

CHAPTER 6 Economic Development Element

66.1001(2)(f) Wis. Statutes

Section 6.1 Introduction

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

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

Section 6.2 Labor Force and Economic Base

A. Labor Force Analysis

1. Educational attainment

As discussed in the Issues and Opportunities chapter of this plan, and illustrated by Table 1.4 of that chapter, the Town of Sharon as compared to Portage County, has 8.3% more high school graduates. 12.3% of the residents have bachelor degrees and 4.8% have attained graduate and professional degrees. Both these percentages are higher than 2000. Residents with Associate Degrees increased from 4.5% in 2000 to 9.6% in 2010.

2. Earnings and Income

Wages are not the only form of income 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.

According to table 1.6, median household income increased from \$30,491 in 1989 to \$67,636 in 2010. Household income in excess of \$34,999 to \$150,000+ represent 82.5% of the Town residents. Town of Sharon households exceed the Portage County average income in all categories in excess of \$34,999 except for \$150,000 or more. The number of persons in the Town of Sharon per household has been declining as represented by 3.01 persons in 1990 to 2.75 persons in 2000, and 2.55 in 2010 (Table 1.5). For a 2 person household, only 5.8% fell under the poverty threshold of \$15,063 projected in the 2010 census. “Poverty” is

generally defined as a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is poor (Table 1.7).

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 5.1% unemployment as compared to Portage County's 6.0% according to the 2010 census. Out of an available labor force of 1,286 people, 1,220 were gainfully employed. Although a rural area, employment in forestry, fisheries, mining and agriculture represented only 6.3%. Manufacturing at 20.2% represented the largest employed group with education, health, and social services (19.7%) and finance, insurance, and real estate (15.3%) representing the next two highest groups. Retail and trade decreased from 12.7 down to 5.6% and represents 77 less people in that category in 2010.

4. Employment by Occupation

Table 6.1 provides information regarding the type of occupation that Town of Sharon residents were employed in the year 2010. About 75% are employed in 3 categories: management, professional, and related occupations; sales and office occupations; and production, transportation and material moving occupations. Table 1.9 of the Issues and Opportunities Chapter summarizes resident employment by industry for the last three Census years. Information from both of these tables represents what type of occupation/industry the working residents of the Town were employed in, but is not a listing of the employment opportunities currently located in the Town of Sharon.

Table 6.1: Town of Sharon Resident Employment by Occupation

Occupation	1990		2000		2010	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Management, professional, and related occupations ⁽¹⁾	114	13%	268	24%	305	26%
Service occupations	85	10%	142	12%	176	15%
Sales and Office occupations	219	25%	327	29%	294	25%
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry occupations ⁽²⁾	113	13%	18	2%	n/a	~
Construction, Extraction, and Maintenance occupations ⁽¹⁾	n/a	~	142	12%	158	13%
Production, Transportation, and Material Moving occupations	n/a	~	243	21%	245	21%
Precision Production, Craft, Repair	106	12%	n/a	~	n/a	~
Operators, Fabricators, and Laborers	224	26%	n/a	~	n/a	~
Total Employed	861	100%	1,140	100%	1,178	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 1990-2000 and American Community Survey 2006-2010

¹This category was changed during the last census period and may reflect the addition or subtraction of other occupations.

²This category has been eliminated during the last census period and folded into other occupations.

5. Commuting

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

6. Economic Base Development

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

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

B. Local Economic Base Analysis

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

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

Section 6.3 Strengths and Weaknesses for Existing Types of Businesses

Strengths

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

Weaknesses

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

Section 6.4 New Business and Industry Types Desired

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

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

Strengths

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

Weaknesses

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

Section 6.6 Business and Industry Sites

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

Section 6.7 Environmentally Contaminated Sites

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

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

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

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

Section 6.8 Economic Development Resources

• Revolving Loan Fund Programs (Portage County)

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

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

Amount Available: Programs are different in each community.

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

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

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: \$100,000 maximum award. 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.

- **Community Development Block Grant –Workforce Training**

Purpose: Support businesses making a firm commitment to locate a new facility in Wisconsin or expanding an existing facility within the State, which is developing a produce, process, or service that requires training in new technology and industrial skills.

Use of Funds: Job training that focuses on new technology, industrial skills, or manufacturing processes. The training must not be currently available through other resources (Wisconsin Technical College System), such as Microsoft Office training, OSHA courses, Welding, etc.

Amount Available: A grant of 50% of eligible training costs, up to \$5,000 per employee trained. The maximum award is \$200,000.

Eligibility: Eligible training costs include training wages (of production employees through first line supervisors), training materials and trainer costs. Routine training is ineligible. Eligible training costs do not include travel expenses, food and lodging.

- **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: www.rd.usda.gov/wi. Contact information:

USDA Rural Development – WI
5417 Clems Way
Stevens Point WI 54482
Phone: (715) 345-7600 Fax: (715) 345-7669

Technical Assistance

- **Small Business Development Center**

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

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

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

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

The University of Wisconsin-Extension's SHWEC program was created to provide pollution prevention services to waste generators in Wisconsin. SHWEC's 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

- **Portage County Business Council**

The Portage County Business Council provides confidential development services to businesses considering expansion or locating in Portage County. The Business Council provides a variety of services including but not limited to: site selection, labor market analysis, financial packaging services, liaison between governments and businesses and researching federal and state programs to leverage private dollars on economic development projects.

Section 6.9 Economic Development Issues

The following issues were identified during the Comprehensive Planning process:

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

Section 6.10 Economic Development Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal 1: Provide for areas of commercial development.

Objectives:

- Identification of existing commercial and industrial development
- Expand areas of commercial development especially those compatible with agriculture, forestry, tourism, and the infrastructure in Ellis and Polonia.
- Identify existing commercial use that may be in conflict with an existing plan and correct to commercial zoning.

Policies:

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

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

Objectives:

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

Policies:

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