

## Introduction

Welcome to the Town of Sharon Comprehensive Plan. This Comprehensive Plan is the centerpiece of the community planning process, stating our community's development goals and outlining public policies for guiding future growth. It establishes an identifiable destination that allows both the governing body and private interests to plan and budget with an idea as to the direction the Town may move in the future, and helps to ensure that growth is not only anticipated, but planned for. The Plan functions as a practical guide to coordinate day-to-day decisions so they make sense in the future.

## Portage County And Town of Sharon Comprehensive Planning

In November of 2000, the Portage County Planning and Zoning Department submitted an application for a State of Wisconsin planning grant to help fund the creation of County-wide comprehensive plans that would meet the newly enacted State Statute requirements for long range planning (see SS 66.1001). The Statute stipulates that by January 1, 2010, all towns, villages, cities, and counties that make decisions regulating land use will need to base those decisions on an adopted comprehensive plan. In January 2001 grant funds totaling \$504,000 were awarded to Portage County to assist with the project. Two separate "large area" plan documents are to be developed: an Urban Area plan which encompasses the City of Stevens Point, Villages of Park Ridge, Whiting and Plover, and a portion of the unincorporated Towns of Hull, Stockton, Plover, Linwood and Carson; and the Portage County Comprehensive Plan, which includes each of the seventeen unincorporated Towns (Alban, Almond, Amherst, Belmont, Buena Vista, Carson, Dewey, Eau Pleine, Grant, Hull, Lanark, Linwood, New Hope, Pine Grove, Plover, Sharon, Stockton) and six incorporated rural Villages (Almond, Amherst, Amherst Junction, Junction City, Nelsonville, Rosholt) that make up the rest of the County. In addition to the large area plans, the project includes the adoption of a Comprehensive Plan for each of the County's 27 individual units of government.

In June of 2001, a committee made up of representatives from each unit of government within Portage County was appointed to draft these plan documents. The Portage County Comprehensive Planning Joint Steering Committee adopted a "Public Participation Plan" on July 25, 2001. The Participation Plan detailed the different ways that residents of the County would be invited and encouraged to participate in the formulation of the Comprehensive Plans. The Town of Sharon also adopted the Public Participation Plan on August 8, 2001. **(See appendix A-Public Participation Plan.)**

The first step in soliciting public involvement was a County-wide opinion survey which was conducted in the second half of September 2001. Over 30,000 surveys were mailed, with an intended target of one for every household within the County. Over 6,600 of the households responded, a return rate of approximately 22%. The survey responses provided information on resident's feelings in the areas of: County trends and land use; housing; utilities and community facilities; agriculture, natural and cultural resources; commerce and employment; transportation; and quality of life within the County. The Town of Sharon was represented in the survey results **(see appendix B-Portage County Comprehensive Planning and Zoning Survey, December 2001, Town of Sharon)**. In order to follow up and build on the information gathered in the survey a series of Hopes and Concerns Workshops were held. A wide variety of County residents participated in the Workshops. To include as many groups as possible, workshops were scheduled in towns and villages across the County, as well as junior high and high schools, UW-Stevens Point (with both faculty and students), and the Lincoln Center.

After completion of the Hopes & Concerns workshops all of the response information was forwarded to the Portage County Comprehensive Planning Joint Steering Committee, who used a series of meetings to boil the information down to 44 summarizing "issue statements". This list then became the basis for a series of six visioning sessions held across Portage County during the spring of 2002. Again, all of the public input was returned to the Joint Steering Committee for review and discussion. An Urban Area Vision Statement and a Rural Vision Statement were approved in the fall of 2002. These Vision Statements (**See appendix C-Vision Statements from Town of Sharon Residents**) were used as a foundation for the Urban Area and Rural Area Comprehensive Plans, respectively.

State Statute 66.1001 defines minimum requirements for what content should be included within a comprehensive plan. These requirements include nine "elements" or chapters describing: *issues and opportunities; housing; transportation; utilities and community facilities; agriculture, natural and cultural resources; economic development; intergovernmental cooperation, land use; and implementation*. The Town of Sharon has used the required elements as an outline for our plan document.

## **The Comprehensive Planning Process**

The first step involves research. Activities include acquiring a thorough knowledge of the existing community setting, identifying problems that require solutions, and analyzing critical factors that need to be changed before progress can be made toward community goals, and establishing goals and objectives for growth and development. The second step involves the formation of a planning policy. Planning policies recommend a course of action that will accommodate expected change, produce desired change, and prevent undesirable change.

The next steps involve the development of different plan alternatives for guiding future growth. The Land Use Element relates how the Town is expected to grow, and generally identifies how development should proceed in the future to achieve community goals. It proposes the most efficient use of land within the financial capabilities of the community by identifying where residential, and other anticipated land uses should occur.

The final step involves implementation of the plan and programs that will influence the day-to-day decisions made by government officials, private enterprise, and individuals. Plan implementation provides the means by which community goals can be achieved. Three major tools of implementation are the zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, and capital improvements program.

The Comprehensive Plan is the primary link between the past, the present, and the future, making it the resource for achieving continuity over a period of time. It is to be used as a guide by those making decisions with regard to the development of the community. The Comprehensive Plan must also remain flexible so that it can be modified to reflect the processes of actual development and the changing attitudes and priorities of the community. To maintain an updated Comprehensive Plan, new information must be continually gathered and studied to determine trends and re-evaluate projections, forecasts, and plans. Even policy recommendations, which are relatively permanent statements, may require periodic review to determine their appropriateness and suitability in relation to the direction and character of community development at that time. A well thought-out and updated Comprehensive Plan, with a solid base of public involvement, is one of the most fruitful investments a local government can make. As a collection of policies and plans designed to guide future growth and development, it will help ensure continuity over time as changes occur within the Town of Sharon.

## **Past Planning in Sharon**

In 1981, the Town of Sharon Planning Committee began working with the Portage County Planning Department to draft the first land use plan for the Town of Sharon. The Town, due mostly to the increased development pressure the community had experienced over the past 20 years, requested this planning effort. The intent of the plan was to serve as a formal statement of Town/County policies regarding land use. In addition, the plan was intended to serve as a guide in updating the Town's 29 year old zoning map, to reflect changing conditions and needs. When the initial Town Land Use Plan was drafted, many acres that were not productive Ag Land were classified as Exclusive Ag for the purpose of allowing landowners to participate to the greatest extent in the Farmland Preservation Tax Credits Program. This created significant problems for farmers to realize full value of such properties either at retirement or dissolution of their farms.

In 1991, the Town did an extensive review of the Land Use Plan and made extensive changes to the Exclusive Ag category and 5,033.2 acres were removed from this category. They were allowed to be put primarily into A-2 zoning by request of landowners. The current planning thought process for the Town of Sharon is to take further consideration of the inequities in land use and value created by the program. Additional land may need to be re-classified out of A-1 exclusive agriculture category.

In 2001 the Town established a 7 member Plan Commission, appointed for various terms, to participate with the County multi-jurisdictional planning process, also know as "Smart Growth". A large number of Town of Sharon residents became concerned that the direction the planning was taking would result in the loss of property rights and of local control over land use. The Town residents petitioned the Town of Sharon Board to pull out of the multi-jurisdictional planning process. As a result, the Town terminated its participation in the multi-jurisdictional planning process, but continued planning on its own on September 10, 2003.

The Plan Commission held a series of public meetings beginning February 23, 2004.

The Town conducted another survey in January, 2005. **(See Appendix D-Town of Sharon Planning Survey Results.)** The results were presented at the next several meetings through July of 2005.

## **Current Planning in The Town of Sharon**

After several meetings the Plan Commission and the Town Board worked together to go forward with an acceptable plan.

1. Issues that impact the viability of agriculture and the best way to protect open space in the Town of Sharon is to protect agricultural operations and the support of businesses that provide their input and marketing needs.
2. Making land use decisions needs to be afforded to those who own the land and have been its stewards in the past and present with regard to neighboring properties.
3. There are national, state, county and local laws and regulations to protect environmentally sensitive areas such as lakes, rivers and wetlands.

4. Provisions have been incorporated to accommodate landowners participating in the Farmland Preservation Program so they have the opportunity to change their land use classification when their contract expires and avoid penalties imposed by the program.

## **CHAPTER 1: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

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.

History of the Town of Sharon may be found in several books in your 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.

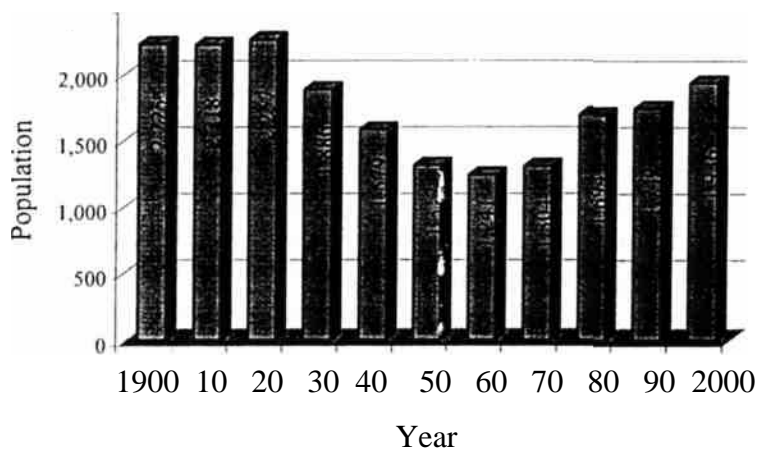
## **Section 1.3 Demographic Trends Population Growth**

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	1970 to 2000 Change	2000 to 2002 Change
	1970	1980	1990	2000	WI Estimate 2002		
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.

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.

**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									
	1985		1995		1985		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.

### 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 years	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

### 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%
Grad / Profess 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.

## 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, and Portage County**

	Town of Sharon			Towns Average			Portage County		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
<b>HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE</b>									
<b>Family Households</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>
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. 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%).

**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 <i>30.7%</i>	88 <i>14.9%</i>	39 <i>5.5%</i>	103 <i>24.2%</i>	48 <i>9.9%</i>	25 <i>3.1%</i>	5300 <i>28.9%</i>	3210 <i>15.0%</i>	1767 <i>7.0%</i>
\$10,000 to \$14,999	73 <i>14.6%</i>	44 <i>7.5%</i>	24 <i>3.4%</i>	66 <i>15.5%</i>	36 <i>7.4%</i>	24 <i>2.9%</i>	2919 <i>15.9%</i>	1978 <i>9.3%</i>	1608 <i>6.4%</i>
\$15,000 to \$24,999	142 <i>28.5%</i>	110 <i>18.7%</i>	61 <i>8.7%</i>	139 <i>32.7%</i>	85 <i>17.2%</i>	55 <i>6.6%</i>	5423 <i>29.6%</i>	4072 <i>19.1%</i>	3174 <i>12.6%</i>
\$25,000 to \$34,999	67 <i>13.4%</i>	99 <i>16.8%</i>	84 <i>11.9%</i>	76 <i>17.8%</i>	84 <i>17.1%</i>	75 <i>9.0%</i>	2907 <i>75%</i>	3654 <i>77%</i>	3425 <i>13.6%</i>
\$35,000 to \$49,999	50 <i>0.3%</i>	149 <i>0.5%</i>	113 <i>0.2%</i>	28 <i>0.2%</i>	123 <i>0%</i>	111 <i>0.2%</i>	1223 <i>6.7%</i>	4370 <i>20.5%</i>	4484 <i>17.9%</i>
\$50,000 to \$74,999	6 <i>1.2%</i>	76 <i>12.9%</i>	214 <i>30.4%</i>	9 <i>2.2%</i>	82 <i>16.7%</i>	154 <i>18.5%</i>	380 <i>2.0%</i>	2983 <i>7.0%</i>	5771 <i>23.3%</i>
\$75,000 to \$99,999	8 <i>1.6%</i>	9 <i>1.5%</i>	100 <i>14.2%</i>	5 <i>1.1%</i>	21 <i>4.2%</i>	80 <i>9.7%</i>	193 <i>1.1%</i>	661 <i>3.1%</i>	2820 <i>11.2%</i>
\$100,000 to \$149,999	0 <i>0.0%</i>	12 <i>2.0%</i>	49 <i>7.0%</i>	0 <i>0.0%</i>	8 <i>1.6%</i>	36 <i>4.3%</i>	0 <i>0.0%</i>	274 <i>.3%</i>	1346 <i>5.4%</i>
\$150,000 or more	0 <i>0.0%</i>	2 <i>0.3%</i>	21 <i>3.0%</i>	0 <i>0.0%</i>	5 <i>0.9%</i>	18 <i>2.2%</i>	0 <i>0.0%</i>	134 <i>0.62%</i>	717 <i>2.9%</i>
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.

With the examination of income information, the Town of Sharon should also assess the poverty status of it's 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

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.

**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	113	115	78	7,454	6,074
	8.3%	5.8%	8.6%	5.5%	12.9%	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	26	13	14	740	561
	16.7%	11.5%	11.3%	9.3%	13.9%	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	15	23	14	1,051	725
	5.6%	2.7%	6.3%	3.5%	7.0%	4.4%

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

**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 1.8%	18 2.5%	0 0.0%	518 2.1%	941 3.1%	0 0%
Personal Services	0 0.0%	17 2.0%	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%	3005 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**

### **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

### **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

### **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.

## **CHAPTER 2: Housing**

66.1001(2)(b) Wis. Statute

### **Section 2.1 Introduction**

Shelter is one of the basic needs we have as humans on this earth. Beyond this obvious fact, it also represents, for the majority of us, the largest expenditure we will make during our lives. Because of the importance of housing in our community, the Town of Sharon believes it is important to allow for an adequate supply of housing to meet the needs of its citizens.

This chapter will look at different characteristics of the housing stock to help make sure that the needs of present and future residents are addressed by this plan. Wisconsin statutes require that the housing element of the comprehensive plan assesses the age, structural value, and occupancy characteristics of the local unit's housing stock.

### **Section 2.2 Inventory and Analysis**

#### **a. Occupancy Characteristics**

Occupancy characteristics help indicate if the current amount of housing stock is sufficient to meet existing demand. The Department of Housing and Urban Development set an overall rate of 3% vacancy to assure an adequate choice for consumers. An acceptable vacancy rate for owner-occupied housing is 1.5% while a vacancy rate of 5% is acceptable for rental units. The Town of Sharon retained an overall vacancy rate of about 6% between 1980 and 2000 following an increase to 13% in 1990 (Table 2.1). Since 1980, Sharon has seen the percent of owner occupied units increase from 86% to 89%, mirroring a trend throughout most of rural Portage County.

**Table 2.1: Housing Occupancy Characteristics**

OCCUPANCY	Town of Sharon			Towns Average			Portage County		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
<b>Occupied Housing Units</b>	<b>506</b>	<b>578</b>	<b>705</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>489</b>	<b>572</b>	<b>18,309</b>	<b>21,306</b>	<b>25,040</b>
<i>(% of Occupied Units)</i>	<i>94.4%</i>	<i>86.8%</i>	<i>93.5%</i>	<i>92.8%</i>	<i>89.4%</i>	<i>91.8%</i>	<i>94.2%</i>	<i>93.0%</i>	<i>94.2%</i>
Owner Occupied	433	508	627	369	426	513	13,328	14,984	17,750
<i>(% of Occupied Units)</i>	<i>86%</i>	<i>88%</i>	<i>89%</i>	<i>87%</i>	<i>87%</i>	<i>90%</i>	<i>73%</i>	<i>70%</i>	<i>71%</i>
Renter Occupied	73	70	78	56	63	59	4,982	6,322	7,290
<i>(% of Occupied Units)</i>	<i>14%</i>	<i>12%</i>	<i>11%</i>	<i>13%</i>	<i>13%</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>27%</i>	<i>30%</i>	<i>29%</i>
<b>Vacant Housing Units</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>1,133</b>	<b>1,604</b>	<b>1,549</b>
<i>(% of Total Housing Units)</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>13%</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>11%</i>	<i>8%</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>6%</i>
Seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	n/a	50	21	n/a	38	30	n/a	685	557
<i>(% of Total Housing Units)</i>		<i>8%</i>	<i>3%</i>		<i>7%</i>	<i>5%</i>		<i>3%</i>	<i>2%</i>
<b>TOTAL HOUSING UNITS</b>	<b>536</b>	<b>666</b>	<b>754</b>	<b>459</b>	<b>547</b>	<b>622</b>	<b>19,442</b>	<b>22,910</b>	<b>26,589</b>

Source: US Census Bureau, 1980, 1990, 2000 Census

#### **b. Age Characteristics**

Age is often used as a measure of a houses condition, however, it should not be the sole criteria since many older homes are either remodeled or kept in a state of good repair to maintain their value. In 2000, 63% percent of the houses in the Town of Sharon were built after 1970 (Table 2.2), indicating a relatively

newer housing stock when compared with the County (57%) as a whole. The Town of Sharon housing stock is similar in age to the rest of the Towns in Portage County (64% being built after 1970). A major factor explaining the age of housing stock can be shown by the fact that the Town's population grew by almost half since 1970, from 1,304 to 1,936.

