

# Town of Sherman

Iron County, Wisconsin

## Comprehensive Plan 2023



No. 08-21

**AN ORDINANCE TO ADOPT THE TOWN OF SHERMAN, IRON COUNTY, WISCONSIN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2023**

The Town Board of the Town of Sherman, Iron County, Wisconsin, does ordain as follows:

SECTION 1. Pursuant to sections 62.23(2) and (3) for towns exercising village powers under 60.22(3) of the Wisconsin Statutes, the Town of Sherman is authorized to prepare and adopt a comprehensive plan as defined in Sections 66.1001(1)(a) and 66.1001(2) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

SECTION 2. The Town of Sherman Plan Commission, by unanimous vote and Resolution No. 2022-01 dated December 20, 2022, has recommended to the Sherman Town Board the adoption of the document entitled "TOWN OF SHERMAN Iron County, Wisconsin COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2023", as its comprehensive plan according to Section 66.1001(2) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

SECTION 3. The Sherman Town Board of Iron County, Wisconsin, does, by the enactment of this ordinance, formally adopt the document entitled, "TOWN OF SHERMAN Iron County, Wisconsin COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2023", as its comprehensive plan pursuant to Section 66.1001(2) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

SECTION 4. This ordinance shall take effect upon passage by a majority vote of the members of the Town Board and publication as required by law.

ADOPTED this 14<sup>th</sup> day of February 2023

Approved by a vote of: 2 ayes — nays 1 absent

Published: Iron County Miner

By: *Kris Woff*  
Chairman

By: *Robert Lepper*  
Supervisor

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor

Attest: *R. D. Z*  
Town Clerk

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Welcome to the Town of Sherman's 2023 Comprehensive Plan Update. The Town of Sherman is in the 'lakes region' of southern Iron County (See Map 1.1). In December 2021, the Town sent a survey to its property owners. There are an estimated 650 property owners and 359 (55%) responded to the survey. We are a sparsely populated Town that values a simple lifestyle. Numerous recreational opportunities offered here include hunting, fishing, silent sports, and various motorized activities. We welcome them all. We enjoy the remote nature of the area, the many encounters with wildlife and the solitude our largely undeveloped Northwoods Town offers.

The Town's population is older compared to the county and more broadly to the state. Seventy-two percent (72%) of the survey respondents are more than sixty years old. A similar number (69%) own property that is a second/vacation home and 69% of respondents own property on water. The town can be categorized as a retirement/vacation destination with a core group of residents that have roots in the community from many, many years ago. It is a lifestyle for those who appreciate the simplicity of a small rural town; one with an abundance of natural resources but without many services or amenities.

When asked how satisfied you are with the quality of life in the Town of Sherman, an overwhelming 95% responded they were either satisfied or very satisfied. Eighty percent (80%) of the respondents said that our sparse population enhances their quality of life. By a similar margin, about 75% of the survey respondents feel new commercial or industrial development near their property would detract from their quality of life. The overall message from the survey, meetings/workshops and listening sessions is that, as much as possible, the residents would like the Town to 'keep things as they are.'

There are challenges to be sure. Volunteers are the backbone of what makes the Town operate. The demographics are changing. We must continue to tap into and broaden the volunteer base from both full time and seasonal residents. Expanding the volunteer base is essential not only to run the town government, staff the Volunteer Fire Department and EMRs (first responders) but also to support the community groups that are the fabric of our small town. The Town's ability to communicate with its residents needs improvement and will be expanded through enhancements to its website. However, communication is a two-way street. It also requires residents to be engaged, involved, and informed on Town issues. Protecting the natural resources and the remote nature of the town will require continued vigilance.

Unlike many towns, whose primary focus is to grow and expand their economic base, three fourths of the survey respondents identified new development near their property as something that would lessen their current lifestyle. Without economic growth and an expanding tax base, the tax burden over the years will fall proportionally higher on the taxpayers to maintain town government and existing town services while also sustaining the quality of life that Sherman currently offers.

