

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

### **STATE PLANNING ENABLING LEGISLATION**

This Comprehensive Plan is the initial plan for the Town of Mitchell, Sheboygan County, Wisconsin. This Plan meets the requirements of Wisconsin’s comprehensive planning law (1999 Wisconsin Act 9) and was adopted on November 12, 2007 under the authority granted by Section 66.1001 of the Wisconsin Statutes.

This Comprehensive Plan is a policy document containing guidance and specific recommendations as to how and where future conservation, growth, and development should occur within the Town, and what level of services should be provided. This Plan should be consulted when the Town makes decisions regarding land use and other issues impacting the development and quality of life in the Town. Specifically, beginning on January 1, 2010, decisions regarding the following must be consistent with the principles and guidelines established in this Comprehensive Plan:

- Official mapping established or amended under s. 62.23 (6).
- Local subdivision regulation under s. 236.45 or 236.46.
- Town zoning ordinances enacted or amended under s. 60.61 or 60.62.
- Zoning of shorelands or wetlands in shorelands under s. 59.692, 61.351 or 62.231.

### **HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION OF PLANNING AREA**

Before the land comprising the current Town of Mitchell could be settled, federal statute required that it be mapped and subdivided. The land was surveyed during 1834 and 1835. On December 7, 1836, the Wisconsin Territorial Legislature created Sheboygan County. It wasn’t until 1850, however, that the county was organized into towns. As part of this organization, the Town of Mitchell was originally named Olio, which was a word at the time to designate a wide-mouthed, earthenware utensil. The name was probably suggested because of its resemblance to the rounded hills and valleys of the area. Following an influx of Irish immigrants a few years later, the town’s name was changed to “Mitchell” in a misspelled tribute to an Irish patriot and statesman, John Mitchel.

Because of a lack of good waterpower sites during a time when that form of energy was essential for community growth, only two small hamlets developed in the Town of Mitchell – Rathburn, located on the Town’s north boundary and named after an early homesteader, and Parnell, situated near the Town’s center and named as a tribute to another Irish patriot, Charles Stewart Parnell. Parnell saw more growth than Rathburn. By the early 1880’s Parnell boasted a town hall, blacksmith shop, post office, general store, cheese factory, and two hotels.

By the 1930’s, hundreds of farm belt communities could no longer compete. Unlike Rathburn, Parnell did not entirely disappear. A few buildings still exist, including the present town hall.



Currently, the Town of Mitchell has a population of 1,315 and encompasses an area of approximately 23,151 acres. Known for its rural farmlands and the Kettle Moraine State Forest, the Town is located in western Sheboygan County, adjacent to and sharing its western boundary with Fond du Lac County, (see Figures 1.1 and 1.2).

### **COMMUNITY COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROCESS**

On May 13, 2002, the Town of Mitchell created its first ever Plan Commission. The Commission was given the responsibility of developing the Town's comprehensive plan. Also during 2002, the Town requested the assistance of the University of Wisconsin-Extension Sheboygan County to assist in plan development. As a strategy to focus on plan development, the Town Board enacted a land use moratorium on August 9, 2004, which would be lifted upon adoption of the comprehensive plan. The Plan Commission, which met on a monthly basis attempted to focus on plan development every other month and current board use issues/moratorium waiver requests during the interim months.

Funding for the Mitchell comprehensive plan was provided in large part by the Sheboygan County Stewardship Fund. The Town received a \$5,000 grant for doing a plan, and an additional \$5,000 bonus for partnering with the neighboring Town of Lyndon. These dollars were kept in a separate local fund and used solely for planning-related activities.