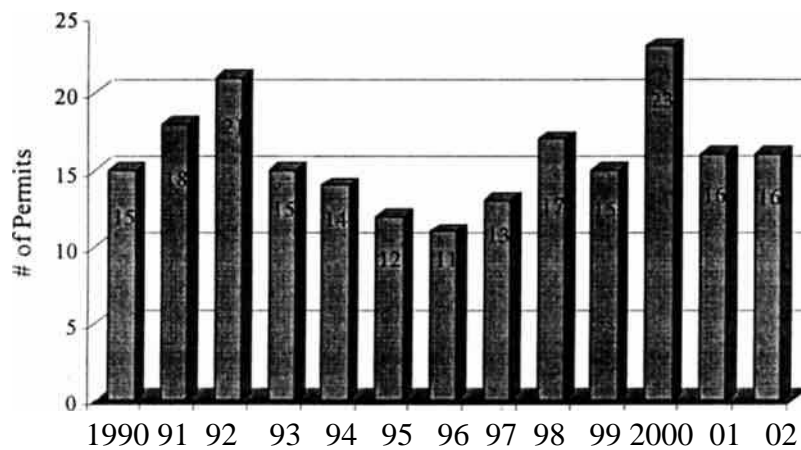
**Table 2.2: Housing Age Characteristics**

Year Structure Built	Town of Sharon			Towns Average			Portage County		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
1990 to March 2000	n/a	n/a	196 25%	n/a	n/a	136 22%	n/a	n/a	5,147 19%
1980 to 1989	n/a	129 19%	117 15%	0%	115 21%	98 16%	n/a	5,012 22%	4,186 16%
1970 to 1979	185 35%	203 30%	176 23%	191 42%	194 36%	161 26%	6,528 34%	6,305 28%	5,717 22%
1960 to 1969	59 11%	75 11%	67 9%	73 16%	75 14%	59 10%	3,308 11%	2,978 13%	2,846 11%
1950 to 1959	29 5%	36 5%	31 4%	30 7%	27 5%	28 5%	1,666 9%	1,672 7%	1,988 7%
1940 to 1949	30 6%	33 5%	28 4%	19 4%	17 3%	22 4%	1,409 7%	1,372 6%	1,270 5%
1939 or earlier	233 43%	190 29%	165 21%	145 32%	117 22%	117 19%	6,539 34%	5,571 24%	5,435 20%
<b>Total Units Listed</b>	<b>536</b>	<b>666</b>	<b>780</b>	<b>458</b>	<b>546</b>	<b>620</b>	<b>19,450</b>	<b>22,910</b>	<b>26,589</b>

Source: US Census 1980, 1990, 2000

A more detailed breakdown of recent single-family housing starts in the Town of Sharon is provided through an examination of building permit data for the past 12 years on file with Portage County (Figure 2.1). The Town experienced its highest permit activity during the early part of the decade and again in 2000, a pattern unlike the rest of Portage County, which the highest permit activity is in the middle part of the decade. Low mortgage rates and favorable economic conditions during that period could be possible factors contributing to these housing starts.

**Figure 2.1 Single-Family Permits**



Source: Portage County Planning & Zoning – Permit data

When comparing single-family housing starts during the recent past (2000-2002) against other Towns in Portage County, Hull shows the greatest activity with 67 permits. Sharon comes in second with 55 single-family permits. These two Towns are located adjacent to each other on the north and northeast side of the Stevens Point urban area.

### c. Structural Characteristics

Structure type is most often used to describe the physical characteristics of housing stock. This is defined in the census as the number of units in a structure. In 2000, 90% of the housing stock was categorized as single-family, or 1-unit detached (Table 2.3). Since 1980, the percentage of single-family homes in the Town of Sharon has been slightly higher than the rest of rural Portage County (Town Average).

The second largest structure type in this classification in the Town of Sharon is mobile homes. In 2000, 7% of the housing stock fell into this category, which is lower than the Towns Average. Over the twenty year time period, mobile homes have been an increasing housing choice for residents throughout the county.

**Table 2.3: Housing Structural Characteristics**

Units in Structure	Town of Sharon			Towns Average			Portage County		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
1 Unit Detached	485 90%	578 87%	696 89%	381 85%	445 83%	540 87%	14,299 74%	15,828 69%	18,534 70%
1 Unit Attached	0 0%	9 1%	13 2%	3 1%	4 1%	4 1%	186 1%	329 1%	630 2%
2 to 4 Units	17 3%	13 2%	17 2%	10 2%	6 1%	1 1%	1,915 10%	2,420 11%	2,840 11%
5 or more Units	11 2%	0 0%	0 0%	6 1%	1 0%	2 0%	1,871 10%	2,196 10%	2,765 10%
Mobile Home Trailer or Other	23 4%	66 10%	54 7%	48 11%	77 14%	65 10%	1,179 6%	2,137 9%	1,788 7%
<b>TOTAL HOUSING UNITS</b>	<b>536</b>	<b>666</b>	<b>780</b>	<b>449</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>619</b>	<b>19,450</b>	<b>22,910</b>	<b>26,557</b>

Source: US Census 1980, 1990, 2000

### d. Value Characteristics

Housing value is another important aspect in gauging the overall assessment of current housing stock. The value of housing, as indicated by median price, has risen significantly since 1980 all across Portage County. Median price is an indicator that can be used to gauge housing demand. The median home price in the Town of Sharon has risen since 1980, but has been consistently lower than the County overall until 2000 (Table 2.4). In 2000, the greatest percentage of homes in Sharon were valued between \$100,000 and \$150,000, which is consistent with the rest of rural Portage County (Towns Average).

**Table 2.4 Housing Value Characteristics**

Housing Value (Owner Occupied)	Town of Sharon			Towns Average			Portage County		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
Less than \$50,000	110 <i>64.7%</i>	76 <i>34.2%</i>	15 <i>4.4%</i>	99 <i>51.7%</i>	63 <i>27.1%</i>	15 <i>4.8%</i>	5,628 <i>60.2%</i>	3,562 <i>33.6%</i>	781 <i>6.0%</i>
\$50,000 to \$99,999	58 <i>34.1%</i>	143 <i>64.4%</i>	120 <i>34.9%</i>	86 <i>5.2%</i>	149 <i>63.3%</i>	114 <i>39.2%</i>	3,516 <i>37.6%</i>	6,139 <i>58.0%</i>	6,028 <i>46.1%</i>
\$100,000 to \$149,999	2 <i>1.2%</i>	3 <i>1.4%</i>	145 <i>42.2%</i>	5 <i>2.8%</i>	16 <i>6.8%</i>	120 <i>39.2%</i>	187 <i>2.0%</i>	716 <i>6.8%</i>	4,253 <i>32.5%</i>
\$150,000 to \$199,999	0 <i>0.0%</i>	0 <i>0.0%</i>	47 <i>13.7%</i>	1 <i>0.3%</i>	6 <i>2.5%</i>	37 <i>12.0%</i>	19 <i>0.2%</i>	150 <i>1.4%</i>	1,329 <i>10.2%</i>
\$200,000 to \$299,999	0 <i>0.0%</i>	0 <i>0.0%</i>	11 <i>3.2%</i>	0 <i>0.1%</i>	0 <i>0.1%</i>	14 <i>4.6%</i>	6 <i>0.1%</i>	19 <i>0.2%</i>	493 <i>3.8%</i>
\$300,000 or more	0 <i>0.0%</i>	0 <i>0.0%</i>	6 <i>1.7%</i>	0 <i>0.0%</i>	0 <i>0.1%</i>	7 <i>2.4%</i>	0 <i>0.0%</i>	4 <i>0.0%</i>	204 <i>1.6%</i>
<b>TOTAL UNITS</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>9356</b>	<b>10,590</b>	<b>13,088</b>
<b>MEDIAN VALUE</b>	<b>\$42,900</b>	<b>\$56,900</b>	<b>\$109,900</b>	<b>\$38,871</b>	<b>\$84,571</b>	<b>\$103,629</b>	<b>\$45,300</b>	<b>\$58,600</b>	<b>\$98,300</b>

Source: US Census 1980, 1990, 2000

**e. Housing affordability**

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development not more than 30% of a household income should be spent on monthly housing costs in order for that home to be considered affordable. The U.S. Census provides this data on housing costs as a percentage of household income for homeowners (Table 2.5). The following information is taken from the US Census Summary File 3, which is based on a sample of households within a community, and not a total count of all households.

Comparison of monthly housing cost for homeowners as a percentage of their household income for the Town of Sharon, Town Average and Portage County are shown (Table 2.5). In 1999, just under 16% of Town of Sharon owner-occupied households paid more than 30% of monthly income on housing costs. This represents a 2% increase in this category since 1989. The percentage for both the Town average and Portage County households paying more than 30% of monthly income in 1999 is lower than Sharon, averaging 13.7%. Units occupied by households reporting no income or a net loss is included in the “not computed” category (U.S. Bureau of Census).

**Table 2.5 Affordability Comparison for Owner-Occupied Housing Unit**

Monthly Owner Costs as a % of Household Income	Town of Sharon		Towns Average		Portage County	
	1989	1999	1989	1999	1989	1999
less than 20.0%	156 70.3%	209 60.8%	156 66.6%	194 63.4%	6,707 63.3%	8,277 63.2%
20.0 to 24.9%	27 12.2%	45 13.1%	32 13.8%	42 13.6%	1,628 15.4%	1,897 14.5%
25.0 to 29.9%	9 4.1%	33 9.6%	21 8.9%	26 8.5%	910 8.6%	1,063 8.1%
30.0 to 34.9%	7 3.2%	22 6.4%	7 3.2%	13 4.4%	470 4.4%	576 4.4%
35% or more	23 10.4%	32 9.3%	17 7.2%	29 9.5%	852 8.0%	1,187 9.1%
not computed	0 0.0%	3 0.9%	1 0.5%	2 0.6%	23 0.2%	88 0.7%
<b>Total Units Listed</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>10,590</b>	<b>13,088</b>

Source: US Census Bureau 1990, 2000.

In 1999, 11% of the Sharon renter-occupied households were paying a monthly rent above 30% of household income. The percentage significantly decreased from 1989, when approximately 27% of renter-occupied households were paying above 30% of monthly household income. The data from the 2000 Census indicated that this percentage was lower than both the County overall (32.3%) and the Town average (23%). Units occupied by households reporting no income or a net loss, or for which no cash rent was paid, are included in the "not computed" category (U.S. Bureau of Census).

**Section 2.3 Housing Issues**

- Obtaining affordable housing.
- The need for Senior Citizen housing.
- Development in the rural area while protecting major wetlands and natural areas as defined in Chapter 8.
- The quality of housing in the Town of Sharon.
- How will neighboring municipality developments affect the Town of Sharon.
- Drinking Water in the Polonia area.

## **Section 2.4 Housing Goals, Objectives, Policies**

**Goal 1:** Provide a climate for affordable housing throughout the Town of Sharon.

**Objectives:**

- Allow for subdivisions in the Polonia area.
- Designate areas for multiple family units.
- Set in place a minimum lot size to ensure that there is sufficient land for a home site and yet it is fair and reasonable.

**Policies:**

- Make use of lot size/density option in a subdivision (Ordinance).

**Goal 2:** Allow for Senior Citizens to live out their lives close to their home community.

**Objectives:**

- Allow for the private sector to develop senior housing in the Polonia area.

**Policies:**

- Work with the County as needed to achieve this objective.

**Goal 3:** Ensure that housing development takes into consideration the protection of wetlands and agricultural operations as well as natural areas as defined in chapter 8.

**Objectives:**

- Preserve agricultural operations throughout the land use zones.
- Identify sensitive natural resource areas (i.e., wetlands, lake property, and large woodland areas) and utilize the Land Use Plan for their protection.

**Policies:**

- Encourage the open space design option in subdivision ordinances
- Put major wetlands under a land use class that would result in conservancy zoning
- Consider setting town guidelines for the support and protection of Agricultural operations
- Utilize natural resources-limited development in areas surrounding water bodies as appropriate

**Goal 4:** Maintain and/or improve the quality and integrity of existing housing and neighborhoods.

**Objectives:**

- Enforce existing ordinances.
- Make adjustments to existing ordinances when and where warranted.

**Policies:**

- Enforce Town of Sharon Subdivision Ordinances.
- Enforce Town of Sharon Road Ordinances.

- Enforce Park Land Ordinance.
- Consider creating a fair and equitable mobile home ordinance.

**Goal 5:** Avoid neighboring development from affecting the Town of Sharon in a negative manner.

**Objectives:**

- Revenue sharing.
- The Town must be allowed to have input.
- Boundary Agreements.

**Policies:**

- Maintain active voice in county government.

**Goal 6:** Plan for a safe and adequate water supply.

**Objectives:**

- Ensure that residents have and maintain legal and working septic systems.
- County to enforce regulations concerning proper abandonment of unused wells.

**Policies:**

- Encourage building on only one acre or two-acre lots in Polonia area.
- Keep abreast of Septic and well water issues.

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## **CHAPTER 3 – Transportation**

66.1001(2)(c) Wis. Statutes

### **Section 3.1 Introduction**

Movement of people, goods, and services within and through the Town of Sharon is an integral part of everyday life for the citizens. Decisions made regarding transportation can have a direct impact on the community's growth and quality of life. These decisions should be made to include choices that will most efficiently serve the community as a whole, maximize investment in transportation infrastructure, as well as minimize conflicts between modes of transportation as well as jurisdictions.

This chapter will: assess the current inventory of transportation options; list goals, objectives, and policies that guide future development of various modes of transportation in the Town of Sharon; and, compare local transportation goals to existing county, regional, and state transportation plans.

### **Section 3.2 Transportation Facility Inventory**

#### **a. Roads & highways**

Current road classifications for the County transportation networks are officially designated in the document entitled "The Functional Classification of Highways, Roads, and Streets in Portage County, Wisconsin"; adopted in 1989. The existing functional class system (**Map #010**) categorizes streets and highways according to their two primary purposes: 1) to move vehicles (traffic mobility), and 2) to serve adjacent land (land access). "Arterials" accommodate the movement of vehicles, while "local streets" provide a land access function (neighborhood streets that lead to homes, etc.). Collectors serve both local and through traffic by providing a connection between arterials and local roads.

As of 2002, the local road system for Sharon consists of a total of 101.68 miles of public roadway within the Town: County Trunk Highways (CTH) CC, I, J, K, Y, and Z equal 33.78 miles; and Town roads comprise the remaining 67.9 miles. In addition, State Highway (STH) 66 adds 9.3 miles to the Town's road system.

#### **Principal Arterials**

There are no principle arterials located in the Town of Sharon.

#### **Minor Arterials**

State Highway 66, is the only road currently designated as a minor arterial. The Average Daily Traffic (ADT) count in 2002 for STH 66 west of CTH K was 4,200 vehicles while the count was 2,900 vehicles east of CTH K in Polonia. Traffic mobility and servicing principle arterials is the main function of this road.

#### **Major Collectors**

County Highways J, Z, and Y are designated as major collectors in the Town of Sharon. The ADT in 2002 for Highway J, north of STH 66 was 890 vehicles, the ADT for CTH Z in Polonia was 1,400 vehicles, and CTH Y had an ADT count of 620 vehicles just east of Bentley Pond. Providing access to attractions such as schools, parks and airports is one set of criteria used in assigning major and minor collectors.

### **Minor Collectors**

County Highways I and K are designated as minor collectors in the Town. The 2002 ADT count for CTH I, just south of STH 66 is 210 and the ADT count for CTH K, south of STH 66 is 320.

### **Local Streets**

The remaining roadways are classified as local streets. Their primary function is land access.

#### **b. Pedestrian & bicycle facilities**

There are no designated bicycle or pedestrian facilities in the Town.

#### **c. Transit and Transportation options for the Elderly and Disabled**

The Portage County Department on Aging provides transportation services for elderly residents in the Town of Sharon. Volunteer drivers may be requested for those persons going to medical appointments or those otherwise not able to use the busing service. Persons requiring such services must call to make a reservation and are picked up and dropped off at their home. In addition to these needs, Portage County Department on Aging will also arrange volunteer driver rides to a meal site in Rosholt. There is no set fee for these services, however, passengers are asked to make a donation. As another option, a privately-owned business called Courtesy Carriers provides transportation within the County as well.

#### **d. Rail**

There are no rail lines running through the Town of Sharon.

#### **e. Air Transportation Facilities**

The two main airports that serve the Town of Sharon are the Central Wisconsin Airport and the Stevens Point Municipal Airport.

The Central Wisconsin Airport, located approximately 15 miles north of Sharon in Mosinee, is a full service, all weather airport offering around-the-clock service. Four airlines offer regular commuter and passenger service with connections anywhere in the world. Air cargo service is also available. These airlines offer overnight delivery and connections throughout the world.

The Stevens Point Municipal Airport is located on STH 66 in Stevens Point and has two runways, one of which is 6,000 feet long. There are 37 private hangers at the airport. No passenger or freight service is available. Jet fuel and repair services are available for private aircraft.

## **f. Trucking**

Semi traffic in the Town generally consists of through traffic on STH 66 and normal delivery services for area businesses. There are no designated truck routes, however, the Town of Sharon and the Portage County Highway Department posts weight limits on town and county roads in spring to mitigate potential damage from the thawing frost layer in the soil.

The majority of truck traffic in rural Portage County (County Highways and local roads) comes from agricultural use, non-metallic mining, and some logging operations.

## **g. Water Transportation**

The Plover and Tomorrow Rivers are used as modes of non-motorized recreational transportation in the Town of Sharon. The Plover River bounds the Town of Sharon on its southwestern border, while the Tomorrow River is located on the eastern side of the town.

### **Section 3.3 Inventory and Analysis of Applicable Transportation Plans and Programs**

#### **a. Highway improvement plans**

##### **1. Six-Year Highway Improvement Plan (2002-2008)**

A rebuild of State Hwy 66 is scheduled for the 2007 calendar year. The highway is being rebuilt from Hwy J North on the west end and will extend to the township line on the east end. The rebuild will allow for better line-of-sight vision and turn-off lanes at the heavier traveled intersections. A rebuild of the corner at Rustic Drive, approximately one and one-half miles east of Polonia, is also included in this project.

##### **2. U.S. Hwy 10 Improvement Plan**

Another major highway improvement plan will be occurring on U.S. Hwy 10. Although U.S. Hwy 10 is not located within the boundaries of the Town of Sharon, the planned improvements for this highway will have a great impact for the Town of Sharon residents. The plan calls for the re-routing of U.S. Hwy 10 around Stevens Point in order to create a high speed corridor between Marshfield and Appleton. This plan was put on hold indefinitely in 2003. However, more recently, up to a 20-year timeline to complete this project is now expected.

