

Gaining and Maintaining Young Adults in Wisconsin

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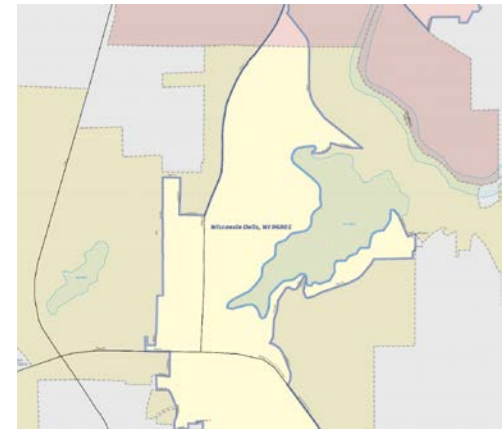
Research Project Framework

- A strengths approach—studying communities that are gaining and maintaining young adults rather than those that are losing them
- A community approach—studying municipalities rather than counties
- A holistic approach—studying whole communities rather than single programs
- Goal—find positive forms of community development that attract and maintain higher numbers of young adults.

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Research Methods

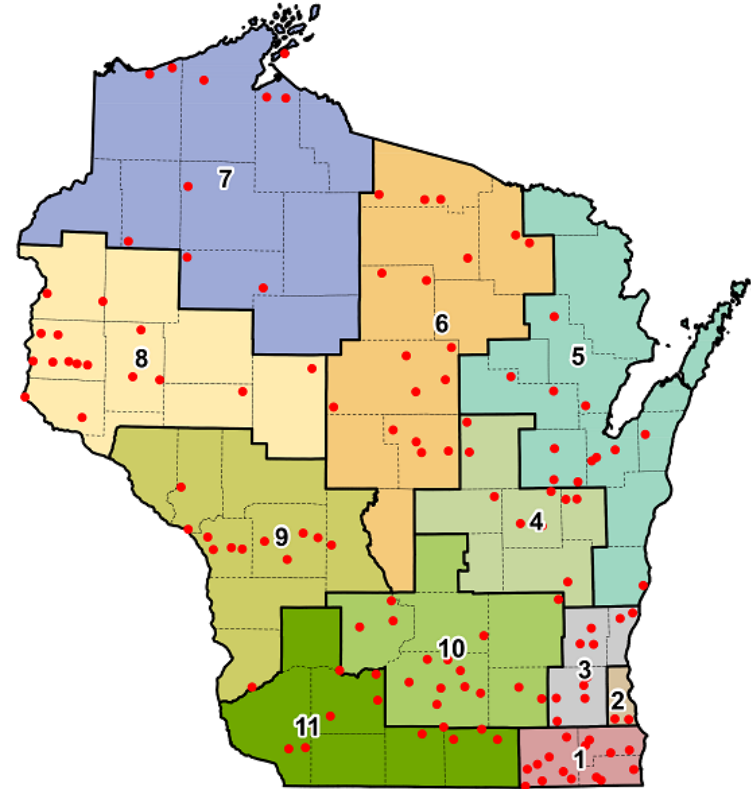
- Started with all 1800+ Wisconsin municipalities and towns
- Assembled U.S. Census counts of “young adults” (20-39 yrs) at 1990, 2000, 2010
- Excluded “group quarters” population
- Merged counts from cities and villages crossing county lines
- Calculated measures of *gainers* and *maintainers* in each place.
 - *Gainers* – absolute growth of young adult population
 - *Maintainers* – higher total percent of young adult population



