



# Town of Somerset Comprehensive Plan 2023



## Acknowledgments

Thank you to the following elected officials, staff and community partners that participated in the development of the 2023 Town of Somerset Comprehensive Plan. Thank you to the community members who took the community survey and provided comments that informed the Comprehensive Plan.

### **Town of Somerset Board of Supervisors**

Ed Schachtner, Chairman  
Lenny Germain  
Shane Demulling  
Douglas Plourde  
Tim Witzmann

### **Town of Somerset Parks Recreation & Plan Commission Committee**

Ed Schachtner, Chairman  
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Joseph Jahnke, Citizen Member  
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Larry Rauch, Citizen Member  
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### **Town of Somerset Staff and Community Partners**

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## Table of Contents

Acknowledgments .....	1
Table of Contents.....	2
Introduction .....	3
Issues & Opportunities.....	11
Housing.....	12
Transportation .....	25
Utilities & Community Facilities .....	45
Agricultural, Natural, & Cultural Resources .....	65
Economic Development.....	107
Intergovernmental Cooperation .....	127
Land Use .....	137
Implementation .....	165
Appendix A: Public Participation Results.....	168
Appendix B: Highway 64 Stormwater and Wastewater Coalition .....	191

## Introduction

In accordance with Wisconsin Statutes, the purpose of this Town of Somerset Comprehensive Plan is to guide and accomplish a coordinated, adjusted, and harmonious development of the community which will, in accordance with existing and future needs, best promote public health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity, or the general welfare, as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development. The plan provides an inventory of community assets and issues to determine the local needs, set goals and priorities, and develop a guide for action. This Town of Somerset 2023 Comprehensive Plan is an update of the adopted 2015-2035 Comprehensive Plan.

## 9 Comprehensive Plan Elements

*As set forth in Wisconsin Statutes §66.1001 comprehensive planning, the Town of Somerset comprehensive plan is organized by and addresses the nine elements:*

- 1) *Issues & Opportunities*
- 2) *Housing*
- 3) *Transportation*
- 4) *Utilities & Community Facilities*
- 5) *Agricultural, Natural, & Cultural Resources*
- 6) *Economic Development*
- 7) *Intergovernmental Cooperation*
- 8) *Land Use*
- 9) *Implementation*

## Plan Update Process

The Town of Somerset Comprehensive Plan update was prepared under the guidance of the Town Board of Supervisors, Plan Commission, and staff that reviewed the plan and conducted meetings between August 2022 and May 2023 with the St. Croix County facilitator as follows.

Meeting or Task	Description	Date
<b>Meeting 1: Town Board - Plan Commission</b>	Review / approve DRAFT schedule, outreach strategies, review previous plan issues	August 3, 2022
<b>Website and Survey</b>	Launched website, implemented online survey Sep 1 - Oct 16, 2022	September- October 2022
<b>Meeting 2: Town Board</b>	Adopted Resolution No. 2022-04 approving public participation plan	September 7, 2022
<b>Meeting 3: Public vision session</b>	Staff facilitate discussion and gather feedback with survey and reflection questions	September 22, 2022
<b>Meeting 4: Town Board</b>	Review public participation results	November 2, 2022
<b>Meeting 5: Joint Board - Commission</b>	Review DRAFT plan chapters	January 4, 2023
<b>Meeting 6: Joint Board - Commission</b>	Review DRAFT full plan	February 1, 2023
<b>Meeting 7: Joint Board - Commission</b>	Review DRAFT full plan	March 1, 2023
<b>Meeting 8: Joint Board - Commission</b>	Review DRAFT full plan	April 5, 2023
<b>Meeting 9: Public Hearing</b>	Plan Adoption	May 3, 2023

## Public Participation Process

On September 7, 2022 the Town Board adopted Resolution No. 2022-04 approving the public participation plan as required by Wisconsin Statutes sec. 66.1001(4). The resolution outlined the following participation plan to solicit public opinion. The town and county worked together to implement the public participation plan strategies. A public vision session was held on September 22, 2022 and a public survey was administered September – October 2022, both described in Appendix A. Results of the public vision session and survey can be found in Appendix A.

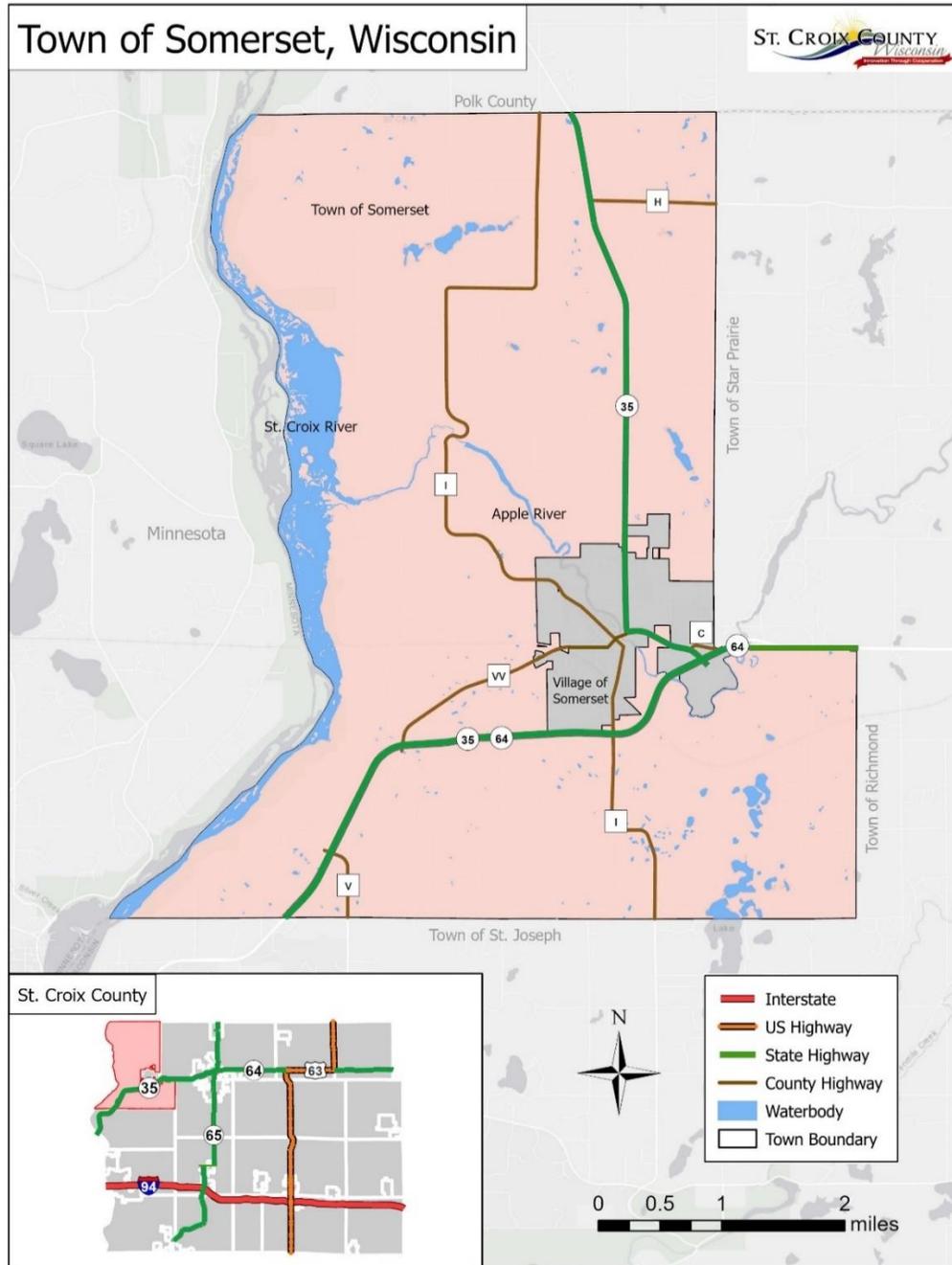
### Town of Somerset Resolution No: 2022-04 Public Participation Plan

1. Develop and administer the 2023 Town of Somerset comprehensive plan update survey both online and paper copies from September 1 – October 16, 2022
2. Promote the 2023 Town of Somerset comprehensive plan update survey by distributing post cards with the survey deadline, survey link, instructions for completion and instructions for submittal, to the property owners in the Town of Somerset
3. Host a public meeting to introduce the comprehensive plan update process, promote the survey, facilitate discussion of the Town issues and opportunities, and answer questions.
4. Promote the 2023 Town of Somerset comprehensive plan update survey and public meeting by hosting a webpage that provides updates
5. Report the results of the survey and public meeting
6. Review and consider the results of the survey and public meeting in the development of the 2023 Town of Somerset comprehensive plan update
7. Make the draft 2023 Town of Somerset comprehensive plan available for public review and comment 10 days prior to the public hearing
8. Hold a public hearing to accept public comment on the draft 2023 Town of Somerset comprehensive plan



## Location

The Town of Somerset is located in northwestern St. Croix County, in west-central Wisconsin. Town of Somerset is along State Highway 64 and is geographically the largest town in St. Croix County. The Village of Somerset is surrounded by the Town and provides some employment, shopping, and services. The Town is bordered on west by St. Croix River, on the east by the Towns of Star Prairie and Richmond, on the south by Town of St. Joseph, and on the north Polk County and Town of Farmington.



## History

The original natives of the area were, for the most part, people of the Dakota and Ojibway Native American tribes. European fur trappers and explorers used the St. Croix River as a travel route as early as the 17th century and the beauty of the valley was noted in their journals and records.

The first European settlers in the present Town of Somerset were two French Canadian brothers, Joseph and Louis Parent who arrived in 1850. They settled on the bluffs above the mouth of the Apple River. Many of their family and neighbors soon followed from Canada, settling on both the north and south sides of the Apple River. As others arrived, a schoolhouse and a church were built, and a French-Canadian community was born.



The Town of Somerset was organized on September 19, 1856. In 1859, General Samuel Harrison arrived in the Town of Somerset and built a sawmill on the Apple River, upstream from the original settlement. The sawmill prospered. A general store, church, hotel, and a schoolhouse were constructed upstream in what is now the Village of Somerset. The Village of Somerset was incorporated in 1918 and is surrounded by the Town of Somerset.

### PICTURED LEFT: HISTORIC TOWN HALL

The historic town hall on Main Street was built in 1886. In the past, both Town and Village Board of Directors held meetings at this location. Old Town Hall renovation efforts began in 2005 and the building opened for the sesquicentennial September of 2006.

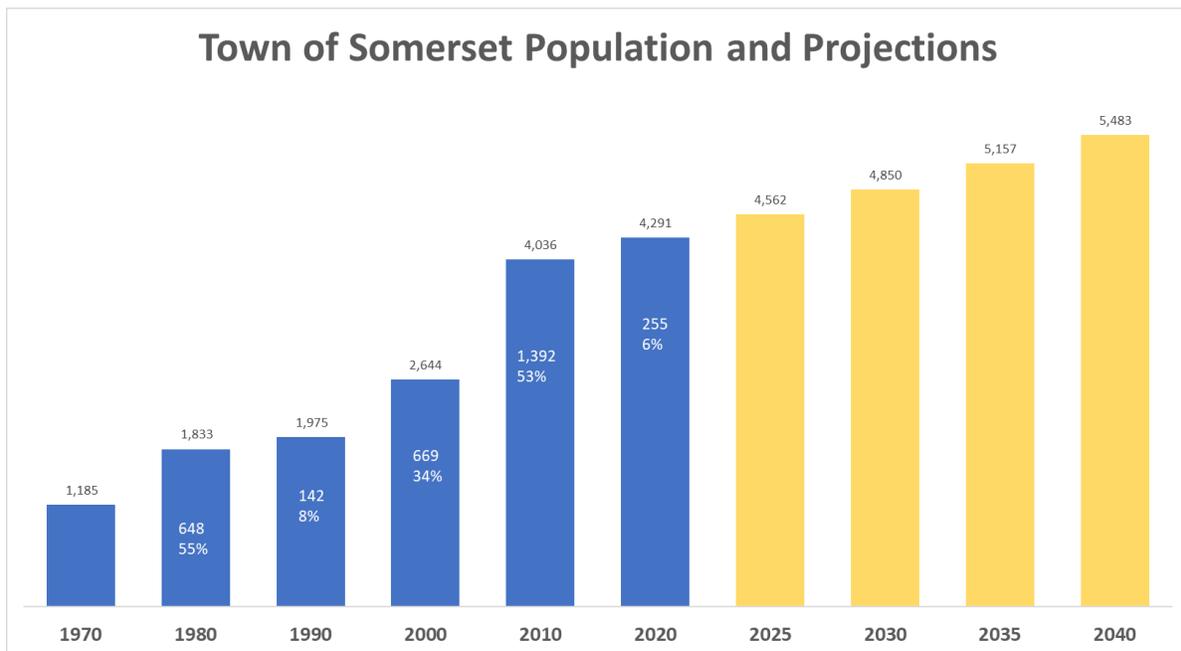
St. Croix County is 736 square miles and is host to 35 local units of government that include four (4) cities, ten (10) villages and 21 towns. The County of St. Croix was organized in 1838 and at that time was part of the Wisconsin Territory which extended into areas of the present day State of Minnesota. On February 2, 1844, Stillwater was designated as the county seat. In 1848 the Wisconsin Territory became a state, at which time the St Croix River became the western border for the State and St. Croix County.

## Population Demographics

To properly plan for the Town of Somerset's future requires an understanding of the community's population and demographic trends. Population trends influence all other plan elements, such as the demand for community services, economic development policy, and land use.

### Town of Somerset Population 1970-2020

According to WI Department of Administration, the Town of Somerset's most current population estimate for election purposes was 4,421 as of January 1, 2022. The graph below shows US Census decennial population estimates from 1970 to 2020 and projections to 2040. According to the estimates, the Town of Somerset has experienced population growth since 1970 with the greatest population increases in the following three decades: from 1970-1980 (648), 1990-2000 (669), and 2000-2010 (1,392). Town officials postulate that the impetus for the great population increase from 2000-2010 was the new home construction boom that attracted new residents. During that decade mortgage loans were easy to secure and developers negotiated land purchases to construct several new homes in town. Source of population 1970-2020: U.S. Census.

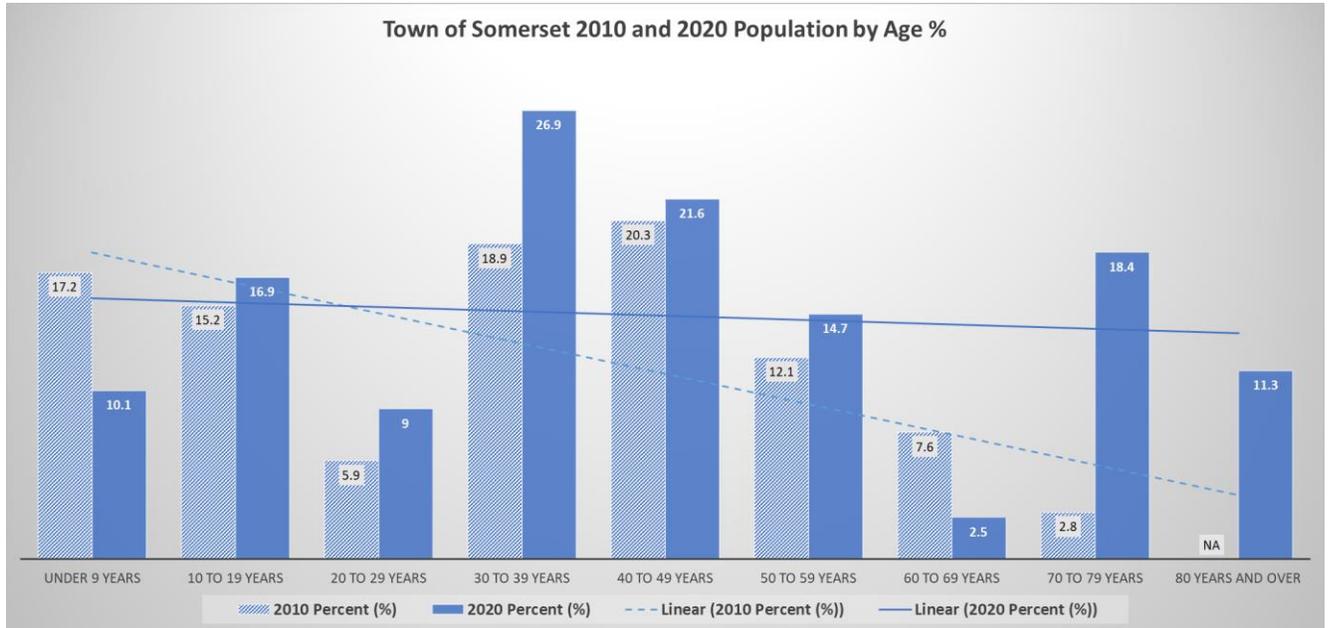


### Population Projections 2025-2040

The population projections, in the above graph, were developed using a growth trend extrapolation of the 2010 and 2020 census reported population. The Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) develops population projections and reported close predictions for 2020. DOA projected a population increase from 2010 census (4,036) to 2020 (4,770), that was off by 479 more persons than the census 2020 population estimate of 4,291. Using the wrong estimate in housing projections could have meant 200 houses x 3 acres, or 600 acres of land converted to residential. Therefore, it is essential to remember that the population numbers are estimates only. Please find more information about housing projections in the housing chapter.

## Town of Somerset Population by Age

The graph below shows the % population distribution by age groups for 2010 and 2020 in the Town of Somerset. For the Town, the group with the most population in 2020 was the 30-39 (26.9 percent) age group followed by the 40-49 (21.6%) age group. Since 1990, the median age has consistently increased in the Town of Somerset shown in the graph right. The population by age graph reveals 2010 and 2020 trend lines showing that in 2010 most of the population was younger than 40-49 compared to a relatively balanced population age in 2020.



Source: U.S. Census (ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles)

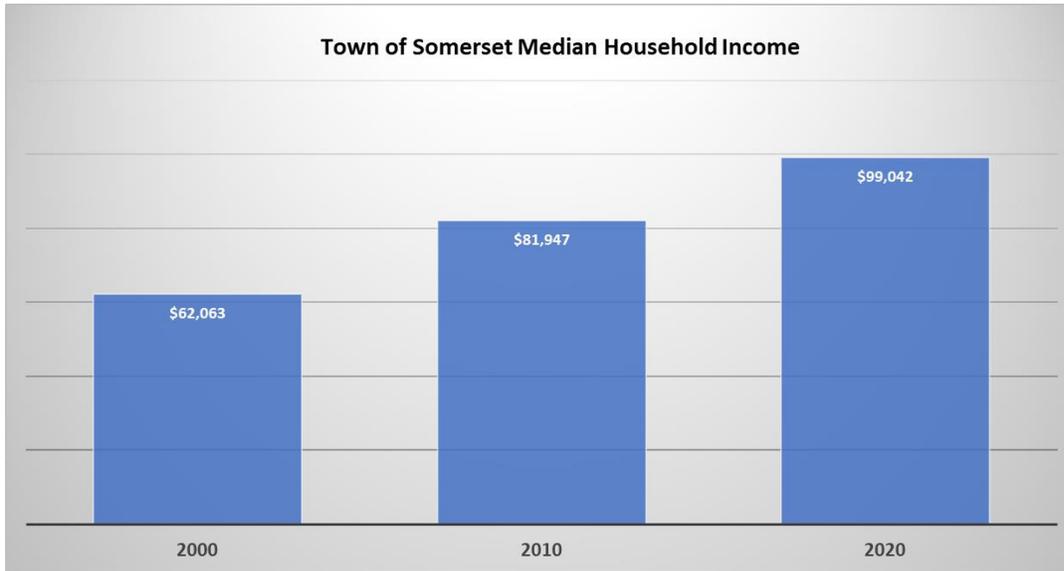
The age cohorts displayed in the 2010-2020 graph are evenly distributed into 9-year age groups. The 2015 comprehensive plan provided uneven age distribution groups (i.e. Under 5 = 5 years, 5 to 19 = 14 years, 20 to 44 = 24 years, 45 to 64 = 19 years) that are not comparable to the new data but provided in the table right for reference.