The Town of Mitchell is a small community with no full-time employees and an annual budget under \$350,000. As such, its resources are limited. Early on in the planning process, UW-Extension recommended, and the Town accepted, an "issues driven" planning approach to best fit Mitchell's situation. Rather than create a thick document with several dozen goals and objectives, the Plan Commission agreed to focus primarily on the most critical issues identified during the public participation process for each of the nine elements outlined in Chapter 66.1001 of the state statutes. It was felt that this kind of focused approach would be easier for residents and local officials to comprehend, fund, and implement. This does not mean other items were overlooked or not addressed. They simply were not deemed urgent or critical at the time the plan was being developed. The policy of the Town of Mitchell is to regularly update or amend this comprehensive plan to more thoroughly address these items if changing circumstances warrant.

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Public participation has been a priority from the beginning of the Town of Mitchell comprehensive planning process. The Town of Mitchell has worked extensively with Sheboygan County UW-Extension, encouraging public participation in a variety of ways to ensure the Town's comprehensive plan will address as much as possible the needs of local residents. In accordance with state requirements, the Town adopted a Public Participation Plan by resolution on June 10, 2002 (see Appendix A).

### **Visioning Process**

Sheboygan County UW-Extension coordinated a thorough visioning process that included 1) a nominal group process with Town officials to identify community issues, 2) a community-wide citizen opinion survey to obtain citizen input, 3) "hands-on" visioning and mapping workshops, 4) creation of vision, goal statements, and recommendations 5) key stakeholder forums to obtain feedback, and 6) a second survey of residents to confirm the "final" goal statements and recommendations.

**[Map: Figure 1.1 Location Map, Town of Mitchell]**

**[Map: Figure 1.2 Project Area Map, Town of Mitchell]**

**Issue Identification**

UW-Extension facilitated a process with Plan Commission members on October 23, 2002 to identify present and future issues facing the Town of Mitchell. A nominal group exercise was used to generate, prioritize, and categorize a number of issues that came forth (see Appendix B). These issues were then turned into survey questions by UW-Extension staff and brought back in the subsequent months for fine-tuning.

### **Citizen Opinion Survey**

The Town partnered with Sheboygan County UW-Extension in March 2003 to create a citizen opinion survey in order to learn more about the preferences of Town residents. A total of 195 surveys, or 37 percent of the surveys which were mailed to every household, were returned. Key findings included:

- 58.0% of respondents favored a “mixed agricultural/residential community,” followed by 41.0% favoring a “rural, agricultural community”.
- 83% favored growth at the current rate or slower.
- Single-family housing was by far the most preferred type of housing.
- The overall level of satisfaction with services provided by the Town was very high.

There were also literally hundreds of written comments submitted along with the regular checked responses. These comments touched on a wide variety of issues including recreation, open space and farmland preservation. The overall tone of the survey responses were positive, as summed up by this comment: “I am a new homeowner in Mitchell although I have been visiting the area for 20 years and I’m proud to be a part of Mitchell’s future.”

See Appendix C for detailed survey results.

### **Draft Vision & Goal Statements**

Based directly on all of the previously described input, “draft” vision and goal statements were created and reviewed by UW-Extension and the Mitchell Plan Commission for the most urgent and critical issues affecting the Town.

### **Key Stakeholder Forum**

On January 13, 2005, a key stakeholder input session was held. The public was invited to give their reaction to the draft vision and goal statements, as well as to provide additional input into the planning process. Results of this input impacted the preparation of the eventual comprehensive plan.

### **Survey to Confirm Goals and Recommendations**

In November 2005 the element goal statements and recommendations for Mitchell were mailed to each household in the Town. Check boxes beneath each statement asked the recipient to indicate whether he or she agreed with the statement, disagreed, or had no opinion. With a response rate of 39%, overall agreement with all of the goal statements averaged 77%.