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Research Methods

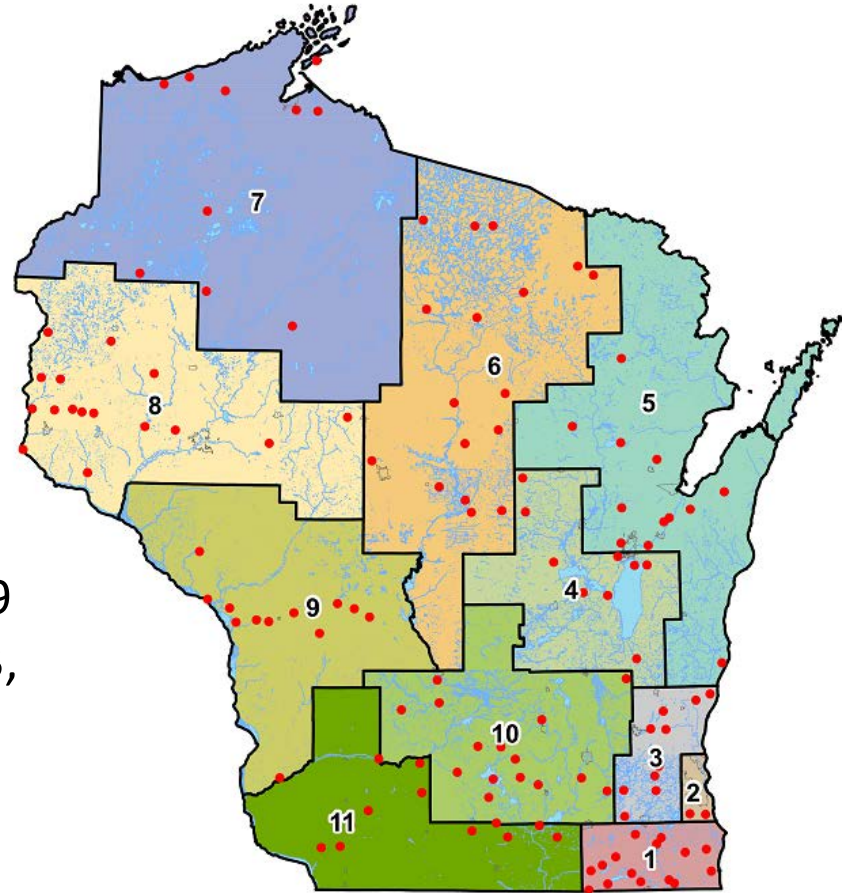
- Looked for regional division strategy to highlight more cases *across* Wisconsin
- Ranked the “top 20” gainers & “top 20” maintainers *within* each WWDB region
- Selected *overlappers*--places that appeared in both “top 20” lists (top 30 in region 7) = **118 places**
- Solicited input from Extension professionals on suitability of these “overlappers”
- Included non-overlappers in northern portion of regions 5 & 6
- Resulted in **130 places** under consideration



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What We've Learned So Far

- The long list of 130 places includes more geographic dispersion.
- The 130 places are generally clustered around:
 - Watersheds
 - Main transportation lines: regions 8, 9
 - Large metropolitan areas: regions 1, 3, 5, 8, 10



