

## **CHAPTER 1 Issues And Opportunities Element**

66.1001(2)(a) Wis. Statutes

### **Section 1.1 Description of Planning Area**

Sharon is the 2nd largest town (out of 17 towns) in Portage County in terms of geographic size, encompassing an area of approximately 41,488 acres or 64.83 sq. miles. The Town (political unit) includes all of congressional township T24&25N-R9E. The Town of Sharon is located on the northern edge of Portage County and is bordered on the north by Marathon County, on the south by the Town of Stockton, on the east by the Towns of New Hope and Alban, and on the west by the Towns of Hull and Dewey (Figure 1.1).

From the Portage County Historical Society: The Town of Sharon is crossed by a continental divide: On the West it is drained by the Plover River which flows into the Wisconsin River, a tributary of the Mississippi River which empties its waters in the Gulf of Mexico; on the East side runs the Tomorrow River which farther down is called the Waupaca River, a name which is Indian meaning tomorrow. This stream is a tributary of the Wolf River and their waters flow through Lake Michigan and the St. Lawrence River and eventually flow into the North Atlantic Ocean. The escarpment which represents a terminal moraine, the furthest advance of the last Wisconsin glaciations, in the southern part of the town is the continental divide; farther North the moraine has been eroded to let the Plover River make its way through it. There the continental divide is not clearly marked; it is an area with swamps and lakes.

Up until 1960, the Town of Sharon was a typical rural agriculture-based community with a steadily declining population, due mostly to the changes in agricultural economy. Thus, the decade of the 1960's marked the end of the Town of Sharon's declining population and the beginning of a growth period, and population estimates for 2025 portray a continued growth pattern.

The region was first wooded and attracted lumbermen. When it was cleared of trees it became farmland. Among the pioneer settlers were Irish and German Catholics who set down roots around where Ellis is today. Beginning in 1857 the first Polish family settled in this area, creating the first Polish rural settlement in the State and the second in the United States. Coming along with these Polish emigrants was their respect of the land, religion, family and an ethic of hard work.

Polonia was named by a Polish priest when he established a new Catholic church on top of the moraine east of Ellis. By the 1900's at least 10,000 people, more than one-third of the population of Portage County, were of Polish descent. With a heavy influx through the early part of the century, that percentage increased so that today 60% of the population can claim Polish ancestry. Subsequently, more Polish immigrants came to the region to farm. Polish Americans continued the legacy given by their ancestors. This legacy is also evident by the dedication of Highway 66 as the Polish Heritage Highway.

Additional history of the Town of Sharon may be found at the Portage County Historical Society and local County Libraries.

### **Map 011**

**See the Map of Town of Sharon Area**

## **Section 1.2 Town of Sharon Vision**

We envision that in 2020 Sharon will be.....

- A distinctive rural community blending into a beautiful natural setting;
- Home to productive family farms;
- An environmentally aware community;
- A diverse and progressive community working together to address issues of local importance; and
- A growing community, with growth that should enhance the rural character of the town.

We believe there is room for us to grow, but in ways that will maintain and enhance the values of rural living that we enjoy today. To do this we must build upon our community's strengths and unique qualities; avoid complacency by promoting creativity, leadership and creative problem solving; and be willing to work together to address a variety of difficult problems we will surely face in a changing future.

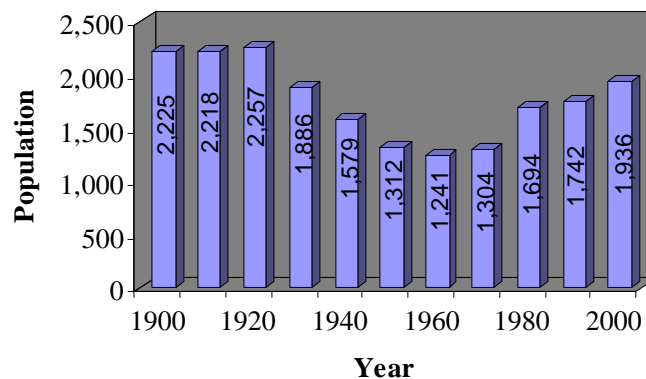
## **Section 1.3 Demographic Trends and Population Growth**

Every 10 years the Federal government performs the national census, and these census results are the main source of the information we use to understand how communities change over time. The Town of Sharon has seen a considerable variation in its growth rate over the last 100 years.

