

**SHERMAN TOWNSHIP,  
MICHIGAN  
MASTER PLAN**

ADOPTED BY THE SHERMAN TOWNSHIP PLANNING  
COMMISSION MARCH 6, 2007

PREPARED BY THE SHERMAN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION AND THE  
WEST MICHIGAN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The 2006 Sherman Township Master Plan is a planning tool developed by the Sherman Township Planning Commission and the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (WMRPC). The planning process sought to include as many participants as possible and included input from community leaders as well as individuals, elected officials, and many others. Public input was solicited primarily through face-to-face interviews.

Mapping was performed by the WMRPC using a variety of sources of information and through creating a Geographic Information System (GIS) appropriate for a township planning process. The Existing Land Use Inventory includes information from recent aerial photographs and Osceola County's Master Plan. The Future Land Use Plan follows information from input from the Sherman Township Planning Commission.

The 2006 Sherman Township Future Land Use Plan is intended to act as a guide for the Township and should frequently be consulted and updated by the Township's Planning Commission.

**SHERMAN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION**

- Ron Moesta, Chair
- Flo Nye, Vice Chair
- Denise Justus, Secretary
- Pete Nemish, Township Board Representative
  - Rick Stokes, Member

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- Joe Grugal, Zoning Administrator

## VISION STATEMENT

The Vision Statement is meant to provide an overall view of Sherman Township's preferred future. Since this plan extends to 2025, the Vision Statement provides a look at the Township, its residents, and other features in 2025. The Vision Statement follows.

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### **Vision for 2025**

In 2025 Sherman Township has maintained its quiet rural quality and natural beauty. Through planning, the Township has maintained a steady rate of growth to reach a population of 1,550.

The Township's year-round residents are housed in quality homes distributed across the Township in an efficient manner that provides residents an acceptable amount of freedoms related to how they utilize their property – while respecting the rights of their neighbors.

Family farms still operate in parts of the Township and surrounding residential uses are situated in a harmonious manner that respects the needs of agriculture. While agriculture is not a major employer, supplying primarily family incomes, it helps the Township maintain its rural character by keeping large tracts of land in agricultural use.

Commercial areas focus on serving the day-to-day needs of residents. Commercial uses are concentrated in Dighton (an unincorporated village in Sherman Township) and near the Village of Tustin. Dighton is an attractive part of the Township that offers not only commercial services, but a concentration of affordable and attractive housing as an option to the low density housing in the Township.

As a small community, Sherman Township continues to coordinate with surrounding communities and Osceola County to provide necessary services to residents. Residents enjoy healthy schools, appropriate fire services, well-maintained local parks, and roads that serve residents and travelers. Private utilities (telephone, internet, and electricity) service the needs of the community. The relatively low population density still leaves the Township without the demand for public water and sewer, or natural gas lines.

Sherman Township is a friendly place to live. The small size of the Township helps everyone know their neighbors and fellow residents. The same friendly spirit ensures that the Township is governed by caring and fair residents that have the well-being of the community in mind with every decision. Citizens frequently participate in all levels of government and are familiar with their elected and appointed officials and the general operating procedures of the Township.

## **PLANNING PROCESS**

### **Action 1 – Introduction**

In this action, The West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (WMRPC) reviewed the work program with the Sherman Township Planning Commission to insure everyone agreed to the established planning process. During this action the planning team also established, with the assistance of the Planning Commission, a list of 10-15 key people to interview. The WMRPC will also worked with the Planning Commission to set meeting dates. Also, the WMRPC notified all of the necessary entities to let them know of the Township's planning process. Finally, the WMRPC gathered information to begin the planning process.

### **Action 2 – Community Description**

The WMRPC updated the Community Description by updating the Plan's Natural Features Inventory. The WMRPC created a new natural features map and description of the Township's basic natural and built features. Maps include a soils map, a topographic map, and a map identifying water features. The Community Description also includes the Township's Existing Land Use Inventory. This information was taken directly from the current plan and the Osceola County Land Use Plan, with some updates provided by the Sherman Township Planning Commission. The Community Description also includes a description of the Township's public facilities.

The next major portion of this action describes Sherman Township's demographic features. This section describes the Township's existing population and provides information about the Township, the surrounding communities, Osceola County, and Michigan for comparison. The plan includes population features including age and sex distribution; racial distribution; people with physical disabilities; types of households; employment; and income information. The Plan also describes the Township's housing based on census information. Most information is from the 2000 U. S. Census of Population.

### **Action 3 – Public Participation**

The WMRPC conducted Key Person surveys at the beginning of the planning process to gain a better understanding of issues in Sherman Township. The planner conducted these one-on-one surveys in the Township's Offices. Each interview took between 20 and 30 minutes and consisted of four open-ended questions related to the Township's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The Planning Commission provided the list of Key People to interview.

Additional opportunities for public input included input sessions that were part of regularly scheduled Township Planning Commission meetings. The WMRPC facilitated these sessions to allow everybody opportunities to help formulate the land use goals of the Township.

The primary public input opportunities coincided with the Township's Planning Commission Meetings. The WMRPC provided opportunities for the public to review and

comment on information generated during the planning process. Additionally, a public hearing was held on February 6, 2007 towards the end of the planning process.

#### **Action 4 – Community Goals and Objectives**

The WMRPC reviewed the Goals and Objectives established in the last Master Plan at a meeting with the Planning Commission to determine if the Goals and Objectives were still relevant. The WMRPC worked with the Planning Commission to strengthen the Township's Goals, Objectives, and Strategies, and insured that they were used to develop the Future Land Use Plan Map. The WMRPC also helped develop a Vision Statement to identify a brief picture of the “ideal” future for Sherman Township in the year 2025. The statement identifies target population, housing, employment, recreation, services and other details of the Township's future. The section also identifies a complete list of issues developed by WMRPC with the assistance of Key Person Interviews.

The WMRPC also developed population and housing projections during this Action. The planner based projections on past trends, projections prepared by the Michigan Department of Management and Budget, and the Township's goals (since the goals will influence the future population and housing distribution). Projections include overall population projections, household distribution, overall housing numbers, and housing type distribution for the Township.

#### **Action 5 – Future Land Use Plan**

The WMRPC developed a future land use plan based on current conditions and trends, the issues and goals established in Action 4, and generally accepted planning principles. The planner prepared a Future Land Use Map for review, based largely on the current Plan and discussion with the Planning Commission. The Future Land Use Plan consists of a map and text describing the map and the rationale behind the decisions. The same level of detail and categories used in the existing land use inventory was used to develop this portion of the plan.

Each member of the Planning Commission received a draft of the plan.

#### **Action 6 – Planning Commission Review**

The Planning Commission reviewed the draft of the plan and revised the Draft at special work sessions. There were several benefits to providing the Planning Commission with a draft *intended* for editing:

- Saved time
- Provided the Planning Commission with a starting point
- Encouraged discussion and input from the Planning Commission
- Provided ideas based on key person surveys and Planning Commission input
- Allowed the Planning Commission an open forum to discuss ideas

During this Action the Planning Commission met to develop ideas and questions. This provided the Commission opportunities to critique the Plan in an open and familiar

environment (other Planning Commissioners). The Planning Commission developed a list of changes and questions for WMRPC to answer at a Review Session.

#### **Action 7 – Finalize Plan**

The WMRPC developed a Final Draft of the Plan based on the Planning Commission's comments in Action 6. The Final Draft of the Plan contained an up-to-date Future Land Use Map, a complete list of Goals, and a variety of text, tables and maps supporting the Plan. The planner presented twenty (20) copies of the plan for community review. Some of these copies were forwarded to the surrounding townships, Osceola County Planning Commission, and any other identified entity for their review.

#### **Action 8 – Community Adoption**

After comments were incorporated in the Plan the WMRPC attended a Public Hearing. The WMRPC prepared the Notice of Public Hearing for the Master Plan and a Resolution for the Planning Commission to adopt the Plan.

#### **Action 9 – Plan Preparation**

After the public hearing the WMRPC printed 20 copies of the final plan. The Plan contains text, tables, and maps. Maps include a variety of informational maps plus an 11 x 17-color map of the Existing Land Use Inventory and an 11 x 17 color Future Land Use Map.