Population by Age, Town of Somerset, 1990-2010

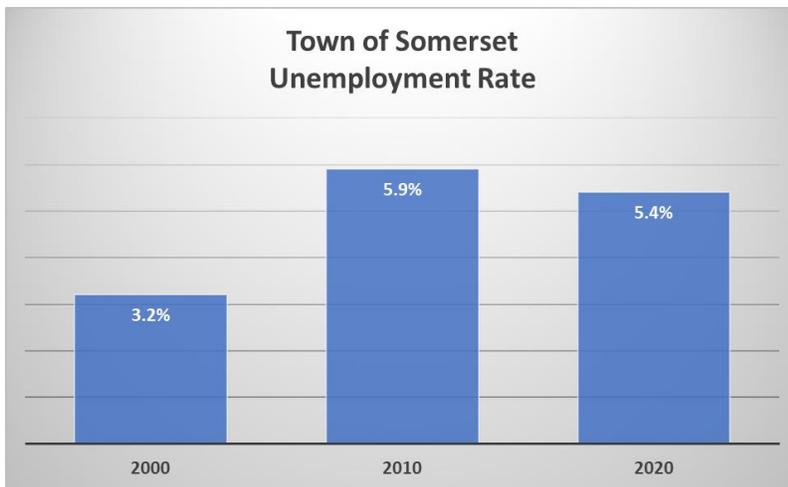
Age (years)	1990		2000		2010		% Change 1990-2010
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	
Under 5	160	8.1	183	6.9	263	6.5	64.4
5 to 19	514	26.0	642	24.3	965	23.9	87.7
20 to 44	836	42.3	985	37.3	1,268	31.4	51.7
45 to 64	330	16.7	648	24.5	1,232	30.5	273.3
65+	135	6.8	186	7.0	308	7.6	128.1
Total	1,975	100.0	2,644	100.0	4,036	100.0	104.4
Median Age	31.6		36.0		38.5 (county – 36.7)		

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990-2010

## Town of Somerset Median Income

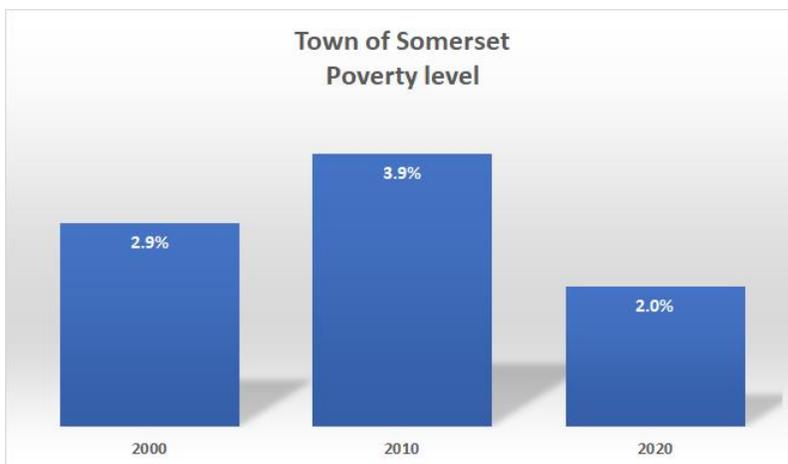


Town of Somerset's median household income has consistently increased since 2000 (\$62,063) to 2020 (\$99,042). Source: U.S. Census



### Unemployment Rate

The Town of Somerset experienced unemployment growth from 2000 (3.2%) to 2010 (5.9%). According to the US Census, the Town's unemployment rate dropped to 5.4% in 2020. Source: U.S. Census

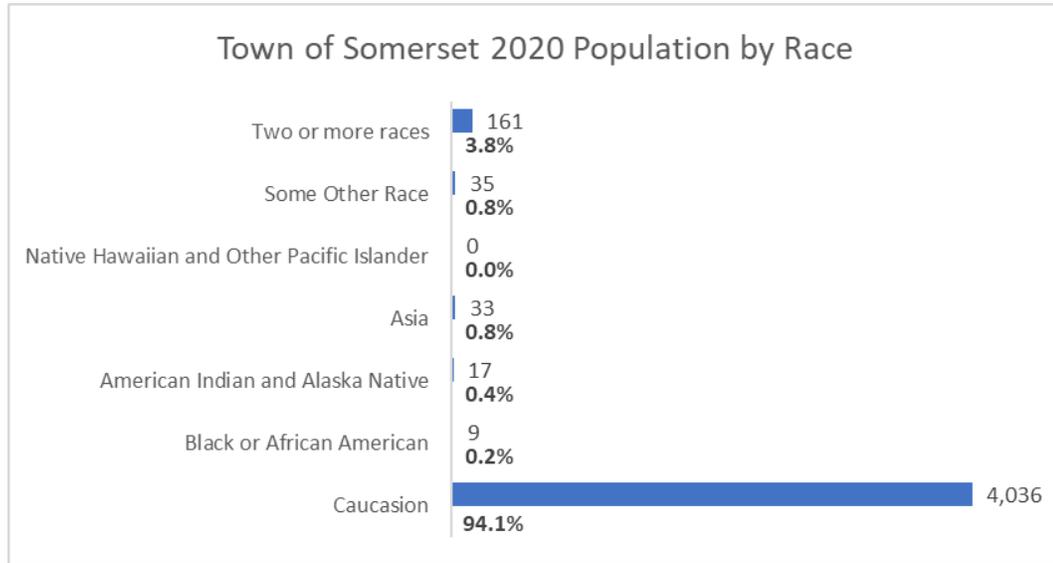


### Town of Somerset Poverty Level

Similar to the unemployment rate, the poverty level also dropped from 3.9% in 2010 to 2% in 2020. Both indicators reveal positive changes in the Town of Somerset economy in the past decade. Source: U.S. Census

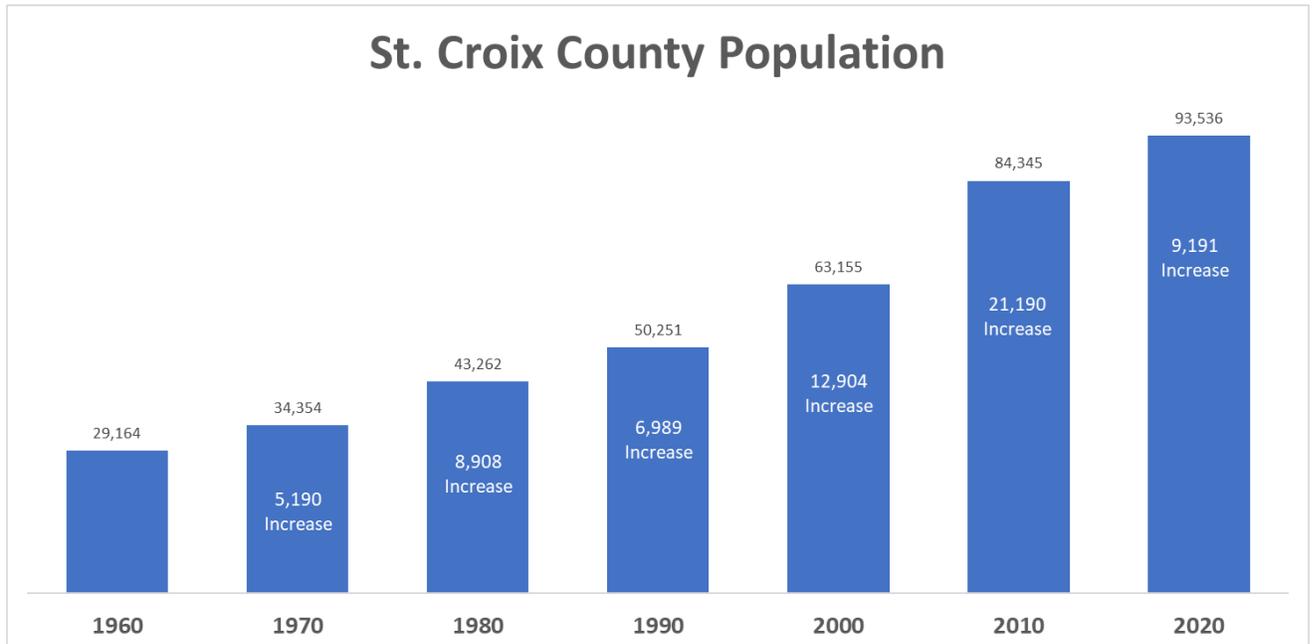
### Town of Somerset Population by Race

The Town is relatively racially homogenous with 87.3 percent of its population being Caucasian in 2020. (Source: 2020 U.S. Census DEC Redistricting Data)



### St. Croix County Population

The graph below displays the population trend in St. Croix County from 1960 through 2020. As illustrated in the graph, St. Croix County has experienced consistent population growth since 1960 with greatest increases from 1990-2000 (12,904), 2000-2010 (21,190), and 2010-2020 (9,191).



Source: U.S. Census

## Issues & Opportunities

### Vision statement

Wisconsin Statutes 66.1001 requires a statement of overall goals, objectives, policies, and programs of the local governmental unit to guide the future development and redevelopment of the local governmental unit. The vision statement serves as the overall plan goals. The implementation chapter of this plan contains all the goals, objectives and policies gathered from the public participation and analysis of each comprehensive plan element topic.

Top issues identified in the 2015 Comprehensive Plan with clarification and additions from the 2023 update process.

### Town of Somerset Top Issues

- Preserve rural character and small town feel by managing growth with subdivision design that enhances and preserves the existing natural resources, encourages quality development, and considers the impacts on town infrastructure
- Improve public safety river patrol
- Improve internet and phone speed and reliability
- Limit multi-family development
- Provide more bike routes and trails
- Increased need for public open space
- Encourage best management practices
- Continue groundwater testing in collaboration with St. Croix County Community Development Department
- Improve river access by adding more access points to both rivers and improving existing access
- Encourage locating commercial and industrial at major highway intersections, avoiding location near residential and avoiding spot location separate from other similar uses
- Prevent land use conflicts
- Encourage open space preservation and conservation design
- Support aging in place

### Vision Statement

The Town of Somerset is a place much like it is today, where managed, flexible and orderly growth, good design, and sustainable development has:

- ensured the quality, availability, and beauty of its natural and environmental features;
- protected the Town's rural character by guiding appropriate land use design and through open space and agricultural preservation;
- controlled the impacts of development on taxes, and public services and facilities; and,
- developed and maintained parks, trails, water access, and other recreational opportunities that contribute to the high quality of life for residents.

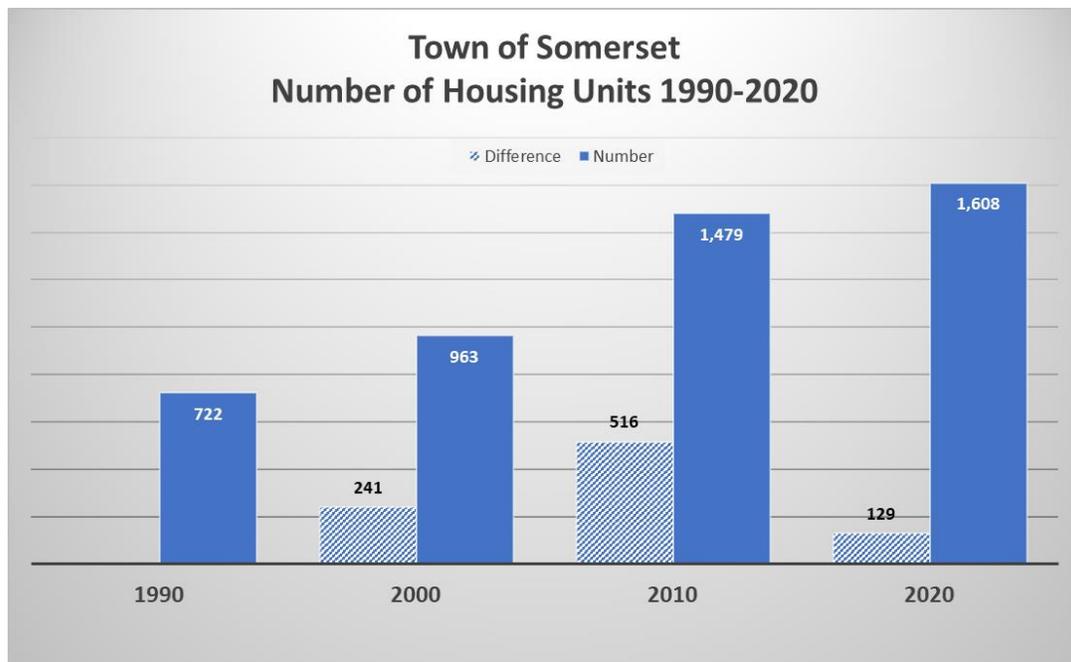
These values will continue to preserve and enhance a sense of community, economic vitality and sustainability, and the natural heritage of the Town of Somerset.

## Housing

The following housing element inventories and analyzes available data to gain a basic understanding of the housing stock and trends in Town of Somerset. This chapter element contains analysis of housing demographics including number of household units, tenure, and type from 2000-2020, an overview of housing programs, and housing goals, objectives, and policies.

### Number of Housing Units

According to the US Census Bureau, the number of housing units in Town of Somerset consistently increased since 1990. The graph below shows the number of housing units increased by 241 from 1990 (722) to 2000 (963), and by 516 from 2000 (963) to 2010 (1,479) and increased by another 129 housing units from 2010 to 2020 (1,608) for a total increase of 886 housing units in the 30-year period. For reference, the terms housing units<sup>1</sup> and households<sup>2</sup> are deciphered in US Census Bureau glossary definitions, shown in footnotes below.

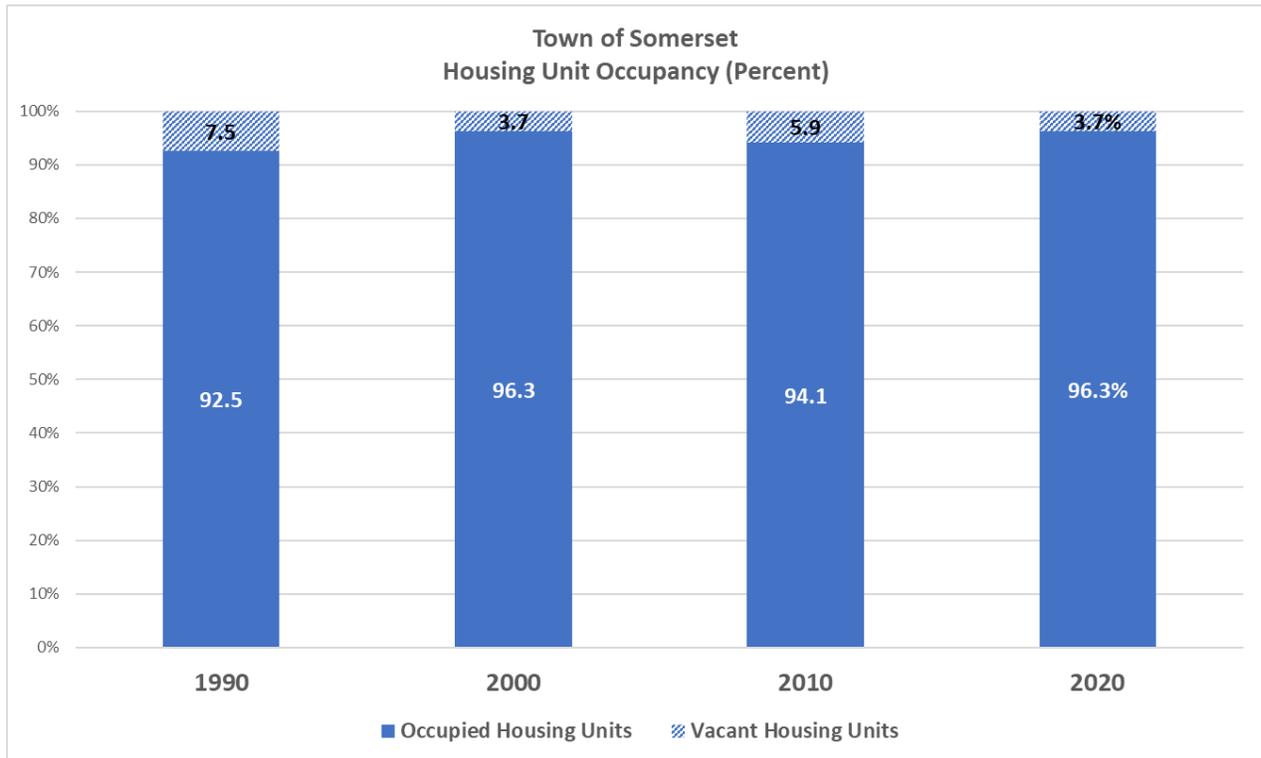


<sup>1</sup> **Housing unit definition:** A house, an apartment, a mobile home or trailer, a group of rooms, or a single room occupied as separate living quarters, or if vacant, intended for occupancy as separate living quarters. Separate living quarters are those in which the occupants live separately from any other individuals in the building and which have direct access from outside the building or through a common hall. For vacant units, the criteria of separateness and direct access are applied to the intended occupants whenever possible.

<sup>2</sup> **Household definition:** A household includes all the people who occupy a housing unit (such as a house or apartment) as their usual place of residence. A household includes the related family members and all the unrelated people, if any, such as lodgers, foster children, wards, or employees who share the housing unit. A person living alone in a housing unit, or a group of unrelated people sharing a housing unit such as partners or roomers, is also counted as a household. The count of households excludes group quarters. There are two major categories of households, "family" and "nonfamily." Household is a standard item in Census Bureau population tables.

## Housing Occupancy

Housing occupancy is an indicator of community stability. According to the US Census, the number of occupied housing units in Town of Somerset, since 1990, has fluctuated with the highest percent of vacant housing units reported in 1990 (7.5%) and 2010 (5.9%). In 2020, the vacancy rate of housing units in Town of Somerset returned to the low rate reported in 2000 (3.7%). The decrease in vacant housing in Somerset is a positive indicator for community prosperity.



Town of Somerset Housing Unit Occupancy								
	1990	%	2000	%	2010	%	2020	%
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	722		963		1,479		1,608	
<b>Occupied Housing Units</b>	668	92.5	927	96.3	1,391	94.1	1,548	96.3%
<b>Vacant Housing Units</b>	54	7.5	36	3.7	88	5.9	60	3.7%
<b>Seasonal Use</b>	34	3.2	15	1.6	45	3	--	--
<b>Household Size</b>	2.74		2.75		2.91		2.93	

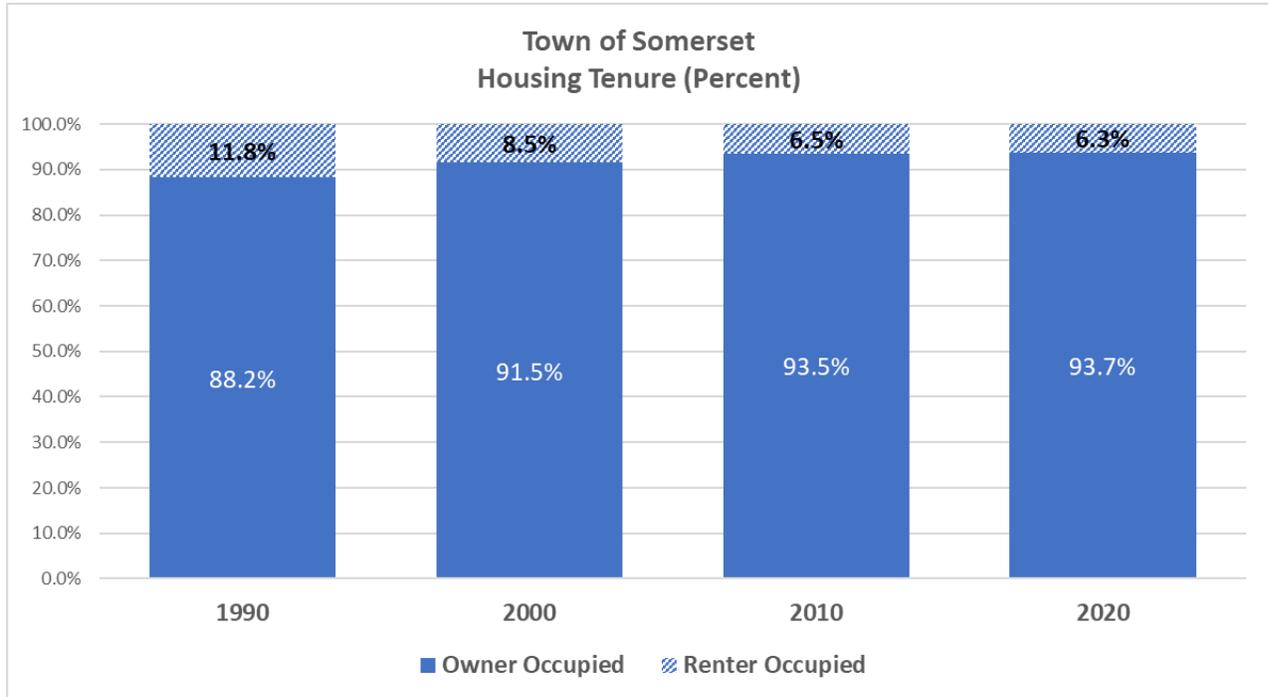
Source: US Census

As U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development reported to Congress in 2010, “Foreclosures [vacant housing units] can depress property values, lower local property tax revenue, and impose additional costs on public agencies in the form of additional police, fire, and other municipal services needed to respond to the blighting influence that vacant and foreclosed properties can have on local communities.” For communities with high rates of foreclosure and vacancies, the goal of many housing programs is to repurpose properties to stabilize neighborhoods<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development: <https://www.hud.gov>

## Housing Tenure

Housing tenure is the number or percent of housing units that are owner occupied or renter occupied. The graph and table below reveal that the percent of occupied housing units in the Town of Somerset that were owner occupied increased from 1990 (88.2%) to 2020 (93.7%).



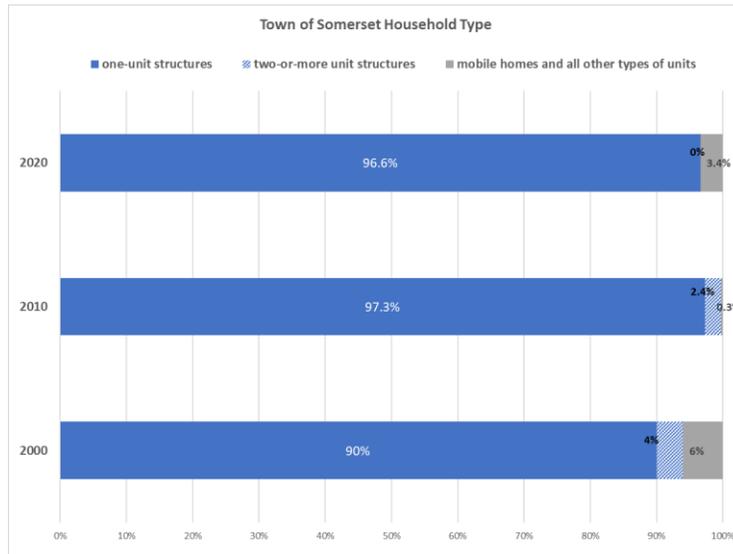
Town of Somerset Housing Unit Tenure								
	1990	%	2000	%	2010	%	2020	%
<b>Occupied Housing Units</b>	668		927		1,391		1,548	
<b>Owner Occupied</b>	589	88.2%	848	91.5%	1,301	93.5%	1,450	93.7%
<b>Renter Occupied</b>	79	11.8%	79	8.5%	90	6.5%	98	6.3%

Source: US Census

Source: US Census Bureau

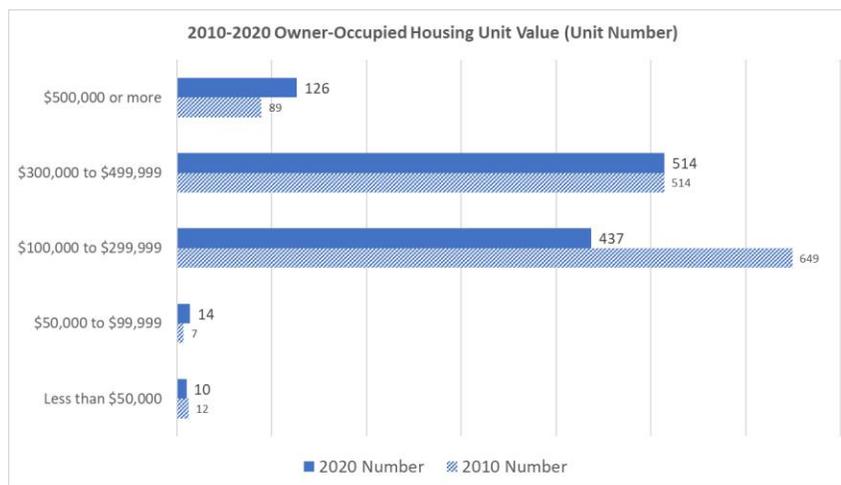
## Household Type

The graph below shows the percent of household types including one-unit, two-or-more unit, and mobile homes and all other types of units in the Town of Somerset. One-unit structures are the dominant housing type in town with 90% or more since 2000. The graph reveals that the percent of two-or-more unit homes decreased from 2000 (4%) to 2020 (0%). Similarly, the percent of mobile homes and all other types of units decreased from 2000 (6%) to 2020 (3.4%). Source: US Census Bureau



## Owner-Occupied Housing Unit Value

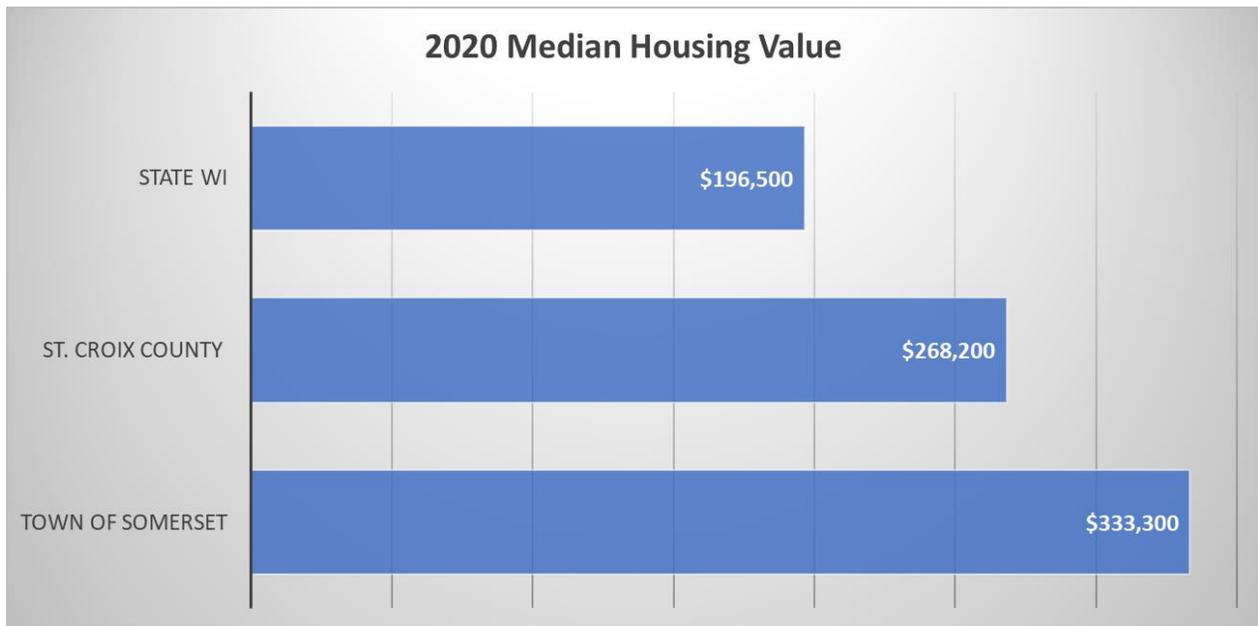
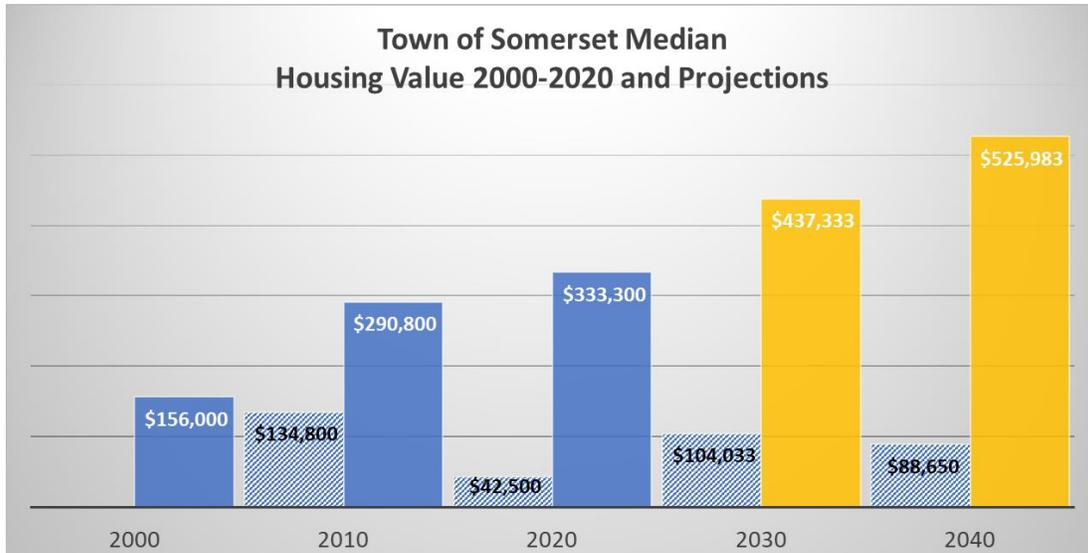
Finding affordable and quality housing has historically been somewhat difficult in St. Croix County. A lack of affordable housing has overriding impacts on population migration patterns, economic development, and the tax base. The graph below shows the number of housing units in five Census dollar value categories ranging from less than \$50,000 to \$500,000 or more. According to the 2020 Census ACS 5-year estimates the majority of owner-occupied housing was valued between \$300,000-\$499,999 (514). In comparison, the 2010 Census reported the majority of housing was valued between \$100,000 to \$299,999 (649). In summary the value of housing in Town of Somerset has increased since 2010.