### **Town Vision Statement**

The vision statement for the Town of Mitchell is as follows:

*“The Town of Mitchell will continue a slow, planned development as a mixed residential/farm community with limited commercial and industrial development. Growth of residential development is expected to be on larger lots, lots not served by municipal sewer or water, and to result in the loss of some farmland. Agricultural uses are expected to move away from the traditional dairy farming towards niche/specialty farming or hobby farms. Commercial development in the Town is expected to be primarily from home based businesses that while generally unobtrusive can come into conflict with their neighbors. The Town of Mitchell is desirous of establishing the minimum amount of regulations that would balance private property rights with the overall community’s health and welfare including a farmer’s right to farm. ”*

**Goals, Objectives, Policies, and Programs**

**Goals** are broad statements that reflect the vision of a community (where do we want to be 10-20 years from now?). **Objectives** define goals with practical, concrete and specific terms (what will it look like when we get there?). **Policies** focus the intent of the governing body on moving forward (we’re committing to getting there). **Programs** describe specific actions that should take place (here’s how we get there).

Final goal statements for the Town of Mitchell, as well as objectives, policies, and programs for “Housing,” “Transportation,” “Utilities & Community Facilities,” “Agriculture, Natural & Cultural Resources,” “Economic Development,” “Land Use,” and “Intergovernmental Cooperation” can be found in the respective chapters dedicated to each of these elements.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION-SUMMARY**

**Existing Conditions**

**Demographic Trends**

The following pages contain data and brief analyses of basic demographic data for the Town of Mitchell. This type of data is helpful in understanding the makeup of the local population, which is important in the planning process. Factors such as age, education levels, income levels, employment characteristics, and housing stock may influence what a community has to consider when it looks at meeting the needs of its residents.

**Gender**

From 1990-2000, Mitchell experienced an increase in males (88) and also an increase in females (100) (see Figure 1.3). The result in 2000 was a closing of the gap between gender numbers. While this data is currently within normal ranges, it may signal a trend as the population grows older and females, known to have a longer life expectancy, become more numerous in relation to males. This could impact a number of the planning elements in the future, including housing and services.

<b>Figure 1.3 – Gender, Town of Mitchell</b>				
	<b>1990</b>		<b>2000</b>	
	number	percent	number	percent
Male	496	52.5%	584	51.6%
Female	448	47.5%	548	48.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>944</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1,132</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**Age Distribution**

The age distribution tables in Figures 1.4 and 1.5 show higher percentage population distributions from ages 0 to 34 in 1990 as compared to 2000. There is also a greater percentage of population between the ages of 35 and 79 in 2000 than in 1990. This could be for several reasons, most likely the aging of “baby boomers” (those born between the years of 1946 and 1964).

<b>Figure 1.4 – Age by Sex – 1990, Town of Mitchell</b>						
<b>AGE</b>	<b>MALE</b>	<b>FEMALE</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>	<b>SHEBOYGAN CO PERCENT</b>	<b>WISCONSIN PERCENT</b>
0-4 yrs.	22	35	57	6.0%	7.1%	7.4%
5-9 yrs.	48	37	85	9.0%	7.8%	7.7%
10-14 yrs.	49	35	84	8.9%	7.5%	7.2%
15-19 yrs.	37	33	70	7.4%	6.8%	7.1%
20-24 yrs.	25	19	44	4.7%	6.3%	7.4%
25-29 yrs.	29	33	62	6.6%	7.9%	8.2%
30-34 yrs.	47	37	84	8.9%	8.7%	8.6%
35-39 yrs.	38	33	71	7.5%	8.1%	8.0%
40-44 yrs.	51	40	91	9.6%	6.7%	6.8%
45-49 yrs.	34	33	67	7.1%	5.4%	5.3%
50-54 yrs.	23	24	47	5.0%	4.5%	4.5%
55-59 yrs.	26	22	48	5.1%	4.2%	4.2%
60-64 yrs.	28	30	58	6.1%	4.4%	4.3%
65-69 yrs.	17	16	33	3.5%	4.2%	4.0%
70-74 yrs.	10	8	18	2.0%	3.7%	3.3%
75-79 yrs.	4	4	8	0.8%	3.0%	2.7%
80-84 yrs.	3	5	8	0.8%	2.0%	1.8%
85 + yrs.	5	4	9	1.0%	1.7%	1.5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>496</b>	<b>448</b>	<b>944</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**Figure 1.5 – Age by Sex – 2000, Town of Mitchell**

