

Town of Maiden Rock Comprehensive Plan 2026–2046

Brief Summary and Goal Statements

Please see Draft Plan of July 6, 2026, for details and public review
Prepared By the Town Planning Committee with the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission

Plan Overview

The Town of Maiden Rock Comprehensive Plan 2026–2046 establishes a 20-year framework for land use, development, and public services in accordance with Wisconsin Statute § 66.1001. The plan was prepared by the Town of Maiden Rock Comprehensive Plan Committee, appointed by the Town Board in 2025, with planning and technical assistance from the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission. Public participation included a community survey, open public meetings, and comment periods, and the results were used by the committee to develop the goals and objectives throughout the plan.

The Town of Maiden Rock is a small, rural community of approximately 609 residents (2025 estimate) located in the southeast corner of Pierce County, bordered by Lake Pepin, the Great River Road (Hwy 35), and Pepin County, and surrounding the separate Village of Maiden Rock. Its defining character is a blend of working farmland, wooded valleys, scenic Mississippi River bluffs, and peaceful rural residential areas. Wisconsin Department of Administration projections indicate a modest, gradual population decline to 551 residents by 2050, consistent with broader rural trends in the Upper Midwest; the plan is designed to manage that change thoughtfully while preserving what makes Maiden Rock distinctive.

The plan addresses the nine statutory elements: Issues and Opportunities, Housing, Transportation, Utilities and Community Facilities, Agricultural and Natural Resources, Economic Development, Intergovernmental Cooperation, Land Use, and Implementation. Each element includes goals, objectives, and action steps grounded in community input, data analysis, and Wisconsin planning law.

Central Themes

Five themes run through every element of the plan. First, protecting prime agricultural land and natural resources, including bluffs, woodlands, wetlands, surface water, and groundwater. Second, maintaining a “service-neutral” growth philosophy under which new development must not require municipal water, sewer, or expanded full-time emergency services, and any needed infrastructure is funded by the developer or business rather than the Town’s general fund. Third, supporting small-scale ag-tourism and rural economic development — orchards, vineyards, farm-to-table operations, bed and breakfasts, event venues, and artisan enterprises — managed through conditional use permits. Fourth, coordinating with the Village of Maiden Rock, Pierce County, and state agencies on shared services, land use consistency, and Great River Road tourism. Fifth, ensuring fiscal responsibility in all development decisions, including the authority to pace residential building permits to the Town’s ability to maintain roads and emergency services.

Key structural recommendations include creating a standing Plan Commission to review all new development and rezoning petitions before Town Board action; requiring developer-funded roads built to Pierce County standards; restricting permanent structures on slopes exceeding 12% or within 100 feet of designated wetlands and environmental corridors; and continued reliance on the CAFO operations ordinance adopted December 9, 2024. A public hearing on the draft plan is proposed for August 10, 2026, at 6:00 pm at Maiden Rock Town Hall, with Class 1 notice published in the Pierce County Journal.

Goal Statements by Element

Implementation Goal

“To ensure the Town of Maiden Rock Comprehensive Plan serves as the primary guideline for all local decision-making by establishing a transparent, consistent, and proactive system for updating Town ordinances, reviewing development proposals, and fostering the intergovernmental partnerships necessary to achieve the Town’s 20-year vision.”

Issues and Opportunities Goal

“To guide and manage future growth and development in Maiden Rock through a coordinated, long-range planning framework that preserves the rural character, protects its agricultural heritage, and ensures environmentally responsible land-use decisions, while proactively addressing the evolving needs of a changing population through fiscally responsible public services and sustainable land use practices.”

Housing Goal

“To foster a diverse and inclusive housing market in the Town of Maiden Rock by promoting the development of varied housing types for all income and ability levels, while prioritizing land conservation through planned home placement and design and the preservation of productive agricultural and natural resources.”

Transportation Goal

“To maintain and develop a safe, efficient, and well-managed transportation network that supports the needs of all residents while protecting the Town’s unique natural, scenic, and historical character through high standards for new development and a proactive maintenance strategy.”

Utilities & Community Facilities Goal

“To provide cost-effective, high-quality public services and facilities that evolve in step with community demand, prioritizing underground utility infrastructure and expanded broadband access while ensuring that any expansion of Town services remains fiscally responsible and driven by resident needs.”

Agricultural & Natural Resources Goal

“To sustain Maiden Rock’s rural agricultural heritage by protecting the economic viability of its agricultural lands and the integrity of its iconic natural landscapes including bluffs, woodlands, and waterways through responsible land stewardship, the prevention of incompatible development, and the promotion of a diversified, conservation-minded rural economy. The Town will also promote sustainable land management and a diverse agricultural environment that welcomes traditional farming alongside innovative ag-enterprises and cottage industries. Maiden Rock will also protect our natural resources including bluffs, vistas, wetlands, groundwater, and woodlands.”

Economic Development Goal

“To cultivate a resilient, low-impact local economy that prioritizes agricultural viability and small-scale enterprise, ensuring that new commercial and residential growth is paced and placed to protect the Town’s fiscal health, natural resources, and rural identity without requiring the expansion of high-intensity urban services.”

Intergovernmental Cooperation Goal

“To maintain a seamless network of communication and partnership with the Village of Maiden Rock, Pierce County, and neighboring jurisdictions to achieve economies of scale in public services, ensure consistent land-use planning that protects our shared rural character, and provide high-quality emergency and law enforcement services through collaborative resource management.”

Land Use Goal

“To manage growth through a disciplined land use strategy that preserves Maiden Rock’s agricultural foundation and natural landscapes. Ensure new development is located and designed to prevent urban-scale service demands and fiscal strain on Town taxpayers.”