## Median Housing Value

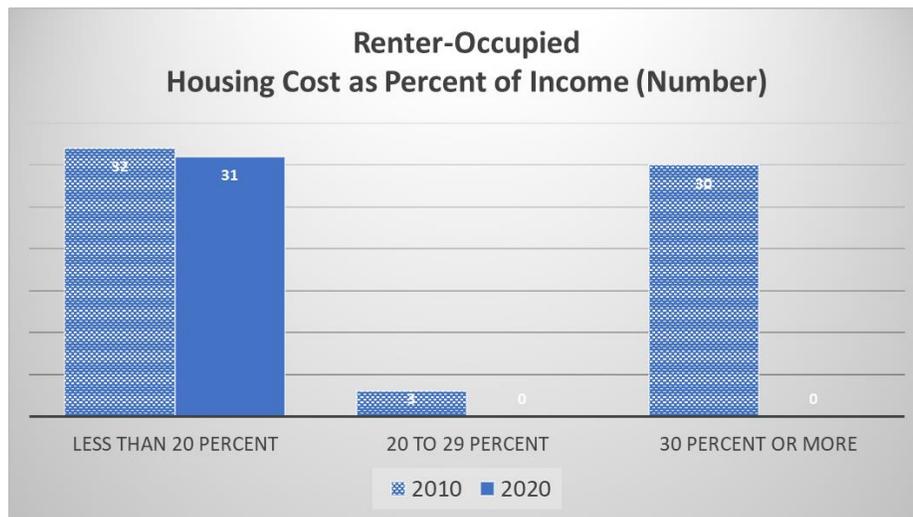
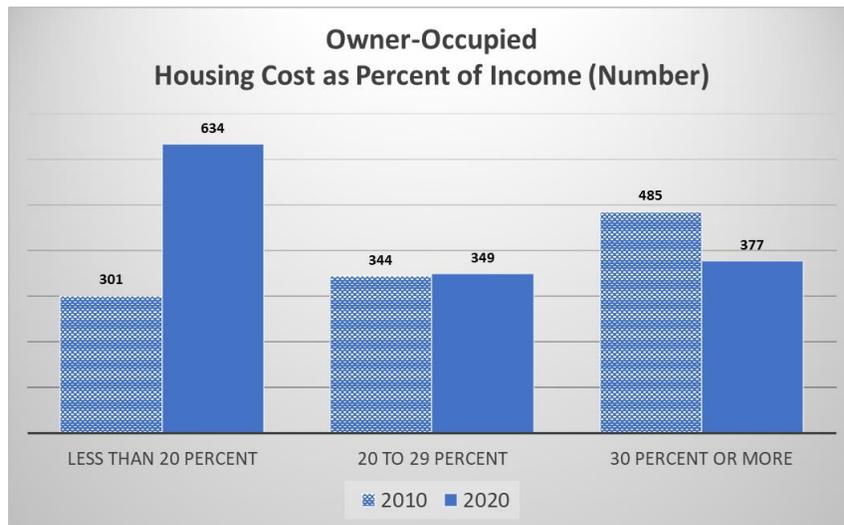
The top graph below shows that the median value of homes within the Town has consistently increased since 2000. Median home value nearly doubled between 2000 (\$156,000) and 2010 (\$290,800) a difference of \$134,800 in the ten-year period. The value projections for 2030 and 2040 were developed with an extrapolation calculation based on the previous decades, 2000-2020. The most current 2021 American Community Survey estimated the Town of Somerset Median Housing value at \$348,500.

The bottom graph shows a housing value comparison that reveals the Town of Somerset median value in 2020 is higher than the County and much higher than the State of Wisconsin median housing value.



## Housing Affordability - Cost as Percent of Income

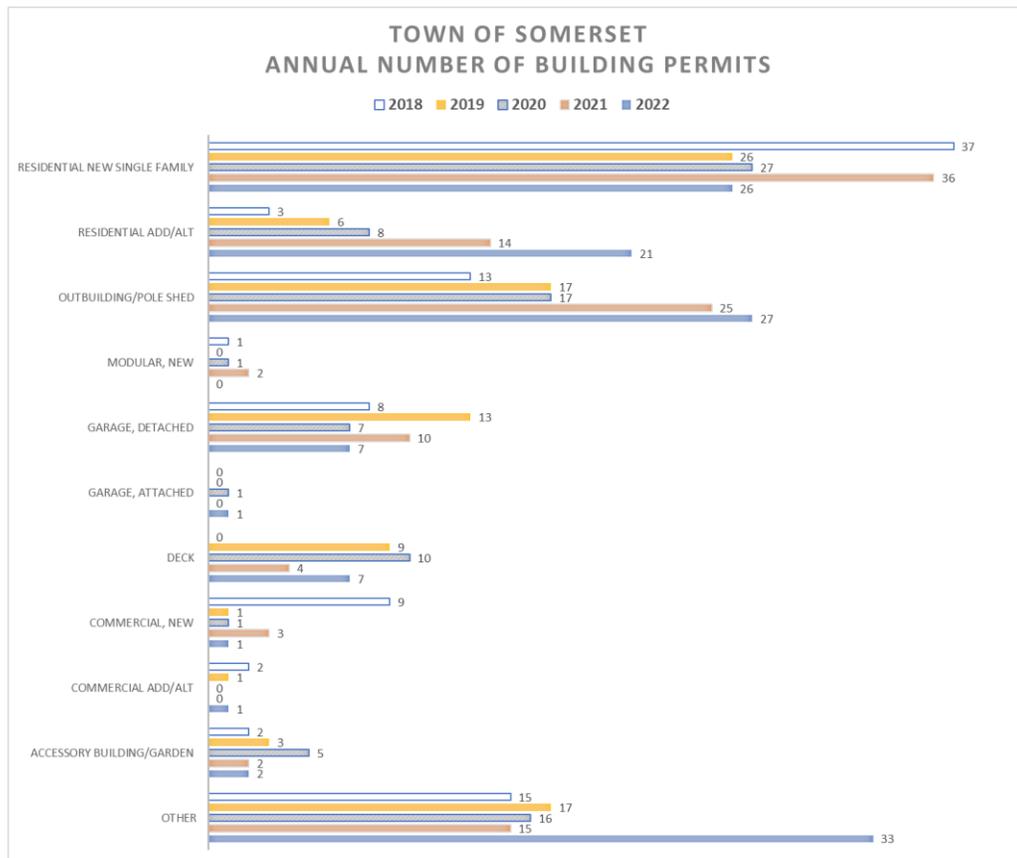
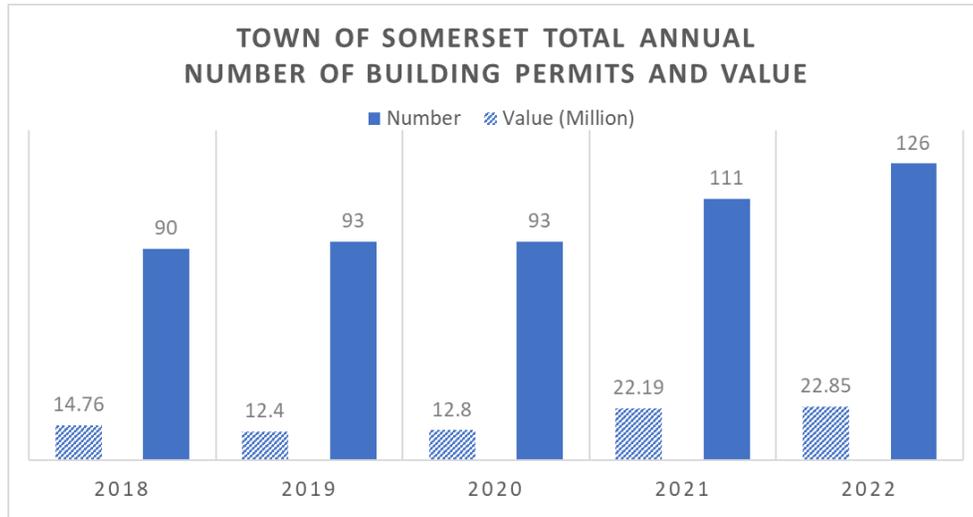
The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines affordable housing as housing that does not exceed more than 30 percent of household income.<sup>4</sup> The graphs below show the number of households in three Census categories depicting different percentages of the housing cost to income ratio. In 2010 the majority of owner-occupied households paid housing costs 30% or more of their income (485) and the majority of renter-occupied households paid housing costs 30% or more of their income (32). In comparison, in 2020, the majority of owner-occupied households paid housing costs less than 20% of their income (634) and the majority of renter-occupied households paid housing costs less than 20% of their income (31). According to this Census data, it looks like housing is more affordable in 2020 than it was in 2010.



<sup>4</sup> This affordability benchmark is not an underwriting standard; it does not address the ability to pay for housing. Households may choose to pay more to get the housing they need or want; however, according to HUD standards, people should have the choice of having decent and safe housing for no more than 30 percent of their household income.

## Building Permits

The Town of Somerset contracts with All-Croix Inspections, Corp. for building permit administration. The graphs below show the annual total number of permits from 2018-2021 and the total value and the annual number of permits issued by type such as new residential, outbuilding, and deck. The top graph reveals that the number of total permits has consistently increased since 2018.



## Housing Programs

### County and Local Housing Programs

- *St. Croix County Housing Authorities Hudson, New Richmond and River Falls* - [www.rfhousing.org](http://www.rfhousing.org)
- *West Central Wisconsin Community Action Agency, Inc. (WestCAP)* - <http://www.wcwrpc.org/>
- *Impact Seven, Inc., Rice Lake provides senior housing support* - <https://www.impactseven.org>
- *St. Croix Valley Habitat for Humanity River Falls, WI* - <https://scvhabitat.org>
- *Tomorrow's Home Foundation, Madison, WI* - <https://www.tomorrowshomefoundation.org/home>

### State Housing Programs

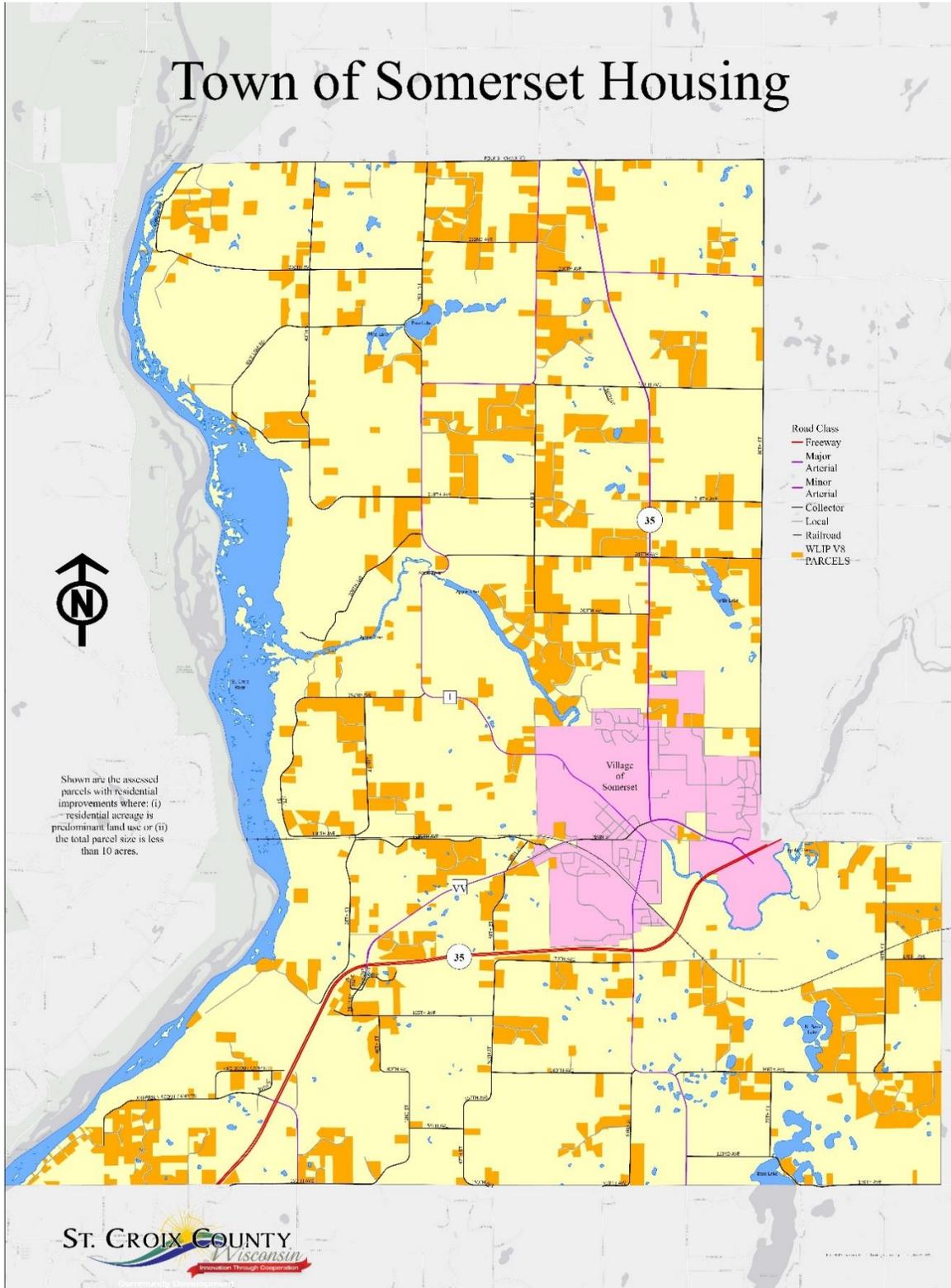
- *Wisconsin Housing and Urban Development* - <https://www.hud.gov/wisconsin>
- *Wisconsin Department of Administration*
  - *Division of Housing and Intergovernmental Relations*
  - *Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) –*  
<https://doa.wi.gov/Pages/LocalGovtsGrants/CommunityDevelopmentPrograms.aspx>
  - *Wisconsin Housing Cost Reduction Initiative (HCRI)*
- *Wisconsin Historic Home Tax Credits* - <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Article/CS3136>
- *Wisconsin Home Safety Act* - <https://www.doj.state.wi.us/ocvs/safe-home>
- *Wisconsin Property Tax Deferred Loan Program (PTDL)* - <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov>
- *Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA)* - <https://www.wheda.com>
- *Wisconsin Rural Development, Rural Housing Service* - <https://www.rd.usda.gov/wi>
- *Wisconsin Weatherization Assistance Programs* - <https://www.benefits.gov/benefit/1887>

### Federal Housing Programs

- *United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)* - <https://www.hud.gov>
  - *Home Investment Partnership Program (HOME)*
- *United States Department of Agriculture (USDA-RD)* - <https://www.rd.usda.gov>
  - *Home Programs, Rural Development, Rural Housing Service*



# Housing Map





## Housing Unit Projections

Housing projections are helpful to estimate the number of units that may be needed and for the amount of land that may be consumed by future housing development. As the number of households and housing units continues to grow, there is a resulting need for government to provide additional public facilities and services such as roads, sewer and water extensions, fire and police protection, and schools. It may also create a need to develop and enforce additional regulations and ordinances.

The population projections in the table below were developed using a growth trend extrapolation of the 1990, 2000, 2010 and 2020 census reported data, with the assumption that the growth reported in the past decades will continue into the future. The household size figures below were calculated by dividing the total population by the total number of housing units. The total housing units from 1990-2020 were gathered from the US census and the projected units for 2030-2040 were calculated by dividing the total population by the 2020 household size (2.67), with the assumption that the household size will stay the same.

Town of Somerset Population and Housing Unit Projections											
	1990	+/-	2000	+/-	2010	+/-	2020	+/-	2030	+/-	2040
<b>Population</b>	1,975	669	2,644	1,392	4,036	255	4,291	559	4,850	633	5,483
<b>Household Size</b>	2.74	0.01	2.75	-0.02	2.73	-0.06	2.67	0.00	2.67	0	2.67
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	722	241	963	516	1,479	129	1,608	208	1,816	237	2,054
<b>Estimated # Acres (Unit increase x 3)</b>									625		711

Source: US Census, with difference, projections and estimates in italics

## Housing Acreage Projection

Most of the Town of Somerset is available for residential development as indicated in the existing future land use and zoning maps. The residential highlighted area on the housing map above is land assessed as residential by the assessor for tax and assessment purposes. According to the housing unit projections in the table above, the Town of Somerset may continue to add to its housing stock, by an estimated 208 units by 2030 and 237 units by 2040, for a total of 445 units.

To project the additional acres that may be used for the projected, future residential units in town; the above table shows the estimated, projected housing unit increase (For 2030/2040) multiplied by 3 acres (Current minimum lot size in town). This calculation results in the possible future conversion of approximately 1,337 acres of land for residential use. The estimate does not take into account the acreage of residential development features including right-of-way and open space natural land features such as wetlands.

Through the analysis in the land use section of this comprehensive plan, we contemplate the location and impact of this potential residential development. Land use elements include the location of future development in relationship to the village and natural resources, the loss of productive agricultural land, and the town's rural character.



## Housing Goals, Objectives, Policies

### Housing Goals and Objectives

***Housing Goal 1: Provide sound and affordable housing without compromising environmental constraints indigenous to the rural Somerset community.***

#### ***Objectives***

1. Allow opportunities for diverse housing choices that are compatible with the community's rural character, while directing multi-family housing (e.g., apartments) to incorporated areas.
2. Local ordinances, land use planning, and local decision making should allow for and encourage a range of housing choices that meet the needs of persons of all income levels, all age groups, and persons with disabilities.
3. Residential development should not encroach upon or negatively impact environmentally sensitive areas.
4. Work with the Town building inspector and the County Community Development Department to administer housing health, safety, and maintenance regulations.

#### Housing Policies (Decision-making Guidance)

1. Consider the use of common on-site wastewater treatment systems alternatives that have a long-term record of success on soils and topography similar to that in the Town of Somerset.
2. Accept manufactured housing that conforms to applicable Town and County ordinances.
3. Work closely with the Town building inspector and the County Community Development Department to identify and address housing-related problems (e.g., health & safety, maintenance, environmental impacts, supply).
4. Habitation of a structure will not be allowed until all Uniform Dwelling Code requirements have been met and a certificate of occupancy has been issued by the Town building inspector.
5. Rely primarily on partner agencies, public service providers, and non-profit housing programs, such as WestCAP, to deliver housing services and manage housing maintenance and rehabilitation programs within the Town. As needed, consult with the area housing programs, local realtors and developers, and the general public to help identify viable options to address specific housing needs.
6. Maintain the Town's comprehensive plan and future land use map to provide adequate opportunities to meet a variety of housing market needs, while providing access and linkages to appropriate services and amenities when possible.
7. The site layout, design, character, and neighborhood context of residential development will be considered during zoning and conditional use permitting decisions. While design and maintenance of homes and home sites is important, any related regulations must be reasonable, appropriate, and justified.
8. When opportunities allow, encourage housing developers to consider issues of accessibility and aging in place standards as part of new home construction.
9. Based on demand, the Town will consider group homes, senior housing duplexes, and other non-traditional housing arrangements on a case-by-case basis and if deemed consistent with the vision, goals, and objectives of this Plan meeting all County/Town regulations.