### **PHYSICAL FEATURES**

### **Sherman Township Location**

Map 1 shows the location of Sherman Township in relation to other communities in Osceola County and the map identifies the location of Osceola County in relationship to other Michigan counties. Osceola County is located in the central part of Michigan's Lower Peninsula. Sherman Township is located in the north-central part of Osceola County.

The map also identifies the other 15 townships in Osceola County as well as the cities of Reed City and Evart; and the villages of Hersey, LeRoy, Marion, and Tustin.

### **Sherman Township Soil Types**

Map 2 identifies the Soil Associations in Sherman Township. Soil Associations are general designations that combine a combination of more detailed Soil Types. For general planning purposes soil associations are good for a broad understanding of soil capabilities. The *Soil Survey for Osceola County Michigan* was used to develop the following text and should be referenced for information specific to individual soil types in Sherman Township.

A description of the Soil Associations follows:

#### Emmet-Montcalm-Kalkaska

This is the largest soil association in Sherman Township, extending from the northern boundary across the western half of the Township and into the southeast corner of the Township.

This soil association aligns with the McBride-Montcalm-Kalkaska association in the *Soil Survey for Montcalm County*. The association is well-drained and moderately well-drained sand and loamy soils on undulating and rolling moraines.

The soils of this association are on undulating to rolling moraines throughout many parts of the county (township). Slopes are complex and vary greatly in degree of steepness. There are numerous streams, lakes, and depressions throughout this association.

The dominant soils, the McBride, Montcalm, and Kalkaska, are well drained or moderately well drained. The McBride soils are finer textured throughout their profile than either the Montcalm or the Kalkaska soils. The McBride soils have a loamy surface layer and subsoil, but the Montcalm and Kalkaska soils have a sandy surface layer and subsoil.

Poorly drained and very poorly drained organic soils and the sandy Roscommon soils are in depressions and drainageways throughout the association. These soils remain wet

Map 1

Map 2

longer in spring than other soils of the association. In some areas the soils of the association are underlain with stratified gravelly sand and sand.

The Montcalm and Kalkaska soils have low or moderately low available moisture capacity and moderately low natural fertility. The McBride soils have moderately high available moisture capacity and moderate fertility.

The soils of most areas of this association are severely limited for crop use because of an erosion hazard, droughtiness, or steepness. The gently sloping to sloping areas of McBride soils are suited to crops and pasture. A large part of this association is presently in woods, and most areas of the association are suited to woods, recreational uses, or wildlife habitats.

#### Graycalm-Kalkaska-Montcalm

This is the second largest soil association in the Township, with three separate areas. The largest occupies most of the northeast quadrant of the Township. The second largest occupies about three sections in the southeast corner of the Township. The smallest area is in Section 36.

This soil association aligns with the Chelsea-Rubicon-Montcalm association in the *Soil Survey for Montcalm County*. The association is well-drained and moderately well-drained sandy soils on rolling to steep moraines.

The soils of this association are in the most hilly part of the county, where there are many lakes and deep depressions but only a few streams. The dominant soils are level to steep and have stones on their surface.

The dominant soils, the Chelsea, Rubicon, and Montcalm, are sandy and well drained or moderately well drained. The Rubicon soils are sandy throughout their profile. The Chelsea and Montcalm are also sandy, but they have a slightly finer textured subsoil than the Rubicon. All three soils lie close together in a complex pattern.

Small areas of loamy McBride soils and of gravelly and sandy Mancelona soils together occupy less than 10 percent of the association. Organic soils and somewhat poorly drained to poorly drained sandy soils are in the wet depressions and drainageways.

Soils of this association have low to moderately low fertility. Water moves through these soils rapidly, and therefore they are droughty during dry periods in summer. None of the dominant soils hold adequate moisture for crops during the dry summer. The Montcalm soils have slightly better available moisture capacity than either the Chelsea or Rubicon Soils. Farming is severely limited on the association because the soils are droughty and low to moderately low in fertility. Wind and water erosion are limitation in most of the association. Most of this association is used for wood crops or as habitats for wildlife.

### Nester-Kawkawlin-Menominee

This is the third largest soil association in the Township, with three separate areas. All three areas are located in the southern half of the Township, one on the west side, one in the central portion, and a small portion in Section 36.

This soil association aligns with the Nester-Kalkaska-Menominee association in the *Soil Survey for Montcalm County*. The association is well-drained and moderately well-drained loamy and sandy soils on undulating to hilly uplands.

This soil association is on undulating to hilly uplands that are dissected by drainageways and depressions. It is one of the most extensive soil associations in Osceola County.

The major soils, the Nester, Kalkaska, and Menominee, differ greatly from each other in texture and fertility. The Nester soils are the finest textured of the three. They formed in clay loam or silty clay loam material and are well drained or moderately well drained. Kalkaska soils are the coarsest textured of the three, are well drained, and formed in thick deposits of medium and coarse sands. Menominee soils have a layer of sand or loamy sand, 18 to 42 inches thick, over loamy material. The three soils occur together in a complex pattern.

Minor soils in the association include small areas of organic soils and poorly drained mineral soils occupying drainageways and depressions. A few areas of the well drained and moderately well drained, loamy McBride soils also are present on the steeper areas.

Available moisture capacity and natural fertility vary greatly between the major soils of this association. Available moisture capacity ranges from low for the Kalkaska soils to high for the Nester soils. Natural fertility ranges from low for the Kalkaska soils to moderate for the Nester soils. Permeability is rapid in the Kalkaska soils. It is moderately slow in the Nester and Menominee soils below a depth of 18 to 42 inches. Surface runoff is medium to rapid on the Nester soils and is more rapid than on the coarse textured and more gently sloping Menominee or Kalkaska soils.

Water erosion has been severe on some of the sloping and hilly soils, especially in areas of Nester soils. A few gullies have formed in some of the more steeply sloping areas in the association, and their control is difficult. Kalkaska soils are subject to wind erosion when large areas are exposed by cultivation. The Menominee and the Kalkaska soils dry quickly in spring and can be tilled easily. Cultivation of the Nester soils is more difficult because they are finer textured and because there are gravel and cobblestones on the surface of these soils in many areas.

Use of the soils of this association for crops is limited in many areas by a serious erosion hazard. The Nester and Menominee soils are mainly used for crops or pasture, which are grown as part of a general farming or dairy farming operation. The sandy and droughty Kalkaska soils were cleared in the past but are now idle and in brush and trees because of

declining crop yields and erosion damage. A few areas of Kalkaska and Menominee soils have been planted to trees.

### Kalkaska-Rubicon Association

This is the smallest association in the Township, with two separate areas on the eastern boundary – one to the north and one to the south.

This association is well-drained sandy soils on level plains and steep moraines.

The soils of this association are on level outwash and till plains, valley floors, and sloping to steep moraines. They are among the sandiest and driest soils in Osceola County.

The major soils, the Kalkaska and the Rubicon, formed in sandy material and have a sandy surface layer and sub-soil layer. The subsoil layer of the Kalkaska soils is darker brown than that of the Rubicon soils.

These soils have low available moisture capacity and low natural fertility. Water moves rapidly or very rapidly through the soil layers. Kalkaska soils are slightly more fertile and are less droughty than Rubicon soils. Both soils are subject to wind erosion if cultivated. Kalkaska soils are locally called hardwood soils because they are better suited to northern hardwoods than are the Rubicon soils. Areas of Rubicon soils are locally called pine lands.

In most areas of this association, the soils are too steep, too sand and droughty, or too subject to erosion to be used for crops. Their major uses are for woods, pasture, wildlife habitats, or recreation.

### **Sherman Township Natural Features**

Map 3 shows natural features in Sherman Township related to elevations and bodies of water. The Township has several lakes including Center Lake, Emery Lake, Echelberger Lake, Eggle Lake, and Bammer Lake. There are no major rivers in the Township. Elevations in the Township range from a low of 1,200 feet above mean sea level in the eastern portions of the Township to a high of 1,704 feet above mean sea level in Section 12 (northeast quadrant). There is some debate related to whether this is the highest point in Michigan's Lower Peninsula, or if that distinction belongs to Wexford County.

