

INTRODUCTION

The Town of Sarona is located in southern Washburn County, and borders the Town of Barronett to the west, the City of Shell Lake and the Town of Beaver Brook to the north, the Town of Long Lake to the east, and the Town of Bear Lake (Barron County) to the south. Located at latitude 454121N & longitude 0915117W, the Town of Sarona is a civil township. Sarona was part of Bashaw from 1883 through 1889 and Shell Lake from 1889 through 1904, when it became Sarona.

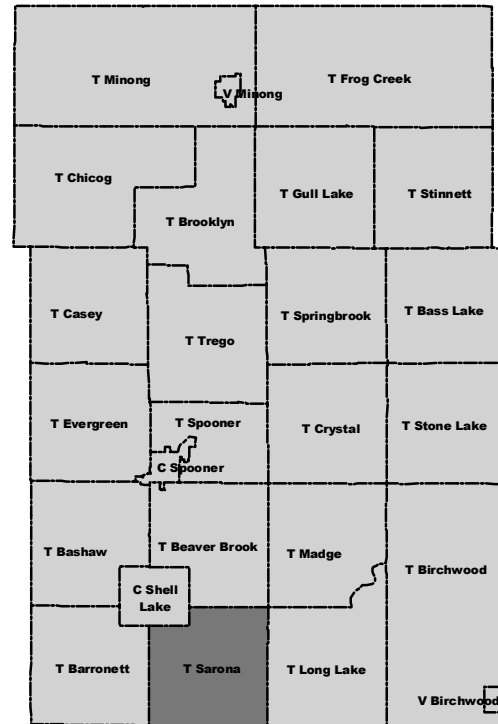
Sarona is a rural farming community that has experienced a population decline over the past 20 years. Of the businesses operating in the town, agricultural operations, Browning-Ferris Industries Inc., and home-based businesses are the primary economic sectors. Residents enjoy the rural character and atmosphere of the town, which is sustained by a large amount of farmland, woodlands, and water to create a diversified ecosystem. Some significant water resources include: Upper Bear Lake, Lake Kekegama, Ripley Lake, Little Kegema, and Miller Lake. These waters, along with the rich amount of forest and farmland, have provided wildlife, residents, and visitors alike with a unique and enjoyable environment.

Development of the comprehensive plan is intended to guide future land use decisions made by the Town of Sarona, surrounding jurisdictions, and Washburn County. It is important to point out that this plan is representative of year-round and seasonal residents. Participation by year-round and seasonal residents has contributed to a broad-based plan where all persons had an opportunity to provide direct input. Nowhere during the process were seasonal residents ignored as being “non-voting” landowners or non-residents of the community. Throughout the process, the planning committee/commission encouraged and utilized comments from the public. As a result of this integrated planning process, the comprehensive plan examines the entire community, that pertaining to both year-round and seasonal residents.

PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN

The *Town of Sarona Comprehensive Plan* is intended to assist local officials make future land use decisions. The plan will also assist in development and management issues by addressing short-range and long-range concerns regarding growth, development, and preservation of the community. There are numerous reasons for developing a comprehensive plan, including:

Figure 1: Town of Sarona



- identifying areas appropriate for development and preservation over the next 20 years;
- recommending types of land use for specific areas of the town;
- preserving agricultural practices and retaining agriculture as a viable industry over the next 20 years;
- protecting surface water resources and their surrounding environments;
- identifying needed transportation and community facilities to serve future residents;
- directing housing and other investments in the town; and
- providing detailed objectives and actions to implement the plan goals.

This *comprehensive plan* has been prepared under the Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning legislation contained in Wisconsin Statute 66.1001. The plan is organized into nine chapters or elements. These include: Issues and Opportunities; Housing; Transportation; Utilities and Community Facilities; Natural, Agricultural, and Cultural Resources; Economic Development; Intergovernmental Cooperation; Land Use, and Implementation.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

Efforts by the Town of Sarona to begin reviewing and discussing comprehensive planning began in 2001 when a five-member community planning committee representing the town was appointed by the town board. This broad-based committee assisted the town in developing a local community survey and in developing the comprehensive plan prior to recommending it to the plan commission in early 2004.

The Planning Committee/Commission has prepared goals, objectives, and action statements to aid the Town of Sarona in planning for its future. The town board, following review and recommendations by the plan commission, adopted the goals and objectives. These broad goals and objectives are intended to provide guidelines for future decision about land use and are intended to provide an orderly basis for immediate and long-range planning. These guidelines will be used by the plan commission in its recommendations to the town board on future land use changes. The goals and objectives recommended in this comprehensive plan are the framework for the various specific action statements and programs taken on by both the public and private sectors. These implementation statements will provide the foundation for town and county future ordinances, especially those relating to zoning, land division, erosion control, parks, and town and county services.

To guide the planning process, the Town of Sarona Comprehensive Planning Committee/Commission directed a number of efforts to ensure that this comprehensive plan is based on a vision shared by Sarona residents. The results are summarized below.

TOWN OF SARONA “PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN”

Wisconsin's new “Smart Growth” law requires municipalities to adopt written procedures that are designed to foster a wide range of public participation throughout the planning process. The main goal of this plan is to make all citizens of Sarona aware of the progress of the

comprehensive planning process occurring in the town and to offer the public opportunities to make suggestions or comments during the process.

In adhering to the requirements of developing and adopting a public participation plan, on January 13, 2003, the Town of Sarona Town Board adopted the plan for use in the overall development of the Sarona Comprehensive Plan. See Appendix A for Public Participation Plan.

COMMUNITY SURVEY

In January 2002, a community land use survey was mailed to 384 property owners and residents of the Town of Sarona. Of the 384 sent, 127 completed surveys were returned to Northwest Regional Planning Commission. This results in a response rate of 33.1 percent, excellent for a written survey of six pages. The survey included questions to gather basic demographic data, ascertain resident's assessment of the current situation in the town, and to obtain opinions regarding the town's future. Results of the survey are included in Appendix B.

ISSUES IDENTIFICATION AND S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS WORKSHOPS

The town held its issues identification meeting in January 2002, and a S.W.O.T. (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) meeting in February 2002. The purpose of the issues meeting was to identify issues the town faces specific to seven of the nine 'Smart Growth' elements. In February, the town held a workshop where participants were asked to express their opinions about the town's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Results of both the issues and S.W.O.T. meetings are available at the end of the Issues and Opportunities Element.

TOWN OF SARONA OPEN HOUSE SESSIONS

On June 10, 2002, from 6-7 p.m., the Town of Sarona held an open house/public input session at the town hall. The purpose of the open house was to discuss the results of the survey and to gather comments from the public on the planning process. A second open house was held on April 5, 2004, at the town hall to gather input from the public on the draft Town of Sarona Comprehensive Plan.

PUBLIC HEARING

A formal public hearing on the *Comprehensive Plan* and adopting ordinance was held on Month/Day/Year. In advance of that hearing, the town provided copies of the plan to surrounding governments and other parties under the requirements of the 'Smart Growth' legislation.