Census data reveal two major, historical population trends for the Town of Sharon (Figure 2). The first major trend was a steady decline in the Town's population over a forty-year period from 1930 through the 1960's. This is characteristic of an agriculture-based economy that saw a steady decline in farm numbers, but an increase in average size of farm.

This declining population trend was reversed in the 1970's, with the Town experiencing a significant upturn in population during the 1970s as urban residents began moving back to rural or semi-rural areas. In Portage County, the impact of this migration back to the rural areas occurred earlier and was greater in those towns located adjacent to the larger population centers.

**Figure 1 Town of Sharon Population Change: 1900 to 2000**



Source: US Bureau of Census

The Town of Sharon's most dramatic growth occurred during the 1970's, with the Town documenting population increases of 29.9% for the 1970-1980 period (Table 1.1). From 1980 to 2000, the growth slowed, increasing by 14% for the period. The growth experienced by the Town of Sharon over the past twenty years was an average percentage increase compared to all towns in Portage County; the Town of Lanark experienced the greatest percentage increase with 150.7%. The Wisconsin Department of Administration, which provides yearly population estimates for the census period, has projected continued growth for the Town in 2002, continuing a growth trend that is average to other communities in Portage County.

**Table 1.1 Sharon Comparison Population Change: 1970 to 2002**

	U.S. Census				State of WI Estimate 2002	1970 to 2000 Change	2000 to 2002 Change
	1970	1980	1990	2000			
Town of Sharon	1,304	1,694	1,742	1,936	1,968	48.5%	1.7%
Town of Alban	606	768	860	897	901	NA	0.4%
Town of Dewey	575	803	849	975	1,001	69.6%	2.7%
Town of Hull	3,124	5,122	5,563	5,493	5,533	75.8%	0.7%
Town of New Hope	492	625	694	736	751	49.6%	2.0%
Town of Stockton	1,537	2,208	2,494	2,896	2,946	88.4%	1.7%
Portage County	47,541	57,420	61,405	67,182	68,227	41.3%	1.6%

Source: US Census Bureau; State of Wisconsin Dept. of Administration; Portage County Planning and Zoning Dept.

Population growth is a combination of many factors including birth, death, and in and out migration. By examining migration patterns for the residents of the Town of Sharon, we can better understand where the growth in the community is occurring (Table 1.2). The U.S. Census provides data on where residents were living five years prior to the census. The "Same House" column identifies the Sharon residents that lived in the same dwelling in both 1995 and 2000 (or 1985 and 1990); this can be an indicator of long-term residency. The "Different House, Portage County" column identifies the Sharon residents that lived in a home outside the Town, but within Portage County, in 1995. The "Different House, Different County" column identifies the Sharon residents that lived in a home outside of the Town and Portage County, but within the State of Wisconsin, in 1995. The "Different State" column identifies the Sharon residents that lived in a home outside the State of Wisconsin in 1995. Altogether, this information provides insight into the nature and pace of new residents moving into the Town.

**Table 1.2 Place of Residence for Town Residents. Five Years Prior to 1990 & 2000 Census**

	Same House		Different House, Portage County		Different House, Different County		Different State									
	1995		1995		1995		1995									
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%								
Town of Sharon	1,120	45%	980	34%	434	17%	511	18%	112	4%	81	3%	75	3%	64	2%
Town of Alban	528	70%	545	71%	140	19%	127	16%	67	9%	86	11%	18	2%	13	2%
Town of Dewey	585	69%	662	68%	123	14%	194	20%	37	4%	33	3%	28	3%	18	2%
Town of Hull	2,945	58%	3,669	70%	1,173	23%	939	18%	611	12%	366	7%	380	7%	246	5%
Town of New Hope	489	70%	538	73%	101	15%	110	15%	45	6%	29	4%	40	6%	20	3%
Town of Stockton	1,589	91%	1,996	103%	466	27%	500	26%	158	9%	173	9%	79	5%	66	3%
Portage County	51%		56%		21%		22%		21%		16%		7%		5%	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000 Census.

