

# ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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## *About this Plan*

The Town of Shelby Comprehensive Plan has been developed to provide background and direction for a variety of land use decisions. Included in this plan are a variety of chapters, or elements, that provide baseline information and specific goals, objectives, and recommendations specific to each element. This plan should be used by the Plan Commission to make decisions about growth and development over the next 20-year period. Periodic updates are required to ensure this plan remains current over time. Specific requirements and procedures for use and maintenance of this plan are provided in the Implementation Element.

Elements in this plan include:

1. Issues and Opportunities
2. Housing
3. Transportation
4. Utilities and Community Facilities
5. Open Spaces and Outdoor Recreation
6. Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources
7. Economic Development
8. Intergovernmental Cooperation
9. Land Use
10. Implementation

This section of the plan will provide information on the demographic trends and projections that are taking place in the Town of Shelby. The information has been gathered from various sources, including township level data when possible.

## *History and Setting*

The Town of Shelby is an unincorporated municipality located in the southwest corner of La Crosse County, just south and east of the City of La Crosse along the banks of the Mississippi River. The Town of Shelby is bordered to the South by Vernon County, to the East by the Town of Greenfield, to the North by the Towns of Medary and Barre and to the North and West by the City of La Crosse (See [Map 1.1 Regional Context Map](#) Appendix C). The Town is a mix of urban and rural residences, farmsteads, commercial and institutional facilities, about 45 miles of roads, wetlands, parkland and recreation land, agricultural lands, and wooded areas. In total, the Town has an area of approximately 20.40 square miles. Of this, approximately 4.40 square miles are water and approximately 16.00 square miles are land.

The area's original inhabitants were Native Americans. It is documented that Mormon's settled in the 1800's on what is now called Mormon Coulee and Mormon Creek. German and Swiss immigrants followed in the 1850's and 1860's bringing with them their knowledge and skills in agriculture. Until shortly before it's establishment, the Town of Shelby was part of the Town of Greenfield, after the division of the Town of Greenfield, the Town of Shelby was established on April 2, 1867. Phillip Young, a

German settler, is credited with giving the Town of Shelby its name after his former home of Shelby, Ohio.

The Town of Shelby was a growing area from the late 1950's to 1980 with a population ranging from 7,000 to 8,000 during this period. More recently, annexation has reduced the Town's population to 4,770 in 2020. Overall, the southern portion of La Crosse County slowed in population growth due to large-scale infrastructure improvements (primarily highways) in northern areas over the past two decades.

Agriculture has a long-standing history in Shelby, particularly along Mormon Coulee where oats, hay, potatoes and even fruit trees have been grown in the past 100 years. Agricultural land still exists within Shelby, however, is utilized less for farming than what has been seen in previous years. More areas in Shelby are being sought out for development or residential properties and more urban areas are becoming prevalent throughout the Town.

Today, Shelby can be described as an urbanized town with distinct urban, suburban, and rural areas. Rural and agricultural areas remain in the eastern portion of the Town near and adjacent to extreme topographical areas. The western portion of the Town contains a more urbanized landscape, especially in areas where it borders the City of La Crosse.

### *Summary of Key Findings from Survey*

The Town of Shelby assembled questions about a variety of topics that exist within the community including housing, transportation, and land use. These questions were then incorporated into a Town Survey for two reasons: 1) to facilitate a community discussion about long-term issues related to these topics; and 2) to collect community sentiment concerning these topics. The survey was performed as part of the Town of Shelby Comprehensive Plan. Results of the survey were incorporated into this Plan and used to help generate goals and objectives to determine actions for implementation. A summary of the key findings are below and complete survey results with comments can be found in [Appendix D](#).

312 survey responses were received by the Town. There was an even distribution of respondents from each Ward represented. The majority of respondents had lived in the Town over 10 years, worked outside the Town, or were retired (63 years old or older).

### **Perception of Town**

Overall survey respondents are satisfied with the overall quality of the town and Town Hall facilities. Many choose to live in the Town because of the natural beauty, reasonable tax rate, rural character, and proximity to natural resources. The amenities provided such as parks and recreation, snow removal, police protection, and emergency services are to the standards most residents prefer. An area residents feel needs improvement is road maintenance.

### **Transportation**

As stated above, road maintenance was an area of concern for respondents. It was rated a low priority to increase public transportation with a high priority of providing safer walking and biking along roadways. It was also a medium priority to provide multi-use trails.

### **Agriculture and Natural Resources**

Respondents included many high priority items they felt the Town should address concerning agriculture and natural resources. The top response was protecting groundwater followed by protecting scenic views and undeveloped hills. They also felt the Town should participate in environmental projects to manage storm water, protect air quality, and support solar energy opportunities. The lower priority

items were to promote waterway and fishing opportunities. The Town also felt strongly about encouraging farmland preservation.

### **Growth Projections and Management**

As the Town grows, survey respondents stated they were open to regionally sharing services such as public transportation, regional law enforcement, and regionally supplied fire and first responders. It was rated a high to medium priority to expand community partnerships and intergovernmental cooperation.

When looking at new development in the Town, respondents are hoping for more single family units on rural lots and lots smaller than 1 acre. They are also interested in mixed use areas for business, industry, and residential units. 13% of respondents did not want more development promoted.