AGE	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	PERCENT	SHEBOYGAN CO PERCENT	WISCONSIN PERCENT
0-4 yrs.	30	35	65	5.7%	6.4%	6.4%
5-9 yrs.	38	31	69	6.1%	7.0%	7.1%
10-14 yrs.	37	46	83	7.3%	7.5%	7.5%
15-19 yrs.	47	44	91	8.0%	7.4%	7.6%
20-24 yrs.	29	19	48	4.2%	5.7%	6.7%
25-29 yrs.	20	18	38	3.4%	6.0%	6.2%
30-34 yrs.	43	29	72	6.4%	7.0%	7.0%
35-39 yrs.	45	57	102	9.0%	8.3%	8.1%
40-44 yrs.	50	52	102	9.0%	8.5%	8.2%
45-49 yrs.	54	49	103	9.1%	7.5%	7.4%
50-54 yrs.	63	44	107	9.5%	6.2%	6.2%
55-59 yrs.	39	32	71	6.3%	4.7%	4.7%
60-64 yrs.	25	27	52	4.6%	3.8%	3.8%
65-69 yrs.	21	16	37	3.3%	3.4%	3.4%
70-74 yrs.	21	25	46	4.1%	3.4%	3.2%
75-79 yrs.	13	16	29	2.6%	3.0%	2.7%
80-84 yrs.	8	5	13	1.1%	2.2%	2.0%
85 + yrs.	1	3	4	0.3%	2.0%	1.8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>584</b>	<b>548</b>	<b>1,132</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau



These changes in age distribution present a set of variables for the Town to consider when drafting new policies or amending older policies. The needs and desires of residents change as they age and as income increases or decreases. A larger distribution of elderly, whose income tends to be limited, can change the demands placed on public services and policies due to changes in needs and desires. The demand on public services can also increase due to a rise in younger populations, such as school age and median age populations living in newer suburban settings. These increases can place higher demands on educational and other residential services such as law enforcement and emergency medical care.

**Education Levels**

Figure 1.6 shows a marked increase in the basic educational attainment of residents within the Town from 1990 to 2000. In 1990, the percentage of Town of Mitchell residents with less than a high school diploma was 26.0%. By 2000, that percentage had declined to 14.5%. This is comparable with percentages in Sheboygan County of 22.6% in 1990 and 15.6% in 2000 (see Figure 1.7). Percentages of residents possessing a high school diploma increased substantially from 1990 to 2000 for the Town of Mitchell. While the table shows a slight increase in Mitchell residents with graduate degrees, the increase is less than Sheboygan County’s percentage for 2000..

Educational attainment is generally tied to income earnings potential. Income data for Mitchell show it surpassing Sheboygan County as a whole. Mitchell’s 1999 median household income of \$56,875 was above Sheboygan County’s median income of \$46,237 and also above the \$55,652 median income average for the 15 towns in the County.

<b>Figure 1.6 – Educational Attainment (residents 25 years and over), Town of Mitchell</b>		
	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
Less than 9 <sup>th</sup> grade:	13.0%	5.7%
9 <sup>th</sup> to 12 <sup>th</sup> grade, no diploma:	13.0%	8.8%
High school graduate (includes equivalency):	37.0%	45.0%
Some college, no degree:	15.0%	17.2%
Associate degree:	7.0%	9.4%
Bachelor’s degree:	11.0%	9.8%
Graduate or professional degree:	3.0%	4.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

<b>Figure 1.7 - Educational Attainment (residents 25 years and over), Sheboygan County</b>		
	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
Less than 9 <sup>th</sup> grade:	10.8%	5.8%
9 <sup>th</sup> to 12 <sup>th</sup> grade, no diploma:	11.8%	9.8%
High school graduate (includes equivalency):	41.6%	39.9%
Some college, no degree:	15.0%	19.7%
Associate degree:	7.1%	6.9%
Bachelor’s degree:	9.9%	12.8%
Graduate or professional degree:	3.8%	5.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

### Income Levels

Annual income levels for Town of Mitchell households are shown in Figure 1.8. In 1999, 23.89% of Mitchell households were in the lower income brackets, compared to 35.4% of households in Sheboygan County. The middle income brackets totaled 65.3% in Mitchell, compared to 65.8% for all rural towns. High income households were slightly less likely in Mitchell, totaling 10.9%, compared to 11.1% in all rural towns, but more likely in Mitchell when compared to 7.7% in Sheboygan County.

