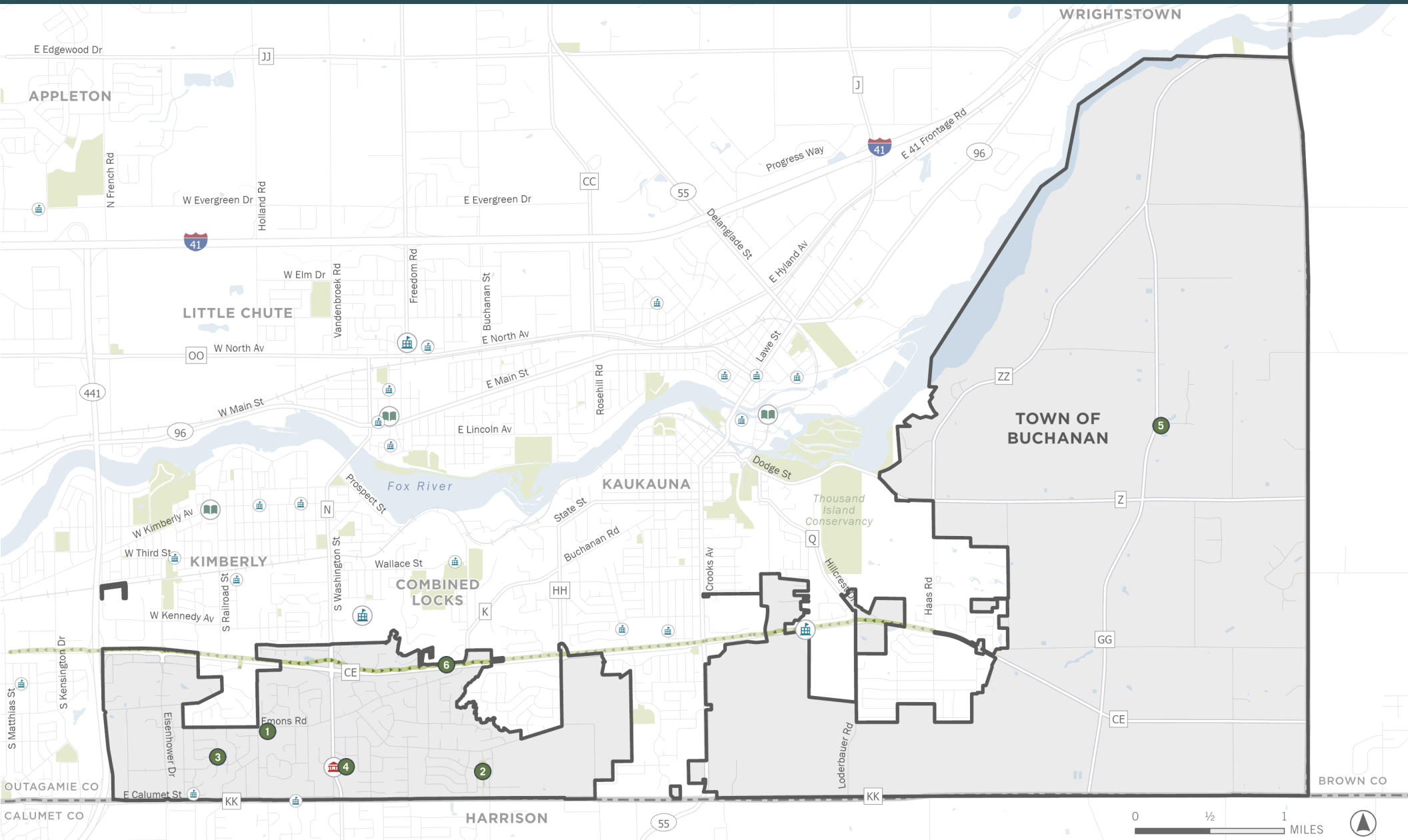


Source: ACS 2022 5-Year Estimates

POPULATION BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE



MAP 1-1. COMMUNITY OVERVIEW



- | | | | | |
|------------------------------|--|----------|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 Emons Rd Pond Trail | 4 Town Hall Park | CE Trail | Buchanan Town Hall | Elementary or Middle School |
| 2 Hickory Park | 5 Future Park | Park | Library | High School |
| 3 Springfield Park | 6 CE Trail Underpass (Buchanan) | | | |

ENDNOTES

¹ <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Stewardship/About>

² <https://ecode360.com/14215418>

³ <https://www.townofbuchanan.org/home/showpublisheddocument/186/637389027298100000>

⁴ <https://www.ecwrpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/2021-Appleton-TMA-and-Oshkosh-MPO-Bicycle-and-Pedestrian-Plan.pdf>



*Photo