#### **b. State airport plans**

##### **1. Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2020**

The plan determines the number, location and type of aviation facilities required to adequately serve the state's aviation needs through 2020. The plan also forecasts the level of public investment required to: upgrade substandard features such as widening of existing runways, replace existing systems to meet federal and state standards, and enhance the airport system

through runway extension and new construction. The classifications for Central Wisconsin Airport (Air Carrier/Air Cargo) and Stevens Point Municipal Airport (Transport/Corporate) are not projected to change through 2020.

**c. State railroad plans**

1. Wisconsin State Rail Plan 2020

The Wisconsin State Rail Plan 2020 does not apply in the Town of Sharon due to a lack of rail facilities.

**d. State, regional and local bicycle and trail plans**

1. Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020

Overall plan goals are to increase the level of bicycling in Wisconsin and to reduce the number of crashes involving bicycle and motor vehicles.

**Section 3.4 Transportation Issues**

**Highways and Roads**

- How can the Town keep roads in good condition?
- Development of new roads.

**Transportation options for the elderly and disabled**

- How can transportation services for the elderly be provided throughout the Town?
- Community Industries of Stevens Point offers a pickup service for employees needing to get to work.

**Bicycles and walking trails/routes**

- How will the town address safety concerns from increased bicycle traffic in the summer?
- To what extent should organized walking/biking trails be encouraged in the town?

**Trucking**

- Seasonal truck traffic for the vegetable harvest is moderate from mid-June to November.

**Section 3.5 Transportation Goals/Objectives/Policies**

**Goal 1:** Support and maintain a safe and efficient road system.

**Objectives:**

- Upgrade roads on a priority basis.

**Policies:**

- Systematically prioritize road improvement needs; implement as funding is available.
- Priority is given to maintaining and enhancing existing infrastructure before adding new.

**Objectives:**

- Plan for new or upgraded road corridors. (See Map #010)

**Policies:**

- As development takes place, the developer is responsible for the cost of the new roads and/or necessary improvements.
- The Town will not accept new roads unless they meet road specifications as stated in the Town Road Ordinance or Subdivision Ordinance. (These Ordinances can be obtained at the Sharon Town Hall.)
- Design new roads to have a separate entrance and exit and they must meet Town, County, and State requirements. Cul de sacs should not be allowed and only be considered as a temporary solution when it will eventually be eliminated and the road meets up with a new road.
- Consider an impact fee to deal with long term cost of new roads.

**Goal 2:** Allow for human-powered transportation options. Bicycle and walking trails.

**Objectives:**

- Maintain good visibility along town roads so as to make all town roads safer for pedestrians and bikes.

**Policies:**

- Make sure brush and trees do not obstruct drivers line of sight.
- Support the county's efforts if they choose to build bike and pedestrian lanes on shoulders of county roads

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## **CHAPTER 4 - Utilities and Community Facilities.**

66.1001(2)(d) Wis. Statutes

### **Section 4.1 Introduction**

Adequate infrastructure, utilities, community facilities and services are important in meeting existing and future community needs. They are the framework of a community's life and without them, present day standard of living could not exist. The decisions made for the Town of Sharon regarding the utilities and community facilities will impact all present and future residents.

This chapter will describe the existing utility and community facilities serving the community, and outline future needs for Town residents based on projections and desires.

### **Section 4.2 Public Utilities and Community Facilities Inventory**

Below are descriptions of existing public utilities and community facilities for the Town of Sharon. There are also future needs/wants that the Town envisions for government services relating to such utilities and facilities.

#### **a. Sanitary Sewer Service**

There is no municipal sewer service available in the Town. Residents are served by on-site wastewater treatment systems (septic systems).

#### **b. Storm Water Management**

Surface drainage in the Town is characterized by an extensive system of glacial lakes and by the Plover and Tomorrow Rivers. Much of the Town is poorly drained due to numerous low and flat areas without drainage outlets and partially underlain by shallow bedrock. These conditions result in extensive wetland and wet soils areas. Flood Hazard Boundary Maps have been prepared by the Department of Housing and Urban Development in 1977. Preliminary 1982 Flood Insurance Rate Maps were prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Responsibility for storm water management within the Town of Sharon is split between Portage County and the Town. Management mainly consists of ditches along the road network. Portage County maintains the ditches along the portions of county highways within Sharon, while the Town maintains any ditches along Town roads. The ditches along Town roads vary in size, ranging from 1 to 4 feet in width. Additional information can be found in the **Town of Sharon Road Ordinance** (this Ordinance can be obtained at the Sharon Town Hall).

Improvements on existing Town roads can be made at the discretion of the Town Board while referencing the Town Road Ordinance. Any new road construction will strictly follow the Town Road Ordinance.

#### **c. Water Supply**

The Town does not have a municipal water system. The primary source of water for residents in Sharon is found in the groundwater aquifer and is obtained via private wells. The groundwater

aquifer refers to a saturated, permeable geologic formation that yields significant quantities of water.

Groundwater in the southwestern quarter of the Town, particularly in the Ellis area, is generally plentiful and of good natural quality. The plentiful groundwater there, is a natural environmental and economic resource that has been tapped via irrigation technology to increase the crop yields on much of these soils.

The County Health Department and University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point have documented significant levels and distribution of nitrates, although nitrate levels can fluctuate seasonally.

State and Federal regulations advise that nitrate levels in drinking water not exceed 10.00 parts per million (ppm) for health reasons. Portage County well data records can be viewed on **Map #038**.

Approximately 3,200 acres in the Town of Sharon, including the Ellis area, was placed within an atrazine ban area in 1982 (see **Map #037**). A ban was placed in areas throughout Portage County in the recharge portions of aquifers where contamination levels in excess of 10 parts per billion (ppb) had been detected.

The Portage County Groundwater Management Plan indicates that proper lot size is a critical factor in preventing groundwater pollution from private sewage systems. The traditional 1/2 acre lots used in many parts of the Town and County in previous years have been found to provide insufficient area to prevent degradation of groundwater quality. Lot sizes of 2 acres or more were found to be needed to minimize potential groundwater problems (see **Map #040**).

#### **d. Solid Waste & Recycling Facilities**

The Town of Sharon currently contracts with Portage County Solid Waste Disposal Dept. through Wittenberg Disposal, out of Wittenberg, WI for solid waste disposal and collection of recyclables. Solid waste is collected on a weekly basis and taken to the Portage County Landfill in the Town of Stockton on CTH QQ. In January of 2007 waste will go to a site to be determined by the Portage County Solid Waste Dept. Recyclables are picked up on a bi-weekly basis and taken to the Portage County Recycling Facility on Moore Road in the Village of Plover.

#### **e. On-site Wastewater Treatment Technologies**

The Town of Sharon has no municipal wastewater treatment facility. Residents in the Town utilize private on-site wastewater treatment systems (POWTS), otherwise known as private septic systems, as allowed by Wisconsin Department of Commerce Code 83.

#### **f. Parks**

Only one county facility, Becker Lake Recreation Area, is located in the Town of Sharon (see **Map #042**). It is a 40-acre natural area adjacent to Becker Lake used primarily for hunting and nature appreciation. Other county parks, adjacent to the Town, include Collins Park and Jordan Park. Collins Park is a 22-acre park located on the northern shore of Collins Lake just across CTH I in the Town of Alban. Amenities include: a beach, picnic and restroom facilities, campsites, swimming raft, playground, shelter, boat ramp, and manager's residence.

Jordan Park is a 293-acre County facility located at the intersection of STH 66 and Jordan Road and is the major public recreational facility in the Town of Hull. Primary activities at this park include camping, swimming, fishing and picnicking.

There are no town parks within the boundaries of the Town of Sharon at this time. As the Town of Sharon grows and completes their visions, the **Town Parkland Dedication Ordinance** will be used to incorporate town parks as needed. (This Ordinance can be obtained at the Sharon Town Hall.)

#### **g. Telecommunication Facilities**

There is one 300 foot telecommunication tower located in the Town of Sharon. At the present time there are five towers located on the south side of 10<sup>th</sup> street between CTH J and CTH K in the Town of Stockton. The towers serve two-way radio, telephone, and other wireless customers.

#### **h. Power Generating Plants and Transmission Lines**

The Town currently receives its electric service from three different companies. The northern portion of the Town is served by Central Wisconsin Electric Coop, out of Iola, WI, and Alliant Energy, while the southern portion is served by Wisconsin Public Service Corporation (WPSC) out of Plover, WI. Some residents also receive gas service from WPSC. There is no generation plant located in the Town; however, there are four substations located in the Town as follows: 1) In Polonia, 2) near Twin Lakes, 3) at the intersection of Deer Road and Merryland Drive, and 4) on Woodland Road 2 miles north of STH 66.

#### **i. Cemeteries**

The Town currently has two Cemeteries. One is located across from Sacred Heart Church of Polonia on Church property and is maintained by the Sacred Heart Church Parish; the other Town Cemetery is located west of Polonia at the old St. Martin's Church site also owned and maintained by the Sacred Heart Church Parish (see **Map #020**).

#### **j. Health Care Facilities**

There are no health care facilities of any kind in the Town. Residents travel primarily to neighboring communities for their health care needs.

#### **k. Senior/Child Care Facilities**

There are no senior care facilities located in Sharon, however, to assist low-income elderly, and handicapped persons, the Housing Authority of Portage County provides subsidized rental units to qualifying tenants. Under this program the HAPC has an apartment located in the Village of Rosholt, which has 4 two-bedroom units and 6 one-bedroom units.

Other senior care facilities, including Community Based Residential Facilities, Adult Day Care and Hospice care, are located in the Stevens Point Urban Area approximately 12 miles from the center of Sharon.

According to the Wisconsin Department of Health and Human Services, no person may for compensation provide care and supervision for 4 or more children under the age of 7 for less than 24 hours a day unless that person obtains a license to operate a child care center from the Department. This does not include a relative or guardian of a child who provides care and supervision for the child; a public or parochial school; a person employed to come to the home of the child's parent or guardian for less than 24 hours a day; or a county, city, village, town, school district or library that provides programs primarily intended for recreational or social purposes. Child care centers are licensed by the state from one of five regional licensing offices.

There are 2 different categories of state licensed child care; they depend upon the number of children in care:

**Licensed Family Child Care Centers** provide care for up to 8 children. This care is usually in the providers home. It is not required to be located in a residence.

**Licensed Group Child Care Centers** provide care for 9 or more children. These centers are usually located somewhere other than a residence and may be small or large in size.

There are no licensed child care facilities located in the Town. There is one facility located in the Village of Rosholt and a number of providers in the Stevens Point urban area. For a complete list of providers, contact the Regional Division of Children and Family Services at:

**2811 8th St. - Ste. 70  
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494  
Phone: (715) 422-5080  
Fax: (715) 422-5091**

#### **l. Police**

The Town of Sharon is served by the Portage County Sheriffs Department.

#### **m. Fire**

The Town of Sharon shares in a fire district with the Village of Rosholt and the Town of Alban. A future fire substation may be needed in the Town as growth and development dictates. The Rosholt Fire District also has mutual aid agreements for fire protection with surrounding communities which are approved by the Town.

#### **n. Rescue**

Through mutual agreement between the city of Stevens Point and Portage County, the countywide ambulance service plan will continue to provide the Town of Sharon with ambulance service. Additionally, the Town provides first responder service to its residents. In addition to human rescue efforts, the Town also has animal rescue service that is provided by the Portage County Humane Society.

#### **o. Libraries**

There are no libraries within the boundaries of the Town of Sharon. However, the Portage County Library, located in the city of Stevens Point on Main Street, is supported by all the municipalities in the County and is available for the Town resident's use.

#### **p. Schools**

The Town of Sharon is served by the Stevens Point Area Schools and the Rosholt School Districts. (See **Map #021**.) Additionally, Sacred Heart School with Grades 1-6 is located in the Town next to the Sacred Heart Church of Polonia. Higher education choices are also available in the city of Stevens Point such as Pacelli High School, University of Stevens Point, and Mid-State Technical College.

#### **q. Other Governmental Facilities**

The Town of Sharon Town Hall is located on STH 66 ¼ mile west of Ellis. The Town Garage is located on Grader Lane in Polonia.

### **Section 4.3 Utilities and Community Facilities Issues**

The following major issues were brought about as a result of public input taken at Plan Commission meetings:

- How can we address the potential future need for sewer service in the Polonia area?
- How can we obtain improved cell phone service in the Polonia area?
- How can we provide recreational opportunities for local youth?
- How can we reduce the overall cost of fire insurance for town residents?
- How can we enhance our ambulance and first responder service?
- How can we obtain improved energy transmission and distribution?

### **Section 4.4 Utilities and Community Facilities Goals/Objectives/Policies**

**Goal 1:** Consider a plan for future development to be placed in such a way as to facilitate economical use of utilities as future needs arise such as in the Polonia area.

#### **Objectives:**

- Plan for future lot sizes that will make sewer service affordable through subdivision layout, i.e., building placement on a lot to allow for future lot split.

#### **Policies:**

- Allow for multi-residence communal septic system as technology develops per Wisconsin Department of Commerce rules pertaining to private on site waste treatment systems.

**Goal 2:** Provide for limited telecommunication service development.

**Objectives:**

- Allow for use of existing structures for cell towers.
- Consider plan for future towers to be added to enhance the Town's communication capabilities.

**Policies:**

- Consider developing an ordinance for telecommunication towers/wind towers.

**Goal 3:** Encourage privately sponsored activities for local youth.

**Objectives:**

- Work with area civic and church groups.
- Promote community involvement to provide facilities.

**Policies:**

- Work with area civic and church groups.
- Promote community involvement to provide programs and facilities.

**Goal 4:** Implement cost effective procedures for added fire protection.

**Objectives:**

- Maintain our mutual aid agreements.
- Implement protection districts within the overall district so they relate to insurance costs for residents.

**Policies:**

- Work to establish a fire protection substation within the Town boundaries if economically feasible.

**Goal 5:** Provide for increased safety protection.

**Objectives:**

- Consider mutual aid agreements.
- Promote involvement in first responder program.

**Policies:**

- Consider ideas that are economically feasible to offer quicker and better safety protection when it arises.

## **CHAPTER 5 - Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources**

66.1001(2)(e) Wis. Statutes

### **Section 5.1 Introduction**

The agricultural, natural and cultural resources of the Town of Sharon are major reasons why people choose to live here. Hilly moraines, woodlands, lakes, rivers & streams, wetlands, sand plain, varied and abundant wildlife, and farmland all come together to create a unique and attractive Wisconsin landscape.

The residents of the Town of Sharon recognize the value of their unique landscape and understand that it supports and sustains a way of life they are proud of. For those who choose to farm the land here, the community supports their efforts and works to minimize barriers that impede this industry where possible. Although Agriculture plays a major role in the Town economically and as a contributor to the quality of life, it is declining. In the late 1960's and into the 1970's, Dairy declined quite rapidly due to several factors such as small sized farms going out of business, aging ownership, and young people leaving the farm, to name a few. This occurred primarily on the more marginal soils of the Town. This also caused a decline in infrastructure in the Dairy industry. At the same time this was occurring, vegetable and potato farming were increasing. This continued to put additional pressure on the dairy industry as competition for the Town's more productive lands increased. By the early 1980's, potato and vegetable production were the driving force for the agricultural industry in the Town. Increased demand for a higher quality product, as well as competition amongst processors at the retail level has now put great stress on the economic viability of this industry. The Town of Sharon is at a greater disadvantage in this situation due to stony ground, lack of contiguous large tracts of productive land (a big factor in processors contracting in this area), and inability to attain the yields necessary to compete for contracts as compared to lands in southern Portage County and beyond where the base for prices and profit margins are set. In the Town of Sharon these factors have contributed to an overall decline in relative net worth and inability to exit the agricultural industry economically due to low agricultural land prices relative to other potato and vegetable production areas. The residents also understand that the identification and protection of the natural, historical and cultural resources of the community will help sustain a rich quality of life that is enjoyed by all who live here.

### **Section 5.2 Agricultural Resource**

#### **A. Basis for Declining Agricultural Potential**

- Evaluate economically viable crops and markets
- Hilly, Rocky, Droughty, soil conditions
- Distance to markets
- Assess availability of vegetable canning contracts
- Assess contiguous acreage to enable efficient size and achieve economy of scale

#### **B. Highly Productive Agricultural Soils**

Highly Productive agricultural soils in the Town of Sharon have been identified with the assistance of the County Conservationist, based on highest productivity and lowest degree of limitations for farming (see **Map #30** Productive Agricultural Soils). Slopes greater than 6% were excluded from the "highly productive" designation (due to severe hazard for water or wind erosion), along with small parcels and stony, rough and eroded sites.

Highly Productive Soils in Sharon are listed below. However, soil productivity in Sharon is less than soils in the southern part of Portage County and Counties beyond.

- Billet sandy loam 0-2% slope
- Rosholt loam, 2-6% slope
- Wyocena sandy loam, 2-6% slope
- Osterle sandy loam, 2-6% slope (prime Ag if drained)
- Richford loamy sand, 0-6% slope (prime Ag is irrigated)

### **C. Farming Systems, Demographics & Land Tenure**

The Town is located within two major farm regions in Wisconsin. First and most prominent is the dairy region. In Wisconsin, dairying is most concentrated in a belt that begins near Hudson (St. Croix County), heads east to Wausau and Green Bay (Brown County), then turns southwest through Fond du Lac, Madison and ends near Dubuque (Iowa County). Wisconsin Department of Agriculture 2002 permit information listed 18 active grade-A dairy farms operating in the Town of Sharon. To the north in Bevent there are 12 farms; to the west in Town of Dewey 4 farms and in the Town of Hull 2 farms; to the south in Town of Stockton 22 farms; and to the east in Town of Alban there are 11 farms and in Town of New Hope 11 farms.