<b>Figure 1.8 – Household Income Levels, 1999</b>			
<b>Annual Income</b>	<b>Town of Mitchell</b>	<b>Rural Town Average</b>	<b>Sheboygan County</b>
Less than \$10,000:	1.9%	2.2%	4.9%
\$10,000 to \$14,999:	3.3%	3.2%	5.2%
\$15,000 to \$24,999:	6.9%	7.3%	12.1%
\$25,000 to \$34,999:	11.7%	10.4%	13.2%
\$35,000 to \$49,999:	18.6%	19.6%	19.5%
\$50,000 to \$74,999:	26.2%	29.4%	26.2%
\$75,000 to \$99,999:	20.5%	16.8%	11.2%
\$100,000 to \$149,999:	7.6%	7.3%	5.2%
\$150,000 to \$199,999:	2.1%	2.2%	1.2%
\$200,000 or more:	1.2%	1.6%	1.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

### Employment Characteristics

For the period 1990 to 2004, the civilian labor force in Sheboygan County increased 17.8%, from 55,935 to 65,906; the number of unemployed increased 18%, from 2,298 to 2,711; and the number of employed increased by 17.8%, from 53,637 to 63,195. The unemployment rate experienced a high of 5.5% in 1991 and low of 2.0% in 1999.

In 2000, the majority (42.6%) of the people in the workforce in Mitchell were employed in the manufacturing industry (see Figure 1.9). This was up slightly from 1990 when 39.4% of Mitchell residents were employed in manufacturing. Educational, health, social services came in second, increasing from 10.8% in 1990 to 13.4% in 2000. Agriculture showed the largest decline, dropping from 16.8% in 1990 to 5.8% in 2000.

<b>Figure 1.9 – Industry of Employed Persons 16 Years &amp; over, 1990, 2000, Town of Mitchell</b>				
<b>INDUSTRY</b>	<b>1990</b>		<b>2000</b>	
	<b>COUNT</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>	<b>COUNT</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and mining	87	16.8%	37	5.8%
Construction	37	7.1%	48	7.5%
Manufacturing	204	39.4%	273	42.6%
Transportation, warehousing utilities	14	2.7%	31	4.8%
Information	~	~	7	1.1%
Communications and other public facilities	12	2.3%	~	~
Wholesale trade	7	1.4%	12	1.9%
Retail trade	43	8.3%	30	4.7%
Finance, insurance, & real estate	8	1.5%	22	3.4%
Professional, management, administrative	~	~	39	6.1%
Business and repair service	16	3.1%	~	~
Personal services	5	1.0%	~	~
Arts, entertainment, recreational services	0	0.0%	29	4.5%
Educational, health, social services	56	10.8%	86	13.4%
Other services	11	2.1%	21	3.3%
Public administration	18	3.5%	6	0.9%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>518</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>641</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

### Forecasts

**Population**

As shown in Figure 1.10, the population for the Town of Mitchell is projected (using a linear projection method) to increase from 2010 to 2025, at a rate of 19.7%. During this same time period the population in Sheboygan County is projected to increase only 8.9% (see Figure 1.11).

Population forecasts, are based on historical trends and are subject to revision. Many factors, such as changes in municipal boundaries, policies, housing availability, and economic development, can have a substantial affect on population trends.