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What We've Learned so Far

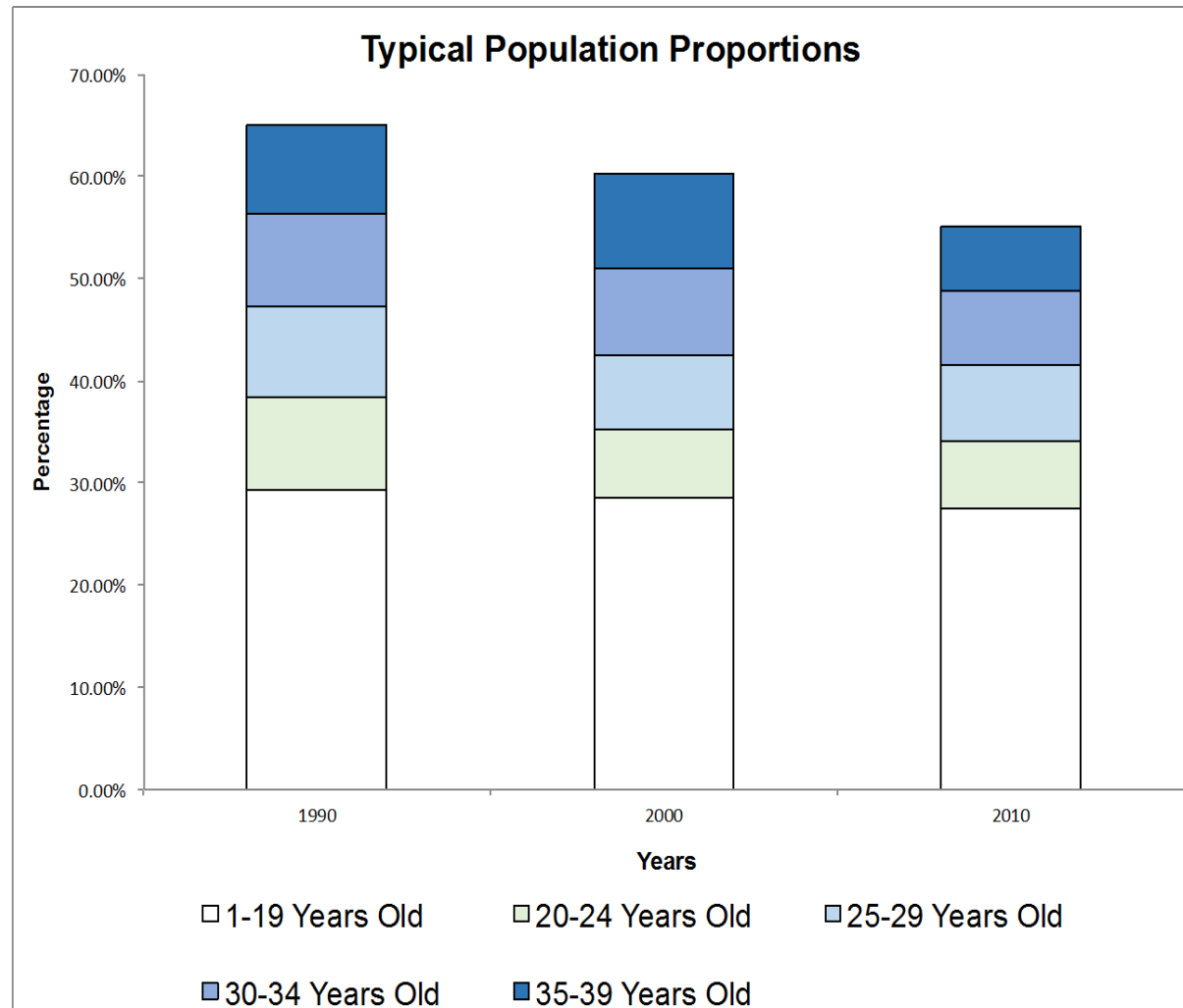
We normally think of rural youth exodus, but the 'region' with the highest percentage of places losing young adults is Milwaukee County.

- Fewer than 10% of the cities or villages in Milwaukee County had population growth of 20-39 year olds from 1990-2010
- Milwaukee County young adult population loss varied from: 6% (West Milwaukee village) to 41% (River Hills village)
- No other region in Wisconsin had such a low percentage of places experiencing young adult population growth (15-35% of places in other WDB regions experienced growth)