The second farming region that includes Sharon is that of fresh vegetable production. The irrigated soils of the “Golden Sands” region of Wisconsin lay between Portage and the Stevens Point area. Sharon is on the northern edge of this large irrigated plain and there are several producers who have vegetable operations within the Town. While no exact acreage numbers are available, the presence of pivot irrigation rigs is one key indicator of vegetable production. Although there were approximately 28 irrigation pivots in Sharon in 2000, some of these fields may not have been used for vegetable production.

The amount of land dedicated to agricultural production can and often does change from one year to the next. In 2000, the Portage County Planning and Zoning Department analyzed aerial photographs of Sharon to identify active farmland within the Town. The land in farms was broken down by presence of irrigation, 3495.71 acres; use for row crops or hay, 8709.22 acres; and permanent pasture, 216.46 acres. Total agricultural acres identified for 2000 were 12,421.39.

There were 80 persons employed in an agriculturally-related field in the Town of Sharon in 2000 (Table 1.10 Issues and Opportunities section). This represented 7.0% of the employment for the Town. Although this is substantially down from the 1980 figure of 145 persons (22.3%), it is similar to the Portage County Town average (6.9%). Decreasing farm employment is not a unique trend by any means. The number of farms is decreasing, while acreage per farm is up. Farm consolidation is a common practice in this industry (see **Map #030 Productive Ag Soils**).

### **D. Farm Economy and Infrastructure**

Dairying is on a continual decline. Initially discontinued dairy operations converted to raising beef cattle to utilize buildings etc. Most recently they have converted to marginal corn and soybeans. Please see the discussion of farm economy in Chapter 5E of the Portage County Comprehensive Plan.

## **E. Other Local Influences on Agriculture**

The Sharon area has the possibility of seeing increased population in the future. With this comes increased demand for housing and services. One source of pressure for the development of rural residential properties is the expansion of US Hwy 10 to 4 lanes between Appleton and Amherst; growth of Hwy 10 E out of Stevens Point; building of Crossroad Commons at Hwy HH and I 39; and the desire for people to have rural property. The possible interest in Sharon can bring more homes onto the agricultural landscape, which in turn could lead to increased potential for life-style conflicts; increased assessed value of non-farm lands; and most importantly, increases in the sale price per acre of land beyond the point of being economically viable to purchase as farmland.

## **F. Agricultural Programs**

A number of programs are available to agricultural landowners to help achieve desired outcomes ranging from enhancing wildlife habitat to minimizing soil erosion. The following is a partial list from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). For more information about these and other programs contact the local NRCS office at 715-346-1325, the Farm Service Agency at 715-346-1313, or the County Land Conservation Department at 715-346-1334.

### Priority Watershed Program

The Priority Watershed Program is a state program that was created in 1978 to provide financial assistance to local units of government in selected watersheds to address land management activities. The goal of the program is to improve and protect surface and groundwater quality by reducing pollutants from urban and rural non-point sources. Erosion from ag operations, stream banks, and developing urban areas and runoff from livestock wastes and urban areas are examples of non-point sources of pollution.

A portion of the Town of Sharon is in the Tomorrow/Waupaca Priority Watershed Project. The Tomorrow project began in the spring of 1994 and is expected to be completed in 2007. The watershed is approximately 291 square miles and includes land in Portage, Waupaca and Waushara counties. The plan outlines actions and funds needed to meet the project's objectives, an implementation strategy, and the monitoring component to evaluate the program's success.

### Soil and Water Resource Management Program (SWRM-DATCP 50)

The Soil and Water Resource Management Program is administered under state code DATCP 50. The program is designed to conserve Wisconsin's soil and water resources, reduce soil erosion, prevent non-point source pollution and enhance water quality. Cost sharing is provided to qualified applicants who enroll in long term agreements to help manage practices, such as intensive grazing. For more information, contact the County Land Conservation Department.

### Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

The Conservation Reserve Program, administered through the Farm Service Agency (FSA) is a voluntary program for agricultural landowners. Through CRP, one can receive annual rental payments and cost-share assistance to establish long-term, resource conserving covers on eligible farmland. Participants enroll in CRP for 10 – 15 years or permanent easements.

### Environmental Quality Incentives Programs (EQUIP)

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQUIP) is a voluntary conservation program. It supports production agriculture and environmental quality as compatible goals. Through EQUIP, farmers may receive financial and technical help with structural and management conservation practices on agricultural land.

EQUIP may pay up to 75 percent of the costs of eligible conservation practices. Incentive payments may be made to encourage a farmer to adopt land management practices, such as nutrient management, manure management, integrated pest management, and wildlife habitat management.

### Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)

The Wetlands Reserve Program is a voluntary program to restore and protect wetlands on private property. It is an opportunity for landowners to receive financial incentives to restore wetlands that have been drained for agriculture.

Landowners who choose to participate in WRP may sell a conservation easement or enter into a cost-share restoration agreement with USDA to restore and protect wetlands. The landowner voluntarily limits future use of the land, yet retains private ownership. The landowner and NRCS develop a plan for the restoration and maintenance of the wetland.

The program offers landowners three options: permanent easements, 30-year easements, and restoration cost-share agreements of minimum 10-year duration.

### Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program is a voluntary program for people who want to develop or improve wildlife habitat on private lands. It provides both technical assistance and cost sharing to help establish and improve fish and wildlife habitat.

Landowners agree to prepare and implement a wildlife habitat development plan. NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to implement the wildlife habitat restoration practices.

## **Section 5.3 Agricultural Issues**

The following issues relating to agriculture were identified through the planning process:

- To what extent should productive agricultural lands in the Town be protected?
- How can farmers enhance their land value, have more flexible land use options and protect natural resources and the rural character of the Town?
- Changes in the economics of agriculture have put great pressures on the need to produce income from the sale of land for non-agricultural purposes.
- How can conflicts between farm and non-farm uses be minimized?
- Niche markets should be explored and developed. How can the Town promote specialty agricultural operations?
- Buffers between intensive agricultural and sensitive environmental areas should be considered.

- Nitrates in the groundwater are of concern in the Town, but it is difficult to pinpoint an exact source, be it natural or man-made. Concentrations of nitrates in well water vary greatly based on location, depth of well and rate of draw.
- How can groundwater be protected from excess pesticides and herbicides?
- Due to concerns, to what extent can the Town direct large agricultural operations toward areas suitable for this type of use?

## **Section 5.4 Agricultural Goals/Objectives/Policies**

**Goal 1:** Support agricultural areas.

### **Objectives:**

- Identify agricultural productive areas.
- Use practices that minimize farm/non-farm conflicts

### **Policies:**

- Develop a system to identify productive agricultural land that includes soils, stones, contiguous acreage, proximity to markets and canning contracts. (L.E.S.A. System could be used.)
- Encourage the use of vegetative or spatial buffers between agricultural and residential uses.
- Encourage non-farm development in areas away from intensive agricultural activities, in order to minimize farm-non-farm conflicts.
- Recommend that new residences be set 100 feet from agriculture land.

**Goal 2:** Educate the public about operations and activities of the agricultural community.

### **Objectives:**

- Work with organizations and agencies to educate the public regarding expectations of living near or adjacent to agricultural uses.

### **Policies:**

- Support the Right-to-Farm Law (Wis. Stat. 823.08).
- Encourage the Portage County Zoning Department and the Board of Adjustment to defend farming operations rights under zoning and educate the public of these afforded rights.

**Goal 3:** Encourage practices that protect air, soil, water and wildlife resources.

### **Objectives:**

- Promote agriculture that is appropriate with existing topography and which protects the quality of surface and groundwater resources, including minimizing the loss of soil or agricultural chemicals to ground and surface water, as well as the proper location and maintenance of on-site sewage systems associated with residential development.

### **Policies:**

- Encourage farmers to work with agencies and organizations to develop and implement farm plans, procedures and Best Management Practices that help protect surface and groundwater, riparian lands and minimize field and feedlot runoff into surface waters.
- Consider new or expanding livestock operations in the Town according to State Standards and Regulations.

**Goal 4.** Support the agricultural community in finding viable markets for their products.

**Objectives:**

- Support farmers who identify niche markets suitable for their operations. Acknowledge the volatile nature of the agricultural economy and the need to be flexible and timely in adjustments to regulations that affect their economic viability.

**Policies:**

- Permit farmers participating in the farmland preservation program to have their lands classified exclusive agriculture, consistent with state law.

**Section 5.5 Natural Resources**

Natural resources in the Town of Sharon serve as the foundation for residents physical, emotional and economic well being – from surface and ground water quality to land suitability for agricultural, residential or commercial development. According to the results of the 2001 County Comprehensive Planning and Zoning Survey and the 2005 Town of Sharon Planning Survey, some town residents favor identifying, managing and protecting natural resources that sustain them (see survey results **Appendix C**).

This section will describe the existing natural resources inventory and state the issues, goals, objectives and policies.

**A. Geomorphology**

The present Portage County landscape primarily reflects the last or Wisconsin stage of the Pleistocene-glacial epoch (Holt 1965). The glacial ice transported large amounts of rock debris known as drift. The drift is called till if deposited directly by the ice and outwash if placed by glacial melt water.

The central and eastern part of the Town of Sharon is characterized as drift, being well drained, gently sloping to very steep soils formed in loamy deposits, and sandy glacial till or outwash sand and gravel. The hilly moraine area presents a significant problem in many areas for large scale farming.

The Ellis area forms the northern tip of the sand plain area of the County. This area is characterized by relatively deep sand deposits that extend down to sandstone and granite bedrock. These deep sand deposits function as an extensive aquifer which has changed farmland from marginally productive farmland to productive by way of high capacity irrigation, as well as other modern agricultural practices.

Bedrock ranges 0–50 ft deep on the northwestern part of the Town to 50–100 ft deep in the southeastern part of the Town and 0-30 ft deep along the Plover River corridor and part of the southwest areas of the Town.

Extending north and south through the Town is a series of parallel or glacial moraine ridges. These ridges are just east of Ellis and continue south throughout the County. The Town also has isolated sandstone deposits located at or near the surface.

The landscape of the Town is generally flat to hilly with numerous lowland wet areas and glacial kettles. The elevation ranges from 1,210 feet above sea level on the western border of the Town in the Jordan Marsh, to 1,250 feet on the top of the moraine running through the center of the Town, just south of Polonia (see Topography **Map # 031**).

## **B. Soils**

Soils in the Town are characterized by a diversity of soil types supporting a variety of land uses. According to the Soil Survey of Portage County, there are 46 distinct soil types that can be grouped into soil associations as follows. These associations are generalized based on the majority of soils in an area.

- Point-Dancy-Mosinee association: Well-drained to somewhat poorly drained, nearly level to gently sloping soils that formed in loamy and silty deposits and the underlying loamy residuum from igneous rocks. These soils are found in northwest corner of the Town. These soils are forested or shrub/scrub wetlands.
- Wyocena-Rosholt association: Well-drained, gently sloping to very steep soils that formed in loamy deposits and sand glacial till or outwash sand and gravel. These soils are found in the northern, central, eastern and southern portions of the Town. The lesser sloping areas tend to be used for crops or pasture, while the steeper areas are used for woodlands or pasture. The steeper soils in this association have very severe limitations for septic absorption fields.
- Kranski-Coloma-Mecan association: Excessively drained and well-drained, gently sloping to very steep soils that formed in sandy glacial till or in deep sandy deposits. These soils are found in the northern, western, southern and eastern portions of the Town. These soils are used for woodlands and irrigated and non-irrigated crops including vegetables, grain, forage crops, and pasture. These soils are subject to soil blowing , water erosion when cropped or exposed .
- Richford-Rosholt-Billett association: Well-drained, nearly level to gently sloping soils that formed in sandy and loamy deposits and outwash sand and gravel. These soils are found north and south of Ellis, in the northwest, west central, and east central portions of the Town. These soils are used for irrigated and non-irrigated crops including potatoes, grains, forage crops and pasture. These soils are subject to wind and water erosion. The sandy soils have high permeability that is conducive to contamination of the groundwater. This is an important concern for both Ellis and Polonia because the drinking water supply is via private wells.
- Plainfield-Friendship association: Excessively drained and moderately well drained, nearly level to sloping soils that formed in deep sandy deposits. These soils are found in the northwestern and western part of the Town west of the Plover River. They are used for potatoes and pasture. The northwestern portion is not shown on map but lies east of the Plover River and west of Hwy Y.
- Roscommon-Meehan-Marky association: Somewhat poorly drained to very poorly drained, nearly level soils that formed in deep sandy deposits or, in places, in organic deposits that overlie the sand. These soils are found along the Plover River corridor in the western part of the Town from north to south. These soils are used for crops, pasture and wildlife habitation.

- Markey-Seelyeville-Cathro association: Very poorly drained, nearly level soils that formed in organic deposits over sandy and loamy deposits. These soils are found along the Plover River, Tomorrow River and Jordan Park. They are also found in the northern part of the Town. These soils are wildlife habitat with a few wooded areas on higher ground. This association has very severe limitations for septic drain fields and basements. Note: a section of this association in the northwestern portion of the Town is not on the map (lies east of the Plover River and west of Hwy Y).

NOTE: Soil testing by a certified soil tester is strongly recommended. For more detailed, site specific information, please see **Map #032** General Soil Associations; **Map #030** Highly Productive Ag Soils; and **Map #040** Land Capability for On-Site Waste Systems.

### C. Surface Water, Wetlands and Flood Plains

The Town of Sharon has two rivers, several streams, 12 named and 7 unnamed lakes, many wetlands and several flood plains. According to 2001 County survey data, 89% of respondents felt lakes, rivers and streams should be identified and protected.

**Rivers & Streams** in the Town of Sharon include:

The Tomorrow River: headwaters begin as an intermittent stream from Mudhole Lake in the west central part of the Town. The river gathers clear, hard water from springs and tributaries on its southeasterly route through Portage County and into Waupaca County. This is a Class 1 trout stream and is listed as Exceptional and Outstanding Water Resources by Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (see WI Administrative Code NR102).

The Plover River: enters the County through the northwest part of the Town as it flows west into the Wisconsin River. Much of the volume of this river is contributed by springs and groundwater. The river in turn supplies drinking water to the Stevens Point area through the City well fields. According to the Plover River Plan, 2/3 of the water that comes from the well originates directly from the Plover River. The Plover River is also groundwater recharge to rural residential and agricultural wells in the area. The dam along the river in the Town is located ¼ mile east of Bentley Rd and County Highway Y. There are also numerous agricultural activities adjacent to the river.

A study of the length of the Plover River through 3 counties was conducted from 2000-2001 by the **Environmental Task Force Program** at The University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. (This Study can be obtained at the Sharon Town Hall.) The study concluded that overall, the Plover River has good water quality when compared to other rivers located in Central Wisconsin. This is likely due to the fact that the river is well buffered through most of the system, most natural wetlands still exist and development is not very intense except in the Stevens Point area. Wetlands act as nutrient sinks and reduce the impacts of heavy rain events. The mid section of the river runs through the Town of Sharon and receives some pesticides and nutrients. To maintain current water quality status, efforts should be made to protect the watershed and river corridor.

Other Streams: North Creek (northwest and north central), Lost Creek (west) and a tributary of the headwaters of Flume Creek (eastern boundary).

**Lakes** are located throughout the Town of Sharon and include (see **Map #039**).

Adams Lake	12.0 acres (north of Adams Ln, east of State Rd 66)
Becker (Bakers) Lake	31.5 acres
**Bentley Pond (Millpond ***)	85.9 acres
**Collins Lake`	10.0 acres (within the Town of Sharon)
Glisezinski Lake	9.87 acres
**Jacqueline Lake	38.7 acres
Kranski Lake	17.1 acres
Mudhole Lake	25.8 acres
Oesterle Lake	30.8 acres
Pallen Lake	12.6 acres
North Twin Lake	36.5 acres
South Twin Lake	52.7 acres
7 unnamed lakes	approximately 43 acres

\*\* = lakes with public access

\*\*\*=a shallow impoundment of the Plover River

**A recent two year study of 29 water bodies in Portage County** was conducted by the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point and the Portage County Land Conservation Office. Six lakes in the Town of Sharon were studied including Bentley & Jordan Pond; Becker, Collins, Jacqueline and South Twin Lakes. Key information is listed below. Additional details on these lakes can be obtained from the Sharon Town Hall office as well as from the above-mentioned agencies.

Jacqueline, North & South Twin, Becker and Mudhole Lakes are classified as shallow soft water seepage lakes. Shallow lakes are considered Wisconsin gems due to their unique aquatic life. South Twin is especially unique due to its very low alkalinity (2 parts per million, ppm)-usually only found in northernmost Wisconsin. Soft water seepage lakes are more susceptible to runoff contamination since they have no river system coming into or going out of them. Acid rain is also a concern for these lakes. An earlier study by UWSP determined that alkaline lakes like Jacqueline and South Twin are more susceptible to acid rain since their alkalinity is 15 ppm or less.

Normally mesophilic, Jacqueline and South Twin lakes are becoming eutrophic due to increased nutrients from runoff and stirred up phosphorous rich sediment. Water clarity is poor. Eutrophic lakes become weedy and/or have frequent algae blooms. Winterkill of fish is much more common under these conditions.