Based on 2000 census information, thirty-four percent (34%) of the Town's residents lived in the same house as they did in 1995, down eleven percent (11%) from the 1990 census. This would show that long-term residents are becoming a smaller fraction of the total population. Three percent (3%) of residents in 2000 lived in a different county in 1995. This is well below the 16% average for Portage County. We do not know what county these residents came from. These numbers provide further examples of the strength of residential expansion within the Town of Sharon: decreased percentage of residents living long term in the same dwelling; more people relocating into the Town from Portage County, but less from beyond.

## **A. Age Distribution**

Table 1.3 details the number of Town residents that occupied specific age groups in each of the last three census years, along with similar information for an average of all Portage County Towns and the County as a whole.

The median age for the Town of Sharon is 38.2 years. This rate has increased by eleven years since 1980, with the rate of increase holding steady over the two decades. The "median age" is the point where ½ of the population lies above and ½ lies below; the older this age is, the older the overall population for a place is becoming. The other towns across Portage County have seen their median age increase at a slightly slower pace (10.5 years). The County as a whole has seen its median age increase at an even slower rate, just under eight years over the twenty-year period. This is an indication that the towns overall are aging more rapidly than the County's villages or City of Stevens Point.

As one would expect with the rise in median age, the percentage of the population for the towns within Portage County over the age of 65 has been trending upward since 1980 as well. The Town of Sharon 65+ population segment increased from 9.7% of total population in 1980 to 11.6% in 2000. The average Portage County town saw this segment increase slightly from 7.9% to 8.6%, and the County as a whole increased from 9.9% to 10.9%. When examining all of the age groups, we find that all groups below the age of 35 are declining in both raw numbers and percent for Town and County population averages, while the reverse is true for age groups above the age of 35. The number of seniors aged 75 and over has nearly doubled since 1990. In Sharon, the age groups under 35 are losing population at about the same rate as the rest of the towns. This is not typical of most of Portage County.

Further insight into the nature of the Town's population change over time can be gained through examining how the different age groups change as they move through their life cycles. Age groups for the towns and County (or "cohorts" as they are called when tracking a group of same-aged people) have been displayed in the table in ten-year increments to more easily see how their numbers increase or decline over different census years. The diagonal series of gray and white boxes within Table 1.3 indicate the path of each age cohort through the three census periods.

The 5-to-14 year old cohort for the Town of Sharon numbered 308 in 1990. Their number declined by 28 persons (-10%) by the year 2000 (as the 5-to-14 year olds became 15-to-24 year olds). Some of this decline may be explained by children leaving home for college or jobs. For the most part, the age cohorts between 35 to 64 and 75 to 85+ years old have experienced increases in numbers between 1990 and 2000. In comparing this growth trend to the Town and County, you will find roughly the same level of growth within the cohorts over the ten year period.