<b>Figure 1.10 – Population Forecast, Town of Mitchell</b>				
				<b>Percent change</b>
<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2010-2025</b>
1,474	1,570	1,668	1,764	19.7%

*Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration, 2005*

<b>Figure 1.11 - Population Forecast, Sheboygan County</b>				
				<b>Percent change</b>
<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2010-2025</b>
119,411	122,921	126,540	130,018	8.9%

*Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration, 2005*

**Housing**

A community’s housing stock changes with fluctuations in the community such as population, economic development, and income level. The type of housing needed is influenced by the ages, incomes, and family sizes of current residents and those wishing to move to the community. The quality of housing also changes over time, creating needs for rehabilitation and/or demolition of older homes.

As indicated by Figure 1.12, 41.5% of Mitchell’s 436 housing units were built before 1970, and of these, 31.7% were built before 1940. By the end of the planning period in 2025, some of these homes may need rehabilitation, but the majority of the housing stock appears to be in good condition. Well-maintained older homes tend to not only improve the life of housing stock but in some cases also provide affordable housing choices for residents.

Maintaining an adequate housing stock is the result of recognizing the needs and desires of residents. New housing should meet the needs of a cross-section of residents from high to low income, including elderly and very young residents whose income is limited.

<b>Figure 1.12 – Year Structure Built, Town of Mitchell</b>		
<b>Year Structure Built</b>	<b>Housing units</b>	<b>Percent</b>

1999-March 2000	13	2.9%
1995 to 1998	45	10.3%
1990 to 1994	60	13.8%
1980 to 1989	53	12.2%
1970 to 1979	84	19.3%
1960 to 1969	13	2.9%
1940 to 1959	30	6.9%
1939 or earlier	138	31.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

### Employment

The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development created the *Bay Area Workforce Development Area Profile, 2002-2012*, a projection for industries, occupations, and the labor force. These projections are for the total number of nonfarm jobs in the ten county Bay Area, which includes Sheboygan County (see Figure 1.13). Although specific data for the Town of Mitchell is unavailable, these projections for the Bay Area are indicative of the trends that could be anticipated in Mitchell. According to the profile, overall employment is projected to grow almost 12% between 2002 and 2012. The education and health services sector is projected to show the largest numeric employment growth adding 12,620 jobs, over one-third of the total growth. Manufacturing is currently the largest employing industry sector in the region and will remain the largest industry sector in 2012, however, other industry sectors will continue to close the gap over the period. Occupations remaining in manufacturing are expected to continue to move away from general labor positions to more semi-skilled and skilled operator and technician jobs. This is due primarily to production processes that are more efficient and availability of new technologies.

**Figure 1.13 – Industry Projections for Bay Area Workforce Development Area, 2002-2012**

Industry Title	Employment		Ten-year change	
	2002 Estimate	2012 Projected	Numeric	Percent
Total Non-farm Employment	302,080	338,060	35,980	11.9%
Construction/Mining/Natural Resources	15,820	19,170	3,350	21.2%
Manufacturing	77,690	78,180	490	0.6%
Paper Mfg	9,900	8,520	-1,380	-13.9%
Plastics and Rubber Products Mfg	5,450	6,640	1,190	21.8%
Transportation Equipment Mfg	5,470	5,860	390	7.1%
Trade	42,270	46,840	4,570	10.8%
Building Material and Garden Equipment and Supplies Dealers	3,000	3,550	550	18.3%
Transportation and Utilities (Including US Postal)	15,760	17,900	2,140	13.6%
Financial Activities	15,120	16,990	1,870	12.4%
Education and Health Services (Inclgd state & local govt. ed. & hosp.)	50,170	62,790	12,620	25.2%
Ambulatory Health Care Services	9,890	13,860	3,970	40.1%
Hospitals (Including state & local govt.)	11,150	13,590	2,440	21.9%
Leisure and Hospitality	27,360	30,950	3,590	13.1%
Information/Prof Services/Other Services	38,510	45,150	6,640	17.2%
Government (Excluding USPS, state & local govt. ed. and hosp.)	19,390	20,100	710	3.7%

Source: WI DWD, Office of Economic Advisors, September 2004