To maintain health of these shallow lakes, they need different management than deep water lakes. Boat traffic can damage plant beds that protect the quality of shallow lakes. Damage is directly due to cutting and tearing out of plant material with propellers or indirect via stirring up of lake sediment that clouds water and reduces light to plant growth. Shallow lakes need large areas of appropriate vegetation to remain healthy. Large scale harvesting of plants and chemical treatment of plants can damage shallow lakes much more than a deep lake. Shallow lakes are not appropriate for high-speed recreation or large boat motors even at no wake speeds. As sediment is re-suspended, phosphorus that was adsorbed to sediment particles becomes available for plant use and studies have shown an increase in algae and nuisance levels of aquatic plant growth. It is recommended that these lakes have a boating "Carry-On Only", and "No Motor" lake ordinance. "No Wake" is recommended for

lakes with public landings such as Jacqueline Lake.

Development also affects these and other lakes. Jacqueline Lake has considerable development and residents created a lake district to make improvements and rehabilitate aquatic quality. Progress has been made, but the water quality is still poor, numerous plant species have disappeared and aeration is required year round to reduce fish kill. There is limited development on South Twin and none on North Twin at this time. However, some development may occur in these areas. Any development should work with the county to ensure new storm water regulations are met and no additional run off occurs from roads, construction, fertilizers, manure, and/or soil erosion. Development needs to maintain 100 ft setbacks with no setback averaging, create or maintain shoreline buffers, recommend septic systems be put behind the dwelling (away from the lake), maintain septic systems properly, observe and manage non-native aquatic plants, reduce or eliminate pesticides and continue to monitor lakes where possible. Twin Lakes' property owners should consider developing a lake district at some future time.

Collins Lake is a drainage lake with a depth of 56 ft. It has the largest flora of aquatic and wetland species on record in Portage County. However, the current high phosphorous levels of 44 parts per billion (ppb) have made it eutrophic and subject to nuisance algae and aquatic plant growth. Filamentous algae are increasing due to increased nutrients. Water quality is fair due to elevated phosphorous levels, algae populations, sedimentation and water color from wetland vegetation. Although only 10 acres of Collins Lake is in the Township, there is an extensive wetland complex west and southwest of the lake that is important to the health of the lake and for habitat of many plants and animals. Attention to invasive species is needed to protect the lake. The county should consider adding land northwest of the Collins Park entrance for trails and to reduce run-off. It is recommended that the Town of Sharon also work with the Town of Alban on water quality and lake protection issues.

Becker Lake is a shallow soft water lake with an adjacent bog. The water quality is good but it is susceptible to nutrient inputs like N & S Twin and Jacqueline Lakes. It has the highest number of vascular plants (87 species) and the highest floristic quality found in all Portage County lakes. Plants of special concern include Farwell's milfoil (*Myriophyllum farwellii* Morong) and Bright-green spikerush (*Elocharis olivacea*). The bog on the northwest side is rich in plants. Care is needed to protect these plant communities and the water quality. Data on surface watersheds is being tabulated and will be in the **UW-SP Lakes of Portage County Study** (this study can be found in the Sharon Town Hall office).

Bentley & Jordan Pond are part of the Plover River that overall has good water quality. These two impoundments have phosphorous concentrations less than the average for similar areas in the county. Water clarity is fair for both. To maintain current water quality status, efforts should be made to protect the watershed and river corridor.

**Watersheds** are interconnected areas of land draining from surrounding ridge tops to a common point such as a lake or stream junction with a neighboring land area. The Town of Sharon is divided into 3 watersheds - The Plover-Little Plover watershed on the western border, the Tomorrow-Waupaca watershed on the eastern and southeastern portion and the Lower Little Wolf on the north eastern corner of the Town. Some areas in these watersheds are subject to occasional flooding from major storm events and melt water from the spring thaw.

**Wetlands** are an important part of the watershed, as they act as a filter system for pollutants, nutrients and sediments, along with serving as buffers for shore lands and providing essential wildlife habitat, flood control and groundwater recharge. There are numerous wetlands in the Town of Sharon (see **Map #033**) that include 3 general types: forested, scrub or shrub, Emergent “Wet” Meadows. The predominant type is forested wetlands. In this section “wetland” means an area where water is at, near of above the land surface long enough to be capable of supporting aquatic or hydrophytic vegetation and which has soils indicative of wet conditions.

- Forested wetlands are the predominant type (approximately 10,216 acres) - including bogs and forested floodplain complexes that are characterized by trees 20 feet or more in height such as tamarack, white cedar, black spruce, elm, black ash and silver maple. These wetlands are located in most parts of the Town except in south central part of the Town. They are along and east of the Plover River; between CTH J, Y and K and north of STH 66; east of CTH J, south of County Line Dr and north of CTH CC; and north of CTH Z, east of STH 66 by Rustic Rd and west of Township boundary with Town of Alban.
- Scrub/shrub wetlands are the second abundant type (approximately 2,404 acres). These wetlands, which include bogs and alder thickets, are characterized by wood shrub and small trees such as tag alder, bog birch, willow and dogwood. These are found throughout the Town in many areas adjacent to forested wetlands.
- Emergent/wet meadows are the third abundant type of wetland (approximately 912 acres) and consist of areas that may have saturated soils more often than having standing water. Vegetation includes sedges, grasses and reeds as dominant plants, but may also include blue flag iris, milkweed, sneezeweed, mint and several species of goldenrod and aster. These types of wetlands are found primarily along the Plover River and its feeder creeks; along parts of the Tomorrow River; around Osterle Lake; east of N & S Twin Lakes; and scattered in the north central and northeastern parts of the Town.

**Flood Plains** are defined as that land which has been or may be covered by floodwater during a regional flood. The flood plain includes the floodway and flood-fringe areas. A 100-year flood is defined as a flood event having a one percent chance of reaching the 100-year flood elevation in any given year. Contrary to popular belief, it is not a flood occurring once every 100 years. A 100-year flood plain then, is the area adjoining a river, stream or watercourse covered by water in the event of a 100-year flood.

Flood plains provide many benefits including: natural flood and erosion control, water quality maintenance, and groundwater recharge. Some of these areas are also desirable for residential development due to aesthetic reasons, and agricultural development due to the presence of nutrient rich soils. According to Federal Emergency Management Agency maps, flood plains occur in two main areas: in the north western, western and southwestern portions of the Town of Sharon along the Plover River, North Creek and other tributaries flowing into the Plover River and along Lost Creek in the west central part of the Town. (**See Map #033 Wetlands; and Map #035 Floodplains.**)

## D. Groundwater

All Town residential water use comes from groundwater sources. Therefore, protection of this resource for quantity and quality is vital. Depth to water table, soil texture and permeability all play a role in diminishing the negative effects pollutants may have on water quality. **(See also Utilities and Community Facilities Chapter, 4.2C, Water Supply.)**

The Town of Sharon is located in 2 geologic provinces. The drift province makes up the eastern and central 3/4s of the Town, while the sand-plain province makes up the western 1/4 of the Town. The drift province is considerably different from the western half of the County in that the basement granitic bedrock is far from the surface and the unconsolidated aquifers above it are not limited. Depth to bedrock is generally greater than 100 ft and the depth to groundwater ranges from a few feet below the surface to 30-157 ft. The sand-plain province is considerably different from the rest of the County in that the basement sandstone bedrock is far from the surface and the unconsolidated aquifers above it are not very limited. The depth to bedrock is 0 to >150 ft. and the depth to groundwater varies greatly, between 0 and 68 ft.

In the drift province, the depth to groundwater in some areas of the township is of a nature that is more conducive to intercepting pollutants; however the sub-surface soil texture is sandy and coarse, allowing liquids a faster rate of travel through the soil column such that pollutants in these strata migrate with relative ease.

In the sand-plain province, generally a thick unsaturated zone exists; however given the sandy soil types, there exists little second line defense against pollutants regardless of the nature of the subsurface materials. Although some of the soils ranked moderate to good in pollution attenuation, this area of the County should be considered vulnerable overall given the sandy soil type.

Potential pumping yield rates (see **Map #022**) for groundwater generally range from 10-1,000 gallons per minute, indicative of a large potential supply in most of the Town. However, large removals could affect groundwater levels, wetlands and surface water. The Town of Sharon will review any development proposals which would require large scale groundwater extraction with the express guideline of preserving and protecting the important resource.

The Town is split by the groundwater divide formed by glacial moraines that run north and south through the Town of Sharon just east of CTH J (see **Map #034**). The land east of the divide is part of a larger watershed that drains into Lake Michigan and eventually into the Atlantic Ocean. Land west of the divide flows into the Wisconsin River and eventually into the Gulf of Mexico. Knowing the direction of groundwater can be very helpful when determining proper siting of well and on-site waste systems.

The wellhead protection area in Polonia runs on a north-south line following Polonia Road south to STH 66, west on STH 66 to Church Street, then straight south on a line with Church Street to Lepak Lane, then east on Lepak Lane to CTH Z. It then follows CTH Z south beyond the south border of the Town of Sharon. Lands east of this line are in wellhead protection Zone C. Developments in this zone that are not within a municipal sewer system must be a minimum 2-acre lot size. **(See Map #039)**

Data collection for groundwater monitoring remains an on-going process. Residents are responsible for their own groundwater testing. It is recommended that water is tested on an annual basis. More specific information and recommendations regarding groundwater can be found in the **Portage County Groundwater Management Plan**, adopted by the County Board in March 2004.

### **1. Atrazine Prohibition Areas**

The US Environmental Protection Agency is researching the health effects of atrazine in water. Drinking water that contains atrazine will not cause an immediate sickness or health problems (acute toxicity). However, consuming low levels of atrazine over time may cause health problems (chronic toxicity). The EPA is also concerned that Atrazine may be an endocrine disruptor which can cause unintentional hormone-like activity in the body.

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection is responsible for protecting Wisconsin's groundwater from contamination by pesticides and fertilizers. Their authority to restrict the use of a pesticide that is contaminating groundwater at levels above health-based standards is found in the Wisconsin Groundwater Law, Chapter 160 of the Wisconsin Statutes, and by department rule in ATCP 31, Groundwater Protection Program.

The rules for restricting the use of Atrazine and other herbicides in Wisconsin are part of ATCP 30 – Pesticide Product Restrictions and the county maps showing the location of the prohibition areas can also be found in the rule in ATCP 30.

Atrazine has been detected above the health standard in some wells within the Town of Sharon and because of this a prohibition area has been defined within the community (**Map #037, Atrazine Prohibition Areas**). Approximately 3,300 acres of land from three areas are within the prohibition area in the Town of Sharon. The lands are found in the central area and the northwest and southeast corners. (**See Map #034 Groundwater Flow; Map #037 Atrazine prohibition area; and Map #039 Wellhead Protection Map-Polonia.**)

### **E. Wildlife Habitat and Forested Areas**

When people think about wildlife, birds, fish and mammals most likely come to mind. It is important, however, to consider all organisms that make up an ecosystem in order for that system to continue providing the maximum benefit to humans and the environment. Town residents recognize the fact that human beings play a role in protecting or restoring, as well as, degrading or destroying wildlife and its habitat. They also recognize that it will be very difficult to preserve all ecosystems in the Town from human encroachment or interaction.

The biggest threats to wildlife are loss of habitat quality and quantity. These threats can be attributed primarily to fragmentation, invasive species, and pollution. Fragmentation refers to the loss of large, contiguous sections of land through subdivision into smaller parts. These subdivisions can lead to an alteration and possible degradation of the native plant and animal communities. Invasive species, both plant and animal, tend to out compete or prey on native Species also altering the native ecosystem. Pollution can lead to habitat degradation and cause birth defects and increased mortality rates in animal species.

Habitat areas are important for providing food and cover for nesting, brooding and sheltering.

Farmland is one type of habitat that also provides food, as well as travel corridors between wetlands and woodlands.

Woodlands, Forested Lands, and Herbaceous Cover and Shrub Lands account for approximately 26,399.05 acres or 64% of the total land area in the Town of Sharon, of which 13,532 acres or 51% are identified as Wetlands as described earlier in this Chapter (see **Map #036**). According to 2001 County survey data, 80% of respondents felt that an effort should be made to identify and protect woodlands, and 74% felt the same about wetlands and floodplains. Loss of these habitat types can threaten the viability of certain species. Woodlands that exist now are primarily due to an inability to sustain successful agricultural practices.

Options for landowners to protect habitat can be accomplished by working with a land trust to place a conservation easement on the property. The easement is usually donated but it can be purchased through the WI Stewardship Fund or other resources. For more information contact the local land trust (North Central Conservancy Trust) or the WI Department of Natural Resources.

Another option open to all private landowners owning ten or more acres of woodlands is the Managed Forest Law Program. The MFL program is intended to foster timber production in private forests while promoting other benefits that forested lands provide. Participants in this program have the option to choose a 25 or 50-year contract period and pay property taxes at a reduced rate on enrolled lands. A portion of the difference in property taxes is recouped by the state at the time of a timber harvest when a yield tax is imposed based on the volume of timber removed. For more information regarding specific requirements and how to enroll in this program, contact the WI Department of Natural Resources.

#### Threatened and Endangered Species

Known rare and endangered animal species in the Town of Sharon identified by the Wisconsin Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI), UW-SP Lakes Study, WI Department of Natural Resources and US Fish and Wildlife include: Karner blue butterflies, Wood Turtles and Osprey. Rare and endangered plant types include: Farwell's milfoil (Becker and S. Twin Lake), Vasey's pondweed (S. Twin Lake), violet bladderwort (S. Twin Lake), Valeriana Sitchenesis (deep cedar swamps N of Hwy 66 by Plover River) and bright -green Spikerush (Becker Lake).

Karner blue butterflies have been noted west and south of Lepak Ln, along Hwy CC, east of Lake Jacqueline and likely other locations with stands of wild lupine. Wood Turtles have a historic record on the Plover River. Rare plant communities include wild lupine (see Karner Blue butterflies above). Wild blue lupine is the only food Karner blue butterfly caterpillars eat.

Many areas do not have information available on threatened or endangered species. Two areas of note are S Twin and Becker Lake bogs that need further study for rare species. All these elements should be taken into consideration along with protection measures. A detailed description of rare and endangered plants and animals can be obtained from the WI DNR. (**See Map #036 Forested Lands.**)

## **F. Air Quality**

The following information comes from the WI DNR and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA):

A few common air pollutants are found all over the United States. These pollutants can injure health, harm the environment and cause property damage. The EPA calls these pollutants **criteria air pollutants** because the agency has regulated them by first developing health-based **criteria** (science-based guidelines) as the basis for setting permissible levels. These pollutants include: ozone, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, particulate matter, and lead.

One set of limits (**primary standard**) is designed to protect public health, including the health of “sensitive” populations such as asthmatics, children, and the elderly; another set of limits (**secondary standard**) is intended to protect public welfare, including protection against decreased visibility and damage to animals, crops, vegetation, and buildings. A geographic area that meets or does better than the primary standard is called an **attainment area**; areas that don’t meet the primary standard are called **non-attainment** areas.

All of Portage County, including the Town of Sharon, is listed as an attainment area by the WI DNR.

## **G. Non-Metallic Mining**

The glacial and geologic history of Portage County has made conditions suitable for certain types of non-metallic mining. Along the moraines in the eastern third of the County, glacial deposits have resulted in some lands that are desirable for gravel and aggregate extraction.

There are no active gravel operations in the Town. One closed gravel site (located east of Hwy J, north of Merryland Dr. and south of Hwy CC) was used in 2000 for the Portage County Business Park and earlier for work in the Town. There is also a known gravel deposit located west of CTH J and north of North Star Drive.

## **H. Natural Resources Programs & Potential Preservation Sites**

### Portage County Land Preservation Fund (PCLPF)

This county fund was established in the fall of 2003 to identify and protect natural, cultural, historic and/or agricultural areas in Portage County. Land can be preserved through donations, conservation easements or land purchase. The PCLPF Committee reviews applications on a regular basis for funding and sends recommendations to the Portage County Parks Committee for final approval. Contact: Gary Speckmann, Portage County Parks Director at 715/346-1433.

### Land Legacy Fund of Portage County

The Land Legacy Fund was established in the fall of 2004 as a private fund within the Community Foundation of Portage County. The primary purpose of the fund is to supplement and complement the activities of Portage County’s Land Preservation Fund to identify and protect natural, cultural, historic and/or agricultural areas in Portage County by acquiring land and/or conservation easements. The secondary purpose is to work with other organization in or near Portage County to purchase land and conservation easements that protect natural, cultural, historic and/or agricultural areas in or near Portage County. Contact The Community Foundation of Portage County at 715/342-4454.

### Plover River Alliance

The Plover River Alliance is a private non-profit organization working to preserve the Plover River in

Portage County through conservation easement donations or purchase. They work with landowners to create permanent buffer strips of 300 ft or more. They have secured funds from private sources and from the WI Stewardship Fund. Contact George Rogers at 715/344-9077 or The Community Foundation of Portage County at 715/342-4454.

#### Wisconsin Stewardship Fund

The WI Stewardship Program was established in 1989 to preserve significant land and water resources for future generations and to provide the land base and recreational facilities needed for quality outdoor experiences. The fund acquires land and easements for conservation and recreation purposes, developing and improving recreational facilities and restoring wildlife habitat. The fund provides 50% match grants to local governments and not-for-profit organizations for eligible projects. Contact in West Central Region is Leslie Gauberti – Local Gov. Grant Manager, Rhinelander 715/365-8955 or Janet Beach Hanson – Nonprofit Grant Manager in Madison at 608/267-0496.

#### Partners in Wildlife

The Wisconsin Karner Blue Butterfly Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), approved in September 1999, guides the management and monitoring of Karner blue-occupied land in Wisconsin. The HCP is based on a legal agreement between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Wisconsin DNR, and an array of public and private land managers. Cost sharing is available up to 100% for approved habitat restoration. Contact: Bob Welch, Waupaca teacher and Karner Blue expert at 715/258-7247; Darcy Kind – WI DNR Landowner Contact Specialist 608/334-2967; Catherine Carnes – US Fish & Wildlife Service, Endangered Species Coordinator – Green Bay 920-465-7415.