### **Wildlife**

The Township's wildlife is typical of that found in most of lower Michigan. Common wildlife includes deer, raccoons, opossums, skunks, rabbits, badgers, muskrats, beavers, squirrels, rodents and other small mammals. There are also occasional observations of other animals such as bears, coyotes, and bobcats. The area is home to a variety of birds including owls, wild turkeys, pheasants and many others. The area is also a seasonal home to many migratory birds including ducks and Canada Geese.

**Map 3**

**Native Vegetation**

Originally, all of Osceola County was covered with a dense forest of deciduous and coniferous trees. As the area was cleared for farming and development, or the trees were removed for timber, the area’s forests were replaced by farm fields, open field areas, orchards and smaller forested areas containing both deciduous and coniferous trees.

**Climate**

Osceola County’s weather, like all of Michigan’s, has a strong influence on the way of life, agriculture, housing, recreation, transportation and other facilities and activities. Table 1 identifies information related to the area’s climate. Generally, January is the coldest month (29.2 average daily maximum temperature). August is generally the warmest month in the County (80.8 average daily maximum temperature). June usually has the highest average precipitation (3.58 inches) and February generally has the lowest average (1.56 inches) but the greatest average depth of snow. Prevailing winds are from the west.

Table 1: Climate in Osceola County

MONTH	TEMPERATURE (F)		PRECIPITATION (INCHES)	
	Average Daily Maximum	Average Daily Minimum	Average	Average Depth of Snow on Days with Snow Cover
January	29.2	12.9	1.81	6.1
February	31.1	12.6	1.56	8.3
March	40.2	20.1	1.76	8.0
April	55.5	31.4	2.06	1.4
May	68.4	42.2	3.05	0
June	77.6	51.9	3.58	0
July	77.0	54.9	2.39	0
August	80.8	54.0	3.43	0
September	71.7	46.2	3.37	0
October	59.9	36.4	2.29	0
November	43.9	26.9	2.59	2.4
December	32.6	18.6	1.71	3.8
Year	55.7	34.0	29.60	---

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture

**Sherman Township Community Facilities**

Map 4 shows the community facilities in Sherman Township including the road network (paved and unpaved). The map also identifies the location of the Township Hall, the Township Cemetery, Osceola County Road Commission’s facility, the Kettunen Center, and the Bible Camp. The Township’s two parks are also identified on the map.

**Map 4**

## **Sherman Township Existing Land Use**

Map 5 shows the distribution of existing land uses in Sherman Township. The information is taken from Osceola County's Land Use Plan, which was completed in 2002. The planner updated this information by reviewing more current information from the USDA Farm Service Agency. Very general land use categories are used to create an existing land use map that provides enough information, but does not overwhelm people using the Plan. Each of the categories is described below.

Agriculture – This category includes a variety of uses including crops, orchards, Christmas trees, livestock, and other uses related to agriculture. Barns and other outbuildings are also included in this category, as are homes associated with the agricultural uses. Since the Existing Land Use Inventory is at a general level of detail, other land uses may also exist in areas identified as agriculture. Also, it is often difficult to determine (with aerial photos) if an area is actually used for agriculture, or if it is open space.

Agriculture covers 151,429 acres (41.5 percent) of Osceola County and 10,990 acres (46.3 percent) of Sherman Township. This is the second largest category in the Township and County.

Commercial – This category includes retail and wholesale businesses, business and professional services, personal services, and other businesses that provide goods or services to the general public. The category includes any buildings associated with the land use, as well as surrounding land, outdoor structures, parking areas, access areas, and other related areas.

Commercial covers 610 acres (0.2 percent) of Osceola County and 26 acres (0.1 percent) of Sherman Township. This is one of the smallest land use categories.

Industrial – This category includes sites where any type of manufacturing process occurs. Industries can include those that produce various emissions in the process (smoke, odor, noise, light, vibrations, etc.) or those that do not produce emissions detectable to surrounding areas – such as the assembly of parts shipped from other facilities. This category also includes extraction sites, where oil, gas, gravel, sand, or other natural resources are removed.

Industrial covers 2,067 acres (0.6 percent) of Osceola County and 58 acres (0.2 percent) of Sherman Township. This is one of the smallest land use categories.

Modular – This category includes areas where mobile homes, trailers, modular housing, or other types of homes manufactured off site are located. Typically, since the categories are fairly general and must cover a certain area to be considered, this category only occurs where larger clusters of such housing occurs, such as mobile home parks or modular home subdivisions. Modular covers 46 acres, or less than 0.1 percent of Osceola

County. There are no modular home parks in Sherman Township, but there are a number of individual modular homes dispersed throughout the Township.

Multiple Family – This category includes attached housing with three or more units. The category also covers the surrounding land and any structures related to the dwelling units such as garages, carports, parking lots, maintenance facilities, storage sheds, administrative offices, club houses, recreation areas, and other related uses. Since the coverage of the inventory maps is limited to land uses of certain sizes, multiple family facilities may be identified in other land use categories. No major facilities were identified in Sherman Township or Osceola County.

Forest Land/Open Space – This category consists primarily of undeveloped areas including forested areas and pastures that are not actively used for agriculture. Homes may be included in this category if the housing units make up a small portion of the area. Since the Existing Land Use Inventory is at a general level of detail, other land uses may also exist in areas identified as open space. Also, it is often difficult to determine (with aerial photos) if an area is actually open space or if it is used for some form of agricultural uses.

Open Space covers 198,070 acres (54.3 percent) of Osceola County and 12,100 acres (50.9 percent) of Sherman Township. This is the largest land use category for both the County and Township.

Public/Quasi-Public – This category includes a wide variety of land uses including municipal offices, federal, state, and county office facilities, schools, libraries, parks, golf courses (public and private), cemeteries, maintenance facilities, and other areas funded by, or available to, the general public. The category includes all support buildings and structures as well as land and parking areas. Transportation is included in this category, but tends to be included in whatever categories the network crosses or borders. This category does not identify public land as a land use; the many areas that are public land are listed in the Open Space or Agriculture categories.

Public covers 4,169 acres (1.1 percent) of Osceola County and 385 acres (1.6 percent) of Sherman Township. This is one of the smaller land use categories. This should not be confused with “public land” which denotes ownership versus a land use.

Single Family – This category includes unattached single-unit homes built on-site. The category also covers the surrounding land and any structures related to traditional dwelling units such as garages and storage sheds. Since the Land Use Inventory is fairly general, this category will often contain modular units, duplexes, and other housing that has characteristics similar to unattached, single-unit homes built on-site. Many single family units are included in other categories (primarily agriculture and open space) due to lack of compact development. This category does not distinguish between year-round residences and seasonal units (cottages).

Single-Family covers 8,518 acres (2.3 percent) of Osceola County and 191 acres (0.8 percent) of Sherman Township. This is the third largest land use category.

Table 2: Existing Land Use Distribution

Location	Total	Agri-culture	Comm-ercial	Indus-trial	Mod-ular	Multi-ple Family	Open Space	Public	Single Family	Water
Sherman	23,750	10,990	26	58	0	0	12,100	385	191	130
%	100.0	46.3	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0	50.9	1.6	0.8	0.5
County	364,905	151,429	610	2,067	46	0	198,070	4,169	8,518	3,571
%	100.0	41.5	0.2	0.6	0.0	0.0	54.3	1.1	2.3	1.0

Source: West Michigan Regional Planning Commission

**Map 5**

**DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS**

**Population Trends**

Between 1960 and 2000 Sherman Township’s population increased from 544 to 1,081. This increase of 537 people was a 98.7 percent increase. The growth rate was not constant over the 40 year period, with the population increasing by 11.8 percent between 1960 and 1970, 39.3 percent between 1970 and 1980, 12.0 percent between 1980 and 1990, and 13.9 percent between 1990 and 2000. During the same period Osceola County’s population increased by 9,602 (70.6 percent) to reach 23,197 residents. The Township’s growth rate of nearly 100 percent was much greater than Osceola County’s growth rate of 70.6 percent or Michigan’s rate of 27.0 percent.

