

## **CHAPTER 6 Economic Development Element**

66.1001(2)(f) Wis. Statutes

### **Section 6.1 Introduction**

This element will present information about the economy within the Town of Sharon. Economic development, which can be defined as the type and level of business activity within an area, is often based on a combination of market forces, regulation, and the extent of local government encouragement. The Town of Sharon has historically been a rural community of primarily agricultural activity with a scattering of small-scale commercial uses. This trend will likely continue. As such, the Town recognizes that the majority of non-agriculture related business development will most likely occur beyond its borders. Different types of development in surrounding areas, however, can have an impact on Town growth, quality of life, and even its ability to pay for Town services. For this reason Sharon wishes to pursue economic development opportunities that will enhance the rural character of the area and assure the community the means to provide for the services and infrastructure needs of present and future residents.

This chapter concludes with goals, objectives, and policies to promote the stabilization, retention, or expansion of the economic base. County and state economic development information is included to help the Town identify potential opportunities that could be used to pursue appropriate economic development activities.

### **Section 6.2 Labor Force and Economic Base**

#### **A. Labor Force Analysis**

##### **1. Educational attainment**

As discussed in the Issues and Opportunities chapter of this plan, and illustrated by Table 1.5 of that chapter, the Town of Sharon as compared to Portage County, has 12.4% more high school graduates. Nine percent of the residents have bachelor degrees and 4.3% have attained graduate and professional degrees. Both these percentages are higher than 1990.

##### **2. Earnings and Income**

Wages are not the only form of income those residents receive. "Total income" is defined by the U.S. Census as the sum of the amounts reported separately for wages, salary, commissions, bonuses, or tips; self-employment income from non-farm or farm businesses, including proprietorships and partnerships; interest, dividends, net rental income, royalty income, or income from estates and trusts; Social security or Railroad Retirement income; Supplemental Security Income (SSI); any public assistance or welfare payments from the state or local welfare office; retirement, survivor, or disability pensions; and any other source of income received regularly such as Veterans; (VA) payments, unemployment compensation, child support, or alimony.

Median household income increased from \$16,399 in 1979 to \$53,750 in 1999. Household income in excess of \$34,999 to \$150,000+ represent 54.6% of the Town residents. Town of Sharon households exceed the Portage County average income in all categories in excess of \$49,999. The number of persons in the Town of Sharon per household has been declining represented by 3.34 persons in 1980 to 2.75 persons in 2000. Using 3 persons as an average household, only 3.4% fell under the poverty threshold of \$13,738 projected in the 2000 census. "Poverty" is generally defined as a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is poor.

### 3. Employment by Industry

As discussed in the Issues and Opportunities chapter of this plan, and illustrated by Table 1.9 of that chapter the Town of Sharon had only 3% unemployment as compared to Portage County's 6.3% according to the 2000 census. Out of an available labor force of 1,174 people, 1,140 were gainfully employed. Although a rural area, employment in forestry, fisheries, mining and agriculture represented only 7%. Manufacturing at 19.6% represented the largest employed group with education, health, and social services following at 16.8%. Retail trade at 12.7% and finance, insurance, and real estate at 11.7% represented the next two highest groups.

### 4. Employment by Occupation

Table 6.1 provides information regarding the type of occupation that Town of Sharon residents were employed in the year 2000. The Technical, Sales, and Administrative category is indicated as the prominent group, followed closely by the Managerial and Professional Specialty category. Table 1.9 of the Issues and Opportunities Chapter summarizes resident employment by industry for the last three Census years. Information from both of these tables represents what type of occupation/industry the working residents of the Town were employed in, but is not a listing of the employment opportunities currently located in the Town of Sharon.

**Table 6.1: Town of Sharon Resident Employment by Occupation**

OCCUPATION	1990		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Managerial & Professional Specialty	114	14%	268	24%
Technical, Sales, Administrative	219	25%	327	29%
Service	85	10%	142	12%
Construction, Extraction, Maintenance	~		142	12%
Production, Transportation, Moving	~		243	21%
Farming, Forestry, Fishing	113	13%	18	2%
Precision Production, Craft, Repair	106	12%	~	
Operators, Fabricators, and Laborers	224	26%	~	
<b>TOTAL EMPLOYED</b>	<b>861</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,140</b>	<b>100%</b>

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

### 5. Commuting

According to Census 2000 data, the majority of employed residents worked outside of the Town. Further indication of a majority of residents working outside the Town can be shown through an average travel time to work of 24.7 minutes.

### 6. Economic Base Development

For the Town's economic base to grow, existing areas of commercial and industrial development should be identified and expanded. These areas are primarily in the Ellis and Polonia locality. It is the hope that the Town can work with future business opportunities to help business grow in Sharon.