### **Section 5.6 Natural Resources Issues**

Natural resources are important to the residents of the Town of Sharon. The following natural resource issues were identified through the planning process:

- How can the shallow, soft water lakes' and other lakes' health be protected?
- How can the Plover and Tomorrow River be protected?
- How can ground and surface water be protected from failing septic systems, road construction, residential development and certain agricultural practices?
- How can groundwater and other natural resources be protected from junk vehicles and other nuisances?
- Excessive groundwater draws can lower surface water levels. How can surface water levels be maintained while accommodating human activity?
- How can fishery resources be protected in the Town?
- How can the Karner blue butterfly and other rare or endangered species be protected?
- How can the impact of oak wilt and gypsy moths be addressed?
- How can the spread of exotic species in the Town be minimized?
- How can the Town maintain the quality of scenic views around surface waters and ridge tops?
- How can forest owners be made aware of Options for land management?
- Increasing Deer population is causing excessive damage. To what extent can the Town control the herd when its hard to find open areas to hunt?
- Town Park and any recreation plans need to be reflected in the County Outdoor Recreation Plan in order to be considered for state funding.

- What is WI DNR’s intent for their properties in Sharon?
- Unique geologic features should be identified.
- How can the integrity of the night sky be maintained?

**Goal 1: Identify, manage, preserve and protect natural resources throughout the Town.**

**Objectives:**

- Encourage landowners to use accepted best management practices to protect air, soil, surface water, ground water and wildlife resources.
- Work towards preservation of environmental resources.

**Policies:**

- Encourage farmers to work with private, government and educational organizations to develop farm plans and procedures that minimize field and feedlot runoff into surface waters.
- Recommend setbacks and use buffers along surface waters for agricultural activities and development.
- Support efforts to protect the quality of ground water aquifer that supplies drinking water to the Town and surrounding area.
- Support no additional run-off into surface waters from any new development through the use of retention ponds, buffer strips and other techniques.
- Preserve major wetlands and natural resources through the application of the County’s Conservancy Zoning District.
- Evaluate creation of a “carry-on only” and “no motors” ordinance for shallow soft water lakes in the Town to reduce stirring up nutrient-rich sediment from damaging lakes.
- Evaluate surface and groundwater watersheds of lakes when making land use decisions on property in watersheds.
- Identify and protect unique natural resources including woodlands, wildlife habitat and water resources.
- Recommend that new development takes into consideration the protection of natural resources.
- Monitor any non-metallic mining operations through Town ordinance.

**Goal 2: Partnership efforts**

**Objectives:**

- Encourage cooperation with Portage County, UW Extension, and DNR to provide educational materials relating to natural resource management.
- Work Together with public and private organizations to protect unique resources in the Township.
- Work with the County to better enforce its Zoning Ordinance relating to inoperable or “junk” vehicles and other items that negatively impact natural resources.
- Consider development of future town parks.

**Policies:**

- Work with DNR and UW Extension to educate residents, landowners and loggers about control of oak wilt and non-native and invasive species.
- Work with County to educate residents about proper care of septic systems to reduce failure and

pollution.

- Work with Town government, residents, businesses and others to protect ground water and surface water quality.
- Work with local land trusts, the Portage County Land Preservation Fund, Land Legacy Fund of Portage County and other funding resources in preserving unique areas in the Township.
- Encourage quality deer management.
- Work with other governmental units to help prevent spread of plant diseases and gypsy moths.
- Work with DNR and other organizations to help maintain or enhance fish habitat.
- Encourage Portage County to expand Collins Lake Park to NW if land is available.
- Encourage the use of shielded lighting to preserve the integrity of the night sky.
- Evaluate existing salvage operations to verify proper permits and operation.
- Encourage residents with inoperable vehicles and other items on their property to dispose or recycle them. If residents feel the need to keep them then they should be kept out of sight in an environmentally safe manner.
- Evaluate development of proposed Town park areas in future subdivisions.

## **Section 5.7 Cultural Resources**

Cultural and historic resources often help link the past with the present and can give a community a sense of place or identity. These resources can include historic buildings and structures along with ancient and archeological sites.

Burial sites are one example of a resource that can add to a community's sense of history as well as provide a great deal of genealogical information. Formally catalogued burial sites are protected from disturbance in Wisconsin and are given tax treatment equal to that of operating cemeteries.

Information regarding cultural and historic resources in the Town is constrained by limited financial and human resources. This section will provide goals and policies that promote the effective management of historic and cultural resources.

### **A. Cultural and Historic Resources Inventory**

A wide range of historic properties have been documented that help create Wisconsin's distinct cultural landscape. Descriptions of existing locations are identified on the list of historic places by the Wisconsin Historical Society. Keep in mind many of the properties included in this inventory are privately owned and not necessarily open to the public, so please respect the rights of private property owners. At this time there are nine listed in Sharon, which include buildings, school houses, a church, cemeteries, shrines and a country store/saloon. The Town of Sharon has a strong Polish heritage. It is the second oldest Polish settlement in the country.

### **Schools**

- Town Hall (former Edison School) – a stone building constructed in 1938 as a two room school house later converted to the Town Hall for Sharon, located at 6704 State Rd 66 in Ellis.
- Old Ellis School – one room stone school house constructed prior to the Edison School, located on the grounds of the former St Martins Church.
- McGloughlin School – old school house built in 1920, now used as a private residence, located at

2604 County J N.

- Madison School-school house located at 7789 Merryland Drive, now used as a private residence.

### **Churches**

- Sacred Heart Church and Convent – is a large active Catholic church and includes a grade school and residence for nuns. It is located in Polonia and was originally built in 1872 from the dismantled St. Joseph’s church in Ellis. The church burned, was rebuilt and rededicated in 1876. It burned again in 1934, but was reconstructed.
- St. Martins Church – is a wooden “white” church built in 1866. This replaced the original St. Martins Church of 1856. Located next to the Town Hall and by the cemetery in Ellis, this was the German, Irish Catholic church. It is no longer used as a church, but was used for funerals for some time. Currently it is owned and maintained by Sacred Heart Church.

### **Cemeteries**

- Two cemeteries located in the Town, one in Polonia by Sacred Heart Church and one in Ellis by the former St Martin Church. (see the Utilities and Community Facilities Chapter of this Comprehensive Plan).

### **Shrines**

- Two grottoes to the Virgin Mary – located at the corners of CTH I and OO and CTH Z & I. They are small, enclosed structures made of brick, located along the roadside at corners, and often maintained by families living near the grottoes.

### **Other Sites**

- North Star Saloon and Store – was built around the 1880’s and later converted to an Antique Shop and Country Store. It is located at 3000 CTH J N.

### **Other Cultural and Historic Resources**

Another source of information comes from the National and State Register of Historic Places. There are currently fourteen sites listed throughout Portage County, however, none of them are located in the Town.

### **Cultural Resource Programs**

Wisconsin Historical Records Advisory Board (WHRAB) works at the state level in association with the Wisconsin Historical Society. The Board’s activity falls primarily into three areas: it provides guidance and assistance to archives and records management programs in Wisconsin; promotes the value of historical records as keys to our cultural heritage and works through partnerships with statewide organizations whose purpose and goals support that end; and to bring federal grant funds to Wisconsin for improving access and preservation of historical records.

Portage County Land Preservation Fund (see Sec 5.5 H of Natural Resources Programs).

Land Legacy Fund in Portage County (see Sec 5.5 H of Natural Resources Programs).

### **Section 5.8 Cultural Resource Issues**

The following issues or concerns were identified through the planning process:

- How can the cultural and historic sites be preserved?

### **Section 5.9 Cultural Resource Goals, Objectives and Policies**

#### **Goal 1: Identify and protect cultural and historic resources in the Town**

##### **Objectives:**

- Work with Portage County Historical Society, other organizations and area residents to encourage the identification of cultural and historic resources.

## **CHAPTER 6 – Economic Development**

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 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 PERSONS</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.

## **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

## il. 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 Pont 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, 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
- Use lot-size density option for development in Agricultural areas

## **CHAPTER 7 – Intergovernmental Cooperation**

66.1001(2)(g) Wis. Statutes

### **Section 7.1 Introduction**

The intergovernmental cooperation chapter identifies opportunities for establishing or maintaining cooperation between units of government. Cooperation improves lines of communication between different units of government, aids in the recognition and possible resolution of conflicts between jurisdictions, and allows for the identification of mutual service needs and improvements. The intent of this chapter is to identify and analyze existing and potential cooperative relationships, and set goals and policies to foster cooperation with surrounding communities and other governmental agencies.

### **Section 7.2 Inventory and Analysis Intergovernmental Relationships**

Inventory and examination of existing municipal relations allows for the understanding of how municipalities currently work together and how these relationships can be enhanced. As the Town of Sharon develops over the next 20 years, it is important for them to continue to work with surrounding municipalities, school districts, and other governmental units.

#### **A. Adjacent Units of Government**

The Town of Sharon shares borders with the Portage County Towns of Alban, New Hope, Stockton, Hull, Dewey, and the Town of Bevent in Marathon County.

##### **1) Adjacent Communities**

The Town of Sharon shares in a Fire District with the Village of Rosholt and the Town of Alban for provision of fire and rescue services. The fire station is located in the Town of Alban ¼ mile west of CTH I on the south side of STH 66. Additionally, the following towns provide mutual aid as a second response to a fire in the Town of Sharon if needed: Town of Hull, Village of Plover, Town of Dewey, Town of Amherst, and the city of Stevens Point. The decision as to which town or village will assist depends on the severity and the location assistance is needed. First Responder Service is provided to its residents by the Town of Sharon. First Responders are local residents who volunteer to be the first to respond to accidents and medical emergencies within the area. They are dispatched by the Portage County 911 system, respond in their personal vehicles, and attempt to stabilize patients before Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT's) and/or Ambulances arrive. Supplies and equipment used by local First Responders are kept at the Sharon Town Hall. The Town of Sharon financially supports the First Responder Program.

The Town has other Mutual Aid Agreements with surrounding communities. The Town of Sharon shares road maintenance with the Town of Alban; however, snowplowing on South Collins Lake Lane is maintained by the Town of Alban. Road maintenance on the north 1 and ¼ mile of Woodland Road is shared between the Towns of Alban and Sharon; however, the Town of Sharon is responsible for snow removal on Woodland Road. On County Line Road and Birch Road (west of Bentley Road), the Town of Bevent blacktops and the Town of Sharon is responsible for snow removal. There is also a mutual agreement with the Town of

Stockton for maintenance and snowplowing on 10<sup>th</sup> Street because the boundary line for Stockton and Sharon is the center of that road.

## B. School Districts

The Town of Sharon is served by the Rosholt and Stevens Point Area School Districts. The primary form of interaction with these entities is through the payment of property taxes which, in part, help to fund the districts. The Town has little participation with either district in issues pertaining to administration or sites of new facilities. Additionally, the Sacred Heart School with Grades 1-6 is located in the Town of Sharon next to the Sacred Heart Church of Polonia for residents choosing private schooling. Bus service is provided for the students.

## B. County

### 1) Portage County Solid Waste

The Town of Sharon contracts with Wittenburg Disposal through an agreement with Portage County, for handling solid waste and recycling materials until Dec. 31 2006. Waste is taken to the Portage County Landfill, while recyclables are taken to the County's Material Recovery Facility (MRF). On Jan. 1, 2007 waste will go to a site to be determined by the Portage County Solid Waste Dept.

### 2) Portage County Highway Department

The Highway Department of Portage County maintains and plows County Highways in the Town. This Department also administers the dispersal of funds for local road projects as part of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's Local Roads Improvement Program.

### 3) Portage County Police and Ambulance

The Town relies on the Portage County Sheriffs Department to provide protective services through periodic patrols and an "on-call" basis. The Stevens Point Fire Department operates the Ambulance Service for Portage County. See Utilities and Community Facilities Chapter for detailed information.

### 4) Portage County Planning and Zoning Department

There are currently three different sections operating under the Planning and Zoning Department; the Planning and Groundwater Management Section, the Code Administration Section, and the Land Conservation Section.

The Planning and Groundwater Management Section includes staff and resources to assist local communities in the preparation or amending of various plan documents including a comprehensive plan. Staff can also assist in water quality testing associated with siting new developments.

The Code Administration Section staff is responsible for administering the County's Zoning, Wellhead Protection, Tower, Subdivision, Floodplain Zoning, ShoreLand Zoning, Non-

metallic Mining Reclamation, and Private Sewage System Ordinances. The Town of Sharon participates in the Portage County Zoning program.

The Land Conservation Section staff works with individuals to design and implement conservation practices. Assistance is given to Towns upon request.

#### 5. Portage County Parks Department

The Portage County Parks are open all year; however, they are only maintained by the Department from May 1<sup>st</sup> to October 31<sup>st</sup>. The Town interacts with the Parks Department on an as needed basis.

#### 5) State of Wisconsin

The two primary State agencies that the Town of Sharon interacts with are the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT). The DNR is responsible for natural resource protection, compliance monitoring, and law enforcement. The DOT is responsible for the planning and development of road networks and associated infrastructure and is the lead agency for the Local Roads Improvement Program (LRIP). Town road improvement projects must be submitted as part of a two-year improvement plan.

### **Section 7.3 Identification of Existing or Potential Conflicts with Other Governmental Units**

The following issues or conflicts were identified that need further attention:

- The need to encourage cooperation between adjacent units of government to ensure efficient delivery of services
- The need to discuss potential conflicts with neighboring townships, i.e. lot sizes on boundaries.
- The need to have input on city/urban/municipal issues that affect rural areas

#### **Concerns:**

- Will there be enough volunteer First Responders and Fire support with increased development?
- Will there be an increase for safety issue needs with increased development?
- There will be a need for more “on-site” inspections and maintenance for roads, fire, buses, etc. with increased growth. Who will pay for this?

### **Section 7.4 Issues/Conclusions Regarding Intergovernmental Relations**

The Town would like to continue its intergovernmental agreements with surrounding communities and meet with them on a periodic basis to review how relationships and services can be improved.

## **Section 7.5 Goals/Objectives/Policies for Intergovernmental Relations**

### **Goal 1: Share services with other units of government whenever possible.**

#### **Objectives:**

- Continue shared agreements with adjacent units of government.
- Collaborate with local units of government to work together to identify, manage, preserve and protect natural resources throughout Portage County.
- Communicate with surrounding municipalities for discussion of Land Use and other related issues.
- Support a central economic development organization that actively maintains the growth and informational resources in the community.
- Support and protect productive agricultural areas countywide.
- Create and protect public green space and water resources countywide.

#### **Policies:**

- Continue to meet with other government units as needed.
- Continue participation with the Wisconsin Towns Association.
- Explore additional opportunities for intergovernmental agreements.
- Support commerce and tourism throughout the county.
- Develop partnership efforts that result in the preservation and restoration of natural resources.
- Develop a process where the general public shares in the cost of protecting agriculture.
- Maintain good communication with all units of government in order to achieve our goals.
- Encourage local units of government work together to develop creative ways to plan for and share the benefits of growth across municipal boundaries.
- Meet with adjacent units of government to discuss intergovernmental issues.

## **CHAPTER 8 Land Use Element**

66.1001(2)(h) Wis. Statutes

The purpose of this plan's Land Use Chapter is to compile an inventory of existing land use patterns, and establish the goals, objectives and policies which will be used to guide public and private actions concerning future land use and development. These goals, objectives and policies follow the other chapters of the Comprehensive Plan.

### **Section 8.1 Existing Land Use**

The Town of Sharon is a mix of lakes and wetlands situated amongst rolling agricultural, forested lands, and sand plains. These characteristics, combined with a relatively low population density, help to distinguish the Town from other parts of the County. Table 8.1 illustrates the distribution of different land use categories across the Town.

**Table 8.1: Town of Sharon Existing Land Use, 2004**

<b>Existing Land Use Category</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Residential Land Use	1,782.00	4.26%
Agricultural Land Use	12,116.63	29.05%
Commercial Land Use	36.58	0.09%
Manufacturing & Industrial	33.79	0.08%
Undeveloped	26,671.75	63.95%
Government & Institutional Use	46.44	0.11%
Transportation Road R.O.W	949.43	2.29%
Other	70.21	0.17%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>41,706.83</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Source: Town of Sharon and Portage County Planning and Zoning Department Aerial Photos of 2000

#### **A. Residential Land Use**

This category includes several types of residential dwellings, including single-family and seasonal residences, mobile homes, duplexes, and farm residences or farmsteads. These categories comprise approximately 735 permits by issued fire numbers as of fall of 2004. Concentrations of residences are found in and around the Ellis and Polonia areas and Lake Jacqueline while remaining residences are scattered throughout the Town, generally located along the established road network. For the purposes of land use calculation, rural residences and farmsteads were estimated to occupy approximately 2 acres of area if located within a larger parcel, while calculations for residential uses concentrated in subdivisions or clusters were based on neighborhood area (Polonia 250 acres, Lake Jacqueline 50 acres, Collins Lake 12 acres). Adjustments to aerial photo numbers of 2000 for residential use were taken 2/3 out of Agriculture and 1/3 out of Undeveloped. As of December 2004, 1,782.00 acres or 4.26% of the Town's land area, were devoted to residential land use.

#### **B. Commercial/Industrial Land Use**

There are currently 36.58 acres or 0.09% of lands classified as various types of commercial districts located primarily in the Ellis and Polonia areas; also 33.79 acres or 0.08% of land classified as industrial (manufacturing) districts in Ellis, north on CTH Y, and on CTH CC.