Communities within Osceola County experienced different rates of growth during the 40-year period between 1960 and 2000. Populations decreased in the City of Evert, and the villages of Marion and Tustin. Marion had the largest numeric and percentage decrease, with a decrease of 62 people (6.9 percent). The City of Evert decreased by 37 people (2.1 percent) and Tustin lost 11 people for a 4.4 percent decrease over the 40-year period.

All of the townships in Osceola County grew during the 40 years between 1960 and 2000. Ten of the townships grew by *at least* 100 percent (doubling in size). Rose Lake Township had the greatest growth rate with 321.6 percent, followed by Cedar with 298.0 percent and Hersey Township with 268.9 percent. Numerically, Hersey Township grew the most with an increase of 1,073 people. Evert Township follows closely with an increase of 987 people, and Rose Lake Township is next with an increase of 939.

Table 3 shows the population trends for Sherman Township, the Village of Tustin, the three adjacent townships within Osceola County, Osceola County, and Michigan for comparison.

Table 3: Population Trends

COMMUNITY	POPULATION					CHANGE 1960-2000	
	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	#	%
Sherman Twp.	544	608	847	949	1,081	537	98.7
Tustin Village	248	230	264	230	237	(11)	(4.4)
Burdell Twp.	437	507	803	917	1,004	567	129.7
Highland Twp.	659	712	1,063	1,018	1,207	548	83.2
Rose Lake Twp.	292	380	847	937	1,231	939	321.6
Osceola County	13,595	14,838	18,928	20,146	23,197	9,602	70.6
Michigan	7,823,194	8,871,722	9,262,078	9,295,277	9,938,444	2,115,250	27.0

Source: U.S. Census of Population

**Age Distribution**

Table 4 shows the age distribution of Sherman Township in 1990 and 2000. The primary changes that occurred in the Township between 1990 and 2000 include the overall aging of the population, with the median age increasing from 31.3 to 36.0 years of age. The percentage of those in the 5-17, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, and 85+ age groups increased during the ten-year period, while all others decreased as a percentage. Several groups decreased numerically as well, which is significant since the overall population increased. Those age groups that decreased numerically include under 5, 18-24, and 25-34.

When compared to Michigan, Sherman Township (in 2000) had a lower percentage of residents under 5, and in the 18-24, 35-44, and 65-84 age groups. The Township’s median age was slightly higher than Michigan’s in 2000.

Table 4: Age Distribution

	SHERMAN TOWNSHIP				MICHIGAN	
	1990		2000		1990	2000
	#	%	#	%	%	%
Under 5	84	8.9	67	6.3	7.5	6.8
5-17	209	22.0	239	22.6	18.9	22.2
18-24	88	9.3	60	5.7	10.7	7.2
25-34	149	15.7	147	13.9	17.1	13.7
35-44	114	12.0	157	14.9	15.2	16.1
45-54	125	13.2	153	14.5	10.2	13.8
55-64	68	7.2	116	11.0	8.5	8.7
65-84	97	10.2	100	9.5	10.8	10.9
85+	15	1.6	18	1.7	1.1	1.4
Total	949	100.0	1,057	100.0	100.0	100.0
Median	31.3	---	36.0	---	32.6	35.5

Source: U.S. Census of Population

**Gender Distribution**

In both 1990 and 2000 there were slightly more males in Sherman Township than females (Table 5). This is opposite the usual trend, demonstrated by Michigan’s 2000 ratio of 49 percent males and 51 percent females – due to the longer life-spans of most females.

Table 5: Gender Distribution

	SHERMAN TOWNSHIP				MICHIGAN	
	1990		2000		1990	2000
	#	%	#	%	%	%
Male	477	50.3	535	50.6	48.5	49.0
Female	472	49.7	522	49.4	51.5	51.0
Total	949	100.0	1,057	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: U.S. Census of Population

**Household Distribution**

Table 6 shows that Sherman Township has a higher proportion of family households than Michigan as-a-whole. In 1990, 80.4 percent of the Township’s households were family households, compared to 71.3 percent for Michigan. In 2000 this figure decreased to 79.1 percent in the Township and 68.0 percent in Michigan. Similarly, the Township had a higher percentage of married couple families during both decades. The Township had a lower percentage of female householders with no spouse than Michigan, and a higher percentage of male householders with no spouse than Michigan. Reflecting the higher percentage of family households, the Township had a lower percentage of all types of non-family households than was present in Michigan in 1990 and 2000. The average household size was slightly higher in the Township than in the State in both decades.

Table 6: Household Distribution

	TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS				NONFAMILY HOUSEHOLDS			PERSONS PER HOUSEHOLD	PERSONS IN GROUP QUARTERS
		Total	Married Couple Family	Female Householder with no Spouse	Male Householder with no Spouse	Total	Householder Living Alone	Householder 65 & Over Living Alone		
<b>1990</b>										
Sherman Twp.	317	255	210	33	12	62	46	27	2.9	16
%	100.0	80.4	66.2	10.4	3.8	19.6	14.5	8.5	---	---
Michigan (%)	100.0	71.3	55.1	12.9	3.3	28.7	23.7	9.3	2.7	---
<b>2000</b>										
Sherman Twp.	369	292	236	36	20	77	53	11	2.8	15
%	100.0	79.1	64.0	9.8	5.4	20.9	14.4	3.0	---	---
Michigan (%)	100.0	68.0	51.4	12.5	4.1	32.0	26.2	9.4	2.6	---

Source: U.S. Census of Population

Between 2000 and 2004 the County experienced a fairly steady labor force, but the number of employed people decreased, resulting in an increased unemployment rate (Table 7). The labor force was 10,650 in 2004, with an annual average of 9,775 employed and 850 unemployed. The County’s unemployment rate is consistently higher than rates Michigan or the United States.

**Employment Distribution**

Between 1990 and 2000 the Census changed the employment categories enough to make comparisons difficult, so only 2000 information is provided. There are several similarities and differences between Sherman Township’s and Michigan’s employment distribution. First, both the Township and Michigan have the same three top categories. In both areas, “Manufacturing” is the largest category, followed by “Education, health and social services,” and “Retail trade.” While manufacturing is the largest category, it makes up a

much larger percentage of the Township’s workers (35.1 percent) than the category does in Michigan (22.5 percent). The other two categories have similar proportions for both Sherman Township and Michigan, with Education, health, and social services accounting for 17.9 percent of the Township’s employees; and Retail accounting for 10.9 percent. Sherman Township has a higher percentage of people involved in Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining; and construction.

Table 7: Employment Trends

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
<b>Osceola County</b>					
Labor Force	10,875	11,100	10,400	10,575	10,650
Employment	10,275	10,200	9,625	9,675	9,775
Unemployment	600	900	775	900	850
Unemployment Rate	5.5	8.0	7.5	8.6	8.0
<b>Michigan</b>					
Unemployment Rate	3.6	5.3	6.2	7.3	6.8
<b>United States</b>					
Unemployment Rate	4.0	4.7	5.8	6.0	5.5

Source: Michigan Department of Career Development, Labor Market Information

Table 8: 2000 Employment Distribution

	SHERMAN TOWNSHIP		MICHIGAN
	#	%	%
Employed Persons 16 and Over	487	100.0	100.0
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	16	3.3	1.1
Construction	38	7.8	6.0
Manufacturing	171	35.1	22.5
Wholesale Trade	4	0.8	3.3
Retail Trade	53	10.9	11.9
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	18	3.7	4.1
Information	9	1.8	2.1
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental leasing	18	3.7	5.3
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	14	2.9	8.0
Education, health and social services	87	17.9	19.9
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	32	6.6	7.6
Other services (except public administration)	16	3.3	4.6
Public Administration	11	2.3	3.6

Source: U.S. Census of Population

**Income and Poverty**

Sherman Township’s residents tend to have lower incomes than Michigan as-a-whole. In 1990 the Township’s median household income was \$22,583, which was considerably lower than Michigan’s median of \$31,030 for the same year. By 2000, the Township’s median household income grew by 88.5 percent to reach \$42,569. Michigan’s median household income increased by 43.9 percent to reach \$44,667 – indicating the Township’s incomes are “catching up” to Michigan’s. The per capita levels in the Township were also lower in 1990 and 2000 than in Michigan, but the Township’s grew by 84.8 percent to reach \$16,785 while Michigan’s grew by 56.6 percent to reach \$22,168. The percentage of people below the poverty level in 1990 (which is based more on County income levels) was higher in Sherman Township (18.7 percent) than in Michigan (13.1 percent), which is a difference of 5.6 percentage points. The figures decreased dramatically in the Township to reach 13.4 percent in 2000 – only 3.1 percentage points higher than Michigan’s rate of 10.3 percent.