**Table 1.3 Distribution of Population, by Ten-Year Age Groups**

Age	Town of Sharon			Towns Average			Portage County		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
Under 5	157 9.3%	124 7.1%	115 5.9%	131 9.4%	117 7.8%	95 5.0%	4,343 7.6%	4,266 6.9%	3,964 5.9%
5 to 14 yrs	344 20.3%	308 17.7%	251 13.0%	271 19.4%	270 17.9%	253 13.4%	8,671 15.1%	9,080 14.8%	9,118 13.6%
15 to 24 yrs	280 16.5%	234 13.4%	280 14.5%	256 18.3%	199 13.2%	198 10.5%	15,270 26.6%	13,081 21.3%	13,983 20.8%
25 to 34 yrs	298 17.6%	273 15.7%	231 11.9%	249 17.8%	239 15.8%	182 9.7%	9,180 16.0%	9,897 16.1%	8,322 12.4%
35 to 44 yrs	165 9.7%	296 17.0%	321 16.6%	164 11.7%	247 16.4%	289 15.4%	5,593 9.7%	8,690 14.2%	10,261 15.3%
45 to 54 yrs	138 8.7%	159 9.1%	330 17.0%	116 8.3%	158 10.5%	259 13.8%	4,447 7.7%	5,489 8.9%	8,945 13.3%
55 to 64 yrs	146 8.6%	132 7.6%	182 9.4%	102 7.3%	146 9.7%	149 7.9%	4,185 7.3%	4,299 7.0%	5,235 7.8%
65 to 74 yrs	117 6.9%	135 7.7%	126 6.5%	74 5.3%	86 5.7%	95 5.1%	3,391 5.9%	3,610 5.9%	3,791 5.6%
75 to 84 yrs	38 2.2%	73 4.9%	76 3.9%	29 2.1%	39 2.6%	51 2.7%	1,806 3.1%	2,273 3.7%	2,565 3.8%
85 and over	11 0.6%	8 0.5%	24 1.2%	8 0.5%	9 0.6%	15 0.8%	534 0.9%	720 1.2%	998 1.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,694</b>	<b>1,742</b>	<b>1,936</b>	<b>1,400</b>	<b>1,511</b>	<b>1,882</b>	<b>57,420</b>	<b>61,405</b>	<b>67,182</b>
<b>Median Age</b>	27.2	32.7	38.2	27.3	32.2	37.8	25.4	29.3	33.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 1980, 1990, 2000 Census

## B. Education Levels

Levels of educational attainment have followed a similar trend of improvement across the different municipal divisions within Portage County (Table 1.4). The residents of the Town experienced an increase in overall educational attainment during the 1990's. This was a result of the combination of in-migration, continued educational involvement by the existing residents of the Town and the passing of older residents who did not have the educational opportunities enjoyed today.

The number and percentage of Town of Sharon residents age 25 and over who had less than a 9<sup>th</sup> grade education decreased significantly between 1990 and 2000. The percentage of 25+ year old residents who completed some college, or completed a college degree program rose from twenty-three percent (23%) to thirty-two percent (32%) over the same period. This 10-year increase in attainment for Sharon was slightly behind of the gain for the Town Average (29% to 41%) and for County as a whole (40% to 49%). The Town of Sharon outnumbered the Town and County averages for the number and percentage of residents who completed 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade but did not receive a diploma. The Sharon numbers for this category decreased by 2.1%, while the Town Average experienced a 1% increase and Portage County experienced a 1% decline in this category.

**Table 1.4 Comparison of Educational Attainment for Residents 25 Years and Older**

Ed. Attainment (Persons 25 yrs+)	Town of Sharon		Towns Average		Portage County	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
Less Than 9th Grade	240 22.3%	132 10.1%	118 10.4%	65 6.2%	4,065 11.6%	2420 6.0%
9th to 12th Grade (No Diploma)	113 10.5%	110 8.4%	82 7.2%	85 8.1%	3,029 8.7%	3,019 7.5%
High School Graduate	480 44.6%	651 49.6%	387 34.2%	440 42.2%	14,082 40.2%	14,952 37.2%
Some College (No Degree)	65 6.0%	185 14.1%	113 10.0%	184 17.6%	5,205 14.9%	7,572 18.9%
Associate Degree	53 4.9%	59 4.5%	43 3.8%	73 7.0%	1,922 5.5%	2,802 7.0%
Bachelor's Degree	95 8.8%	118 9.0%	89 7.9%	140 13.4%	4,594 13.1%	6,468 16.1%
Graduate / Professional Degree	30 2.8%	57 4.3%	36 3.2%	57 5.5%	2,107 6.0%	2,910 7.2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,076</b>	<b>1,312</b>	<b>1,132</b>	<b>1,044</b>	<b>35,004</b>	<b>40,143</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000 Census.