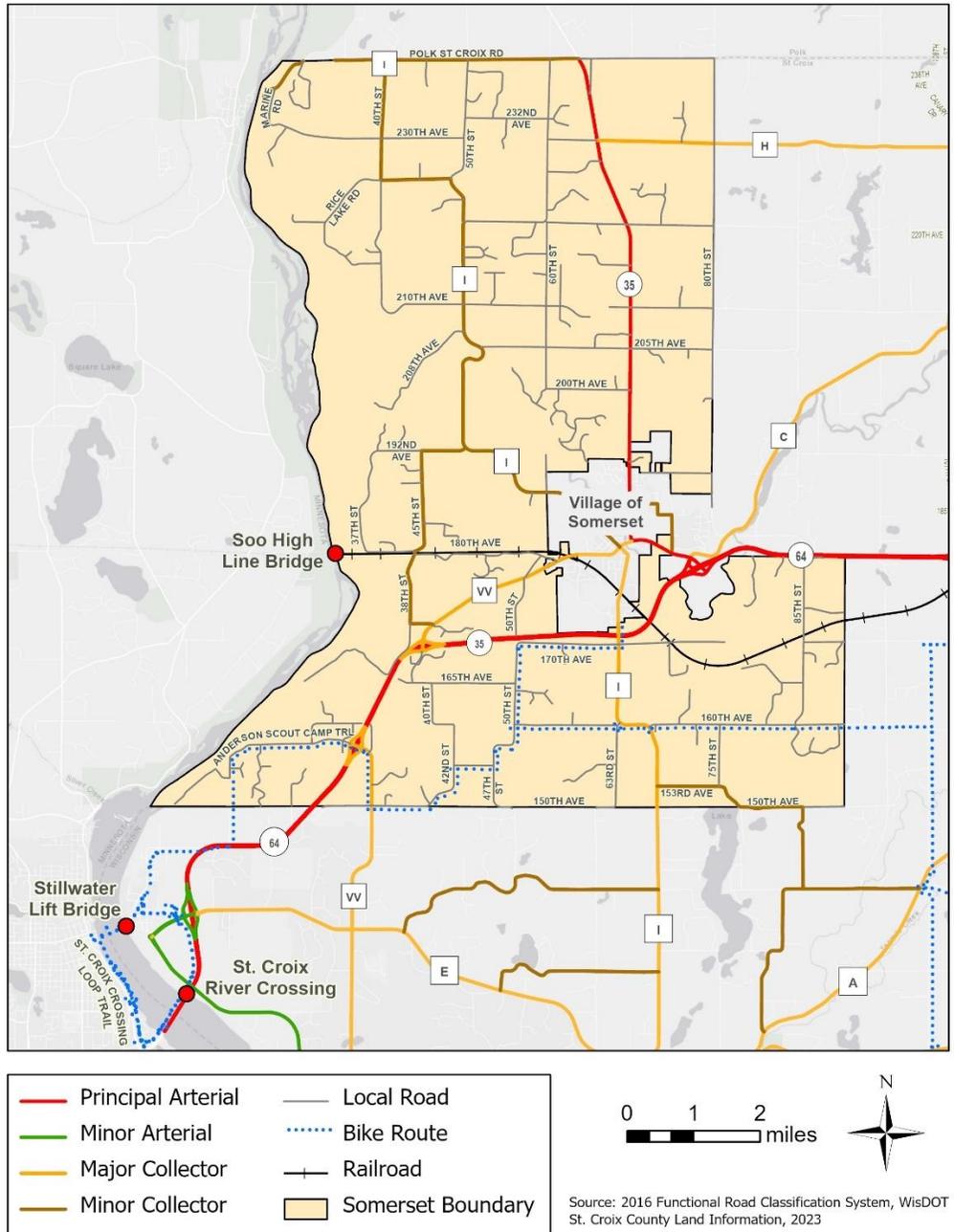
***Housing Recommendations (Action-Oriented Strategies)***

1. The Town of Somerset will act, with the support of the St. Croix County Community Development Department, on situations where housing is grossly deteriorating or debris is collecting to the extent that it is a public nuisance. (short-term)
2. Make available information on housing assistance programs at the Town Hall and/or website. (short-term)

# Transportation

Transportation is interconnected to the other elements of this comprehensive plan. Economic, housing, and land use decisions can increase or modify demands on the various modes of transportation including highways and roads, air, rail, and pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure. Likewise, the transportation decisions, such as the construction of new roadways, can impact accessibility, land values, and land use. The Town of Somerset’s transportation system is shown on the map below.

## Town of Somerset Transportation System



## Roads and Highways

Local roads and highways constitute the Town of Somerset's primary mode of transporting people, goods, and services. The primary components of the Town's road network are:

- State Trunk Highway 64 and State Trunk Highway 35 are significant regional transportation routes connecting the Town with the Village of Somerset and the surrounding communities, such as St. Croix Falls, New Richmond, Stillwater, and Hudson. In addition, these two highways also connect the Town to the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.
- County Highway H, County Highway I, County Highway V, and County Highway VV also travel through the Town. These County highways provide connections to the State highway system and/or to surrounding communities.
- Local Town roads provide access to abutting lands and to the State, County, and Federal highway system serving the community.

### St. Croix River Crossing

Since the adoption of the 2016 Town of Somerset comprehensive plan, the St. Croix River Crossing was constructed and opened in August 2017. The St. Croix Crossing is a beautiful and unique bridge that spans the St. Croix River, between Oak Park Heights, Minnesota (Hwy 36) and St. Joseph, Wisconsin (Hwy 64) with a total length of 4,660 feet (1,420 m). The impacts of the project are evident in the transportation data in this section including the increase in annual average daily traffic and in other sections of the plan including housing and economic development. The completion of the bridge allows safer, faster, and more convenient vehicle transportation between the Somerset area and the Twin Cities.



### Rustic Road 103

A 2.8-mile Rustic Road has been designated in the northwest part of the Town of Somerset. This route leads to the historic Somerset Landing and features sandstone bluff outcroppings, tree canopies, prairie, and farm views. Wisconsin's Rustic Road program has three program goals: • to identify and preserve in a natural and essentially undisturbed condition certain designated roads having unusual or outstanding natural beauty, by virtue of native vegetation along with natural or man-made features associated with the road • to provide a linear park-like system for vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian travel for quiet and leisurely enjoyment by local residents and the general public alike • to maintain and administer these roads to provide safe public travel, yet preserve the rustic and scenic qualities through use of appropriate maintenance and design standards, and encouragement of zoning for land use compatibility, utility regulations and billboard control



## Planned Transportation Improvements

### State of Wisconsin and St. Croix County Highways

According to the St. Croix County 5-Year improvement program, County I is scheduled for a future project and safety enhancement study. Major highway improvements in neighboring communities may affect travel to and from the town. The following table shows St. Croix County planned highway improvements from the Wisconsin State Freight Plan. According to Appendix 9-1: Wisconsin's Highway/Interstate (Freight) Projects 'Update - June 2022', improvements are planned on Highway 94 that will affect travel in St. Croix County, listed below.

WisDOT Program	SFY	DOT Region	Project ID	County	Hwy	Project Title	Project Length	Project Worktype
BACKBONE	2018	NW	1020-03-81	ST. CROIX	94	HUDSON - BALDWIN	5.27	Resurfacing
BACKBONE	2018	NW	1020-11-82	ST. CROIX	94	NW REGION VAR CTYS INTERSTATE 94	31.1	Bridge Preservation
BACKBONE	2019	NW	1020-01-77	ST. CROIX	94	HUDSON - BALDWIN	4.13	Resurfacing
BACKBONE	2019	NW	1020-03-76 [-79]	ST. CROIX	94	HUDSON - BALDWIN	1.66	Bridge Replacement
BACKBONE	2019	NW	1022-07-76	ST. CROIX	94	HUDSON - MENOMONIE	8.41	Pavement Replacement
BACKBONE	2021- 23	NW	1020-00-73	ST. CROIX	94	BALDWIN - MENOMONIE	6.29	Resurfacing
BACKBONE	2021- 23	NW	1020-02-83	ST. CROIX	94	HUDSON - BALDWIN	0.05	Bridge Rehabilitation
BACKBONE	2021- 23	NW	1021-00-78 [-79]	ST. CROIX	94	BALDWIN - MENOMONIE	0.05	Bridge Replacement
BACKBONE	2021- 23	NW	1021-04-75 [-78]	ST. CROIX	94	BALDWIN - MENOMONIE	0.05	Bridge Replacement

Source: Wisconsin State Freight Plan, Appendix 9-1: Wisconsin's Highway/Interstate (Freight) Projects 'Update - June 2022'

### Town of Somerset Improvements

Previous and current transportation improvements, listed in the table below, were gathered and updated from the 2015 town comprehensive plan. Future projects in the table below are from the Town of Somerset Road Work Plan 2022-2027. The project list is subject to modification based on need, funding, or other changing conditions. The project list does not include seal coating, crack filling, and AMZ patch, which the Town does annually as maintenance. Approximately 5.5 to 8 miles of seal coating are performed annually. Crack filling and AMZ patch are applied to various roads over a period of several weeks. Cold patching and shouldering are also considered maintenance.

Town of Somerset Road Projects (Past and Present)				
Year	Description	Distance	Cost	Notes
2014	37th St. from Apple River Lane to 180th Ave.	.75 mi.	\$325,000	
2014	155th Ave. from 47th St. to 42nd St.	.50 mi.	\$100,000	
2015	160th Ave. from Cty. I to 85th St.	1.84 mi.	\$400,000	
2015	75th St. from 160th Ave. to 153rd Ave.	.75 mi.	\$325,000	2014-2015 TRIP-D grant of \$379,133 from Wi DOT
2016	40th St. from 216th Ave. to Rice Lake Rd.	.50 mi.	\$275,000	
2016	50th St. from County VV to 180th Ave.	.25 mi.	\$35,000	
2017	72nd St. from 205th Ave. to end	.50 mi.	\$70,000	
2017	50th St. from County VV to end	.65 mi.	\$91,000	
2018	215th Ave. from Hwy. 35 to end (new blacktop)	.72 mi.	\$100,000	
2022	208th Ave. from County Rd. I toward end (mill & new blacktop)	.75 mi.	\$105,000	
2022	200th Ave. from Hwy. 35 to 60th St. (Reconstruction)	1.20 mi.	\$250,000	
2022	Heron Lane from 150th Avenue to end, pave	.29 miles	\$37,000	
2023	Rice Lake Rd. from 40th St. to 221st Avenue mill & new blacktop		\$122,580	
2023	58th St. from Cty. Rd. I to end, pave	.03 miles	\$37,000	
2024	205th Avenue from Hwy. 35 to Cty. Rd.I (Reconstruction)	2.04 mi.	\$900,000	
2025	Andersen Sct. Camp Rd. reconstruction	1.6 miles	\$433,500	
2026	230th Ave. from 40th St. to 50th St. (Reconstruction)	1.00 mi.	\$350,000	
2027	165th Ave. from 38th St. to end	.25 mi.	\$35,000	

Sources: 2015 Town of Somerset Comprehensive Plan, Town of Somerset 2014-2012 Road Work Plan, Town of Somerset 2022-2027 Road Work Plan

## Federal Functional Classification (FFC)

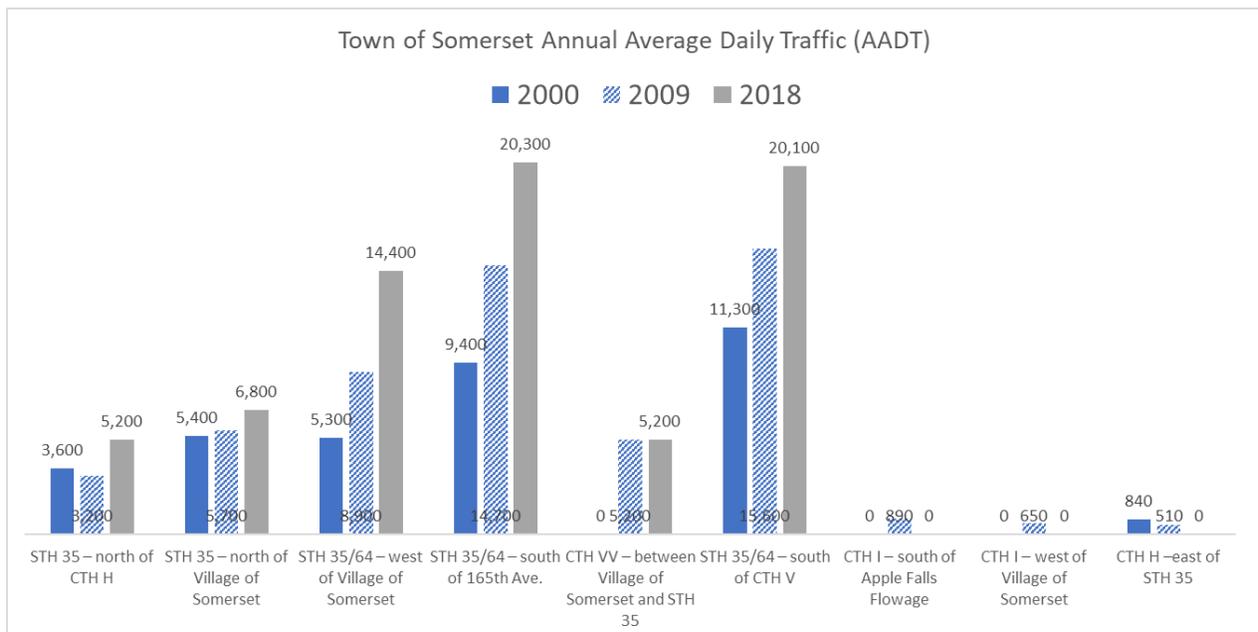
For planning, transportation funding, and design purposes, public roadways are divided into different functional classes, such as arterials and collectors. Factors influencing function include traffic circulation patterns, land use, the land access needs, and traffic volumes. Functional classifications are also often related to ownership and maintenance responsibilities, with the higher roadway classes often being county, state, or federally owned. **The following table shows functional class and approximate miles from 2013 within the 2015 Plan and current 2022 with the difference in the far-right column.**

Town of Somerset Federal Functional Class (FFC)	2013 Approximate Miles	2022 Approximate Miles	Difference
Principal Arterials	12.57	20.07	7.5
Minor Arterials	0	0	0
Major Collectors	9.17	9.74	0.57
Minor Collectors	15.98	16.16	0.18
Local Roads	107.17	92.72	-14.45

Source: Wisconsin Department of Transportation, 2014 and St. Croix County Land Information, November 2022

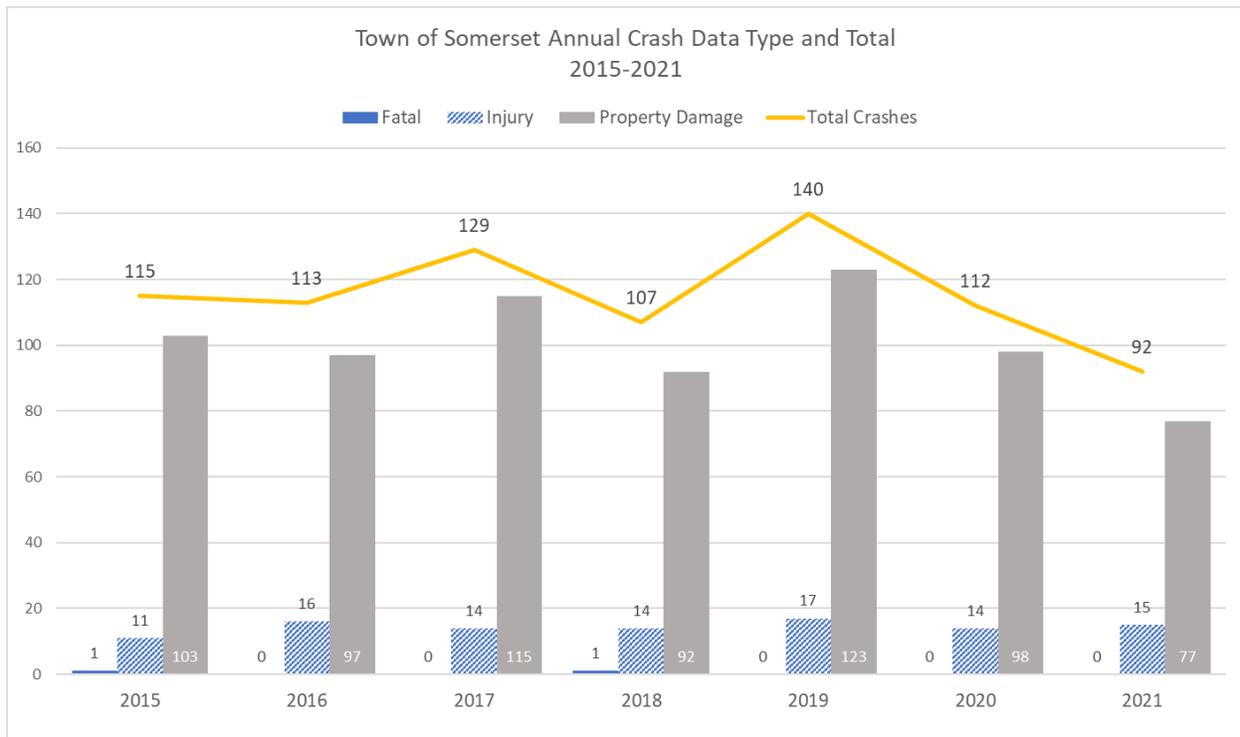
## Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)

AADT counts are conducted by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. Most of these counts are focused on State highways, County trunk highways and other higher traffic volume roadways. The following graph shows AADT counts available in 2000, 2009, and 2018. Some road segment counts were not updated in 2018 shown with '0'. Overall, traffic counts increased in all road segments from 2009-2018.



## Accident Number & Types

According to Wisconsin Department of Transportation, the number of annual crashes has decreased since 2019 (140) to 2021 (92). The graph and table below report the annual number of crashes from 2015-2021 in the Town of Somerset. The average number of crashes within the 6-year period is 115.



Town Somerset Crash Data	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	15-21 Avg
Fatal	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Injury	11	16	14	14	17	14	15	14
Property Damage	103	97	115	92	123	98	77	101
Total Crashes	115	113	129	107	140	112	92	115

Source: WisDOT Crash Records database

## Vehicle Use and Commuting Trends

The automobile is the dominant mode of transportation for the residents in the Town of Somerset shown in the transportation data below. This subsection provides available data from 2020 in the categories of vehicles available, means of transportation to work, and travel time to work as compared to previous years.

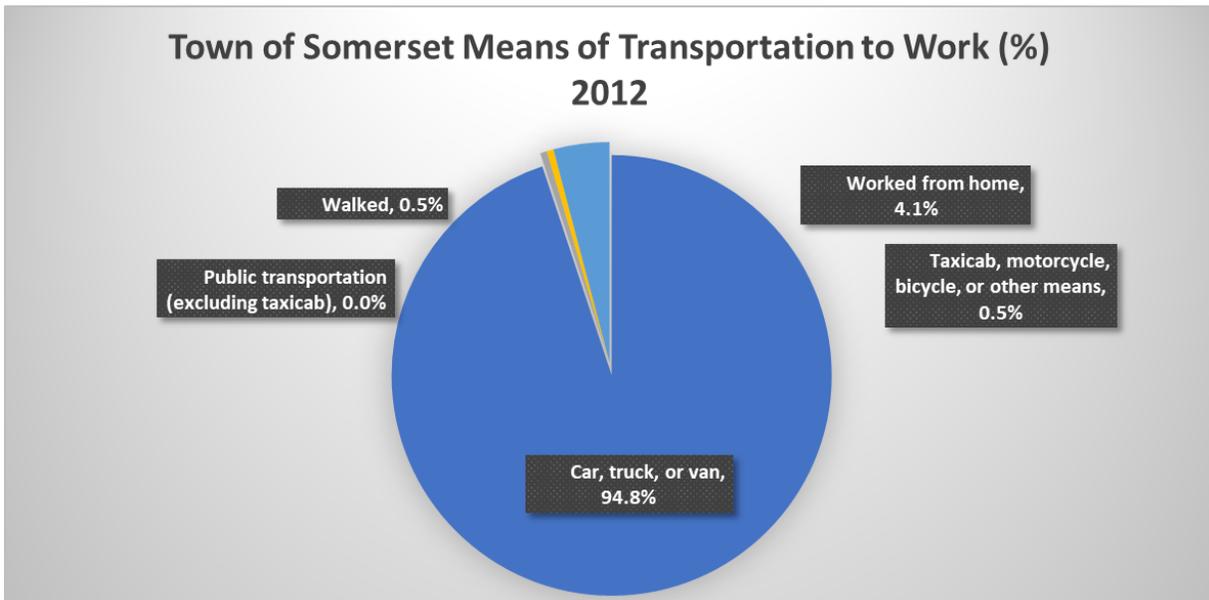
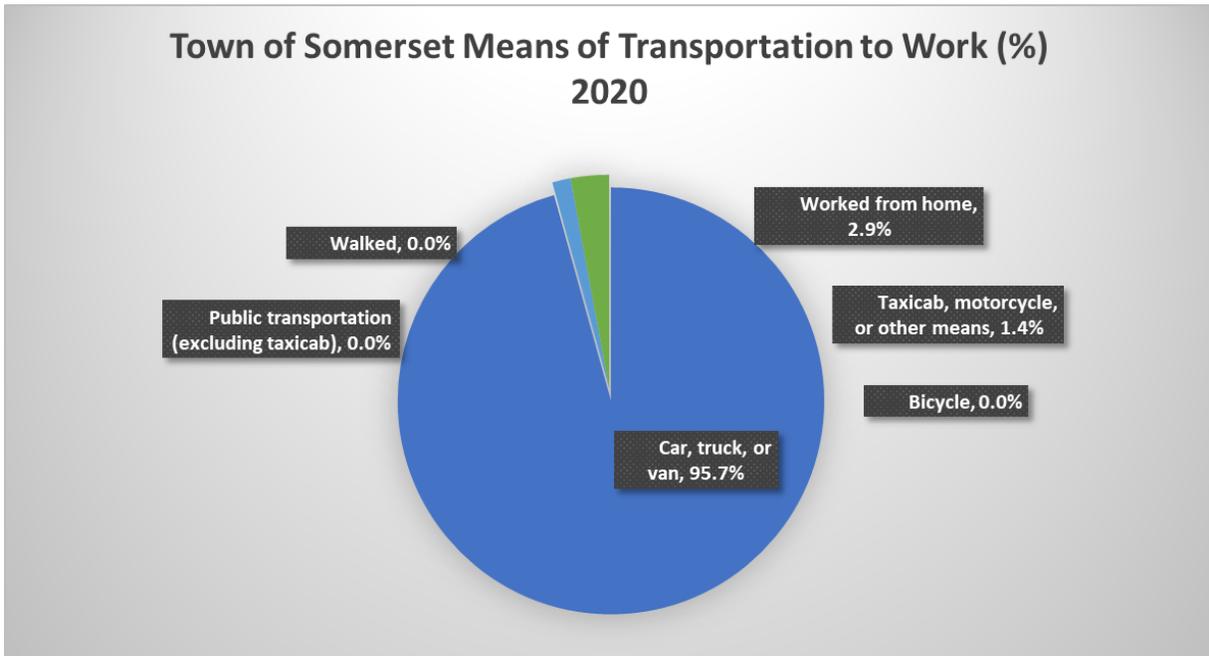
### Vehicle Availability

According to the most recent census estimates, nearly 100 percent of the households in the Town have one or more vehicles. Over half of the households in 2020 (53.7%) have three or more vehicles. Since 2012, the percentage of households with 3 or more vehicles has decreased. Whereas the percentage of households with 2 vehicles available has increased from 35.9% (2012) to 41.1% (2020). The statistics show a trend that less vehicles are available to households in the Town of Somerset since 2012.