Agriculture is the largest commercial trade in the Town of Sharon. Agricultural areas should be protected. Protection can be gained through “right-to-farm” rules.

## **B. Local Economic Base Analysis**

The economic base in the Town of Sharon is very diverse with an emphasis relating to the agricultural industry. The community supports the development of agriculture related businesses that are complimentary to the agricultural activities in the Town. Existing types of businesses in the Town of Sharon include the following:

Agricultural & Lawn Equip. Sales & Svcs	Lawn & Tree Service
Amusement Games & Rides	L.P. Tanks & Propane Delivery Svc
Antiques & Country Store	Machining & Fabricating
Auto Body Repair	Mobile Saw Mill Services
Automotive Salvage & Recycling	Non Metallic Mining
Barber & Beauty Shops	Pallet Manufacturing
Beef & Dairy Farming	Plumbing
Black Hawk Archery	Powder Coating Business
Cabinet Making	Real Estate
Construction	Restaurants
Forest Processing	Solar Wood Drying Kiln
Game Farms	Storage Rental Units
Home Builders	Taverns
Home Health	Trucking
Hunting Lodge	Vegetable Farming and Processing

### **Section 6.3 Strengths and Weaknesses for Existing Types of Businesses**

#### **Strengths**

- \*Agricultural Community
- \*Soil suitability for crop & vegetable productions
- \*Easy interstate access
- \*Strong work ethic
- \*Rural character
- \*High traffic on STH 66 corridor
- \*Suitability for animal feeding and grazing operations

#### **Weaknesses**

- \*Excessive distance to Vegetable Processing Plants
- \*No Railroads
- \*No support services such as sewer and water
- \*Lack of large contiguous acreage to attract vegetable processors
- \*Lower yields than area-wide industry standards
- \*Decreased vegetable quality due to stony soil

### **Section 6.4 New Business and Industry Types Desired**

New Development proposals in the Town of Sharon will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis based on recommendations and criteria in this Plan, citizen input, and impact to surrounding usage. Desired businesses in the Town include but are not limited to: Light Manufacturing, Agricultural-related businesses, Gas Station/Convenience Store, and Home-based businesses.

### **Section 6.5 Strengths/Weaknesses for Attracting and/or Retaining Businesses/Industry**

#### **Strengths**

- \*Agricultural Community
- \*Easy interstate access
- \*Strong work ethic
- \*Rural Character
- \*Good road network

#### **Weaknesses**

- \*Excessive distance to Vegetable Processing Plants
- \*Lack of rail network
- \*Lack of Telecommunication Facilities

## **Section 6.6 Business and Industry Sites**

It is the Town's intent to allow additional commercial and industry placement where facilities already exist such as under-utilized potato storage buildings near and around the Polonia and Ellis areas. These locations are easily accessible along Minor Arterials (STH 66) or Major Collector Roads (CTH J, Z & Y). (See Map # 010)

## **Section 6.7 Environmentally Contaminated Sites**

Contaminated sites, also known as brownfields, serve as potential land base for economic development. Brownfields are defined as abandoned or underutilized commercial and industrial properties where redevelopment is hindered by real or perceived contamination. The Town of Sharon has no contaminated sites.

The town of Sharon does, however, have Historic Fill Sites and Closed licensed Land Fills. They are located as follows:

TN Sharon-North Site	NE NW S30 25N 09E
TN Sharon-South Site	NW SW S09 24N 09E
Land Fill	SE SE S31 25N 09E
Land Fill	NE SW S8 24N 09E

Development may take place on these sites according to NR 506.085, WI Adm. Code (See PUB-RR-683, Appendix D.)

## **Section 6.8 Economic Development Resources**

- **Revolving Loan Fund Programs (Portage County)**

*Purpose:* Funds administered by local communities, which provide local government the ability to assist in economic development projects that will create jobs for low-to-moderate income persons. Typically, the revolving loan fund program provides "gap" financing to local projects that make the project economically feasible.

*Use of Funds:* Land, working capital, buildings, and inventory.

*Amount Available:* Programs are different in each community.

*Advantage:* Offers terms to make the project economically feasible, maximize the return on and provide businesses the ability to finance job creation efforts locally. This program provides a quicker approval process than the Wisconsin Community Development Block Grant – Economic Development Program.

- **Wisconsin Community Development Block Grant-Economic Development (WI Dept. of Commerce)**

*Purpose:* To provide resources to local governments to assist economic development projects that provides jobs to low-to-moderate income persons and expands the local tax base.

*Use of Funds:* Land, working capital, buildings, and inventory.