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What We've Learned So Far

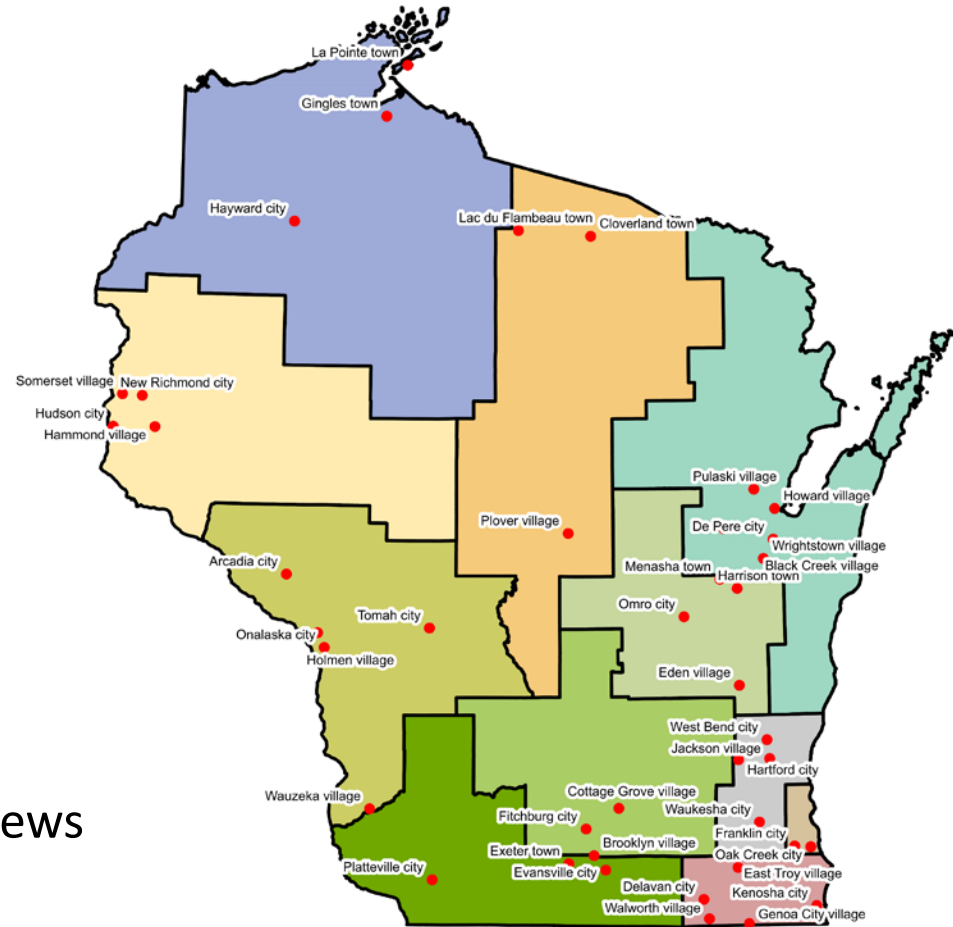
None of our overlapper communities have a young adult population that has actually gained as a proportion of the total population, even though they've gained in relation to their own cohort numbers. Only five places in state where young adults have increased as a proportion—all small residential towns.



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Choosing Case Studies

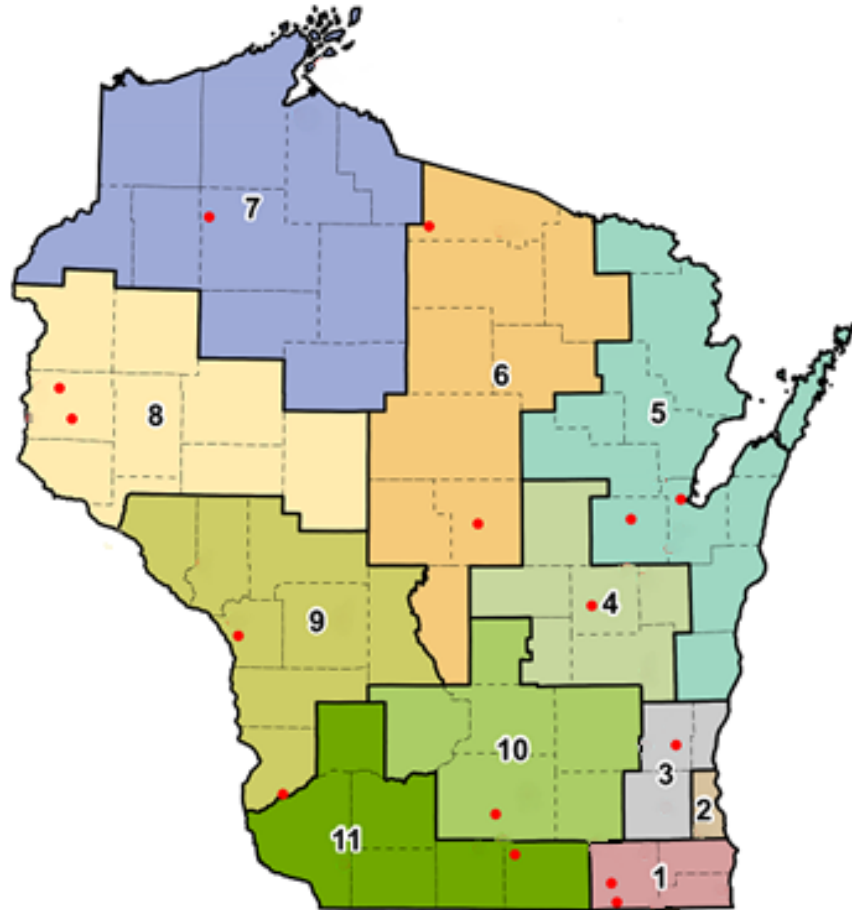
- The Medium list of places
 - Extension educator advice
 - Additional data
 - Education
 - Employment
 - Journey to work
 - Housing
 - Race
- The Short list of places
 - Extension educator advice
 - Additional data
 - Site visits with intercept interviews