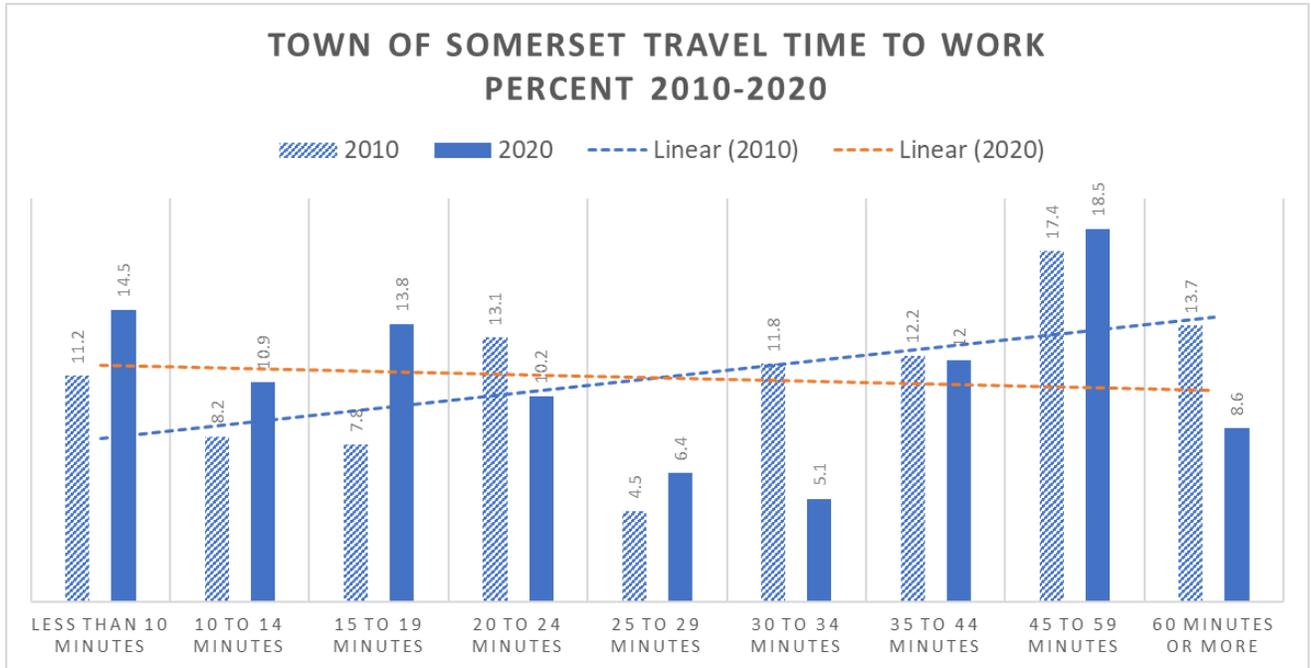
## Means of Transportation to Work

As shown in the pie charts below, the preference for means of transportation to work is by vehicle (car, truck, or van) at 95.7% in 2020 and 94.8% in 2012. This preference is also a requirement based on the spatial pattern of the Town, as distances and existing infrastructure to and from other residents, shopping, and employment centers are generally not conducive for walking and biking. Trends that emerge in the comparison of US Census data from 2012 to 2020 include an increase in the percentage of vehicles as means of transportation and a decrease in the percentage of people that worked from home.



## Travel Time to Work

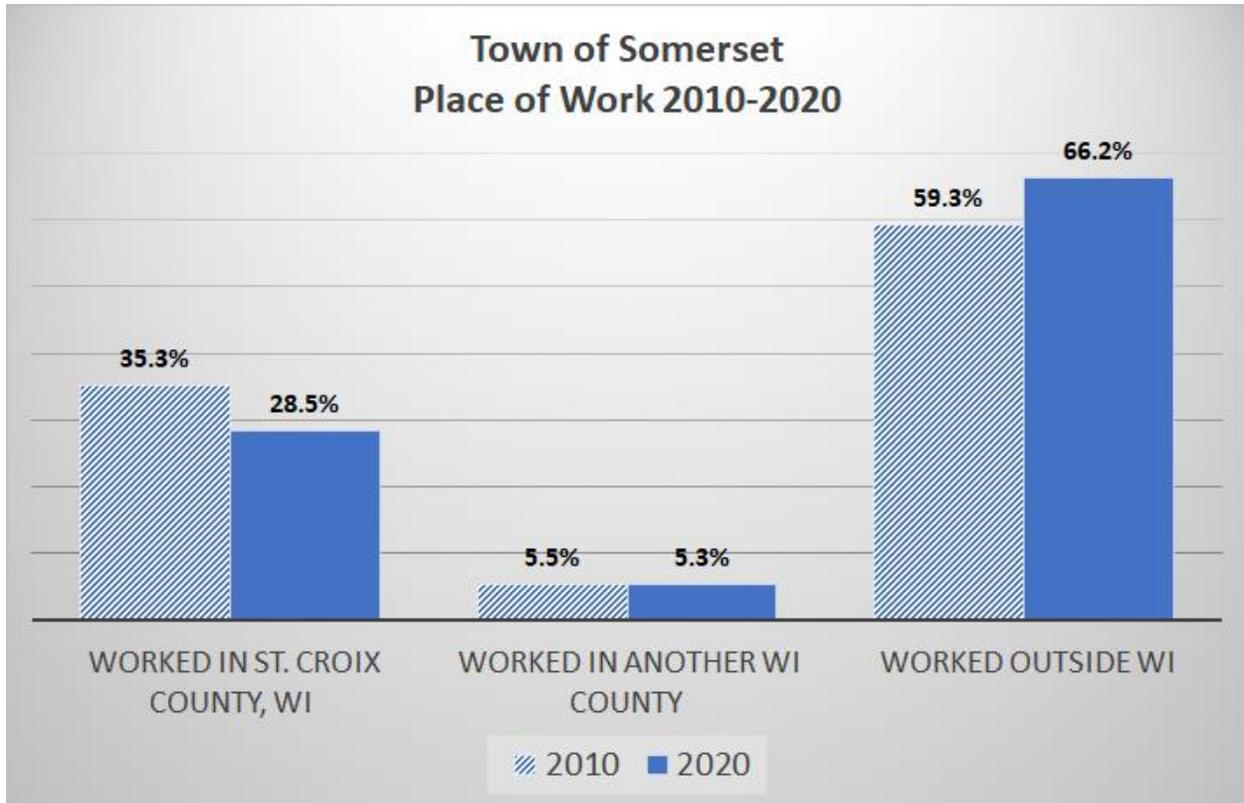
The graph and table below show the percentage of travel time to work in five minute intervals between less than 10 minutes and 60 minutes or more, for residents in Town of Somerset. The US Census data shown below compares travel time in 2010 and 2020. In the graph below, the 2010 trend line reveals that slightly more residents traveled more than 30 minutes to work. In contrast, the 2020 trend line shows that slightly more residents traveled less than 30 minutes to work. That trend is also shown in the average (mean) travel time to work that decreased from 2010 (31.6 minutes) to 2020 (27.7 minutes). According to the census data, town residents average travel time to work has decreased from 2010 to 2020.



Town of Somerset Travel Time to Work	Percent (%) 2010	Percent (%) 2020
Less than 10 minutes	11.2	14.5
10 to 14 minutes	8.2	10.9
15 to 19 minutes	7.8	13.8
20 to 24 minutes	13.1	10.2
25 to 29 minutes	4.5	6.4
30 to 34 minutes	11.8	5.1
35 to 44 minutes	12.2	12
45 to 59 minutes	17.4	18.5
60 minutes or more	13.7	8.6
Mean travel time to work	31.6 minutes	27.7 minutes

## Place of Work

The graph below shows the percentage of residents that worked in St. Croix County, in another Wisconsin county, and outside Wisconsin in 2010 and 2020. The majority of residents in Town of Somerset worked outside of Wisconsin in 2010 (59.3%) and 2020 (66.2%); with the percentage increasing ~7% over the decade. Roughly 1/3 of Town of Somerset residents worked in St. Croix County in 2010 (35.3%) and 2020 (28.5%); with the percentage decreasing ~7% over the decade.



Town of Somerset Place of Work	2010	2020	Difference
Worked in St. Croix County, WI	35.3%	28.5%	6.8%
Worked in another WI county	5.5%	5.3%	0.2%
Worked outside WI	59.3%	66.2%	6.9%

Source: US Census 2010 and 2020

## Truck Freight Service

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) authors the State Freight Plan that addresses the state's freight transportation needs and provides a vision for WisDOT's freight program for the next eight years.

The majority of local truck freight service takes advantage of STH 35 and STH 64, along with the County highways, which are constructed to higher standards than local streets to accommodate heavier loads. The map below shows roadway reliability on Highway 94 through St. Croix County.

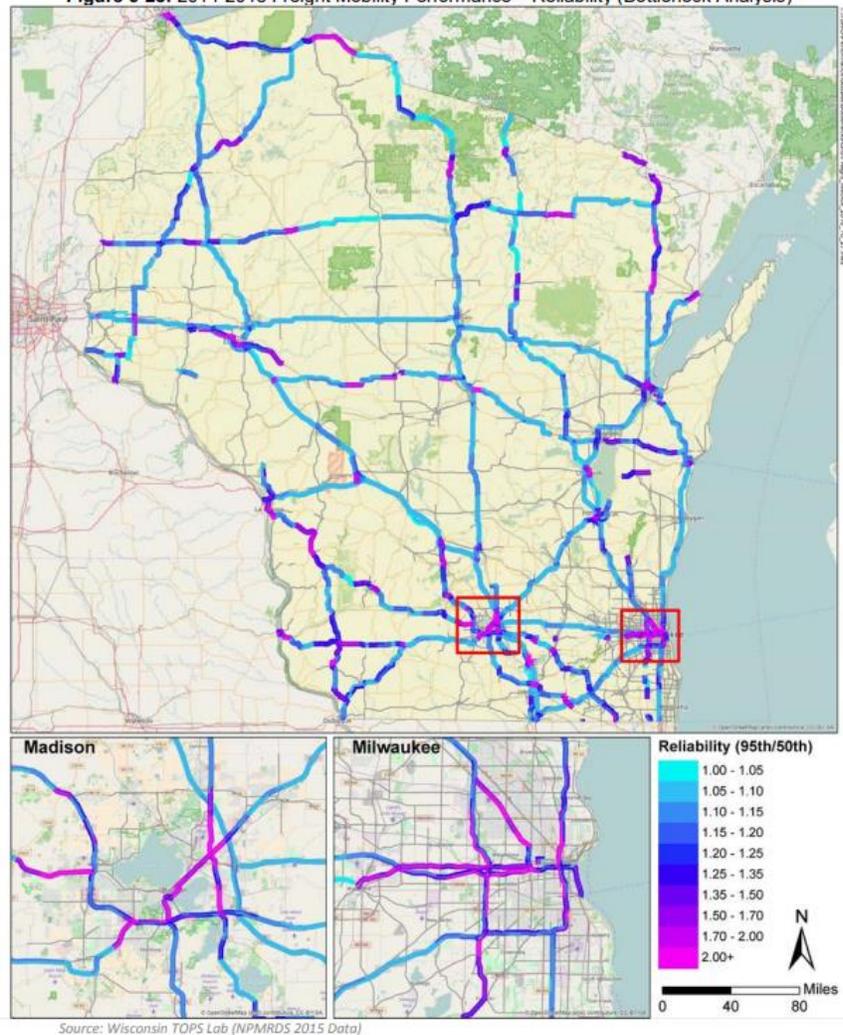
### Truck Freight issues:

- Foundation of shipping for economy
- Travel safety
- Roadway capacity
- Heavy truck traffic impacts to quality of life
- Transport of hazardous materials

### Roadway Reliability

Figure 6-23 displays truck travel time reliability, which is similar to the performance measure proposed under MAP-21, but with the addition of non-Interstates. Truck travel time reliability is the ratio of the 95th percentile over the 50th percentile (median) travel time over the entire year.

**Figure 6-23: 2014-2015 Freight Mobility Performance – Reliability (Bottleneck Analysis)**

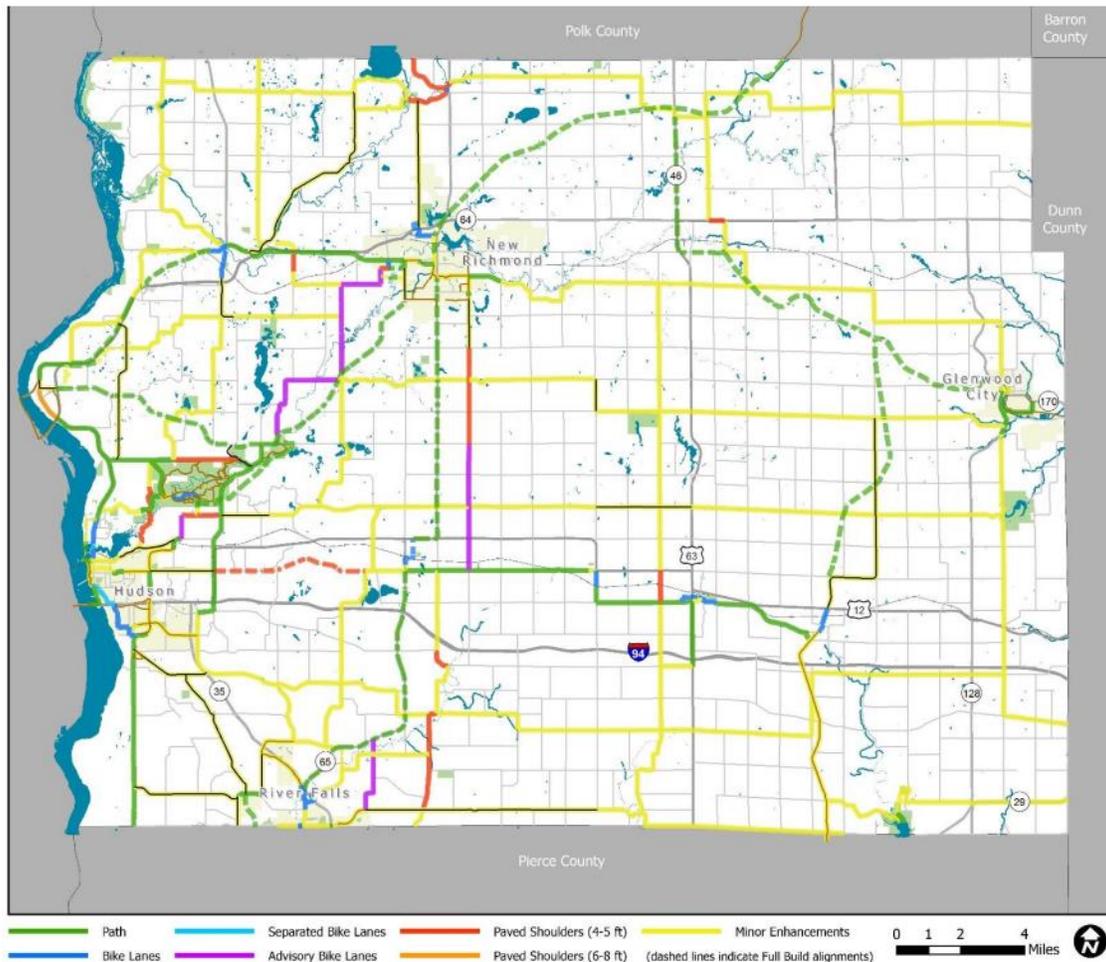


## Pedestrians and Bicycling

The Town adopted a proposed trail corridor map as part of their 2019-2023 Park & Recreation Plan found on the following page. Pedestrian and bicycle traffic is primarily recreational in the Town of Somerset. Active transportation (Pedestrians and bicycling) can be an alternative to the automobile for many purposes, including commuting to work, shopping, visiting neighbors or service providers, and safe routes to school. Due to the lack of density in the Town, there are very few opportunities to walk and bike for functional reasons.

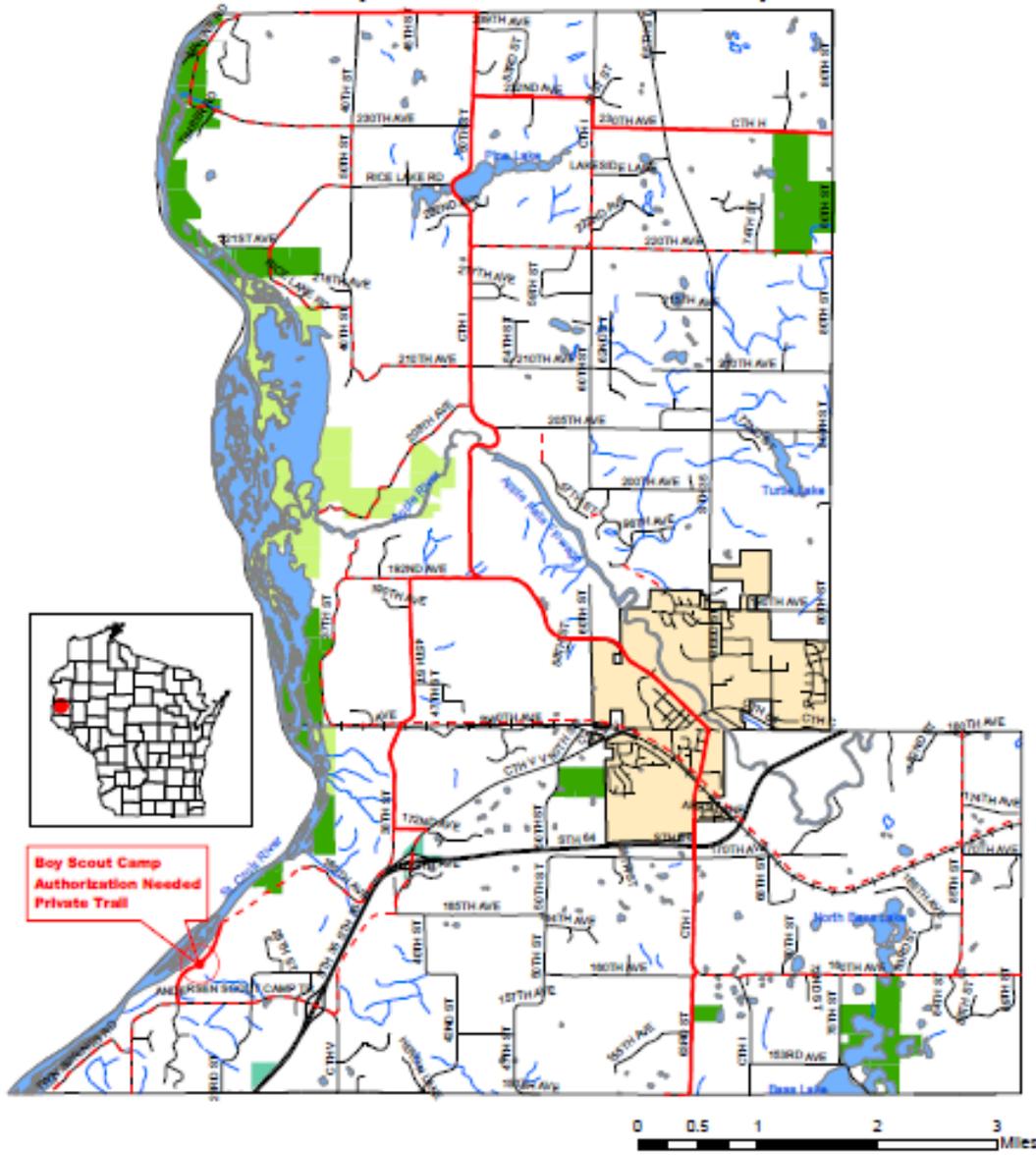
The St. Croix County 2017 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan was adopted on May 2, 2017 by the St. Croix County Board of Supervisors. The St. Croix Crossing bridge includes a bicycle and pedestrian crossing and the historic lift bridge exclusively carries bicycle and pedestrian traffic. Current grants and planning are underway to develop a new loop trail that will connect the two bridges on both sides of the river, effectively linking northern St. Croix County to the Twin Cities. The following map shows recommendations from the 2017 County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

Figure 1–11: System Plan Recommendations – Including Full Build Alignments



Proposed Trail Corridor Map

### Town of Somerset Proposed Trail Corridor Map



- Legend**
- Town of Somerset
  - Village of Somerset
  - Bike & Pedestrian Routes
  - Proposed Trails
  - State Roads
  - County Roads
  - Town Roads
  - Federal Land
  - State of Wisconsin
  - St. Croix Islands Wildlife Area
  - Water

NOTE: Proposed trails are only general corridor locations and would only be pursued if the property developed or was specifically sold to the Town for trail purposes. No taking of land will be considered. Proposed trails are on PRIVATE PROPERTY and there is no public access at this time.

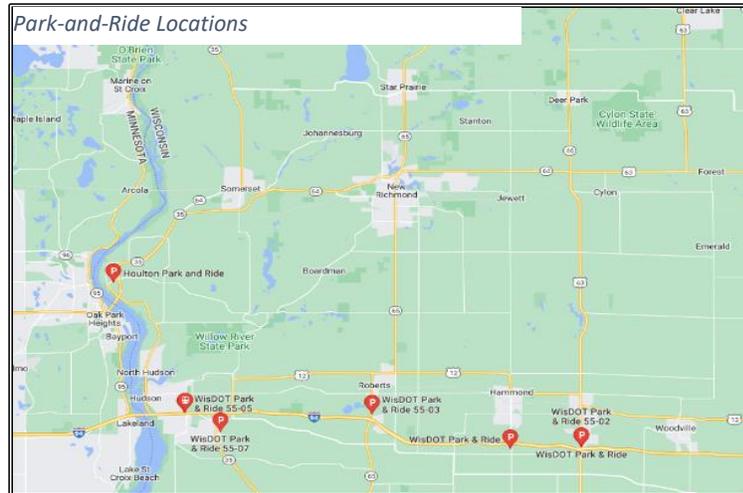


**Stevens**  
 BUSINESS PLANNING - SURVEYING  
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 WWW.STEVENSINCORPORATED.COM  
 715.386.8638  
 715.386.8678 FAX  
 August 2012  
 Revises: J. Crick County, Town of Somerset,  
 Stevens Engineers, Inc.

## Park and Ride - Carpool

The map below shows the locations of park-and-ride facilities in western St. Croix County. Existing park and ride lots for cars and van pools are located to provide connections for commuter transit to the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Area. The nearest park-and-ride facility for Town of Somerset residents is the Houlton location in St. Joseph. Wisconsin DOT Rideshare program is a free service provided by the State of Wisconsin to connect people to carpool and bicycle commute solutions.

Access Rideshare carpooling program online at: <https://wisconsin.gov/pages/travel/road/rideshare>



## Special Transportation Services

St. Croix County Department of Aging and Disability Resource Center maintains a fleet of vans that provide demand responsive service for seniors and those with disabilities. St. Croix County contracts with New Freedom to provide door-to-door service for trips related to medical, educational, employment and social events. This service is available in the Village of Somerset. The table right shows estimated number of trips in 2016-2021.

### Somerset

YEAR	RIDES PROVIDED
2016	186
2017	134
2018	248
2019	796
2020	356
2021	516

### Special Service Considerations:

- \*In 2018, the volunteer ride program was transferred to CILWW/New Freedom transport, so these rides were not included any longer
- \*Transportation services closed from 3/2020, resumes medical essential rides in 6/2020
- \*Senior Centers were closed from 3/2020 to 6/2021, no special trips/rides provided to Centers
- 2014 City of New Richmond started a rideshare program. Westfields Hospital also has multiple vans for rides to their campus

## Public Transit

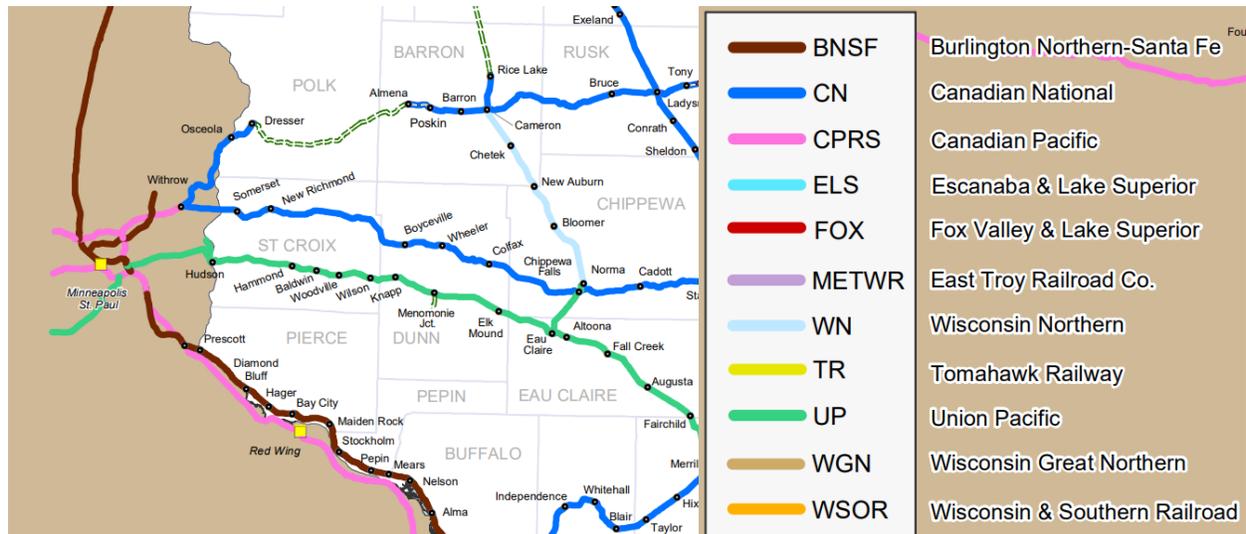
Town of Somerset does not have direct public transit. Some bus service is provided to the region along Interstate Highway 94. According to Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) bus routes map below, it looks like Greyhound, Flixbus, Coach USA and Megabus have bus routes between Menominee and Minneapolis / St. Paul.