Table 9: Income and Poverty

	MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME		PER CAPITA INCOME		PERCENT OF POPULATION BELOW POVERTY LEVEL	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
Sherman Township	\$22,583	\$42,569	\$9,083	\$16,785	18.7	13.4
Michigan	\$31,030	\$44,667	\$14,154	\$22,168	13.1	10.3

Source: U.S. Census of Population

**Housing Tenure**

Housing tenure in Sherman Township is different than the State as-a-whole. In 1990, the Township’s 315 occupied housing units accounted for 79.9 percent of the Township’s 394 units; and in 2000, the Township’s 374 occupied units accounted for 73.9 percent of the Township’s 506 units. In Michigan occupied housing accounted for 88.9 percent of the housing units in 1990 and 89.4 percent in 2000. This difference can be attributed to the large number of seasonal housing units (cottages) within Sherman Township – and it appears to be a growing difference in the Township with higher vacancy rates in 2000 than in 1990. When the number of owner-occupied housing units is compared to the total number of housing units, Sherman Township had a higher percentage (71.8 percent) than Michigan (63.1 percent) in 1990. This was not the trend in 2000, when the percentage of owner occupied units decreased to 63.8 percent in the Township and increased to 66.0 percent in Michigan. When the number of owner-occupied units is compared to occupied units, Sherman Township had a much higher percentage (89.8 percent) than Michigan (71.0 percent) in 1990. In 2000, the Township also had a higher percentage of its occupied units occupied by owners (86.4 percent) than Michigan (73.8 percent). Usually, a higher percentage of owner-occupied housing units is a good sign since homeownership encourages pride in the housing units and community. Also, the lower percentage of renter-

occupied units can be attributed to the lack of apartments (see next section) in Sherman Township.

Table 10: Housing Tenure

	SHERMAN TOWNSHIP				MICHIGAN	
	1990		2000		1990	2000
	#	%	#	%	%	%
Total Housing Units	394	100.0	506	100.0	100.0	100.0
Occupied	315	79.9	374	73.9	88.9	89.4
Owner Occupied	283	71.8 (89.8)	323	63.8 (86.4)	63.1 (71.0)	66.0 (73.8)
Renter Occupied	32	8.1 (10.2)	51	10.1 (13.6)	25.8 (29.0)	23.4 (26.2)
Vacant	79	20.1	132	26.1	11.1	10.6

Source: U.S. Census of Population

### Housing Types

The types of housing units in Sherman Township are very different than in Michigan. In 2000, 366 (72.3 percent) of the Township’s 506 housing units were traditional single family homes. This proportion is lower than Michigan’s figure of 74.5 percent. Sherman Township also had fewer duplexes (0.4 percent) than Michigan (3.5 percent). The Township has no multiple-family homes, which made up 15.3 percent of Michigan’s housing units in 2000. While Sherman Township had a lower proportion of traditional homes, duplexes, and apartments in 2000, it had a much higher proportion of mobile homes, trailers, and other types of units (27.3 percent) than Michigan (6.7 percent). The Township’s ratios of housing type distribution did not change a great deal between 1990 and 2000.

Table 11: Housing Type Distribution

TYPE OF UNIT	SHERMAN TOWNSHIP				MICHIGAN	
	1990		2000		1990	2000
	#	%	#	%	%	%
1 unit	290	73.6	366	72.3	72.8	74.5
2 unit	0	0.0	2	0.4	4.2	3.5
3 or more	0	0.0	0	0.0	15.6	15.3
Mobile Home, Trailer or Other	104	26.4	138	27.3	7.5	6.7
Total Units	394	100.0	506	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: U.S. Census of Population

### Age of Housing

Sherman Township’s housing stock is newer than Michigan’s with a median year built of 1976 for the Township and 1965 for Michigan. The Township does have a higher

proportion of housing units built before 1940, but Michigan has a higher proportion built between 1940 and 1970. Sherman Township has a higher proportion built since 1970.

Table 12: Age of Housing

YEAR BUILT	SHERMAN TOWNSHIP		MICHIGAN
	#	%	%
1939 or earlier	89	17.6	16.9
1940-1959	41	8.1	26.5
1960-1969	59	11.7	14.2
1970-1979	113	22.3	17.1
1980-1989	101	20.0	10.5
1990-March 2000	103	20.4	14.8
Total	506	100.0	100.0
Median Year Built	1976	---	1965

Source: U.S. Census of Population

**DEMOGRAPHIC PROJECTIONS**

The Sherman Township Planning Commission developed the following projections based on past trends, ongoing development, and several assumptions related to growth in the Township. Overall, projections indicate the population will increase to 1,441 by 2020 – which is a 33.0 percent increase. Projections indicate the median age is expected to increase to 45.7 by 2020 – if past trends continue. The number of households is expected to increase at a greater rate than the population due to the projected decrease in household size. The number of households is expected to increase from 369 in 2000 to 515 in 2020. Also, the need for housing will outpace the projected population growth due to the smaller household sizes and trends reflecting more vacant units. The number of housing units is expected to increase from 506 in 2000 to 888 in 2020.

The projections include many assumptions related to past trends plus they assume that no multiple family housing be developed in the future.

**Population Projections**

Between 2000 and 2020 Sherman Township’s population projections project an increase from 1,081 residents to 1,441 in 2020, which is a 33.0 percent increase.

While Sherman Township is projected to grow by 33.0 percent, Osceola County is also projected to increase – growing from 23,197 residents in 2000 to 31,563 in 2020. This 36.1 percent increase is not as large as the projected increase for Region 8, which is projected to increase by 41.6 percent during the 20-year period.

These population projections are based on trends and recent development. Many things can influence the trends including planning, community goals, the economy, fuel costs, marketing, economic development, and other influences. These same projections are used in this plan to project the housing needs for the township.

Table 13: Population Projections

AREA	POPULATION					CHANGE 2000-2020	
	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	#	%
Sherman Township	1,081	1,163	1,250	1,342	1,441	360	33.0
Osceola County	23,197	24,950	26,896	29,081	31,563	8,366	36.1
Region 8	1,104,848	1,199,029	1,304,955	1,425,607	1,564,894	460,046	41.6
Michigan	9,938,444	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.

Source: U.S. Census of Population; West Michigan Regional Planning Commission

**Household Distribution Projections**

The projected number of households is expected to grow at a greater rate than the population due to the fact that household sizes continue to decrease. By 2020, projections indicate there will be 515 households within Sherman Township. This represents an increase of 39.6 percent, while the population is projected to increase by 33.0 percent. Within the household types, the percentage of family households is projected to decrease; and within the family households category, the percentage of married family households is expected to decrease. Conversely, the percentage of non-family households is expected to increase. Overall, the average household size is projected to decrease from 2.89 persons per household in 2000, to 2.77 in 2020.

Table 14: Household Distribution Projections

	TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS				NONFAMILY HOUSEHOLDS			PERSONS PER HOUSEHOLD	PERSONS IN GROUP QUARTERS
		Total	Married Couple Family	Female Householder with no Spouse	Male Householder with no Spouse	Total	Householder Living Alone	Householder 65 & Over Living Alone		
2000	369	292	236	36	20	77	53	11	2.8	15
%	100.0	79.1	64.0	9.8	5.4	20.9	14.4	3.0	---	---
2010	436	339	269	40	31	97	62	13	2.83	15
%	100.0	77.8	61.8	9.2	7.0	22.2	14.3	3.0	---	---
2020	515	394	307	44	44	121	73	15	2.77	15
%	100.0	76.5	59.6	8.6	8.6	23.5	14.2	3.0	---	---

Source: U.S. Census of Population; West Michigan Regional Planning Commission

**Housing Projections**

Housing units are expected to continue to increase as the Township’s population increases, as households decrease in size, and as vacancy rates increase. Projections indicate that between 2000 and 2020 the number of housing units is projected to increase to 888 units by 2020 with an occupancy rate of only 61.9 percent.