### C. Households and Income

The Town of Sharon residential community is made up of different types of households. The US census defines a household simply as "including all of the people who occupy a housing unit". People not living in households are classified as living in group quarters. Table 1.5 details the changes in the make-up of Town of Sharon households over the last 20 years and compares them to the Portage County data and the average of the County Towns. Family households, traditionally the largest group within Sharon, have seen their percentage of total households decrease at a slightly slower pace over the last 20 years than the Town average or county as a whole, even though their numbers have continued to increase. Married couple households increased over those 20 years compared to a decrease for both the Town Average and County. Single parent headed households actual numbers within Sharon have increased over the 20 year period from 52 to approximately 57 households, but decreased nearly 2%. By comparison, the Town Average and County as a whole have seen single-head households increase between 2 and 3%. Sharon's Non-Family households have increased from approximately 19% of total households in 1980 to 22.8% in 2000. The Non-Family percentage for Portage County has historically been higher than Sharon or the Town Average.

The Persons Per Household (PPH) calculation for the Town of Sharon, average of Towns and the County have continued a declining trend over the last 20 years. Sharon closely matches the size and rate of decline of the Towns, while the overall County PPH rate has been a bit smaller. This translates into Sharon and other Town households being a bit larger than the County average.

**Table 1.5 Household Type Comparison, Town of Sharon, Town Average, Portage County**

	Town of Sharon			Towns Average			Portage County		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
<b>HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE</b>	<b>411</b>	<b>473</b>	<b>544</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>13,257</b>	<b>14,883</b>	<b>16,496</b>
<b>Family Households</b>									
Married-couple families	359 87%	415 88%	492 90%	324 90%	357 89%	401 89%	11,592 87%	12,645 85%	13,808 84%
Other family, male householder	25 6%	28 6%	n/a	13 4%	18 4%	n/a	437 3%	602 4%	n/a
Other family, female householder	27 7%	30 6%	29 5%	22 6%	29 7%	29 6%	1,228 9%	1,636 11%	1,827 11%
<b>Non-family Households</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>5,056</b>	<b>6,423</b>	<b>8,544</b>
Householder living alone	78 82%	96 91%	121 75%	55 81%	69 81%	94 78%	3,730 74%	4,679 73%	6,130 72%
Householder 65 years and over	n/a	55 52%	58 36%	n/a	29 33%	34 28%	n/a	1,933 30%	2,196 26%
<b>TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS</b>	<b>506</b>	<b>578</b>	<b>705</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>489</b>	<b>572</b>	<b>18,313</b>	<b>21,306</b>	<b>25,040</b>
Persons Per Household	3.35	3.01	2.75	3.28	3.01	2.72	2.93	2.71	2.54

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980, 1990, 2000 Census.

Another instructive piece of information on the state of households within the Town is the level of income that each household achieves. Again the census provides insight into the range of incomes present within Sharon. Table 1.6 describes how household incomes have changed in the last 20 years.