## Rail Service

A Canadian National Rail Line travels through the Town of Somerset. According to the WI Freight plan, the maximum allowable weight per rail car for the rail line through the town carries 286, 000+ (Figure 6-13 2016 Maximum Weight). Canadian National provides freight shipping services including customs brokerage, transloading and distribution, business development and real estate and private car storage.

WI DOT Railroads and Harbors Map 2022



The Soo Line High Bridge is a steel deck arch bridge over the St. Croix River between Stillwater, Minnesota and Somerset, Wisconsin. It was built by the American Bridge Company from 1910 to 1911. The bridge was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1977 for its national significance in the themes of engineering and transportation. It was nominated for its exceptional dimensions, beauty, innovative engineering techniques, and importance to transportation between Minnesota and Wisconsin.



Railroad - Soo Line High Bridge

## Air Service

The nearest scheduled air passenger service and air freight connections are available at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport. The MSP International Airport is located approximately 45 miles to the southwest and is the 16th busiest airport in the U.S. It offers scheduled passenger service and serves as an air cargo feeder for air freight shipments. Lake Elmo, MN airport is located approximately 17 miles southwest.



The New Richmond Regional Airport is the only public airport located in St. Croix County. The airport is owned by the City of New Richmond and operated by a seven-member airport commission. It is included in the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems for 2021–2025, in which it is categorized as a local general aviation facility. The airport has two runways and houses about 220 aircrafts based in privately owned hangars.

## ATV and Snowmobile Routes

ATV and snowmobile routes have been designated within the Town of Somerset. Designating certain Town roads for ATV/UTV use is not without some resident debate. ATVs were discussed at the public meeting vision session and several questions arose regarding opening all roads to access, enforcement, speed limits and signage.

According to WI DOT, *A town, village, city or county may enact an ordinance under Wis. Stat. s. 23.33(8)(b)1. to designate a highway not under its jurisdiction as an ATV route. In this case, ATV operation on a state highway or connecting highway is allowed only if WisDOT approves the route. ATV routes by statute are on the roadway portion of a highway and not the shoulder or other parts of the right-of-way (ROW). A roadway is defined in Wis. Stat. s. 340.01(54) as the, "portion of a highway between the regularly established curb lines or that portion which is improved, designed or ordinarily used for vehicular travel, excluding the berm or shoulder." On a 2-lane rural highway, the "roadway" is the area between the fog lines (white lines) as shown in picture (1). In an urban area, it is the area between the curbs in picture (2).*



## Transportation Plans and Programs

### State Plans and Programs

1. Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) Plan 2050 (Connections 2050)
2. WI DOT four-year Statewide Transportation Improvement Program
3. WI DOT Access Management State Statutes
4. Wisconsin State Airport System Plan
5. Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan
6. WI DOT Pedestrian Policy Plan
7. WI DOT Adopt-A-Highway Program
8. WI DOT Information System for Local Roads (WISLR)
9. WI DOT Local Roads Improvement Program (LRIP) - Town plan to DOT for funding
10. WI DOT Transportation Economic Assistance (TEA) Program
11. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) trails program
12. Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

### Regional and Local Plans and Programs

1. St. Croix County Transportation Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP) plan
2. Town of Somerset seven-year Road Work Plan, Master Transportation Plan
3. Town of Somerset Maintenance Department
4. St. Croix County Highway Department 5-year plan 2022-2026
5. West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (WCWPRC) Transportation
6. Specialized Transportation and Transit Providers
  - St. Croix County Aging and Disability Resource Center
  - New Freedom Program – Center for Independent Living for Western Wisconsin





## Transportation Goals, Objectives, Policies

### Transportation Goals and Objectives

Transportation Goal 1: Provide a safe, efficient, and cost-effective transportation system that supports and compliments existing and planned land uses within the Town of Somerset.

#### Objectives

1. Planning for the Town’s land uses and transportation network should provide multi-modal linkages between residential areas, employment centers, services, and other destinations throughout the community when safe, practical opportunities allow.
2. Encourage and maintain a safe, reliable, and connected local road system.
3. Guide new growth to developed road systems or preserved rights-of-way when possible.
4. Manage the land use and traffic impacts due to the State Highway 35 reconstruction and the St. Croix River Crossing project.
5. Update and Enforce Local Access Management and Connectivity Policies that encourage more connectivity by:
  - a. Enforcing new local road development standards to reduce single access point subdivisions (subdivisions with only 1 local road access point with dead-end roads) and connect otherwise inaccessible parcels.
  - b. Decrease number of future direct driveway access points and limit major intersections along arterial and collector streets
  - c. Promote new connections to existing subdivisions where cul-de-sacs and dead-end streets (or road easements) reach to the edge of subdivision property. New subdivisions adjacent to existing subdivisions must connect to existing roads and cannot block existing street access with subdivided parcels unless prohibited by environmental constraints.
6. Future road system development shall follow standards of Town of Somerset Ordinance Chapter 30 and 34 addressing roadway and subdivision design.

#### Transportation Policies

The following transportation policies are a mix of decision-making guidance (policies) and recommendations (action-oriented strategies). Highway facilities operated by St. Croix County or State of Wisconsin may not be bound by the policies or recommendations within this plan.

#### Policies (Decision-Making Guidance)

1. Maintain an accurate road map of the Town, including future road corridors and connections.
2. Continue to administer minimum design, construction, and maintenance standards for public roads, trails, and (if needed) sidewalks, including:
  - a. Dead-end roads and long cul-de-sacs should be avoided where possible. Limit dead-end stub streets and long cul-de-sacs unless they are built to service future planned development where a temporary turnaround easement at the end of the street is dedicated and constructed. Town of Somerset Ordinance Sec. 34-266
  - b. New roads should generally intersect at 90 degree angles with no “dog legs.”
  - c. Road design standards should enhance the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists when
  - d. feasible.

- 
- e. Enforce access controls where necessary to preserve the safe functionality of roadways.
  - f. Trails should be ADA compliant and accessible by emergency vehicles where economically and physically feasible.
3. Work closely with Wisconsin DOT, St. Croix County, the Village of Somerset, and adjacent towns on evolving highway and transportation issues and planning in the area (e.g., bike trails/routes, Safe Routes to School, maintenance, access/connectivity) Future development plans and road improvements should be evaluated with regard to accommodating the safe and efficient travel of pedestrians and bicycle users. Encourage adequate road shoulders for safe biking and walking. Explore more off-road trails as opportunities allow as recommended in the Town of Somerset Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan.
  4. Developers shall generally bear all of the costs for new road and transportation system development, improvements, and extensions.
  5. Coordinate road and highway improvement work with utility providers (i.e., electric, gas, cable, broadband).
  6. Review of rezoning requests must consider impacts on the existing transportation network. Direct future residential, commercial, and industrial development to roadways capable of accommodating resulting traffic.
  7. Adequate off-street parking must be provided for commercial and institutional developments.
  8. Consider adding round-a-bouts at any intersections where traffic increases occur.
  9. Manage subdivision connectivity through the following:
    - a. Setting access point requirements,
    - b. Establishing stricter driveway access and intersection standards, and
    - c. Requiring developers to build through streets.

#### Recommendations (Action-Oriented Strategies)

1. Continue to manage the Town's roads using the PASER pavement rating system and WISLR road management database. Maintain a current Town Road Work Plan that is reviewed annually. (ongoing)
2. Continue to work cooperatively with St. Croix County, the Village of Somerset, and adjacent towns for the development of bike and pedestrian trails and routes within the Town of Somerset. Cooperatively engage in productive county and regional efforts to plan for and promote walking and biking connectivity, such as participating in the St. Croix Bike and Pedestrian Trails Coalition and the update of the County's bike and pedestrian plan. Advocate for and build upon the routes and trails identified in the Town of Somerset Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan. (ongoing)
3. Continue to monitor resident transportation needs and keep informed on the availability of transportation services and programs offered by private and public agencies in order to make referrals and advocate for such services. (ongoing)
4. Explore the potential adoption of a Town of Somerset Official Map to promote connectivity and preserve possible locations for future roads, rail spurs, trails, and public rights-of-way. (short-term)

- 
5. Consider amending the Town Road Work Plan to include bike and pedestrian improvements (e.g., signage, trail development) as envisioned in the Town of Somerset Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan. (long-term)
  6. Work with the Wisconsin DOT, Village of Somerset, and other nearby communities to explore and encourage a potential METRO bus line or other transit option to the Somerset area as demand warrants. (long-term)
  7. Update the Code of Ordinances for Town of Somerset (specifically Chapters 30 and 34) to adopt design standard updates for intersection distances and roadway connection requirements per the transportation policy recommendations included 4.7.1 Policies (Decision-Making Guidance, Bullet #9).
  8. Utilize an on-going Geospatial Information System (GIS) management process to collect and map driveway agreements, potential roadway connection points, and other environmental features to be used for on-the-fly analysis when reviewing proposed developments.

## Utilities & Community Facilities

Utilities and community facilities provide the foundation on which a community is built and maintained. Utilities and facilities can also be used to guide growth, encourage development, contribute to quality of life, or help establish community identity. And, combined with roads, the construction, maintenance, and operation of public utilities and community facilities often constitute the largest proportion of a community’s budget. This chapter includes an inventory of the town facilities, services, sanitary sewer, storm water, water systems, electricity, natural gas, telecommunications, solid waste disposal, recycling, parks, health, youth, and senior care, schools, libraries, cemeteries, and emergency services.

### Town Administrative Facilities and Services

The Town office, garage and joint fire rescue department for the Town of Somerset are located in the Town Hall at 748 State Highway 35. This facility includes the Town Clerk’s office, public meeting location, bathroom, kitchen, and attached emergency vehicle garage. The town hall was improved in 2019 including siding, roofing, insulation, lighting, security, window, sign and landscaping. The kitchen and assembly areas are used as a Senior Center with program administration by the St. Croix County Aging & Disability Resource Center. The Town has established a fund for the replacement of major equipment that receives an annual budget contribution from Town tax revenue.



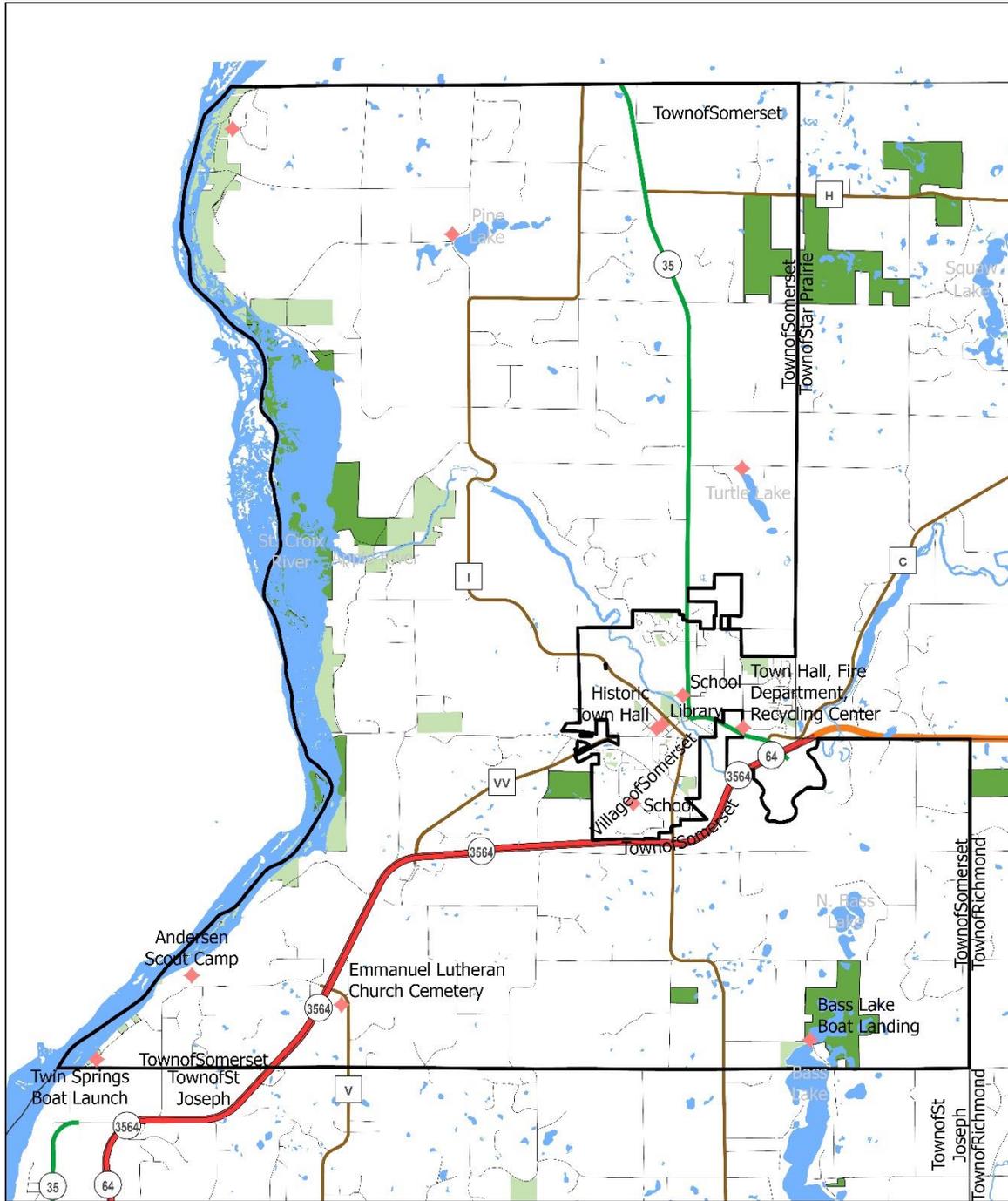
The Town of Somerset government consists of the five board supervisors and three committees— Parks Recreation & Plan Commission, Fire and Rescue Commission, and Transportation and Facilities Committee. Town staff consists of the Town Clerk/Treasure and a two-person Maintenance Department. The Town’s website can be accessed at [www.townofsomersetwi.com](http://www.townofsomersetwi.com) and details a variety of government related information about the Town.

The Town of Somerset still owns its historic Town Hall located within the Village of Somerset. Significant renovations have been completed at the structure and it is currently maintained with limited use.

<b>Use/Capacity:</b>	The current 5,750-square foot Town Hall and Garage built in 1968. Also on site is the recycling area and salt/sand storage.
<b>Short-Term Needs:</b>	Continue historic Town Hall events and programs including Haunted Halloween and honorary bricks program.
<b>Long-Term Needs:</b>	Eventual replacement of the current Town Hall/Garage will likely be needed. Specific sites and plans have not been identified

Town Utilities & Facilities Map

**Town of Somerset Utilities & Community Facilities**



- Town of Somerset
- Municipal Boundaries
- Waterbody
- Parks
- Public Lands
- Community Facilities

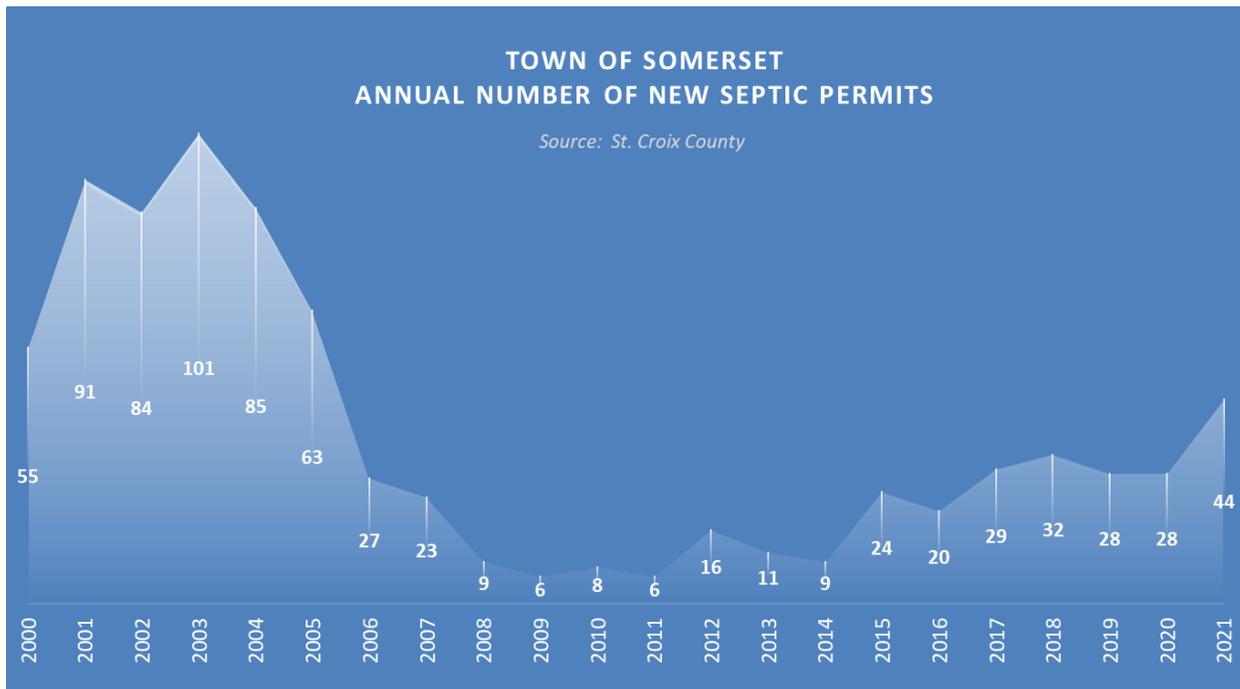


St. Croix County  
Land Information  
April 2023

## Sanitary Sewer Service

All wastewater-sanitary sewer in the Town of Somerset is managed through private, on-site septic treatment systems. Proper installation and maintenance of private septic systems is regulated by St. Croix County. A State sanitary permit is required for the installation of a Private On-site Wastewater Treatment System (POWTS). A County sanitary permit is required for the repair, reconnection or rejuvenation of a POWTS or for the installation of a non-plumbing sanitation (i.e. privy, composting toilet). A Sanitary Permit is required, submitted by a licensed plumber, prior to obtaining a building permit from Town Staff. The proper maintenance of a POWTS is essential to ensure the longevity of private wastewater treatment systems. St. Croix County Private Wastewater System Testing: <https://www.sccwi.gov/328/Sanitary-Program>

St. Croix County issues new septic system permits for development in the Town of Somerset. The following graph shows the annual number of septic permits since 2000, according to the Ascent Permit Management records. The graph reveals a drastic decrease in number of permits from 2003 (101) to 2009 (6). Since 2009, the number of septic permits has gradually increased from 8 in 2010 to 44 permits in 2021.



<b>Use/Capacity:</b>	There are approximately 1,607 private onsite wastewater treatment (septic) systems within the Town of Somerset. Private septic systems are closely regulated and periodic pumping is now required. No issues noted.
<b>Short-Term Needs:</b>	The Highway 64 Coalition is no longer active. More information in Appendix B. None identified.
<b>Long-Term Needs:</b>	None identified.

## Stormwater Management

The goal of stormwater management is to prevent runoff from delivering pollutants or sediment to lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, or adjacent properties. State law maintains stormwater management and erosion control requirements that are administered by local government including county ordinance. Commonly applied stormwater management tools include: ditches, culverts, grassed waterways, rock chutes, retention basins or settling ponds, curb and gutter, storm sewer, and construction site erosion control. Newer techniques, such as bio-retention, rain gardens, and permeable pavements, are also becoming more common.

<b>Use/Capacity:</b>	Largely addressed on a project-by-project basis. No current issues noted.
<b>Short-Term Needs:</b>	The Highway 64 Coalition is no longer active. More information in Appendix B. None identified.
<b>Long-Term Needs:</b>	Maintain awareness of evolving trends and new technologies.

## Water Supply

The drinking water needs in the Town of Somerset are met by private wells. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WI DNR) provides valuable information for private, individual well owners. According to the DNR, “About one-quarter of Wisconsin’s population drinks water drawn from over 800,000 private wells. Wells are safe, dependable sources of water if sited wisely and built correctly. Unlike public water systems, the protection and maintenance of a private well is largely the responsibility of homeowners.” The DNR encourages well owners to test their private well water quality. St. Croix County offers a program to test private well water quality.

**WI DNR Private Well Information:** <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Wells>

The St. Croix County Community Development Department offers various programs throughout the year that provide residents with opportunities to test their private well water. Participation is voluntary and programs are developed to make testing convenient and ensure residents are working with State Certified Laboratories. St. Croix County provides additional drinking water information and resources to keep private well water supply healthy.

**St. Croix County Private Well Water Testing:**

<https://www.sccwi.gov/539/Drinking-Water-Program>



<b>Use/Capacity:</b>	Water quality status is addressed in the Agricultural, Natural, Cultural Resources chapter. 99% of the comprehensive plan survey respondents stated that it is important to protect groundwater quality.
<b>Short-Term Needs:</b>	Continue to promote well testing.
<b>Long-Term Needs:</b>	None identified.

## Solid Waste Management & Recycling

Recycling drop-off is available to town residents on Saturday's at the collection center located behind the Town Hall. In town, each property owner or household contracts for solid waste – garbage collection. Olson Sanitation and Waste Management provide curbside collection. Town officials observed that more people are utilizing curb-side recycling pick-up services with solid waste contractors.

### St. Croix County Recycling

The St. Croix County Recycling Program as part of the Resource Management Division is responsible for enforcing the County's Recycling Ordinance, Chapter 21, in response to the State of Wisconsin mandated household generated materials recycling under s. NR544.04 (9g), Wis. Admin. Code. The program is committed to promoting recycling and protecting our environment now and for future generations to come through sponsored events such as Appliance / Electronic Collection, Clean Sweep Hazardous Waste Collection.

**Resources:** St. Croix County Recycling: [www.sccwi.gov/420/Recycling](http://www.sccwi.gov/420/Recycling)

WI Department of Natural Resources Recycling & Composting: [dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Recycling](http://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Recycling)

Logistics Recycling: Somerset industrial park <https://www.linkedin.com/company/logistics-recycling-inc>

Apostle Biomass: Somerset industrial park <https://www.facebook.com/apostlebiomass>

<b>Use/Capacity:</b>	The use of the recycling and Clean Sweep programs has been increasing among Town residents. Survey responses: 77.9% Recycling service is Excellent or Good, 87.9% Garbage service is Excellent or Good
<b>Short-Term Needs:</b>	Continue to encourage residents to use the recycling and Clean Sweep programs.
<b>Long-Term Needs:</b>	None identified.