Table 15: Housing Projections

	2000		2010		2020	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total Housing Units	506	100.0	660	100.0	888	100.0
Occupied	374	73.9	448	67.9	550	61.9
Vacant	132	26.1	212	32.1	338	38.1

Source: U.S. Census of Population; West Michigan Regional Planning Commission

**Housing Type Projections**

Projections for the types of housing located in Sherman Township, based on past trends, indicate that single family housing units will continue to be the predominant housing type, accounting for 69.7 percent of the total units in 2020. Duplexes will account for a small portion of the homes (1.2 percent) and mobile homes will account for the remaining portion (29.1 percent).

Table 16: Housing Type Projections

Housing Type	2000		2010		2020	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
1 unit	366	72.3	469	71.0	619	69.7
2 unit	2	0.4	5	0.8	11	1.2
Multiple Family	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Mobile Home, Trailer or Other	138	27.3	186	28.2	258	29.1
Total Units	506	100.0	660	100.0	888	100.0

Source: U.S. Census of Population; West Michigan Regional Planning Commission

## **PUBLIC INPUT**

The West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (WMRPC) spent February 7, 2006 interviewing a variety of Sherman Township residents. The interviews were held at Sherman Township Hall and were either one-on-one interviews, or small group sessions. Also, the WMRPC held a group session with the Planning Commission and members of the public at the regularly scheduled meeting of the Planning Commission on the same evening.

The following people participated in the February 7, 2006 sessions:

- Dick Black
- James Calkins
- Ruth Calkins
- Judy Finazzi
- Shawn Gingrich
- John Grix
- Joe Grugal
- Denise Justus
- Jeffrey King (mail)
- Gloria Langworthy (mail)
- Sara Ludviksen
- Amy Martin
- Ron Moesta
- Pete Nemish
- Flo Nye
- Louis Nye
- Jim Peterson
- Bruce Raymond
- Gary Schultz
- June Schultz
- Jerry Shelton
- Eldon Teelander

The facilitator asked the participants four open-ended questions relating to the existing strengths and weaknesses of the Township and the Township's future opportunities and threats. The following summarizes the comments:

### **Strengths**

The strengths identified during the process form five broad categories that are described in the following paragraphs. The planning process should build on these strengths.

Participants listed many traits related to the Township's rural character and agricultural background. Residents recognize that one of the biggest strengths of the Township is the fact that it still has large areas of undeveloped land and land that is used for agricultural uses. There does seem to be a debate about the importance of farming in the Township, with some people feeling it is essential to the continued success of the area, while others feel agriculture is no longer a key land use.

- Rural Character (8)
- Beauty of area (5)
- Family farms (3)
- Recreation value of open space (2)
- Large amounts of open space (2)
- Still see the stars at night (2)
- Agriculture enhances quality of area (2)
- Agriculture as a livelihood still important to many (2)
- Essential to maintain rural character (1)

While Sherman Township may not have a lot of public facilities or programs, people listed many such features as strengths. While none stand out as a favorite, local government (not just Sherman Township) has a positive influence on most peoples' lives.

- Annual Clean-up (3)
- Positive/progressive Township Board (3)
- Township parks (2)
- No junkyards/landfills in Township (2)
- Roads are better than in the past (2)
- Anybody can raise livestock (1)
- Good park south of Township (Rose Lake County Park) (1)
- Township Planning Commission easy to work with (1)
- Schools (1)
- Library (in Village of Tustin) (1)
- Township Cemetery (1)
- Township Hall (1)
- New facilities at Kettunen Center (1)

Many participants discussed the Township's natural features when discussing strengths. While agriculture and open space are part of the natural features, or are impacted by the natural features, there are several features that are unique strengths. The rolling hills, the clean air, and the opportunities that such features provide (outdoor sports) were all discussed.

- Topography (7)
- Hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, outdoor sports (4)
- Clean air/environment (3)
- Big lakes nearby (2)
- Center Lake (2)

Many people feel that the Township's residents are a major strength. Friendly people that are willing to help their neighbors and the fact that everyone knows their neighbors is key to the Township's character.

- Neighbors/People/Family (12)
- Small population (1)
- Local traditions (1)
- Many concerned residents (1)

Closely tied to the strengths related to the rural nature of the Township, many people like the Township the way it is, and hope that it remains relatively unchanged as time progresses, but most people are impressed by the quality of new housing that is being developed in the Township – and they like the lack of commercial and industrial development. Essentially, many people like the current pace and focus of development.

- Quality of new housing (6)
- No big commercial or industrial developments in Township (4)

The Township’s location is important. While Sherman Township has a great “up-north” character and many great natural features, it is relatively close to many large cities in Michigan and several key highways.

- Central location in Michigan (4)
- Close to major highways (US-131, M-115, US-10, M-66) (4)

### **Weaknesses**

The weaknesses identified during the process form four broad categories that are described in the following paragraphs. The planning process should seek to address these issues.

While most issues can be tied to planning, there are many planning-related issues and policies that are directly linked to how a community plans and zones its area. Due to the significance of farming in how the Township developed, and the relationship of the loss of agricultural lands to the future development of the area, agriculture-related issues are included in this category. The primary weaknesses listed by participants relate to the division of land – breaking large pieces of land into smaller sections that are not suitable for farming and that disrupt the large tracts of land that are viewed as a major strength of Sherman Township. Many people cited the cost (taxes) related to maintaining large tracts of land as primary motivation for selling of pieces. Several people questioned the reasoning behind large minimum lot sizes – directly related to the division of land. Also, changing agricultural practices (bigger farms) were cited as an influence. The importance of forested areas, and differentiating these areas from traditional agriculture, was also listed.

- Division of land (8)
- Loss of agricultural lands (5)
- Taxes hard on agriculture-residential category – need another land use/zoning category to encourage people to live with 40 acre blocks (3)
- Large minimum lot sizes spreads development too thinly and uses too much land (3)
- Question value of zoning – if Township is challenged it cannot afford a lawsuit (1)
- Lack of special category for forested land (1)
- Much of Township is not buildable due to topography, wetlands, soils (1)
- Farms need to be much bigger than in the past for farmers to make a living (1)
- Takes years for trees to grow back after farms are let go fallow (1)

The condition of roads in Sherman Township is an issue that is on most peoples' minds.

- Condition of roads (11)
- Relationship with OCRC (2)
- Lack of connecting roads to surrounding areas (i.e. Cadillac) (1)
- 140<sup>th</sup> Avenue between 18 Mile Road and 19 Mile Road needs paved (1)
- Road to Kettunen Center needs paved (1)

Governance, rules, and regulations that impact residents – but may not be considered strictly land use oriented – were discussed by many residents. This category also includes several other issues that do not fit into any general topic but that relate to the quality of life in the Township.

- Junk and lack of ability to enforce ordinances related to junk (6)
- Some services/utilities limited or unavailable (cable, internet, natural gas, etc.) (3)
- Lack of interest in improving Center Lake Park (2)
- Lack of uniform enforcement of regulations related to businesses (1)
- Public school numbers (students) decreasing (1)
- Vacant housing (1)
- Many weaknesses describe most rural areas – not just Sherman Township (1)

Many issues that people identified can be listed as social issues, and relate to income, education, and the changing economy, or people in-general. The changing economy has made farming less attractive as a vocation then in the past. Another interesting issue relates to how some people move to a rural area thinking there are no rules – only to find that rules do exist. Poverty in rural areas, unemployment, formal education, and affordable housing are all related topics that influence the quality of life in any area.

- Decrease in farming as a source of employment (3)
- Many people feel that living in a rural area gives them unlimited rights (3)
- Low income areas/rural poverty (3)
- Not many people to participate (2)
- Lack of affordable housing options for young people (1)
- Lack of formal education (1)
- Not good area for business (1)
- Lack of jobs (1)

## **Opportunities**

Opportunities are usually more difficult to identify than a strength or a weakness since they tend to be in the future or just “over the horizon.” The following four categories group comments received.