39% of respondents do not currently have municipal sewer or water. The majority of respondents felt no sewer and water should be extended to new developments and if they were, the cost should be incurred to the developer or the Town of Shelby. The Town wanted to know if they should work to provide these services to already developed areas. Respondents had mixed responses with about half saying yes, with the cost shared with property owners and the Town, while half were not interested in extending services.

### **Demographic Analyses**

This section includes comparisons to other local and regional governments. They are included to provide a better understanding of the trends emerging locally and within the County or State. Comparable data includes:

- Town of Medary: also borders the City of La Crosse, is subject to same development pressures;
- City of La Crosse: borders the Town, provides the local basis for “urban” characteristics on growth and service provision;
- La Crosse County: regional governmental jurisdiction, contains uniform topographical characteristics and a variety of local governmental entities for comparison.

### **Demographic Trends and Forecasts**

The population of Shelby has fluctuated over the years. During the 1960’s, the population decreased by 16%, likely due to an annexation by the City of La Crosse. The population then rose again, only to experience an eleven percent drop during the 1980’s for the same reason. The most recent population estimates show that Shelby’s population decreased by 1.17% from 2010 to 2020. Projections from the Wisconsin DOA indicate that the population will remain stable. The DOA considers and monitors changes and patterns in fertility, mortality, and migration. DOA’s projections indicate modest growth from 2020 to 2030 in Town of Medary (+60 people) and City of La Crosse (+150 people).

*Table 1.1 Population Estimates*

	Census								
	1990	2000	2010	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2020-2030 Predicted Change
<b>Town of Shelby</b>	<b>5,002</b>	<b>4,687</b>	<b>4,715</b>	<b>4,770</b>	<b>4,775</b>	<b>4,765</b>	<b>4,710</b>	<b>4,665</b>	<b>-0.10%</b>
Town of Medary	1,539	1,463	1,461	1,545	1,575	1,605	1,615	1,630	3.88%
City of La Crosse	51,140	51,818	51,320	52,550	52,750	52,700	52,300	51,850	0.28%

La Crosse County	97,904	107,120	114,638	120,447	123,404	128,120	129,830	131,500	0.6%
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Source: US Census Bureau 2010, 2020-2040 estimates Demographic Service Center, Wisconsin DOA

## Age and Gender

The median age for the Town is 51.1 years old, which is significantly higher than the County median age of 35.9 years old and the City of La Crosse's median age of 29.3. Table 1.2 outlines the age distribution for the population of Town of Shelby residents. Just over 60 percent of residents in the Town are 40 years old and over. 19.4% of Town of Shelby residents are under 20 years old or older, which is lower than the County total of 24.3% residents under 20. When considering gender, 51.1% of the residents are male. For La Crosse County, only 48.8% of residents are male.

Table 1.2 Population by Age, 2019

		Percent (%)								
	Median Age	0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80+
<b>Town of Shelby</b>	<b>51.1</b>	<b>11.3</b>	<b>8.1</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>10.3</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>15.9</b>	<b>21.2</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>3.1</b>
Town of Medary	42.3	14.1	13.9	9.4	11.4	12.0	15.6	15.3	6.6	1.6
City of La Crosse	29.3	8.4	14.2	28.5	11.8	8.3	10.0	9.3	5.5	4.1
La Crosse County	35.9	10.6	13.7	18.4	12.0	10.7	12.6	11.3	6.6	4.1

Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 2019 5-Year Estimates

## Race

A majority of Shelby residents are white. Residents of Asian descent comprise 3 percent (3%) of the Town's population, which makes them the second largest race population in the Town. The racial composition is similar to that of the County.

Table 1.3 Population by Race, 2019

	White (%)	Black (%)	American Indian and Alaska Native (%)	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (%)	Asian (%)	Hispanic (%)	Some Other Race (%)	Two or More Races (%)
<b>Town of Shelby</b>	<b>97.1</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>2.3</b>
Town of Medary	95.1	0.4	0.0	0.0	2.3	3.1	2.3	0.0
City of La Crosse	92.1	3.8	0.9	0.1	4.7	2.2	0.8	2.3
La Crosse County	90.9	1.6	0.4	0.0	4.4	1.9	0.2	2.0

Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 2019 5-Year Estimates

## Income Levels

Table 1.4 depicts three measures of income for the Town and surrounding communities.

- Per Capita Income is the total income of the area divided by the total population.
- Median Household Income considers income for all people who occupy a housing unit- related or not.
- Scaled income levels based on per household income

Per capita income in the Town of Shelby is higher than the County and Village of Holmen. Median household income is significantly higher in the Town at \$83,056 compared to the County at \$57,882.

*Table 1.4 Income Analysis*

	Per Capita Income	Median Household Income	Under \$50k	\$50k- \$100k	\$100k- \$200k	Over \$200k
<b>Town of Shelby</b>	<b>\$52,448</b>	<b>\$83,056</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>35.8%</b>	<b>26.2%</b>	<b>14.1%</b>
Town of Medary	\$36,829	\$79,306	23.7%	36.2%	32.2%	8.0%
City of La Crosse	\$26,827	\$45,233	55.2%	30.9%	11.2%	2.7%
La Crosse County	\$32,565	\$57,882	42.7%	33.2%	19.2%	4.8%

*Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 2019 5-Year Estimates*