**Table 1.6 Household Income Comparison, Town of Sharon, Town Average, and Portage County**

Household Income Per Year	Town of Sharon			Towns Average			Portage County		
	1979	1989	1999	1979	1989	1999	1979	1989	1999
Less Than \$10,000	153 30.7%	88 14.9%	39 5.5%	103 24.2%	48 9.9%	25 3.1%	5300 28.9%	3210 15.0%	1767 7.0%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	73 14.6%	44 7.5%	24 3.4%	66 15.5%	36 7.4%	24 2.9%	2919 15.9%	1978 9.3%	1608 6.4%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	142 28.5%	110 18.7%	61 8.7%	139 32.7%	85 17.2%	55 6.6%	5423 29.6%	4072 19.1%	3174 12.6%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	67 13.4%	99 16.8%	84 11.9%	76 17.8%	84 17.1%	75 9.0%	2907 75%	3654 77%	3425 13.6%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	50 0.3%	149 0.5%	113 0.2%	28 0.2%	123 0%	111 0.2%	1223 6.7%	4370 20.5%	4484 17.9%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	6 1.2%	76 12.9%	214 30.4%	9 2.2%	82 16.7%	154 18.5%	380 2.0%	2983 7.0%	5771 23.3%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	8 1.6%	9 1.5%	100 14.2%	5 1.1%	21 4.2%	80 9.7%	193 1.1%	661 3.1%	2820 11.2%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	0 0.0%	12 2.0%	49 7.0%	0 0.0%	8 1.6%	36 4.3%	0 0.0%	274 .3%	1346 5.4%
\$150,000 or more	0 0.0%	2 0.3%	21 3.0%	0 0.0%	5 0.9%	18 2.2%	0 0.0%	134 0.62%	717 2.9%
Total Households	499	589	705	426	491	829	18,345	21,336	25,112
Median H-Hold Income	\$16,399	\$30,491	\$53,750	\$16,736	\$31,512	\$48,037	\$16,659	\$28,686	\$43,487

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980, 1990, 2000 Census.

It is a testimony to both the inflation of wages and the increased earning power of the residents of Sharon that the percentage of households making greater than \$50,000 per year has increased from 2.8% in 1979 to 54.6% in 1999. Median household income has increased from \$16,399 to \$53,750 over the same period. The percentage increase of households earning greater than \$50,000 for Portage County as a whole is slightly lower over the 20-year period (3.2% to 42.5%), as well as the Towns average (3.3% to 34.7%).

With the examination of income information, the Town of Sharon should also assess the poverty status of its residents. "Poverty" is generally defined as a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is poor. If a family's total income is less than that family's threshold, then that family, and every individual in it, is considered poor. The poverty thresholds do not vary geographically. That is, they are the same throughout the United States. However, the poverty thresholds are updated annually for inflation using the Consumer Price Index (CPI-U). The official poverty definition counts money income before taxes and does not include capital gains and non-cash benefits (such as public housing, food stamps, and Medicaid). Poverty is not defined for people in military barracks, institutional group quarters, or for unrelated children under age 15 (such as foster children). Table 1.7 outlines poverty thresholds for 1980, 1990, and 2000. Table 1.8 lists the census information on poverty for the total number of residents, persons age 65 and above, and families within the Town of Sharon, the Towns average, and Portage County as a whole.

**Table 1.7 Poverty Thresholds: 1980, 1990, and 2000**

Size of Family Unit (Poverty Threshold)	1980	1990	2000
One Person	\$ 4,190	\$ 6,652	\$ 8,794
Two Persons	\$ 5,363	\$ 8,509	\$11,239
Three Persons	\$ 6,565	\$10,419	\$13,738
Four Persons	\$ 8,414	\$13,481	\$17,603
Five Persons	\$ 9,966	\$15,792	\$20,819
Six Persons	\$11,269	\$17,839	\$23,528
Seven Persons	\$12,761	\$20,241	\$26,754
Eight Persons	\$14,199	\$22,582	\$29,701
Nine Persons or More	\$16,896	\$26,848	\$35,060

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**Table 1.8 Percent in Poverty Comparison, Town of Sharon, Town Average, and Portage County**

	Town of Sharon		Towns Average		Portage County	
	1989	1999	1989	1999	1989	1999
<b>Persons</b>	<b>1,735</b>	<b>1,936</b>	<b>1,332</b>	<b>1,417</b>	<b>57,805</b>	<b>67,182</b>
Below Poverty Level	144 8.3%	113 5.8%	115 8.6%	78 5.5%	7,454 12.9%	6,074 9.0%
<b>Persons 65 Years and Over</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>5,327</b>	<b>7,354</b>
Below Poverty Level	36 16.7%	26 11.5%	13 11.3%	14 9.3%	740 13.9%	561 7.6%
<b>Families</b>	<b>482</b>	<b>546</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>404</b>	<b>14,927</b>	<b>16,643</b>
Below Poverty Level	27 5.6%	15 2.7%	23 6.3%	14 3.5%	1,051 7.0%	725 4.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000 Census.