**TABLE 8.2: Town of Sharon Existing Land Use, 2004 (In Detail)**

<b>Residential Land Use</b>	<b>Acres</b>
Residential	1,679.20
Farmsteads	<u>102.80</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,782.00</b>
<b>Agricultural Land Use</b>	
Permanent Pasture	216.46
ROW Crop or Grain Storage Facility	28.64
Non-Irrigated Cropland	8,266.16
Irrigated Cropland	3,495.71
Confined Animal Operation	<u>109.66</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12,116.63</b>
<b>Commercial Land Use</b>	
<b>Commercial &amp; Services TOTAL</b>	<b>36.58</b>
<b>Manufacturing &amp; Industrial</b>	
<b>Manufacturing &amp; Raw Material Processing TOTAL</b>	<b>33.79</b>
<b>Undeveloped</b>	
Forested	17,542.52
Coniferous Forestland Plantation	1,780.61
Herbaceous Cover & Shrub Land	6,829.09
Water Bodies	<u>519.53</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>26,671.75</b>
<b>Government &amp; Institutional Use</b>	
<b>Institutional TOTAL</b>	<b>46.44</b>
<b>Transportation Road ROW (Right of Way)</b>	
<b>Transportation TOTAL</b>	<b>949.43</b>
<b>Other</b>	
Mining & Resource Extraction	9.82
Mixed Urban or Developed Land	3.72
Unknown Use, Unused, Unmodified Land	55.89
Communication & Utilities	<u>.78</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>70.21</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>41,706.83</u></b>

Source: Town of Sharon and Portage County Planning & Zoning Department Aerial Photos of 2000

### **C. Agricultural Land Use**

Lands in this category represent the predominant land use in the Town. Approximately 12,116.63 of the total acreage or 29.05% for the Town of Sharon has a use that is primarily agricultural. This includes irrigated and non-irrigated crop lands, dairy farms and livestock operations, lands that have structures used to store agricultural equipment or products, and small isolated stands of trees that are surrounded by agricultural use.

### **D. Government/Institutional Land Use**

This category includes, but is not limited to, existing municipal and government owned structures, churches, cemeteries, public schools and other educational facilities. These lands make up only 0.11% of the total Town acreage.

### **E. Road Right-of-Way**

This land use category, which occupies 2.29% of the Town, includes all of the road surface and road right-of-way. Table 8.1 shows the acreage for this land use totaling approximately 949.43 acres.

### **F. Parks and Recreation**

Lands in this category can be either publicly or privately owned. Public lands may include State, County, or Town Parks, nature preserves, bike trails, boat landings, or athletic fields. Private lands may include such uses as golf courses, campgrounds, shooting ranges, etc. The majority of this land is owned by the State of Wisconsin, and is associated with the Tomorrow River corridor and around portions of Becker Lake owned by Portage County.

### **G. Undeveloped**

As of December 2004, lands in this category made up the largest area of the Town, accounting for 26,671.75, or approximately 63.95% of the total area. Vacant land, which includes wetlands, scrub or shrub land, privately owned forested areas, and water is located throughout the Town. The majority of these areas are comprised of larger tracts of contiguous forested land associated with wetlands and along rolling hills and lakes.

## **Section 8.2 Land Use Trend Analysis and Projected Land Use**

The Town of Sharon is a rural community that boasts a significant transportation corridor centrally located that dissects the Town both north and south, and east and west. There are two commercial centers in the Town located in Ellis and Polonia with scattered commercial development throughout the Town. By 2025 the Town's Population is Projected to increase by 356 Individuals; therefore, future development will likely include a mix of residential, low density, non-farm, rural, and residential uses.

## **A. Residential Land Use**

The Town's population has risen slowly, going from 1,694 in 1980 to 2,071 in 2005 residents over the last twenty-five (25) years. The Town of Sharon Plan Commission anticipates this trend to continue and desires to direct future non-farm residential uses away from higher intensity agricultural operations. The Town Plan Commission also recognizes that the recent upgrade of US Highway 10 (just southwest of the Sharon boundary) to a four-lane facility and the new development on the CTH HH/I-39 interchange plus general growth of the Plover/Stevens Point area may play a role in increasing demand for residential uses throughout the Town. As a combination of agricultural and undeveloped lands would most likely be converted for any new residential, the Town recommends housing densities that have minimal impact on groundwater quality and other natural resources, as well as remaining agricultural operations. If residential land use projections were based on past permit activity (average of 18.5 single family permits over the three-year period of 2000 to 2002) and assume a lot size of two (2) acres per housing unit, 740 acres would be needed to accommodate new growth over a 20-year period. If population and household size projections were used (153 new housing units; bases on year 2000 occupied housing units), along with the same lot size assumption (2 acres), 306 acres would be needed for future residential use.

## **B. Agricultural Land Use**

Sharon residents consider agricultural land a valuable natural resource to the Town, and since it is the community's economic base, there is a desire to protect those who wish to farm. To encourage retention of the community's agricultural base, the Town Plan Commission recommends limiting residential densities near active agricultural areas.

Acreage in the Town of Sharon devoted to agricultural land uses is projected to decrease during this planning horizon due to an aging agricultural work force and a decreasing percentage of people entering the agricultural industry due to a continual decline in economic viability as well as increasing development pressure for residential use.

## **C. Commercial Land Use**

A detailed listing of commercial activity and business type in the Town of Sharon is located in Chapter 6 (Economic Development) of this plan. The needs and requests for commercial of all types are expected to continue and increase in the town. Some contributing factors are expanding residential development, easy access to larger population centers such as Stevens Point, Plover, & Rosholt, and a highway system that dissects the Town both north and south (CTH J & Y) and east and west (STH 66). These highways have significant volumes of traffic.

## **D. Trends in Land Values**

Table 8.3 describes the increase in the equalized values for the different property types, as compiled by the State of Wisconsin Department of Revenue. The implementation of agricultural use value assessment in the mid 1990's redistributed valuations from the Agricultural category to the Residential, Forest, and Other categories. The Other category (created between 1990 and 2000) includes, "buildings and improvements; including any residence for the farm operator's spouse, children, parents, or grandparents; and the land necessary for the location and convenience of those building and improvements (WI Statutes 70.32)." The critical factor defining "Other" property is its actual use supporting a farm enterprise. If an

assessor obtains verifiable evidence that buildings on a farm are used for agricultural purposes, they qualify as “Other.” (WI DOR Agricultural Assessment Guide for Wisconsin Property Owners 12/03)

**Table 8.3 Equalized Assessed Property Values, Town of Sharon**

<b>Type of Property</b>	<b>1984</b>		<b>1994</b>		<b>2004</b>	
	<b>Value</b>	<b>%/Total</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>%/Total</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>%/Total</b>
Residential	16,646,850	33.60%	33,304,600	54.60%	70,045,000	73.50%
Commercial	2,133,150	4.30%	1,993,900	3.00%	2,806,700	3.00%
Manufacturing	295,600	.60%	416,200	.70%		
Agricultural	22,447,350	45.20%	17,519,400	29.00%	3,274,660	3.40%
Undeveloped	575,400	1.20%	448,900	.70%	570,800	.60%
Forest	7,112,300	14.30%	6,172,100	10.00%	9,654,400	10.10%
Other					8,583,200	9.00%
Personal Property	394,570	.80%	312,100	2.00%	394,200	.40%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>49,605,220</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>60,167,200</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>95,328,960</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

### **E. Redevelopment Areas**

Sites identified for potential redevelopment include structures previously used as potato storage. Locations of these sites are: north on CTH Y and Bentley Road; in the east part of town at the STH 66 and CTH I intersection; and an industrial site which housed a large potato packing facility that burned in Ellis.

### **Section 8.3 Land Use Conflicts**

The primary land use conflict identified by the Town of Sharon Plan Commission was a potential for dispute between non-farm residences and existing farm operations. Due to the role agriculture plays in the community’s economy and character, the primary recommendations for conflict resolution are: To support the Wisconsin Right to Farm law that would protect the farmer’s right to farm by not restricting normal farming practices. To recommend residential building away from intensive agricultural areas and encourage the use of spatial and/or vegetative buffers. This information could then be available to new residents as they move into the area.

### **Section 8.4 Land Use Goals, Objectives and Policies**

#### **Goal 1: Preserve and protect the farmer’s right to farm and agricultural areas.**

##### **Objectives:**

- Consider designing an ordinance that protects agriculture areas from urban restrictions.
- Review and adhere to the Town of Sharon Subdivision Ordinance that will help to protect productive agricultural areas.
- Have any such ordinances available for new residents to inform them of the farmer’s right to farm.

### **Policies**

- Encourage use of buffers between Agricultural and Residential uses.
- Inconveniences, such as aerial spraying, dust, noise, odors, etc. that come from agricultural operations and aren't a major threat to public health or safety, shall generally not be considered a nuisance.
- Inconveniences, such as equipment traveling on roads, shall generally not be considered a nuisance.
- Recommend new non-farm residences be built at least 100 feet from agricultural areas due to dust, noise, spreading of animal waste or sludge, aerial or ground spraying, irrigation, etc.

### **Goal 2: Protect natural resources in the town.**

#### **Objectives:**

- Encourage the proper management of natural resources.
- Protect the quality of the ground water which supplies drinking water to the Town of Sharon and surrounding areas.

#### **Policies:**

- Use Conservancy Zoning to protect wetlands.
- Encourage the use of conservation easements in appropriate areas.
- Development along waterways in the town should protect the quality and aesthetic value of the water resources and associated corridors.
- Recommend use of best management farming and residential practices to protect groundwater.

### **Goal 3: Maintain the Town's rural character.**

#### **Objectives:**

- Support agriculture and the farmer's right to farm.
- Encourage the use of Open Space Design in the Subdivision Ordinance.
- Direct residential growth within the Town.

#### **Policies:**

- Groundwater quality, traffic and transportation infrastructure, loss of rural character, and protection of open space are taken into consideration when recommending housing density.
- Encourage the use of buffers around residential areas to avoid conflict with farms, non-metallic mineral extraction, and sensitive areas.
- Direct non-farm residential development away from productive agricultural areas.

### **Goal 4: Maintain an adequate road system in the Town.**

#### **Objectives:**

- Keep town roads in repair.
- Site new roads as necessary.

### Policies

- Develop process of determining need and prioritization of road maintenance.
- Identify proposed road corridors on Town map.
- Utilize Town Road Ordinance.

### Goal 5: Maintain a balance between the public interest and private property rights.

#### Objectives:

- Encourage public participation in Town government.

### Policies

- Maintain open communication with Town residents and landowners.
- Maintain ongoing communication with the Portage County Planning and Zoning Department regarding one landowner infringing on the rights of a neighboring landowner. Examples: control of unlicensed vehicles and the accumulation of visibly excessive “junk” on private property.
- Monitor existing salvage yards.

### Section 8.5 Future Land Use Recommendations

Table 8.4 and **Map #043A, 043B, 043C**, illustrate the Future Land Use recommendations for the Town of Sharon Comprehensive Plan, and identify how development should proceed in the future to meet the Town’s goal of encouraging a pattern of community growth and development that will provide for a prosperous agricultural community and quality living environment, preserve rural character, and protect natural resources. Future development and redevelopment should be encouraged and would be compatible with existing development.

**Table 8.4: Future Land Use in the Town of Sharon, 2025**

<b>Future Land Use</b>	<b>2004 Acres</b>	<b>% of total</b>	<b>2010 Acres</b>	<b>2015 Acres</b>	<b>2020 Acres</b>	<b>2025 Acres</b>	<b>% of total</b>	<b>Change 2002 to 2025</b>
Residential Land Use	1782.00	4.26%	1950.75	2119.50	2288.25	2457.00	5.89%	675
Agricultural Land Use	12116.63	29.05%	11837.38	11558.13	11278.88	10999.63	26.37%	-1117
Commercial Land Use	36.58	0.09%	51.58	66.58	81.59	96.58	0.23%	60
Manufacturing & Industrial	33.79	0.08%	33.79	33.79	33.79	33.79	0.08%	0
Undeveloped	26671.75	63.95%	26764.25	26856.75	26949.25	27041.75	64.83%	+370
Government/Institutional	46.44	0.11%	46.44	46.44	46.44	46.44	0.11%	0
Transportation Road ROW	949.43	2.29%	952.43	955.43	958.43	961.43	2.30%	12
Other	70.21	0.17%	70.21	70.21	70.21	70.21	0.17%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>41706.83</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>41706.83</b>	<b>41706.83</b>	<b>41706.83</b>	<b>41706.83</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	

Source: Town of Sharon and Portage County Planning and Zoning Department Aerial Photos of 2000

Land Use recommendations include both immediate and long range planning goals to be implemented. The long-range Land Use Plan recommendations will be implemented over the course of the 20-year planning period as development proposals and land use changes are presented to the Town for consideration. The Town will have to consider periodically updating its zoning map to reflect changing land uses and citizen requests.

### **Section 8.6 Extraterritorial Land Use**

Recognizing that land uses in town territory may affect neighboring cities and villages that may need to grow beyond their borders, state laws have long provided these municipalities with certain “extraterritorial” authority over adjacent town lands and have provided methods for them to expand their borders through annexation. This city and village extraterritorial authority may, subject to the applicable laws, apply to planning, land division approvals, zoning and coverage of the city or village official map. The extra territorial jurisdiction for a city with a population of 10,000 or more is three miles from its corporate boundary, while the extra territorial jurisdiction for a city whose population is under 10,000 and for a village is one and one-half miles from their corporate boundaries.

### **Section 8.7 Future Land Use Categories**

Categorizing the many acres of land in the Town into different land use classes is a time-consuming task. In order to ensure accuracy and consistency throughout the mapping process, specific mapping criteria was utilized.

#### **Residential Mapping Criteria**

The term “residential” is intended to identify subdivisions or clusters of lots where it was the original intent of the developer/residents to maintain a residential neighborhood character where nonresidential uses would be incompatible. Proposals for new residential development shall be considered on a case-by-case basis at the request of the landowner. Approval for such use may require a change to the land use map. The following areas were mapped:

1. Existing residential and recreational zoning.
2. Subdivision or clusters of lots, strongly residential in character, that have been developed under agricultural zoning. [It is suggested that such areas be identified and considered for rezoning to an appropriate residential district where there is evidence of land use conflicts or where there is a consensus among the residents as to the need for residential-oriented restrictions.]
3. Areas for expansion of residential development based on goals and policies in this plan. Current nonresidential uses would be allowed until future residential development occurs.

#### **Land Use Categories:**

##### **Residential:**

Existing concentrations of lots of record smaller than 2 acres are also to be included in this category outside the Polonia Area and may include uses such as single family, duplexes and multi-unit dwellings. These uses may be treated as special exceptions to the Portage County Zoning ordinance.

## **Commercial and Industrial Mapping Criteria**

For many rural communities, it is difficult to determine where commercial activity might occur. Most of the businesses that develop are home or farm-based and do not have the option of relocating. Therefore, in the Town of Sharon, proposals for new industrial and commercial development shall be considered on a case-by-case basis at the request of the landowner. All such requests must be considered by the Town Planning Commission, the Town Board, and the County based on the goals, objectives, and policies of the Town's Comprehensive Plan. Approval for such use may require a change to the land use map. The following areas were mapped:

1. Existing developed commercial zoning.
2. Existing developed industrial zoning.
3. Areas where existing structures are in place.
4. Areas proposed for future commercial use.

### **Land Use Categories:**

Commercial: Includes uses as allowed in commercial zoning districts.

Industrial: Uses that relate to the manufacturing of a product or other uses that are allowed in the Industrial Zoning District.

## **Agricultural Mapping Criteria**

Lands recommended predominantly for the continuation of agricultural pursuits in the 1991 Land Use Plan for the Town of Sharon were reviewed and determinations made to aid in land use and zoning decisions. However lands which were Zoned A-1 exclusive agriculture previously to merely qualify landowners participation in the state of Wisconsin farmland preservation program were left unchanged.

The following Land Use Categories of agriculture were used based on the intensity of the agricultural operations in a particular area:

### **L-2 General Agriculture.**

This category is intended to preserve and enhance land for a wide range of agricultural uses. This category's regulations are designed to encourage agricultural uses in areas where soils and other conditions are best suited to those agricultural pursuits and control residential development to avoid potential conflict with agricultural use.

New residential development adjacent to more intensive agricultural uses, i.e. medium to large dairies, large confined livestock feeding operations, concentrations of irrigated vegetable crop production, will have to consider several development techniques: off-set development, open space development, density-based development, 100 foot set-backs for housing, or buffer areas. These requirements will be imposed upon developers through review and recommendation by the Town Planning Commission to the Town Board for implementation.

Appropriate housing densities for lands in this category not zoned Exclusive Agriculture, are to be twenty (20) acres (A20), ten (10) acres (A2), five (5) acres (A3), with a minimum allowable lot size of two (2) acres. This category's uses and development regulations are designed to implement the Comprehensive Plan goals by discouraging urban and suburban development in areas that are suited to agricultural use and that are not well served by public facilities and services. Two (2) acre lots will be allowed under Portage County lot density subdivision option.

### **L-3 Agriculture/Mixed Use A.**

This category is intended to provide for the continuation of low-intensity agricultural uses, recommends against the siting of new and expanding livestock operations and large dairies, provides for the careful siting of single family residences, and support other uses that maintain the rural characteristics of the area. It may serve as a buffer between higher density residential or other uses.

New residential development adjacent to more intensive agricultural uses, i.e. medium to large dairies, large confined livestock feeding operations, concentrations of irrigated vegetable crop production, will have to consider several development techniques: off-set development, open space development, density-based development, 100 foot set-backs for housing, or buffer areas. These requirements will be imposed upon developers through review and recommendation by the Town Planning Commission to the Town of Sharon Board for implementation.

Appropriate housing densities for lands in this category not zoned Exclusive Agriculture, are to be twenty (20) acres (A20), ten (10) acres (A2), five (5) acres (A3), with a minimum allowable lot size of two (2) acres (A4). This category's uses and development regulations are designed to implement the Comprehensive Plan goals by discouraging urban and suburban development in areas that are suited to agricultural use and that are not well served by public facilities and services. In addition, new residential development proposals involving five (5) or more lots shall be submitted to the Town Plan Commission and Board (in addition to the County) for review and, if approved, may be rezoned. Two (2) acre lots will be allowed under Portage County lot density subdivision option.