*Amount Available:* \$750,000 maximum award, \$75,000 to \$500,000 is usual. Provides fixed-rate long term financing.

*Advantage:* Offers terms to make the project economically feasible, maximize the return on public funds, and provide businesses with a rate of return comparable to industry norms. In addition, these funds remain locally for the creation or expansion of an existing Revolving Loan Fund.

- **Wisconsin Rural Economic Development Program (WI Dept. of Commerce)**

*Purpose:* To stimulate the start-up and expansion of small businesses in rural and/or small communities.

*Use of Funds:* Planning and managerial assistance only. This could include development of a marketing strategy for a new product line. Program pays for technical assistance such as consulting fees.

*Amount Available:* Maximum loan award is \$30,000. This program allows straight loans and/or forgivable loans.

*Eligibility:* Businesses with fewer than 25 employees. The business should be starting or expanding operations.

- **Community Development Block Grant – Customized Labor Training (WI Dept. of Commerce)**

*Purpose:* To stimulate the expansion of existing businesses, the attraction and creation of businesses, and the “retooling” of Wisconsin’s Industrial base by providing customized labor training. Program is for new technology to industry and industry sector.

*Use of Funds:* Training costs incurred in the upgrading of manufacturing skills. This includes training on the shop floor while not producing salable product.

*Amount Available:* Grant Award. Training grant, competitively awarded, requires 50% match from *company*. Maximum \$2,500 per employee trained.

*Eligibility:* Proposed training must not supplant training available through existing federal, state and local resources (such as the Technical College and University System). Projects are evaluated on economic contribution; quantity and type of jobs created or saved; cost effectiveness; significance of skill upgrading and local unemployment situation.

- **Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation**

A voluntary, non-governmental organization controlled by member families to represent them on legislative issues and to provide farm marketing, business and planning consultation and services. Contact information:

**Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation**  
**PO Box 5550**  
**Madison WI 53705-0550**  
**1-800-261-FARM or 608-836-5575**

- **USDA-Rural Development Administration (Wisconsin)**

The Rural Development Administration is an organization affiliated with the United States Department of Agriculture that provides funding for home purchase and rehabilitation, technical assistance and funding to new cooperative ventures, and financing for new business development. A full list of their programs can be found on the internet at:

<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/wi/programs/index.htm>

Contact information:

**USDA Rural Development – WI  
4949 Kirschling Ct.  
Stevens Point WI 54481  
Phone: (715) 345-7615 FAX (715) 345-7669**

### **Technical Assistance**

- **Small Business Development Center**

The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) located at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, is one of ten university-based SBDC's in Wisconsin. Their mission is to provide learning opportunities and practical guidance to help individuals make informed business decisions. The Stevens Point SBDC works with small business in eight central Wisconsin counties, and offers several types of services including seminars, customized in-house training, and individualized counseling. (715) 346-3838.

- **Wisconsin Manufacturing Extension Partnership (WMEP)**

In an effort to improve quality and productivity of small to medium sized Wisconsin Manufacturers, a partnership between government, industry, labor, and education was formed. The WMEP assessment process is designed to be broad based rather than in-depth. The purpose is to “raise flags” where more effort should be placed. After the assessment, this can lead to a technical assistance project, in which your company is paired with a facilitator to help design and implement solutions.

- **Solid and Hazardous Waste Education Center (SHWEC)**

The University of Wisconsin-Extension's SHWEC program was created to provide pollution prevention services to waste generators in Wisconsin. SHWEC' pollution prevention specialists will assess hazardous waste systems, provide no-cost non-regulatory technical assistance, and identify potential waste reduction options. Go to: [www3.uwm.edu/dept/shwec](http://www3.uwm.edu/dept/shwec)

### **Section 6.9 Economic Development Issues**

The following issues were identified during the Comprehensive Planning process:

- Lack of commercial (adequate) land use planning
- Expansion of agriculture

### **Section 6.10 Economic Development Goals, Objectives and Policies**

#### **Goal 1: Provide for areas of commercial development.**

##### **Objectives:**

- Identification of existing commercial and industrial development
- Expand areas of commercial development in Ellis and Polonia
- Identify existing commercial use that may be in conflict with an existing plan and correct to commercial zoning.

##### **Policies:**

- Identify new and/or expanded commercial areas on Land Use Map

**Goal 2: Provide for a productive and economic agricultural business climate.**

**Objectives:**

- Support agricultural operations
- Utilize existing state rules and regulations where applicable.
- Identify productive Agricultural areas in the Town

**Policies:**

- Promote “Right to Farm” law
- Protect and support agricultural areas
- Consider lot averaging option for development in Agricultural areas

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