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Choosing case studies

Region 1	Walworth Delavan
Region 3	West Bend
Region 4	Omro
Region 5	De Pere Black Creek
Region 6	Plover Lac du Flambeau
Region 7	Hayward
Region 8	Somerset New Richmond
Region 9	Onalaska Wauzeka
Region 10	Brooklyn
Region 11	Evansville



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Final Case Studies

Stuck in place or happy to be there?

Region	Name	High School Graduates	Bachelors Degree	Mean Household Income	Median Household Income	Unemployed (16+)	In-Migration, 1990-2010, 20-39 year olds
1	Walworth	92.0%	27.0%	\$61,849	\$50,455	10.4%	yes
1	Delavan	82.3%	16.2%	\$53,852	\$48,199	8.0%	mixed
3	West Bend	92.5%	26.1%	\$66,916	\$56,829	4.7%	yes
4	Omro	89.0%	18.0%	\$51,211	\$44,375	4.6%	yes
5	De Pere	95.5%	34.5%	\$69,220	\$56,834	4.5%	yes
5	Black Creek	92.8%	14.0%	\$53,866	\$47,188	7.1%	yes
6	Plover	90.0%	31.0%	\$58,409	\$67,765	7.3%	yes
6	Lac du Flambeau	77.8%	13.0%	\$32,422	\$20,984	13.5%	yes
6	Hayward	86.4%	19.7%	\$41,725	\$27,100	5.3%	yes
8	Somerset	92.4%	22.4%	\$61,412	\$62,115	6.5%	yes
8	New Richmond	92.0%	23.8%	\$66,613	\$52,656	7.7%	yes
9	Onalaska	94.8%	35.7%	\$75,789	\$53,813	3.8%	yes
9	Wauzeka	94.4%	12.4%	\$46,192	\$44,375	5.7%	mixed
10	Brooklyn	96.1%	25.3%	\$79,982	\$77,250	5.8%	yes
11	Evansville	95.6%	24.2%	\$68,319	\$58,571	3.1%	yes
	Wisconsin	90.8%	27.4%	\$64,523	\$52,738	4.9%	mixed

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Case Study Methods

- Conducting case studies for municipalities that show more success at gaining and maintaining young adults and potentially hold lessons for other communities.
 - One to two case studies per region
 - Gather data to understand the total picture of a community, not just the effect of a single program
- Organizing collaboration for participatory research in each case study community.
 - Engage “core group” of community leaders to inform research of their own community
 - group and individual “informant” interviews (goal of 15-25 per case)
 - grounded theory approach
 - document research
 - Create stories that communities can tell about themselves

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General Case Study Data

Status of data collection:

- Communities with data that reach “saturation”: Brooklyn, Evansville, West Bend, Hayward, De Pere, Somerset, New Richmond, Black Creek, Omro
- Communities in process: Walworth, Delavan, Plover, Onalaska
- Communities with participation challenges: Lac du Flambeau, Wauzeka

Quality of data:

- Diversity of participants is unknown or potentially limited by network recruitment method
- Lower response rates in Black Creek and New Richmond

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General Case Study Findings

Initial case study findings:

- Proximity to, and distance from, larger employment/entertainment centers
 - Closeness to outdoors
 - Know about trade-offs
 - Pleasant commute
- Schools
 - Reputation
 - Create social networks
- Housing costs
- Strong marriage/family focus (including extended family)
- Selective desires: restaurants (including fine), pools, focused shopping
- “Tipping point” worries

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Next Research Phase

Implications?

- It might be more important to develop nearby urban centers than the community itself.
- Attempting to attract young singles may be unrealistic
- There may be a minimum set of local amenities needed: schools, outdoor spaces, restaurants, and appropriately affordable housing.
- Too much emphasis on growth, especially developer-led growth, may be counterproductive.