According to census figures, the Town of Sharon has experienced a decrease in the number of residents earning below the poverty level, to below the County level. With regard to the other Towns in Portage County, Sharon has similar percentages of persons living in poverty, but has a little higher percentage of its seniors living in poverty than both the average town and the County. Sharon has also reduced the number of families that are considered to be in poverty, to percentages lower than both the average towns and County.

#### **D. Employment Characteristics**

Table 1.9 summarizes employment by industry data provided for the last three census years. This information represents what type of industry that the working residents of Sharon were employed by, and is not a listing of the employment currently located within the Town. The discussion of the Sharon economy will take place within the Economic Development Element of this Comprehensive Plan. It should be noted that the method used for classifying industries was changed between the 1990 and 2000 census, and therefore the information included in the industry categories of Table 1.9 is not entirely consistent for comparison between those years. The table attempts to place the three census years in a useable context.

**Table 1.9 Summary of Employment by Industry**

Industry	Town of Sharon			Town Averages			Portage County		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Mining	145 22.3%	130 15.1%	80 7.0%	93 16.4%	82 11.2%	58 6.9%	1,816 7.3%	1,755 5.8%	1,241 3.5%
Construction	46 7.1%	68 7.0%	93 8.2%	32 5.5%	43 5.9%	52 6.2%	1,004 4.0%	1,297 4.3%	1,707 4.8%
Manufacturing	139 21.4%	161 18.7%	223 19.6%	121 21.3%	153 20.9%	182 21.6%	4,637 18.6%	5,373 17.8%	6,314 17.7%
Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities	42 6.5%	71 8.2%	59 5.2%	30 5.3%	48 6.5%	54 6.4%	1,214 4.9%	1,511 5.0%	1,948 5.5%
Information	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	17 1.5%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	10 1.2%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	835 2.3%
Communications/ Other Public Facilities	2 0.3%	7 0.8%	0 0.0%	6 1.0%	7 0.9%	0 0.0%	325 1.3%	367 1.2%	0 0.0%
Wholesale Trade	24 3.7%	34 3.9%	50 4.4%	23 4.0%	24 3.3%	30 3.5%	885 3.5%	1,026 3.4%	1,235 3.5%
Retail Trade	73 11.2%	105 12.2%	145 12.7%	78 13.7%	117 16.0%	102 12.1%	4,317 17.3%	5,667 18.8%	4,813 13.5%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	51 7.8%	102 11.8%	133 11.7%	59 10.4%	78 10.6%	83 9.9%	2,971 11.9%	3,359 11.1%	3,682 10.3%
Professional, Management, Administrative	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	31 2.7%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	29 2.5%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1,627 4.6%
Business and Repair Services	6 0.9%	21 2.4%	0 0.0%	10 1.0%	18 2.5%	0 0.0%	518 2.1%	941 3.1%	0 0%
Personal Services	0 0.0%	17 20%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	16 2.1%	0 0.0%	0 0%	777 2.6%	0 0.0%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation Services	26 4.0%	8 0.9%	63 5.5%	17 3.0%	6 0.8%	48 5.7%	734 2.9%	388 1.3%	3,005 8.4%
Educational, Health, Social Services	81 12.4%	102 11.8%	191 16.8%	78 13.7%	101 13.8%	141 16.7%	5,331 21.4%	5,617 18.6%	7,192 20.5%
Other	13 2.0%	27 3.1%	31 2.7%	13 2.3%	22 3.0%	33 3.9%	624 2.5%	1,362 4.5%	1,236 3.5%
Public Administration	3 0.5%	8 0.9%	24 2.1%	9 1.5%	19 2.5%	20 2.3%	571 2.3%	710 2.4%	842 2.4%
<b>Total Employed Persons</b>	<b>651</b>	<b>861</b>	<b>1,140</b>	<b>569</b>	<b>731</b>	<b>842</b>	<b>24,947</b>	<b>30,150</b>	<b>35,677</b>
<b>Unemployed Persons</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>2,013</b>	<b>1,590</b>	<b>2,255</b>
<b>Labor Force</b>	<b>724</b>	<b>890</b>	<b>1,174</b>	<b>629</b>	<b>772</b>	<b>647</b>	<b>26,960</b>	<b>31,740</b>	<b>37,944</b>
<b>Percent Unemployed</b>	<b>11.2%</b>	<b>3.4%</b>	<b>3.0%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>8.1%</b>	<b>5.3%</b>	<b>6.3%</b>
<b>Persons 16 Years +</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,276</b>	<b>1,558</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1058</b>	<b>1198</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>47,202</b>	<b>53,135</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980, 1990, 2000 Census.