When words such as remote nature, small Northwoods town or pure rustic charm are used throughout the plan update, it is more than just describing an area with a reduced population. It is a Town that prioritizes protecting natural resources and promoting recreational opportunities. It is a Town where commercial and business enterprises are small and limited in numbers.

### **Town History**

The Town of Sherman, originally named Emerson, was created on April 19, 1907, from the Town of Vaughn. The Town was named after D.W. Emerson, one of the Town's first settlers who established the Emerson Sawmill. The Emerson Sawmill closed around 1909 after lightning struck and killed three members of the Emerson family. The name was changed in 1918 from Emerson to Sherman in honor of the Town's second chairperson William Sherman.

Ample natural resources and reliable transportation to move products and people were key to communities in Iron County. Settlements failed to grow or faltered if either of these two components were missing. Emerson and Powell are two known communities that have been lost in the Town of Sherman, over the years.

The Town of Sherman's high quality, highly desirable lakes, rivers, and rural forestlands have so far sustained development demand from persons interested in relocating to the community whether for primary homes, second/vacation homes, or recreational purposes. The Town's pure rustic charm and remote town life is not for everyone but does attract a certain group of people that are proud to call it home.

It is the richness of these varied backgrounds that shape the culture of our small Town. Overall residents prefer minimal regulations yet understand the need to balance the broader interests of the community and protection of the area's natural resources with individual property rights.

## **Comprehensive Plan Background**

In 1998, a land use planning committee was directed by the Town Board to guide the Town of Sherman land use planning process. The committee included a cross section of property owners, both lakeshore and forestland, along with the Town Board and local businesses. In January 2002, the Town of Sherman approved the '*Town of Sherman Land Use Plan*'.

In 2001, all ten towns in Iron County passed resolutions entering into an intergovernmental cooperation agreement for the purpose of developing a comprehensive plan. The Town of Sherman's initial comprehensive plan was adopted on July 26, 2005.

The Town of Sherman contracted with Northwest Regional Planning Commission as a consultant to assist with the Comprehensive Plan update. The 2023 Comprehensive Plan Update has gone through an extensive process to identify current issues, provide public participation opportunities and the challenging work of updating the goals, objectives, and actions for each of the plan elements. The 2023 Comprehensive Plan Update referenced the 2005 Comprehensive Plan as an initial starting point. After working through the process to update the plan and looking back from a macro perspective, the 2023 Update follows the broad goals identified in 2005; especially in the key areas of preserving the existing quality of life, limiting commercial and industrial development, and directing land use planning.

## **Comment Regarding Data, Tables and Schedules**

The statistical information provided in the plan is provided by the U.S. Census Bureau via the American Community Survey (ACS) and compiled by the Norwest Regional Planning Commission (NWRPC). The ACS is used because it is the only available source for comprehensive data across geographies on topics such as demographics, housing, and income. Yet, when the ACS is based on a sample of an already small-population size, multiple years of data are necessary to get enough responses in rural communities. This affects the timeliness of data used and because the population sizes are small, the numbers reported in the plan have higher margins for error.

Approximately one third of the property owners in the Town are full-time residents. Often the data only captures information on the full-time residents. Statistics on population, household and employment characteristics, education and income levels are skewed toward the makeup of the full-time residents. The reader should keep in mind the data, schedules and tables are often estimates and often do not include the seasonal residents who make up two thirds of the Town's property owners. The data provided in the Comprehensive Plan Update does offer a reasonable approximation and captures in a

reasonable manner the information discussed in the selective topic from which goals, objectives, and action items were developed.

### **Purpose of the Plan**

The Town of Sherman Comprehensive Plan Update is intended to assist local officials in making future decisions regarding land development and overall government management issues. The comprehensive plan serves as a guide in that process. The Comprehensive Plan Update will address short- and long-term concerns regarding growth and preservation of the community. The Town of Sherman Comprehensive Plan Update has been prepared under Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning legislation contained in Wisconsin statute 66.1001. The updated plan is organized into chapters or elements that include the following:

- Issues and Opportunities
- Housing
- Transportation
- Utilities and Community Facilities
- Natural, Agricultural and Cultural Resources
- Economic Development
- Intergovernmental Cooperation
- Land Use
- Implementation

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