Most of the opportunities that participants cited related to the need to properly plan for the Township's future. Preserving farmland and creating a plan that preserves the rural

character of the Township were two opportunities. Serving as a bedroom community, recognizing that the Township is not an employment center, was also seen as an opportunity by some. Closely related to preserving farmland is the use of cluster development – a land use technique that “clusters” housing units in smaller lots while preserving larger tracts of land as open space.

- Need to preserve farming opportunities for future generations (6)
- Create plan/zoning that reflects rural character of the Township (5)
- Beautiful bedroom community (4)
- Cluster development would provide areas for growth and preserve open space (3)
- Keep Township beautiful (2)
- Still have many freedoms to do what you want with your land (2)
- Do not desire a lot of change (1)
- Need to balance zoning with needs of small businesses and farmers (1)
- Many new large homes being built in Sherman Township (1)
- Lots of development over past 35 years (1)
- Need more restaurants (1)
- Scenic Corridor (1)
- Encourage right kind of businesses (1)

Many people cited improvements to the built environment as opportunities. Improving the Township’s parks is seen as an opportunity. Other opportunities are listed below.

- Improve Township Parks (6)
- Modern world provides opportunities for home-employment and entrepreneurs (1)
- Mackinaw Trail as scenic highway (1)
- Need to adequately fund (grants, millage, etc.) road improvements (1)
- Develop additional parks and trails (1)

Natural features were listed as an opportunity.

- Hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, and other sports (4)
- Governments need to encourage planting more trees (1)
- Center Lake (1)

People were also listed as an opportunity.

- Retired people moving into area (increases local average income) (1)
- Environmental stewardship, people aware of their impact on the environment (1)
- Good family heritage (1)

## Threats

Threats, like opportunities, are also more difficult to identify than a strength or a weakness since threats tend to be in the future or just “over the horizon.” The following four categories group comments received.

The primary threats listed by people relate to the loss of rural character due to over development, loss of farmland, and lot splits. Every other comment in this subcategory is related to some form of development and its impact on the existing character of the Township.

- Too much development (9)
- Loss of farmland (6)
- Lot splits (5)
- Communication towers/wind turbines in Township (3)
- Not many development opportunities (+/-) (1)
- Industrial development (1)
- Loss of ability to move across large areas of land due to development (1)
- Only one lake that is pretty built-up with camps and Township Park (1)
- Turning into bedroom community (1)
- Low density development is not sustainable – reduces ability to farm, destroys open space, and spreads resources too thinly (1)
- Threat/impact of large mobile home parks (1)

The economy is a major concern that can influence the ability of people to maintain an affordable lifestyle in Sherman Township.

- Loss of township form of government (2)
- Dighton’s economic and physical condition (2)
- Woodlands act – influence on taxes
- Limited tax base
- Inadequate enforcement of ordinances
- Michigan’s economy
- Development pushes property values up and makes it prohibitive for young people to get a start
- Taxes force many people to sell farmland

Threats related to the built environment are listed, but did not receive many due to the fact that most of these can be overcome (with money).

- Lack of Class A roads limits capacity (2)
- Lack of adequate electrical (3-phase power) (1)
- Aging mobile homes (1)
- Tire piles, junk (1)

Some participants identified people-related threats, but there were no real clear patterns identified.

- Vandalism in parks (1)
- Drugs and the effect on a community (1)
- Land going to many down-state people (1)
- Increasing number of people living in poverty (1)
- Weekend residents (1)
- Land not staying in families (1)

## ISSUES, GOALS, AND ACTIONS

The following section identifies the issues, goals, and some potential actions that can be taken to guide the Township towards its vision described at the beginning of the plan.

### Population & Housing

**Issue** – Excessive development of new housing can negatively impact the rural nature of Sherman Township.

**Goal** – Plan for an appropriate amount of residential growth in the Township to allow for a population of 1,550 by 2025.

**Actions:**

1. Promote residential growth in areas that have soils that can support residential uses for long periods of time with limited public support.
2. Promote residential growth in areas without severe slopes or other physical limitations.
3. Concentrate new residential development in areas with adequate roads.
4. Consider increasing minimum lot sizes when updating the Township Zoning Ordinance in and around agricultural areas and open space areas.
5. Consider developing educational materials for developers and people interested in building a home or moving to Sherman Township to promote the Township’s vision for the future.
6. Consider adopting zoning that encourages the permanent preservation of open space by developers in exchange for allowing for the development of higher density housing in designated areas.
7. Continue to work with the Osceola County Planning Commission and the various County departments and agencies that can assist Sherman Township in achieving its preferred future.

### Agriculture

**Issue** – Agriculture is important to preserving the rural character of the Township, but the viability of agriculture is decreasing due to challenges faced by farmers and the number of farmers in the Township continues to decrease.

**Goal** – Preserve agricultural space.

**Actions:**

1. Identify key agricultural areas using this plan. Include the input of farmers (full-time and part-time) in Sherman Township.
2. Consider promoting value-added opportunities (working with Osceola County, MSU Extension, and other groups) in West Michigan to increase the profitability of farming.

3. Consider a local Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program to preserve farmland or participate in a county-wide program if Osceola County initiates a PDR program.
4. Preserve the rights of existing farmers by promoting residential growth in areas that will not create conflicts between residential areas and farmers.
5. Consider developing educational materials for developers and people interested in building a home or moving to Sherman Township to inform them of the Township’s existing agricultural base.
6. Consider increasing minimum lot sizes when updating the Township Zoning Ordinance in and around agricultural areas.

### **Open Space**

**Issue** – Open Space is an important part of preserving the rural character of the Township, but development pressures can reduce the amount of available open space.

**Goal** – Preserve Open Space.

#### **Actions:**

1. Identify key open space areas using this plan. Include the input of property owners.
2. Consider working with the Cadillac Area Land Conservancy to preserve key sites within the Township.
3. Consider nominating key sites for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) to acquire.
4. Consider adopting zoning that encourages the permanent preservation of open space by developers in exchange for allowing for the development of higher density housing.
5. Investigate the ability to limit development, through zoning, that would preserve valued “viewsheds” in Sherman Township.
6. Continue to include “scenic corridor” designation in Master Plan and determine if any tools exist to promote goals of the Township.

### **Public Spaces & Services**

**Issue** – Sherman Township currently maintains a variety of public spaces and public services that provide a variety of benefits to Township Residents.

**Goal** – Continue to maintain public spaces and services that serve the needs of Sherman Township’s residents.

#### **Actions:**

1. Prepare a parks and recreation plan (required if seeking funding from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund) to determine if the Township’s two parks are serving the needs of residents.

2. Continue to maintain the Township Cemetery. Determine if additional land is required for the long-term viability of the cemetery.
3. Continue to maintain the Township Hall.
4. Continue to work with neighboring communities to provide fire protection.
5. Continue to provide annual clean-up day services residents to help keep the Township beautiful and to provide a valuable community service.
6. Determine the long-range needs for additional services and facilities related to land use needs/requirements.

## **Transportation**

**Issue** – The transportation network is directly tied to the growth of Sherman Township.

**Goal** – Sherman Township will insure that roads within the Township serve the existing and future needs of residents, visitors, and businesses.

1. Continue to work with the Osceola County Road Commission to maintain and improve the Township’s transportation network.
2. Continue to maintain a list of roads to improve.
3. Continue to work with the Kettunen Center to identify funding sources for paving 145<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 4H Road.
4. Keep up-to-date on the needs of residents related to transit needs.

## **Environment**

**Issue** – The Township’s environment is a major strength that must be preserved to insure the Township’s long-term success.

**Goal** – Encourage the preservation of the Township’s environment through planning and programs.

### **Actions:**

1. Work with Osceola County, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality to maintain a safe environment in the Township.
2. Ensure development does not exceed the capacity of the soils to treat septic wastes.
3. Ensure development does not harm the area’s groundwater.
4. Control development along lakes and streams to limit runoff from septic systems and yards (fertilizers etc.).
5. Encourage the proper disposal of household hazardous wastes by using existing county programs, or initiating local program.
6. Work with residents, the Michigan Public Services Commission, and businesses that are promoting the generation of power using wind, to

develop appropriate guidelines in the Township’s Zoning Ordinance related to the placement, maintenance, and operation of wind turbine generators and related support equipment.