## **Section 1.4 Forecasts**

### **A. Population Projections**

The Wisconsin Department of Administration prepares population projections for each of the municipalities within the County.

The Town of Sharon Plan Commission has adopted the following projected population totals for the planning period:

2015: 2,140                      2025: 2,292

### **B. Household Projections**

Household projections for Sharon will be based on the above stated population projection divided by the anticipated number of persons per household in both 2015 and 2025.

The number of persons per household has been steadily declining in Sharon, from 3.34 persons in 1980 to 2.75 persons in 2000. Using a method of linear regression, the forecasted number of persons per household (PPH) in 2010 will be 2.32. The number of persons per household in 2010, (2.32), will also be used in 2020. If the linear regression method were to be continued through 2025 the forecast number of PPH will go below two and at this time that does not seem feasible. Keep in mind that these numbers represent projections and should not be used as absolute.

Using a PPH of 2.32 for this plan horizon (2020), the household projections for Sharon are:

2015: 922 Households    2025: 988 Households

### **C. Employment Projections**

Employment in the agricultural sector has declined over the last twenty years (Table 1.9). Future job opportunities outside of the agricultural sector are projected to be created throughout the County “including the Stevens Point urban area” in the service, government, manufacturing, and finance sectors.

## **Section 1.5 Community Goals, Objectives and Policies**

The Town of Sharon recognizes the important role that agricultural operations play in the economy, and toward the preservation of a rural lifestyle and community character. Town residents wish to protect agricultural operations while allowing for future development needs. Town residents also recognize the importance that natural resources, such as the named and unnamed lakes in the Town of Sharon (**MAP 042**) and scenic vistas along the moraines that contribute toward rural character. Recognition of these assets should be taken into consideration as growth and development occurs over time.

Goals, objectives, and policies provide the framework for guiding future community development activities in the Town of Sharon. A means of deriving goals and policies is through issue identification. Many of the issue statements in the various plan elements are framed as questions. This was purposefully done so that answering the questions would help plan commissioners form goal or policy statements. **Goals** are stated as desirable conditions to strive toward in the future. They are common ideals of the community that can be achieved through the actions of government leaders, private enterprise, and individuals. **Objectives** are general targets to be achieved along the path of satisfying community goals. **Policies** are more specific recommendations or methods of action to accomplish these stated objectives. Together these three pieces express the uniqueness of the community while providing guidance for desirable

patterns of growth and development. The following statements are reflective of the overall desires of the community:

**Goal 1:** Maintain or improve the current quality of life and rural character in the Town by properly guiding development patterns.

**Objectives:**

- Support agricultural operations. Inform non-farm housing in agricultural areas of the right to farm law.
- Protect major wetlands throughout the Town and natural areas as defined in chapter 8.
- Ensure that newly developed or redeveloped areas are consistent with the comprehensive plan.
- Encourage non-farm development in areas away from intensive agricultural activities, in order to minimize farm/non-farm conflicts.

**Policies:**

- Effective implementation tools, such as the Portage County Zoning Ordinance, official maps, and Town ordinances should be used and enforced.
- Design plans to grant the resident the greatest amount of freedom and latitude that is reasonably possible and yet maintain an orderly and cohesive rural environment within the town.

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