## Parks and Outdoor Recreation

The Town of Somerset is blessed with many outdoor recreation opportunities that contribute to the community's identity and the high quality of life enjoyed by its residents. Most of the public outdoor recreation lands and conservancy areas in town are owned and managed by the Federal and State government including the NPS St. Croix National Scenic Riverway. In January 2019, the town adopted the comprehensive parks and recreation plan. The plan includes goals and policies for the maintenance and improvement of town parks and recreation. The Town assesses a park fee for each new lot created for Town park improvements. The Town maintains four outdoor recreational facilities described below. Area parks, recreational facilities and open spaces are shown in the map below.

<b>Use/Capacity:</b>	55.1% of survey respondents agree or strongly agree that public funds should be used for new parks (Q14). As the population increases, so will the demand for outdoor recreation opportunities. Additional river access on the St. Croix and Apple is desired.
<b>Short/Long - Term Needs:</b>	Care will also be needed to ensure that development, commercialization, and over-use does not threaten or degrade the quality of the outdoor recreation facilities and natural resources of the community. General needs include off-road bike and hiking trails and a disc golf course at Parnell Prairie. See Town of Somerset Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan 2013-2018 for additional goals and recommendations. Parks plan needs to be updated.

### Pine Lake Landing

Located in the north-central part of the Town at 2249 50th Street on the 89-acre Pine Lake, this is a boat landing with dock/fishing pier and shoreline fishing opportunities. This park features an accessible ramp and dock/ fishing pier, boat trailer parking, boat landing, benches and picnic tables. Please clean up after yourself - no trash receptacles.



### Parnell Prairie Preserve

Located at 1823 45th Street, this park opened in 2010 as a cooperative effort between the Town and Village on a reclaimed town dump site (1967-88). The Preserve includes 30 acres of restored prairie and 1.4 miles of mowed hiking paths/cross-country ski trails. It is also available for hunting under WDNR rules. The Preserve is open 5 AM to 10 PM. A park shelter was added in 2021 and the trailhead parking lot was paved in 2022. The Town is planning to install a disc golf course at this location.

### Twin Springs Park

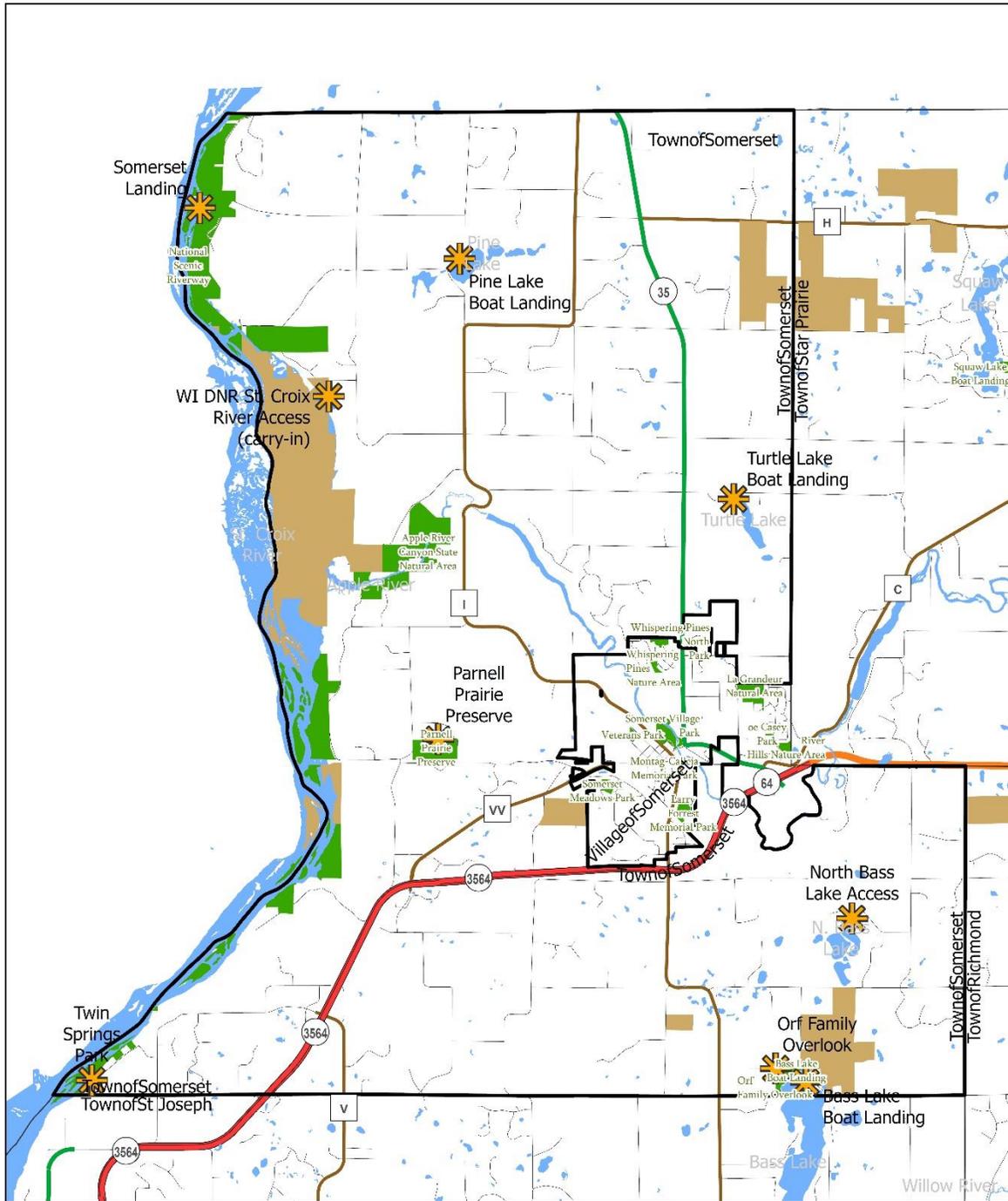
At 1478 Twin Springs Road, the Town of Somerset has developed a boat launch and parking area in cooperation with the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway administration that allows public access to the St. Croix River at the southern Town boundary. This facility is supported through income generated by the sale of yearly launch and parking permits issued by the Town.



### Turtle Lake Landing

This is a small boat landing is available on 52-acre Turtle Lake located about 1.5 miles north of the Village of Somerset at 751 205th Avenue.

### Town of Somerset Parks & Conservation Map



- Town of Somerset
- Municipal Boundaries
- Waterbody
- Parks
- Public Land
- ☀ Town Somerset Parks & Conservation Areas



St. Croix County  
Land Information  
March 7, 2023

## Communications and Broadband

Telephone service within the Town of Somerset is principally provided by Northwest Communications, Company with additional service provided by Frontier Communication, Centurytel, and AT&T. An increasing number of households are solely using mobile telephone service rather than the traditional fixed, land lines. Since the 2015 plan, several cellular towers have been upgraded and three new towers were installed that have improved service. However, the increased cell use, influx in population for large events, and increase in town population have placed demands on the cellular network that fuel the need for improved service in some areas.

The map below, from the 2012 adopted St. Croix County comprehensive plan, shows the telecommunications facilities for St. Croix County municipalities. Three additional cellular tower locations were identified in the Town of Somerset and added to the map below.

### Telecommunications Facilities



source: St. Croix County Land Information

## Broadband Internet

Fast, reliable broadband internet is desired by town residents and required for most businesses. According to the FCC, the definition of broadband internet is a minimum of 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload speeds. Broadband provides high speed internet access via multiple types of technologies including fiber optics, wireless, cable, DSL and satellite, all of which are available in most areas of the town.

Since the 2015 plan, the Town of Somerset has gained access to fiber optic broadband in some areas that requires a hook-up fee. The town provided Northwest Communications with a letter of support for grant opportunities that led to internet improvements.

According to researchers at the Federal Reserve Bank, the social returns to investment in broadband are significant. Increasing access and usage of broadband infrastructure in rural areas (and the amenities, digital skills, online education, and job search opportunities that come with it) lead to higher property values, increased job and population growth, higher rates of new business formation, and lower unemployment rates.

### *Types of broadband connections:*

- *Fiber optics carry lots of data using pulses of light through strands of fiber at the fastest speeds.*
- *Wireless broadband (Wi-Fi) connects a home or business to the internet using radio signals instead of cables.*
- *Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) transmits data over traditional copper phone lines.*
- *Cable delivers high speed internet over the same coaxial cables that deliver pictures and sound to your TV set.*
- *Satellite is provided by communication satellites and is often the best option in rural areas.*

St. Croix County conducted a broadband (high-speed internet) study in 2021 that included review and analysis of the current infrastructure and opportunities for improvement. In 2022, the county implemented broadband grants to expand services in eight townships: Cylon, Emerald, Erin Prairie, Richmond, St. Joseph, Stanton, Star Prairie and Kinnickinnic. A County broadband Subcommittee is being formed to continue looking at additional broadband opportunities.

<b>Use/Capacity:</b>	High speed internet/broadband: 57% of survey respondents rated as 'Needs Improvement,' 35.8% rated it as 'Excellent' or 'Good', and 7.2% stated they 'Don't Know'. Phone Coverage: 54.6% of survey respondents rated as 'Excellent' or 'Good', 38.7% as 'Needs Improvement', and 6.6% stated they 'Don't Know' (Q13)
<b>Short-Term Needs:</b>	Improved broadband speeds and reliability in some areas and reliable cellular phone service. Cellular dead zones exist in spotted areas and with large events (portable towers for large events may be required)
<b>Long-Term Needs:</b>	Changing technologies may influence regulation of communications facilities and offer new opportunities for improved service. Improved broadband speeds and reliability in some areas and reliable cellular phone service.

## Electric and Power Facilities

The Town is provided electric service by Xcel Energy, St. Croix Electric Cooperative, Polk-Burnett Electric Cooperative, and Dairyland Power. Midwest Natural Gas currently provides natural gas to many parts of the Town, while other residents use propane.



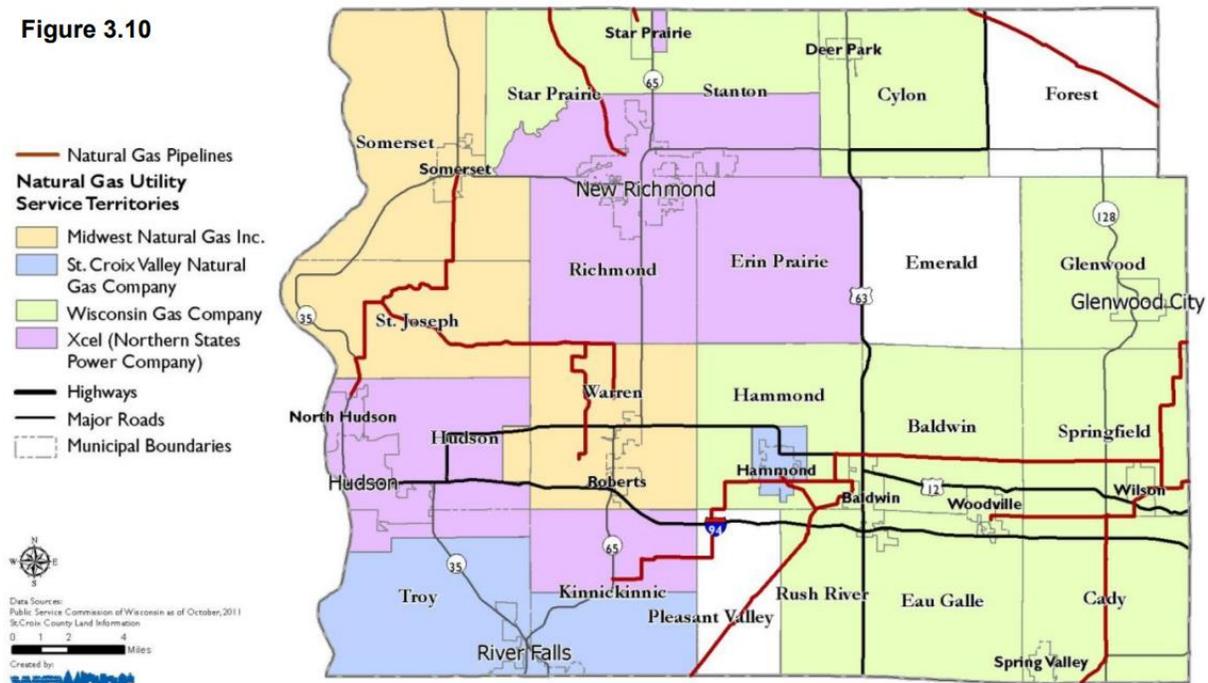
<b>Use/Capacity:</b>	Propane and natural gas prices during winter 2022-2023 are very high and electric outages were an issue, which became hardships for many residents
<b>Short/Long -Term Needs:</b>	Reduce prices, improve and expand natural gas and provide more reliable electric, preventing outages in sub-zero temperatures. As community grows, add power stations as needed.

## Natural Gas

In St. Croix County natural gas is provided by four different gas companies. Large rural areas of the County do not have access to natural gas. The following map from the St. Croix County comprehensive plan shows each town correlating to the natural gas company that provides service in that area. The Town of Somerset gains service from Midwest Natural Gas Company.

### Natural Gas Service

Figure 3.10



source: Wisconsin Public Service Commission & St. Croix County Land Information

## Health, Youth, and Senior Care

The nearest health care facility is the Somerset Clinic located in the Village of Somerset. Hospital and emergency care is also available in New Richmond, Stillwater, and Osceola. Optical and dental care is also available in these communities. Dental facilities are now available in the Village of Somerset.



### Senior Facilities

Facility	Description	Location
Senior Center	Social services organization	Somerset, WI
New Richmond Senior Housing	Assisted living facility	New Richmond, WI
Orchard View Terrace	Assisted living facility	New Richmond, WI
Deerfield	Assisted living facility	New Richmond, WI
Cambridge Senior Living	Assisted living facility	Hudson, WI
Red Cedar Canyon	Assisted living facility	Hudson, WI
Pine Ridge	Assisted living facility	Hudson, WI
Adult Family Homes	Somerset (1 home with 4 beds), New Richmond (12 homes with 48 beds total ), Hudson (13 homes with 46 beds total)	
Community Based Residential Facilities	New Richmond ( 4 facilities with 48 beds total), Hudson (7 facilities with 180 beds total)	
Residential Care Apartment Complexes	New Richmond (2 complexes with 29 beds total), Hudson (2 complexes with 93beds total)	
Sources: 2015 comprehensive plan and online information gathered in December 2022		

### Youth Services & Facilities

In the state of Wisconsin, the childcare licensing program is provided by Department of Children and Families (DCF). The program is accountable for the statewide licensure of Wisconsin's childcare facilities. According to Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) there are 53 licensed childcare programs in St. Croix County as of December 2022. Residents identified the high cost of childcare and lack of childcare providers as an issue in the planning process.

<b>Use/Capacity:</b>	37.7% of comprehensive plan survey respondents agreed that more senior housing (designed for the needs of older persons) is needed in the Town.
<b>Short-Term Needs:</b>	Revisit existing ordinances to allow for senior housing facilities and alternatives, if compatible with nearby land uses. Promote the local need for licensed childcare providers.
<b>Long-Term Needs:</b>	Demand for senior housing will increase as the population ages. Construction designed for aging in place.

### Cemeteries

The Town is home to one cemetery—German Lutheran Emmanuel Cemetery—that is maintained by its Cemetery Association off County Road VV.

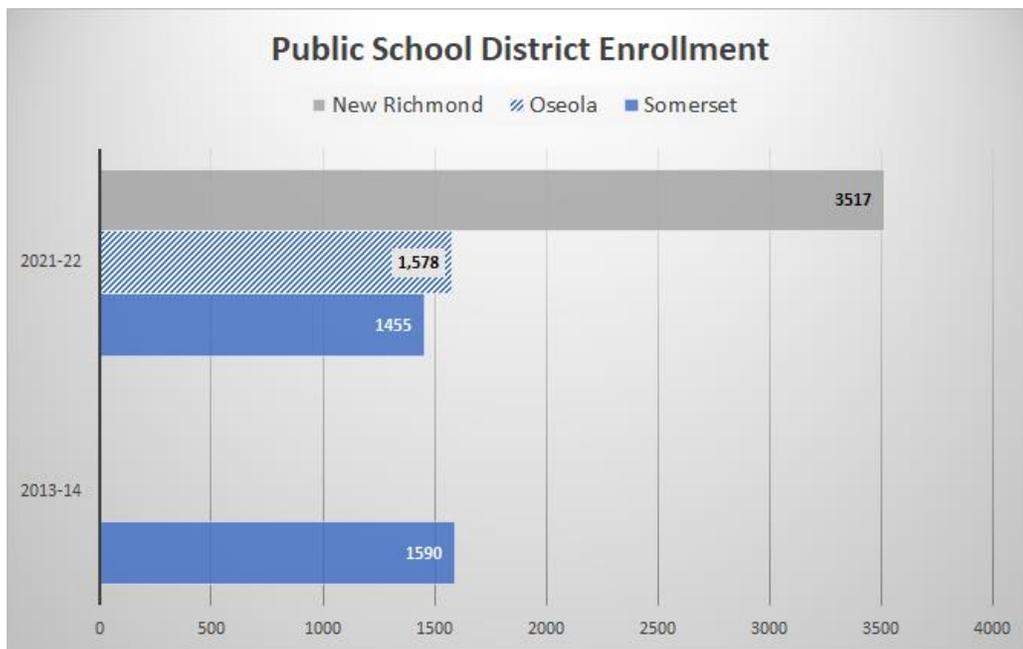
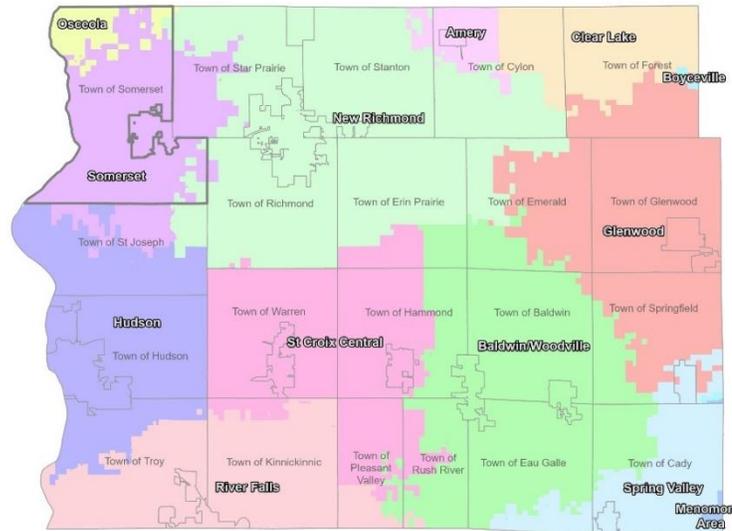
<b>Use/Capacity:</b>	None identified.
<b>Needs:</b>	None identified.

## Public Schools

As shown in the map, the Town of Somerset is primarily served by the School District of Somerset. The New Richmond School District and Osceola School District also serve small areas of the Town.

The graph below shows public school district enrollment according to Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction report cards for 2020-2021 and previous Somerset enrollment numbers found in the 2015 comprehensive plan<sup>5</sup>. The comparison reveals a decrease in school enrollment for Somerset District.

## St. Croix County School Districts



## Private Schools

St. Anne Grade School is located in the Village of Somerset and offers classes for 4-year old Kindergarten through eighth grade. The School's 2013-2014 enrollment was 124 students. St. Anne's School current enrollment as of January 2023 is 113.

<sup>5</sup> Somerset enrollment from 2015 plan, assuming for the school year of 2013-2014, that stated: *Pre-Kindergarten - 8 students, 4-Year Old Kindergarten - 79, Kindergarten - 121, Grades 1-4 - 443, Grades 5-8 - 451, Grades 9-12 - 488.*

## Higher Education

Northwood Technical College is the nearest higher education facility located in the City of New Richmond. The University of Wisconsin system serves western Wisconsin with a number of campuses. The nearest four-year campuses are UW-Stout and UW-River Falls. There are 8 colleges within 25 miles of Somerset including University of Wisconsin in River Falls, and 7 colleges in MN.

## Libraries

Somerset residents have access to several area libraries in St. Croix County as part of the Inspiring and Facilitating Library Success (IFLS) system. St. Croix County area libraries are listed in the text box, right. The closest library is in the Village of Somerset at 208 Hud St., Somerset.

The Somerset Public Library was legally formed in 1974 by a group of residents aided by the Village President. It moved several times until 1993 when the current facility was constructed. The current library with the new 2020 expansion is 12,500 sq ft and offers several meeting rooms in addition to the library services. The library is supported by the Village of Somerset and funded by St. Croix County; the Town of Somerset contributes indirectly through taxes paid to the County.

### St. Croix County Area Libraries

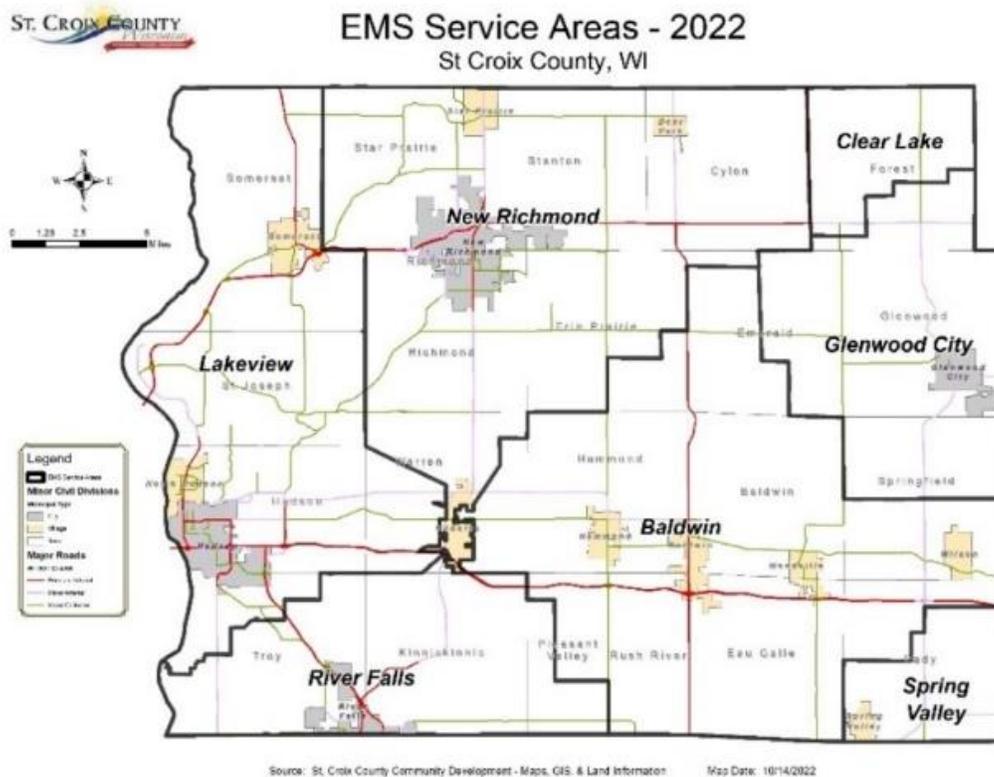
- *Somerset Public Library*
- *Deer Park Public Library*
- *Friday Memorial Library (New Richmond)*
- *Glenwood City Public Library*
- *Hammond Community Library*
- *Hazel Mackin Community Library (Roberts)*
- *Hudson Area Library*
- *River Falls Public Library*
- *Somerset Public Library*
- *Spring Valley Public Library*
- *Woodville Community Library*



<b>Use/Capacity:</b>	The Somerset library has been expanded since 1993 and is now 12,500 sq ft and offers several meeting rooms in addition to the library services.
<b>Short-Term Needs:</b>	Continue to maintain communication with school districts and library.
<b>Long-Term Needs:</b>	If Districts continue to grow in population, additional space may be needed in future.