7. Ensure actions related to the placement of wind turbine generators and related support equipment are coordinated with actions related to preserving the Township’s valued viewsheds.
8. Promote sustainable development, renewable energy, and other practices to responsibly utilize the area’s natural resources.

### **Economic Development & Revitalization**

**Issue** – Commercial businesses are necessary to serve the needs of the Township’s residents.

**Goal** – Promote an appropriate amount of commercial space to serve the day-to-day needs of Township residents.

**Action:**

1. Promote commercial businesses in the unincorporated Village of Dighton, Channel 9/10, and areas immediately east of the Village of Tustin.
2. Work with the Michigan Department of Transportation and businesses to promote Access Management (regulating access to businesses from roadways) in existing and potential commercial areas.

**Issue** – The unincorporated area of Dighton is in poor physical condition.

**Goal** – Encourage the improvement of Dighton.

**Actions:**

1. Work with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) and USDA Rural Development to identify programs available to assist existing and potential residents and businesses within Dighton.
2. Work with Osceola County Economic Development Corporation to strengthen existing businesses and encourage new businesses.
3. Encourage affordable, higher density housing in the Dighton Area.
4. Work with Osceola County to address blighted properties.

## **FUTURE LAND USE**

### **Introduction and Basis**

The 2006 Sherman Township Master Plan is an update of the 1994 Sherman Township Master Plan. The Master Plan is a general guide for future development and is intended to direct future land use into a development pattern which is logical, efficient, esthetically pleasing, environmentally sound, and addresses the goals of the Township. A basic concept which has guided the Plan's development (in 1994 and 2006) is the desire to retain the rural character and natural features which make Sherman Township an attractive place to live.

This plan is designed to accommodate a reasonable amount of new development in a flexible manner. However, any such development that occurs must also be done in accordance with sound land use controls (further defined in the Sherman Township Zoning Ordinance), and it must be consistent with the Township's character and values. The concepts which form the foundation of the Master Plan are summarized below:

1. Comprehensive changes are not anticipated or encouraged in the Township's character or population. Sherman Township is expected to remain a rural residential community in an attractive natural setting. The area's natural features will continue to dominate the charter of the Township's development.
2. In terms of population growth, a twenty-year (2025) projected population of about 1,550 people appears reasonable – based on historical trends.
3. In all future development, the Plan advocates retaining the Township's natural features, forests, open space, and agricultural areas to the greatest extent possible.
4. Additional low-density rural residential development should be accommodated in a manner that is attractive, environmentally sustainable, and compatible with adjacent land uses.
5. More intensive residential development should be accommodated in the area designated as Village Center.
6. An appropriate amount of commercial space to serve the day-to-day needs of Township residents should be accommodated adjacent to existing commercial areas.

## **Future Land Use Categories**

Map 6 shows the general distribution of the future land use categories across Sherman Township. Table 17 identifies the approximate distribution of land uses shown in Map 6. Public roadways are not accounted for in the land use distribution and are included in acreage figures for adjacent land uses. Due to the difference in level of detail between the Existing Land Use distribution and the Future Land Use distribution, it is difficult to show the projected change in land use distribution. No major changes are identified in the Future Land Use Plan.

**Rural Residential** – This category accounts for the majority of the Township’s acreage and is intended to maintain the Township’s rural character. The following characteristics are promoted in this area:

1. Single-family homes are located throughout the area. Residential development is very low density.
2. Parcels of land are generally at least one acre in size, with most parcels exceeding ten acres.
3. Natural features, including wooded areas and other natural vegetation, and scenic vistas are abundant.
4. Access to parcels is via frontage on County section line roads. Public roads, other than section line roads, are not present in many locations.
5. Farms and open space are prevalent across the Township.

This future land use category provides for a controlled mixture of rural land uses in accordance with appropriate land use controls and development standards. Major uses include single-family residences, agriculture (including forestry and tree farming), and open space. Commercial uses include outdoor recreation, home occupations, and small commercial uses to meet the day-to-day needs of residents. Planned residential development should be encouraged.

The uses and intensity of development intended for this area will not create additional demands for public services or facilities. Public utilities (water and sewer) are not provided in this category.

**Village Center** – This category covers the unincorporated area of Dighton in portions of sections 25, 26, 35, and 36. This category encourages the use of smaller lots that have already been platted and to encourage the development and improvement of the area.

Uses encouraged in the area include additional residential development at moderate densities on existing platted lots. Retail businesses should be encouraged in the existing

storefront properties. Dighton provides a logical location for the establishment of additional local retail and service businesses.

**Public** – This Category includes public facilities owned and/or operated by Sherman Township, Osceola County, or the State of Michigan. These properties currently include two parks (Sections 12 and 21), a portion of a trail system (Section 6), a cemetery (Section 15), the Township Hall (Section 22), and the County Road Commission Maintenance Facility in Section 26.

**Private/Quasi-Public Recreation** – This category includes facilities that are owned by private or quasi-public interests that provide recreation resources to the general public or targeted groups. These properties include the Bible Camp (Section 21), the Kettunen Center (Section 22), and the Golf Course in Section 32.

**Proposed Scenic Corridor Overlay District** – This proposed overlay district is proposed along portions of Mackinaw Trail and 130<sup>th</sup>/135<sup>th</sup> Avenues. These corridors are proposed because of their natural beauty and scenic values. Additional land use controls and development standards may be designated to properly manage these corridors and to maintain the natural characteristics of the corridors.

**Commercial Areas Outside Village Center** – Due to the general nature and scale of the Master Plan, small existing commercial areas or individual businesses are not represented on the map. This is not intended to discourage such uses, but it is necessary to carefully analyze such uses when updating the Township Zoning Ordinance or when rezoning requests are filed. If allowed to expand beyond their existing sites, these uses should only be allowed along primary access routes adjacent to other existing commercial uses.

Table 17: Future Land Use Distribution

Category	Acreage	Percent of Total Acreage
Rural Residential	22,880	96.3
Village Center	390	1.6
Public	60	0.3
Private/Quasi-Public Recreation	420	1.8
Total	23,750	100.0

Source: West Michigan Regional Planning Commission

**Map 6**

## **PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

The intent of the Sherman Township Master Plan is to serve as a guide on both short-term and long-term issues facing the Township now and in the future. The goals identified in the Master Plan are based on the Planning Commission's input as well as input from residents of the Township. Implementation of this Master Plan relies on the following strategies and the goals and actions identified earlier in the Plan.

### **Use of Master Plan by Planning Commission**

Preparation and implementation of the Master Plan is the Township Planning Commission's responsibility. The Planning Commission should employ the Plan as a general guideline for making decisions on special use permits, rezoning requests, zoning ordinance text amendments, subdivisions of land, and related land use matters. The Township Planning Commission should regularly review the Plan (at least every five years) for the Plan's appropriateness to Sherman Township's goals.

### **Acceptance and Use of the Master Plan by the Township Board**

The Township Board is not required to adopt the Master Plan. However, as the legislative body of the Township, it is important that the Board accept the Plan and use it in the decision-making process. As a first step in this direction, the Township Board should be asked to accept and endorse the Plan, following its adoption by the Planning Commission. The Board should use the Plan as a guide when making land use decisions such as rezoning requests and ordinance text amendments.

### **Revision to the Township Zoning Ordinance**

The Township Zoning Ordinance should remain the most important tool for Plan implementation. Revisions to the Zoning Ordinance may be necessary to translate the goals found in the Master Plan into law.

### **Public Involvement and Education**

Public involvement and awareness is important to the success of any plan. The Township should recognize the Plan's importance and support its findings. The Planning Commission should keep the citizens involved in the planning process.

### **Plan Updates**

The Planning Commission should review the goals of the Master Plan on an annual basis to ensure the goals continue to reflect the views of the Township. The Planning Commission should review the overall plan to determine if an update is necessary at least every five years.