### **Natural Areas Mapping Criteria**

Lands recommended to remain in their natural state or for non-intensive uses such as recreation, wildlife habitat, or forest management. This category will be applied to lands that are environmentally important or sensitive, including shorelands, wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes, substantial wildlife habitat and public resource areas. Limited residential development could occur in a manner that does not negatively impact the ecological or aesthetic value of areas designated for preservation in their natural state. Criteria for identification may include the following:

1. Lands within 100 feet of navigable waters or to the landward side of adjoining wetlands, if greater than 100 feet.
2. Other wetlands (not adjoining navigable waters.)

- 3 Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) 100-year floodplains. Pre-existing cropland that would be nonconforming under Conservancy Zoning is to be excluded.
4. Publicly owned lands used for recreation or wildlife/resource management.
5. Other natural features of the landscape deemed important by the local community.
6. Groundwater and surface watersheds and water quality.

### **Land Use Categories**

#### Natural Areas Protected

Lands recommended to remain in their natural state or for non-intensive, non-developed uses such as passive recreation, wildlife habitat, ground and/or surface water protection, and forest management. Development of these lands is not recommended due to the potential for destroying or degrading important or unique natural resources or due to the excessive measures necessary to overcome development barriers presented by the environmental conditions.

#### Natural Areas Limited Development

Identifies land that are environmentally important to the community, as well as areas surrounding lakes that are identified by the Portage County Lake Study of 2004. These areas are defined by the groundwater and surface water watersheds. These lakes are individualized based on the intensity of development. Lakes with minimal development shall carry a lot size of ten (10) acres in the groundwater watershed and five (5) acres in surface water watershed. Lakes with more intensive development shall carry a lot size of five (5) acres in both surface and ground watersheds. Minimum lot size in this category shall be two (2) acres. Lot-sized-density-based development will be allowed in the category. Other lands not already identified in this category may require a larger minimum lot size. Limited Residential Development as well as small-scale agricultural practices could occur without negatively impacting the ecological value of the area. Where boundaries of this area come into question and a change can be supported by scientific and/or factual data provided by the landowner, the Town of Sharon Plan Commission and the Town of Sharon Board may consider an adjustment to said boundary. These changes will require a Plan Amendment.

#### **Institutional Mapping Criteria**

Lands where public facilities exist or are to be located. Facilities include, but are not limited to government services and institutions, educational, religious, cemeteries, medical and health care, military, power plants, solid waste disposal sites, communications and transmission towers and pipelines.

## **Land Use Category**

Institutional

## **Resource Extraction Mapping Criteria**

These areas are considered economically viable resources, and are identified within specific boundaries to minimize or avoid conflict with other adjacent land uses. Resource extraction uses include clay, sand, gravel, and other aggregate extraction.

## **Land Use Category**

Non-metallic Mineral Extraction

## **CHAPTER 9 Implementation Element**

66.1001(2)(i)Wis. Statutes

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to be used as the guide for future development decisions. To accomplish the goals, objectives, and policies of the plan, specific implementation measures must be taken to ensure the Town of Sharon's actions meet the desires of its Comprehensive Plan.

### **Section 9.1 Comprehensive Plan Adoption Procedures**

The Wisconsin State Statutes establish the manner in which a Comprehensive Plan must be adopted by a community:

*66.1001(4) Procedures for adopting Comprehensive Plans. A local governmental unit shall comply with all of the following before its Comprehensive Plan may take effect:*

*(a) The governing body of a local governmental unit shall adopt written procedures that are designed to foster public participation, including open discussion, communication programs, information services and public meetings for which advance notice has been provided, in every stage of the preparation of a comprehensive plan. The written procedures shall provide for wide distribution of proposed, alternative or amended elements of a Comprehensive Plan and shall provide an opportunity for written comments on the Plan to be submitted by members of the public to the governing body and for the governing body to respond to such written comments.*

*(b) The Plan Commission or other body of a local governmental unit that is authorized to prepare or amend a comprehensive plan may recommend the adoption or amendment of a Comprehensive Plan only by adopting a resolution by a majority vote of the entire commission. The vote shall be recorded in the official minutes of the Plan Commission or other body. The resolution shall refer to maps and other descriptive materials that relate to one or more elements of a comprehensive plan. One copy of an adopted Comprehensive Plan, or of an amendment to such a Plan, shall be sent to all of the following:*

- 1. Every governmental body that is located in whole or in part within the boundaries of the local governmental unit.*
- 2. The Clerk of every local governmental unit that is adjacent to the local governmental unit that is the subject of the plan that is adopted or amended as described in par. (b) (intro).*
- 3. The Wisconsin Land Council.*
- 4. After September 1, 2003, the Department of Administration.*
- 5. The Regional Planning Commission in which the local governmental unit is located.*
- 6. The public library that serves the area in which the local governmental unit is located.*

*(c) No Comprehensive Plan that is recommended for adoption or amendment under par.(b) may take effect until the political subdivision enacts an ordinance or the Regional Planning Commission adopts a resolution that adopts the plan or amendment. The political subdivision may not enact an ordinance or the Regional Planning Commission may not adopt a resolution under this paragraph unless the Comprehensive Plan contains all of the elements specified in sub.(2). An ordinance may be enacted or a resolution may be adopted under this paragraph only by a majority vote of the members-elect, as defined in s.59.001 (2m), of the governing body. An ordinance that is enacted or a resolution that is adopted under this paragraph, and the plan to which it relates, shall be filed with at least all of the entities specified under par.(b).*

*(d) No political subdivision may enact an ordinance or no regional planning commission may adopt resolution under par. (c) unless the political subdivision or Regional Planning Commission holds at least one public hearing at which the proposed ordinance is discussed. That hearing must be preceded by a class 1 notice under ch.985 that is published at least 30 days before the hearing is held. The political subdivision or Regional Planning Commission may also provide notice of the hearing by any other means it considers appropriate. The class 1 notice shall contain at least the following information:*

- 1. The date, time and place of the hearing.*
- 2. A summary, which may include a map, of the proposed Comprehensive Plan or amendment to such a Plan.*
- 3. The name of an individual employed by the local governmental unit who may provide additional information regarding the proposed ordinance.*
- 4. Information relating to where and when the proposed Comprehensive Plan or amendment to such a plan may be inspected before the hearing, and how a copy of the plan or amendment may be obtained.*

A Town of Sharon Comprehensive Plan was adopted by resolution by the Town Plan Commission on July 29, 2005 and forwarded to the Town Board on July 29, 2005. (See appendix #A)

A public hearing was held by the Town of Sharon Board on August 9, 2005, pursuant to valid notice of proposed ordinance. The Town of Sharon Comprehensive Plan was reviewed. Changes and adjustments were made.

This revised Town of Sharon Comprehensive plan was prepared jointly by the Town of Sharon Board and the Town of Sharon Plan Commission in council.

The Plan commission recommended the Plan to the Town of Sharon board (by resolution #2006-1PC) for consideration on \_\_\_\_\_, with copies of the recommended draft made available for inspection at the Sharon Town Hall, Portage County Library and Portage County Planning and Zoning offices. A public hearing was held before the Town Board and Plan Commission on \_\_\_\_\_ and the Town of Sharon Comprehensive Plan was officially adopted by ordinance at the Town of Sharon Board meeting on \_\_\_\_\_.

## **Section 9.2 Comprehensive Plan Implementation**

Wisconsin State Statute 66.1001(3) establishes the actions that must be based on the adopted comprehensive plan (2003 Wisconsin Act 233 revised the original list of items to meet the consistency requirement) to include:

(3) Actions, procedures that must be consistent with Comprehensive Plans. Beginning on January 1, 2010, if a local governmental unit engages in any of the following actions, those actions shall be consistent with that local governmental unit's Comprehensive Plan:

- (g) Official mapping established or amended under s.62.23 (6).
- (h) Local subdivision regulation under s.236.45 or 236.46.
- (j) County zoning ordinances enacted or amended under s.59.69.
- (k) City or Village zoning ordinances enacted or amended under s.62.23 (7).
- (l) Town zoning ordinances enacted or amended under s. 60.61 or 60.62.
- (q) Zoning of shore lands or wetlands in shore lands under s.59.692, 61.351 or 62.231.

The Town of Sharon came under Portage County Zoning jurisdiction in June 1970 and Portage County still administers the Zoning Ordinance for the Town. The Town is also subject to the following County regulatory tools: Shore land and Floodplain Zoning, Subdivision, Private Sewage, Tower, Nonmetallic Mining Reclamation, Road, and Parkland Ordinances as well as others. The Town of Sharon has its own subdivision, non-metallic mining, road, and parkland ordinances.

The Town shall undertake a review of these regulatory tools for compatibility and consistency with the various goals, objectives and policies of the adopted Town Comprehensive Plan, and identify any sections of the documents that may need updating. This review period shall commence approximately 12 to 18 months after the initial adoption of the plan.

To ensure that this Plan will accomplish its intended goals, more steps will need to be taken beyond simply adopting this document. In general, the plans effectiveness depends upon the commitment of Town and County officials, as well as local residents, to follow through with the policies, recommendations and action plan contained herein.

#### Action Plan:

Specific actions needed to preserve the Town's rural atmosphere, guide growth and otherwise successfully implement this Plan include:

1. Update the Town of Sharon zoning map to reflect land use recommendations.
2. Keep abreast of communal septic system technology as it develops for WI Dept Code
3. Review Comprehensive Plan Goals, Objectives, and Policies when it is warranted.
4. Create a Comprehensive Plan text and map amendment application form.
5. Form policies for future road locations, extensions and connections, to guide the review of development plans and proposals.

6. Develop and maintain a Town Transportation Improvement Plan that is reviewed by the Town of Sharon board.
7. Develop a method for identification and storage of historic Town records.
8. Consider Mobile Home Ordinance.
9. Improve intergovernmental relationships.
  - a. Maintain current list of school board members and administration for all three school districts and continue to invite district representatives to attend Town meetings to share information regarding each district.
  - b. Regularly invite County Board supervisors to attend Town meetings.
  - c. Meet with adjacent units of government on an annual basis to discuss intergovernmental issues.
  - d. Maintain communication and interaction with County departments.
  - e. Maintain written road agreements with surrounding Towns.
10. Consider ordinance for telecommunication towers when warranted.
11. Consider ordinance for wind towers when warranted.
12. Assess the recreational needs and issues within the Town.
13. Continue to monitor, identify, and publicize land preservation opportunities.
14. Consider the creation of a public nuisance ordinance.
15. Assess Town support and enforcement needed to manage inoperable or junk vehicles and other items that negatively impact natural resources.
16. Consider an impact fee ordinance.
17. Work with various organizations to provide educational materials to the public regarding agricultural operations and activities, the “Right to Farm Law”, and the realities of rural living.
18. Implement Lot Size Density zoning in the Town of Sharon. (Once Portage County and Towns approve lot size density concept and ordinance, it will be implemented in the Town of Sharon.

### **Section 9.3 Relationship to Zoning**

This Plan is intended to serve as a guide in updating the Town zoning map. The State's Comprehensive Planning law requires that beginning on January 1, 2010, if a local governmental unit engages in any of the following actions, those actions shall be consistent with that local governmental unit's Comprehensive Plan. One of those actions is zoning, therefore, the Town's zoning map will have to be consistent with the recommendations found in this Comprehensive Plan.

The Portage County Board has the final decision-making authority regarding amendments to the Town zoning map, since the Town of Sharon is under County zoning jurisdiction. It is the County Board's established practice to seek the input of the Town Board, interested residents/landowners, and the Planning and Zoning Department when formulating decisions. Under State law, the Sharon Town Board is granted the power to veto any zoning change made within the Town by the County Board pursuant to Wisconsin Statutes 59.69(5)(e)3. and *Quinn vs. Town of Dodgeville*, 122 Wis.2d 570(1985).

The Town of Sharon will rely on the Portage County Zoning Ordinance and Town ordinances as the primary tools for implementing their Comprehensive Plan. Both the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Ordinance use districts to separate incompatible uses and specify appropriate development densities. Each land use district identified by this Plan describes the community's expectations of what future development should consist of within specific areas. To implement those expectations, the Town must assign zoning districts that match the intent of their land use districts. Table 9.1 is provided to show appropriate zoning/land use district relationships. In the natural areas limited development land use category, existing agricultural practices will be allowed to continue.

If a landowner wishes to change his/her acreage classification to another acreage classification within the land use category he/she is already in, he/she shall request a hearing with the Planning Commission to give reasons for the change. The request will be considered for possible change if it is deemed warranted by the Town of Sharon Board, consistent with rules and regulations.

### **Section 9.4 Integration, Amendment, and Update of Comprehensive Plan Elements**

#### **A. Integration**

The goals, objectives, and policies contained within the preceding eight elements (chapters) of this Comprehensive Plan, along with the accompanying inventory and analysis, have been thoroughly reviewed, amended and approved by the Town of Sharon Plan Commission and the Town of Sharon Board. Throughout the drafting and review process, great care was taken to include all issues and concerns from Board and Commission members, as well as from the community at large. Special attention was then given to making sure that the policies required to address the individual issues or concerns did not conflict, either with each other within the chapter, or between the different chapters. The future revision of any Comprehensive Plan goal,

objective, or policy shall receive the same level of deliberation and analysis as the original Plan; special attention shall be given so that the new adopted language does not create conflicts within or between chapters. It is understood that this is a complicated and difficult process and therefore adjustments may need to be made to clean up areas of conflict as they become apparent by the Town of Sharon Plan Commission and/or Town of Sharon Board.

This is, first and foremost, a guide, not an unchangeable, inflexible document.

## B. Plan Amendment and Update

As cited at the beginning of this chapter, State Statute section 66.1001(2)(i), states that the Comprehensive Plan shall be updated no less than once every 10 years. To comply with this requirement, the Town of Sharon will need to undertake a complete update of this nine-chapter document and appendices by the year 2017. The Town may commence the update at any time prior to 2017 as Town conditions or needs change.

Smaller-scale amendments to portions of the Comprehensive Plan may also be considered by the Town Board at any time. The public shall be notified of any proposed changes and allowed the opportunity to review and comment. The Town should consider resident's opinion concerning their own property in evaluating a proposed change. The procedure for amendment and update will be the same as original Plan adoption outlined in Section 9.1 above.

### 1. Amendment Initiation

The following may submit an application for a Comprehensive Plan amendment:

- Sharon Town Board
- Sharon Plan Commission
- Any person having title to land within the Town
- Any person having a contractual interest in land to be affected by a proposed amendment
- Any agent for the above

The applicant that proposes an amendment to the Future Land Use Map shall have the burden of proof to show that the proposed amendment is in the public interest.

### 2. Application and Review Procedure

The amendment process described in Section 9.1 shall also include the following steps:

a. Submittal of Application. The applicant shall submit a complete application to the Town Clerk, along with any applicable application fees. A copy of the application shall be forwarded by the Clerk to each member of the Plan Commission.

b. Application Review. The Plan Commission shall review the application at one of its regular or special meetings for compliance with the Comprehensive Plan. Upon conclusion of their review, Plan Commission shall make a written recommendation to the Town Board for either approval or denial. This recommendation shall include finding of fact to justify the recommendation.

c. The Town Board shall hold a public hearing on the request, per State Statute requirements. After reviewing the application, Plan Commission recommendation, and comments from the public hearing, the Town Board shall make a decision to deny the proposed amendment; approve the proposed amendment; or approve the amendment with revision(s) that it deems appropriate. Such revisions to the proposed amendment shall be limited in scope to those matters considered in the public hearing.

d. Update History of Adoption and Amendment. The Plan Commission shall establish a table entitled “History of Adoption and Amendment” for the purpose of keeping records on Plan amendments.

### 3. Application Requirements

a. An application submitted by a resident/landowner /agent to amend the Future Land Use Map shall include the following:

- A scaled drawing of the subject property.
- A legal description of each of the parcels in the subject property.
- A map of existing land uses occurring on and around the subject property.
- A written description of the proposed change.
- A written statement outlining the reason(s) for the amendment.
- Other supporting information the Town of Sharon Board deems appropriate.

b. Other Amendments. For all other types of amendments, the application shall include the following:

- A written description of the proposed change.
- A written statement outlining the reason(s) for the amendment.
- Other supporting information the Town of Sharon Board deems appropriate.

### 4. Special Considerations for Plan Amendments

a. Internal Consistency. Amendments shall be made so as to preserve the internal consistency of the entire Comprehensive Plan.

b. Granting special privileges or placing limitations is not permitted. No amendment to change the Future Land Use Map shall contain special privileges or rights or any conditions, limitations, or requirements not applicable to all other lands in the district.

c. The amendment shall not create an adverse impact on adjacent land/land uses.

d. The amendment shall not create an adverse impact on public facilities and services.

### **Section 9.5 Monitoring/Formal Review of the Plan**

To assure that this Comprehensive Plan will continue to provide useful guidance regarding development within the Town, the Sharon Town Board will periodically review and amend the Plan to ensure that it remains relevant and reflects current Town values and priorities.

In order to achieve this, the Town Plan Commission Chair shall request, at least once every year, to place the performance of the Comprehensive Plan on the agenda of a regular or special Plan Commission meeting for discussion and recommendation to the Town Board. Discussion should include a review of the number and type of amendments approved throughout the previous year, as well as those that were denied. This information serves to gauge the adequacy of existing policies; multiple changes indicate policy areas in need of re-assessment. Other topics would include changes to either the development market or residents' attitudes and values toward different aspects of Town life. As a result of this discussion, the Plan Commission would recommend either no change to the Plan, or one or more specific changes that should be addressed. At this point the process detailed in Sections 9.1 and 9.4 above would commence.