## Emergency Services

The Town of Somerset works with area municipalities for emergency services. The Emergency Management System (EMS) service areas in St. Croix County are shown in the map below. Town of Somerset residents receive ambulance service from the Somerset service area. Each area is either direct ambulance service or a combination of a first responder unit, a group of local citizens that volunteer to be contacted in case of an emergency, and back up ambulance service from a neighboring community, determined by contract negotiation and subject to change. St. Croix County has a single emergency dispatch for the entire county, including the Town of Somerset. The St. Croix County Emergency Communications Center provides the vital communications link between those needing emergency services and fire, law enforcement, and emergency medical services in the County. Town of Somerset has an Emergency Operations Plan that identifies procedures, roles, responsibilities, and contact information in case of a large emergency or disaster event.



## St. Croix County Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan

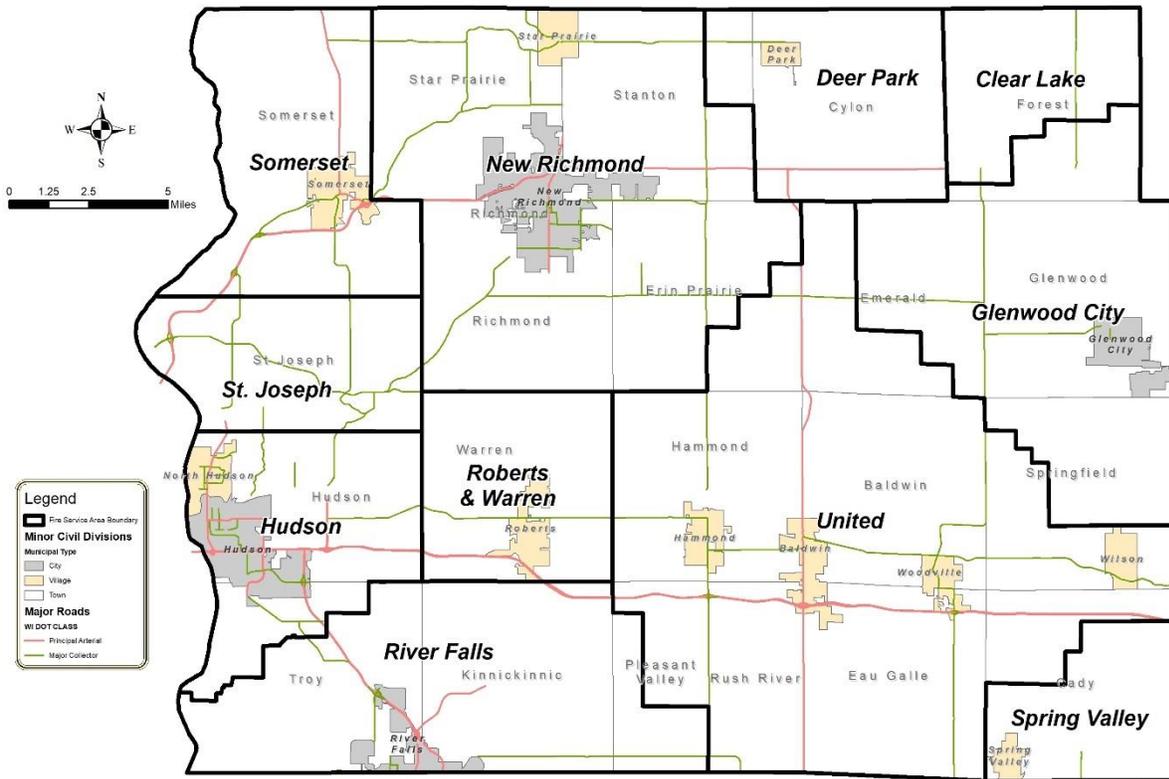
The Town is included within the St. Croix County St. Croix County All Hazards Mitigation Plan, 2013-2018. Adoption of the plan is a prerequisite for certain FEMA mitigation grant programs. The plan included the following hazard concerns specific to the Town of Somerset: • Areas of flooding concern and dam shadows. • Manufactured Home Park may be a good candidate for a community safe room/storm shelter. • Closed depressions and karst topography poses a groundwater contamination risks from hazardous materials. • Snow drifting can be especially bad along 230th Avenue. • The Town is located within the 50-mile Ingestion Pathway Zone of Prairie Island Nuclear facility.

## Fire Protection Areas

Fire protection and rescue services for the Town are provided by the Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) which serves the Town of Somerset and the Village of Somerset. The department is housed in a large structure attached to the Somerset Town Hall. The FRS has been in this location since 1970 and is a volunteer department. All fire departments in St. Croix County participate in the Wisconsin Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS) if assistance is needed.



## Fire Protection Service Areas - 2022 St Croix County, WI



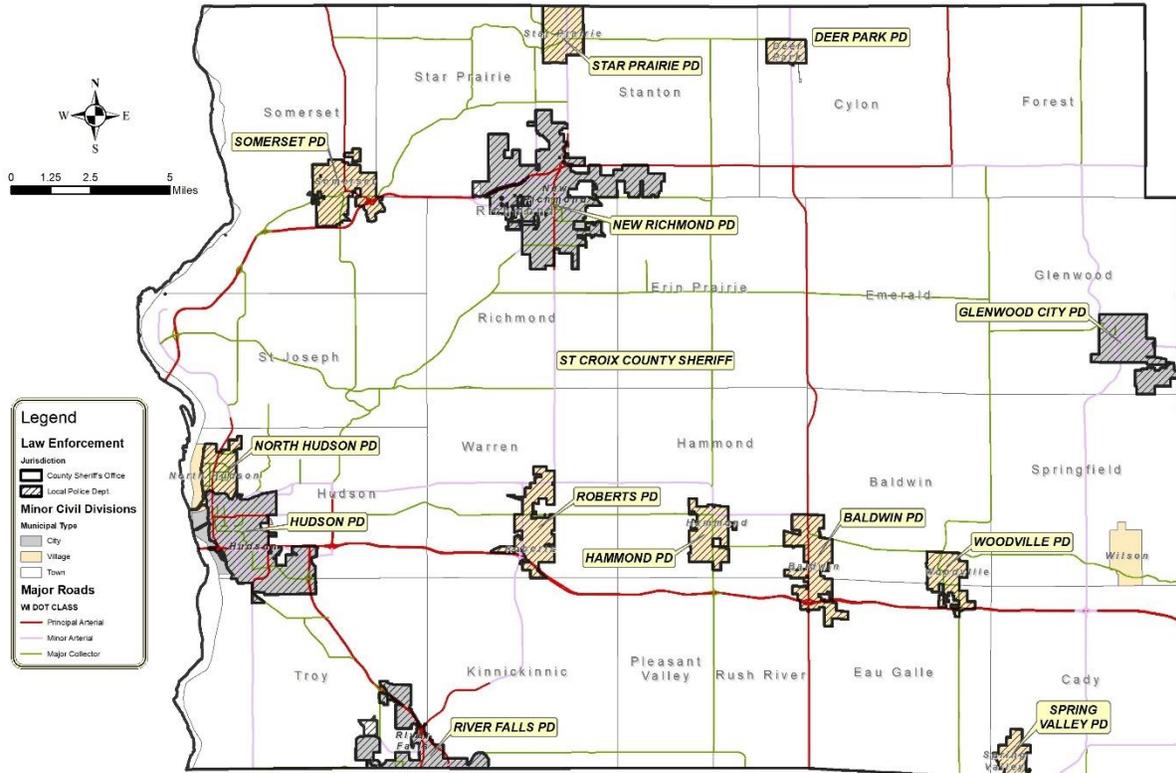
Source: St. Croix County Community Development - Maps, GIS, & Land Information      Map Date: 10/12/2022

## St. Croix County Sheriff

Law enforcement and protective services are provided by the St. Croix County Sheriff's Department as shown in the map below. The Village of Somerset has a police department with offices at the Village of Somerset Municipal Center Statewide law enforcement mutual aid exists if needed.



## Law Enforcement Districts - 2022 St Croix County, WI



Source: St. Croix County Community Development - Maps, GIS, & Land Information      Map Date: 10/20/2022

2022 Survey Results	Excellent	Good	Needs Improvement	Don't know
Fire protection service	21.7%	53.6%	3.6%	21.1%
Ambulance service	18.0%	47.7%	7.2%	27.1%
County Sheriff protection	18.9%	52.8%	10.0%	18.3%

<b>Use/Capacity:</b>	Above table 2022 survey results
<b>Short-Term Needs:</b>	1. Periodically revisit and update the Town Emergency Operations Plan. Officials listed in the plan should have basic levels of Incident Command System training. 2. Identify or develop a community storm shelter and add generator to Town Hall.
<b>Long-Term Needs:</b>	Work with Somerset Fire Protection and Rescue Services to implement existing Capital Improvement Plan and 5-year plan that outline ES needs.

## Dams and Flood Controls

According to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Dam Safety Program, two dams exist within the Town of Somerset. A small, unrated dam structure exists on a small seepage pond in the northeast part of the Town. Of greater concern is the larger Apple River Falls Dam owned by Xcel Energy, which is rated as a significant hazard. The Apple River Falls Dam is highly regulated, inspected regularly, and has an emergency action plan on file with St. Croix County Emergency Support Services Department. The Apple River Falls Dam is located approximately 6.59 miles downstream of the Riverdale Dam and 2.32 miles upstream of the backwaters of the St. Croix River. The inundation area for a failure of the Apple River Falls Dam could be slightly larger than the 100- year floodplain for the first mile downstream, but would closely follow the 100-year floodplain boundary thereafter to the St. Croix River. The dam power plant itself is within the inundation area, as well as 5 to 6 structures closer to the mouth of the River where it joins with the St. Croix River. Should a failure occur, less time would be available for evacuation compared to the Riverdale Dam. Flood conditions would begin in 10-12 minutes at the mouth of the Apple River and peak flooding would occur within 30 minutes, likely allowing less 10 minutes or less to evacuate the 5 to 6 structures just upstream of the confluence before flooding begins. Though the Riverdale Dam is not located in the Town, it is also of concern to residents. This high hazard dam is located approximately 2-3 miles upstream of the Village of Somerset on the Apple River. The inundation area for the first 2 to 3 miles downstream of the dam, should a failure occur, is significantly larger than the high hazard floodplain area.

<b>Use/Capacity:</b>	No issues noted. Closely regulated.
<b>Short-Term Needs:</b>	None identified.
<b>Long-Term Needs:</b>	None identified.

## Post Office

The Town of Somerset is served by the Village of Somerset Post Office, 750 Rivard Street, Somerset, WI.

<b>Use/Capacity:</b>	No issues noted.
<b>Short-Term Needs:</b>	Employment and reliable service are issues
<b>Long-Term Needs:</b>	None identified.

## Civic Organizations and Other Privately-Owned Facilities

There are a number of civic organizations and other clubs located in the area, such as Somerset Chamber of Commerce, Lions Clubs, 4-H Clubs, conservation groups, garden club, and St. Croix bike and pedestrian trails coalition. Coordination with these groups regarding planning or implementing programs should be considered and utilized whenever possible because of the guidance, funding, support, and volunteer efforts the groups may provide. Civic organizations provide local governments a cost effective way to leverage tax dollars for community projects. The most prominent privately-owned facilities available to the public active within the Town of Somerset are: • German Lutheran Emmanuel Church and Cemetery • St. Croix National Golf Club • Fred C. Andersen Scout Camp (Boy Scouts of America)

<b>Use/Capacity:</b>	No issues noted.
<b>Short-Long Term Needs:</b>	Bike and pedestrian trails, reference recommendations for connecting paths in Parks and Recreation Plan



## Related Plans and Programs

### Federal Plans and Programs

1. U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) Assistance to Firefighting Grant Program [www.usfa.fema.gov](http://www.usfa.fema.gov)
2. FEMA grant programs emergency or disaster <https://www.fema.gov/grants>

### State Plans and Programs

1. WI DNR Parks and Recreation Grants <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/aid/Grants.html>
2. Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation Brownfields Initiative <https://wedc.org/programs-and-resources/brownfields-grant-program/>
3. WI DNR Clean Water Fund Program <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/aid/EIF.html>
4. Wisconsin Department of Administration Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) <https://doa.wi.gov/Pages/LocalGovtsGrants/CommunityDevelopmentPrograms.aspx>
5. WI Department of Revenue Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) districts for a limited variety of specific uses <https://www.revenue.wi.gov/Pages/SLF/tif.aspx>

### Regional and Local Plans and Programs

1. St. Croix County Household and Agricultural Hazardous Waste Collection CLEAN SWEEP <https://www.sccwi.gov/430/Hazardous-Waste>
2. St. Croix County Aging & Disability Resource Center - <https://www.sccwi.gov/153/Aging-Disability-Resource-Center>

## Utilities & Community Facilities Goals, Objectives & Policies

### Goal

Support and maintain existing community facilities and anticipate public needs and desired for new or expanded facilities.

### Objectives

1. Utilities, community facilities, and public services should be planned and maintained in a manner that protects the health, safety, and general welfare of residents and property owners, while contributing to the community's quality of life.
2. Continue to partner with the School Districts, Library, utility providers, service providers, and adjacent communities to provide services in an efficient, cost-effective manner and avoid unneeded duplication of facilities and services.
3. Return on investment and long-term maintenance/operating costs should be considered and planned for before creating or expanding a new facility or service. Some benefits are difficult to quantify and a positive financial return may not be necessary or definable in all instances.

### General Policies and Recommendations

1. When evaluating investments in outdoor recreation facilities, community services, and other public amenities, consider the potential long-term positive impacts to the community's quality



of life and attractiveness to residents, visitors, and employers/business investors. Continue to maintain an up-to-date description of key services and amenities at the Town's website. (policy)

2. Maintain a "dig once" goal, so that private infrastructure is installed concurrently with public road and infrastructure improvements. Contact providers when such projects are planned. (policy)
3. Explore the maps within this Utilities & Community Facilities chapter including Town Utilities & Community Facilities map, Parks & Conservation Map, Telecommunications Facilities map, Natural Gas Service map, School Districts map, EMS Service Areas map, Fire Protection Service Areas map, Law Enforcement Districts map when considering preservation of rights-of-way and lands for utilities, public facilities, and parks, as well as future roads.

#### Town Facilities

4. Continue to consider options for a future, more centralized location for a new Town Hall and Town Maintenance Shop, possibly to include room for the Senior Center and meal site. If a property becomes available and is deemed appropriate, consider acquisition. It may be advantageous if the property includes adequate land for public outdoor recreational use and community events, as well as being located on a recreational trail or route. (ongoing)

#### Wastewater/Septic, Stormwater Management, and Water

5. The Town of Somerset will not allow holding tanks for septic waste for new construction. Holding tanks will be allowed for remedial action on existing structures with proper monitoring and pumping.
6. Continue to support and locally promote septic pumping requirements and water testing programs administered by St. Croix County Land Use & Conservation Division. Encourage residents to also test for radon and increase local awareness of related risks. (ongoing)

#### Solid Waste Management and Recycling

7. The Town of Somerset will promote reuse, waste reduction, and composting to reduce the amount of waste disposal and will require the proper recycling and disposal of waste.
8. Continue to advertise and encourage residents and businesses to use the recycling facility and Clean Sweep programs. (ongoing)

#### Parks and Outdoor Recreation

9. During land use permitting and zoning decisions, ensure that the quality of the public outdoor recreational lands in the Town are used in a manner that is compatible with and does not unduly detract from the character of these natural areas and the overall experience of users. If needed, engage St. Croix County, Wisconsin DNR, the National Park Service, and nearby communities in a discussion of design, regulatory, and management options to protect sensitive features, prohibit over-commercialization, and prevent over-use. (policy)
10. Continue to actively evaluate, plan for, and improve outdoor recreational facilities within the community through the Town of Somerset Parks and Recreation Committee. (ongoing)
11. Implement the recommendations identified within the Town of Somerset Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan 2013-2018. Include projects that: (i) increase access to the St. Croix and Apple Rivers for boating, canoeing, and kayaking; (ii) add more open park areas, like at Parnell's



Prairie, (iii) improve bicycle and pedestrian route and trail connections, and (iv) protect the quality of public outdoor recreational areas. (short- & long-term)

12. Review and update the Town of Somerset Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan 2013-2018 at least once every five years. (long-term)

#### Communications and Broadband

13. If there is sufficient public interest, form an ad hoc committee to further explore broadband issues and needs in the community. Reach out and collaborate with providers to identify barriers to improving service and available alternatives, including any priorities that may be grant eligible. Treat the community as a market and develop a business case for private broadband investment. Consider organizing a “broadband open house” or similar event that brings together residents, business owners, and Internet service providers to increase awareness of available broadband alternatives and to discuss related needs. Also consider any policy actions that the Town may take, such as adopting a joint trench-use policy. (short-term)

#### Senior Housing Facilities

14. Land use regulations and enforcement should allow for and encourage the development and operation of senior housing facilities (e.g., nursing homes, CBRFs, group homes) in the Town, if the proposed facility: (i) can be physically accommodated at the site, (ii) does not create significant use conflicts, and (iii) is designed and operated in a manner that is compatible with the Town’s rural character. (policy)

#### Schools and Libraries

15. Maintain open communications and partnerships with the Somerset Public Schools and the Somerset Public Library that benefits Town residents. (policy)

#### Emergency Services and Planning

16. Continue to support the joint fire/rescue service in cooperation with the Village of Somerset. Maintain open lines of communication with the fire/rescue service to anticipate future needs and encourage the planning for future capital projects and equipment replacement.

## Agricultural, Natural, & Cultural Resources



### General Context

The Town of Somerset lies in the northwest corner of St. Croix County and is, geographically, the largest town in the county. The St. Croix Federal Riverway forms the western border of the Town and is a landscape of forested limestone cliffs interspersed with low, timbered banks and wetland areas where the Apple River joins the St. Croix River.

For much of its course through the Town of Somerset, the Apple River is a fast flowing river with occasional moderate rapids. The river traverses the Town of Somerset and is a unique and largely unspoiled waterway. Portions of the river flow through eighty- to ninety-foot rock palisades on its way to join the St. Croix National Riverway. There has been considerable interest in improving public access to the Apple River, possibly through the use of conservation easements that would allow the public access for low impact activities such as hiking, fishing, and picnicking.

The physical geography of the Town was created through thousands of years of glacial sculpturing which has created both gentle rolling hills and steep ravines throughout the Town. The basic fundamentals of the land in the Town have changed little since its settlement, but the use of the land has changed drastically in the last century. The economic base of early settlement was timber. At one time, two saw mills were established on the Apple River within the Town. These mills sawed pine logs using waterpower from the river. Later, the prime occupation in the Town was farming which lasted until the 1970's at which time landowners began to realize that their land, little of which was prime farmland, was becoming increasingly valuable as house sites for the booming population of the Twin Cities. It is estimated that, presently, no more than six farming operations in the Town provide a family's basic income. The Town now has a morning and evening rush hour and the traditional rural character and agricultural heritage of the Town is rapidly disappearing. A central concern of the Plan Commission is that this Comprehensive Plan should guide development in a way that might retain some sense of the land's original character.

## Agricultural Resources and Trends

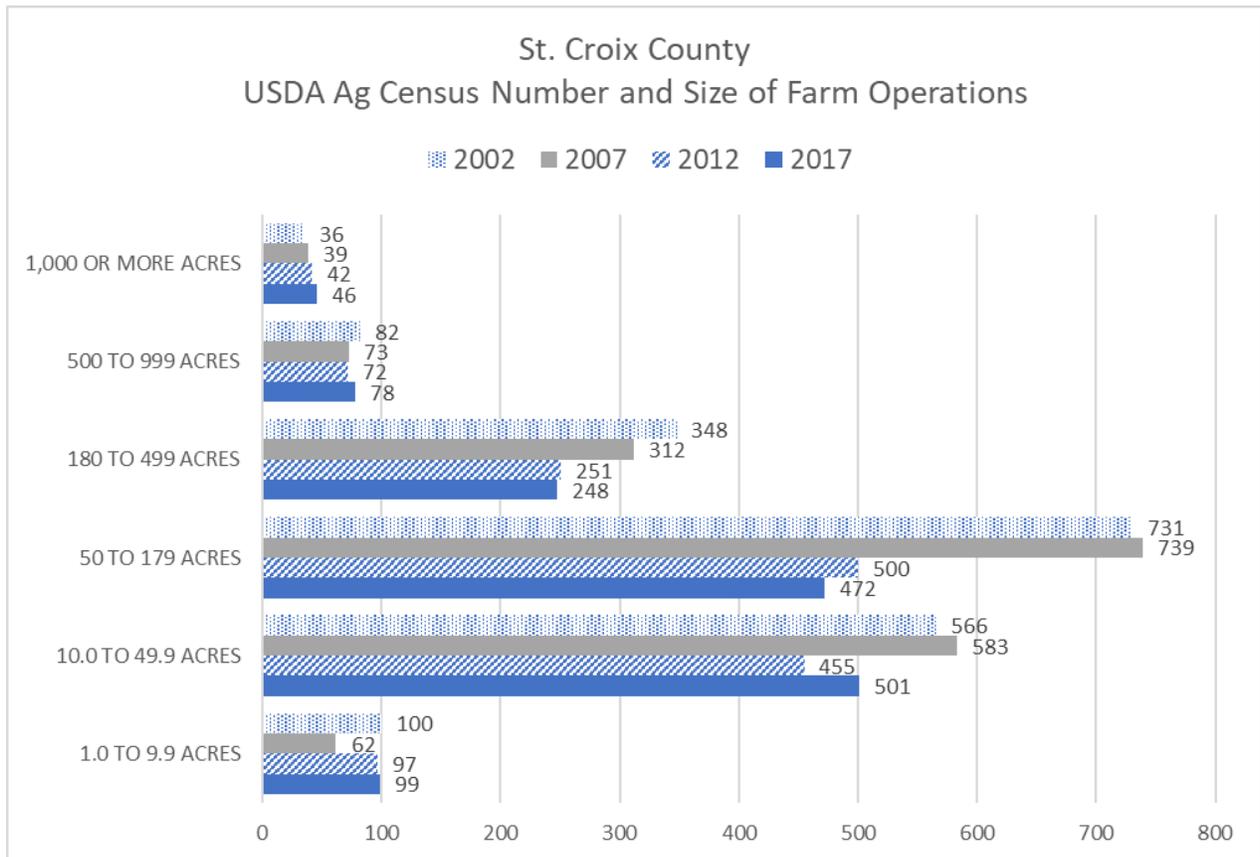
Agriculture is an important element of the social and economic characteristics of St. Croix County. Up until about 30 years ago agriculture was the predominant feature of the Town of Somerset as well. Changes in agriculture, due to socio-economic conditions, new practices, and development pressure, have had profound impacts in the Town of Somerset.

In 1990, there were 61 people reported to live on farms in the Town of Somerset, down from 339 in 1980. By 2000, the Census Bureau reported a farm population in the Town of Somerset of 43. It should be noted that the definition includes all operations that receive \$1,000 or more in gross farm income. After 2000, the Census Bureau no longer collected data on farm vs. nonfarm households. But, it is obvious that production agriculture is no longer a dominant occupation in the Town of Somerset. During the 2023 plan process, Town officials stated that there are two dairy farm operations in town.

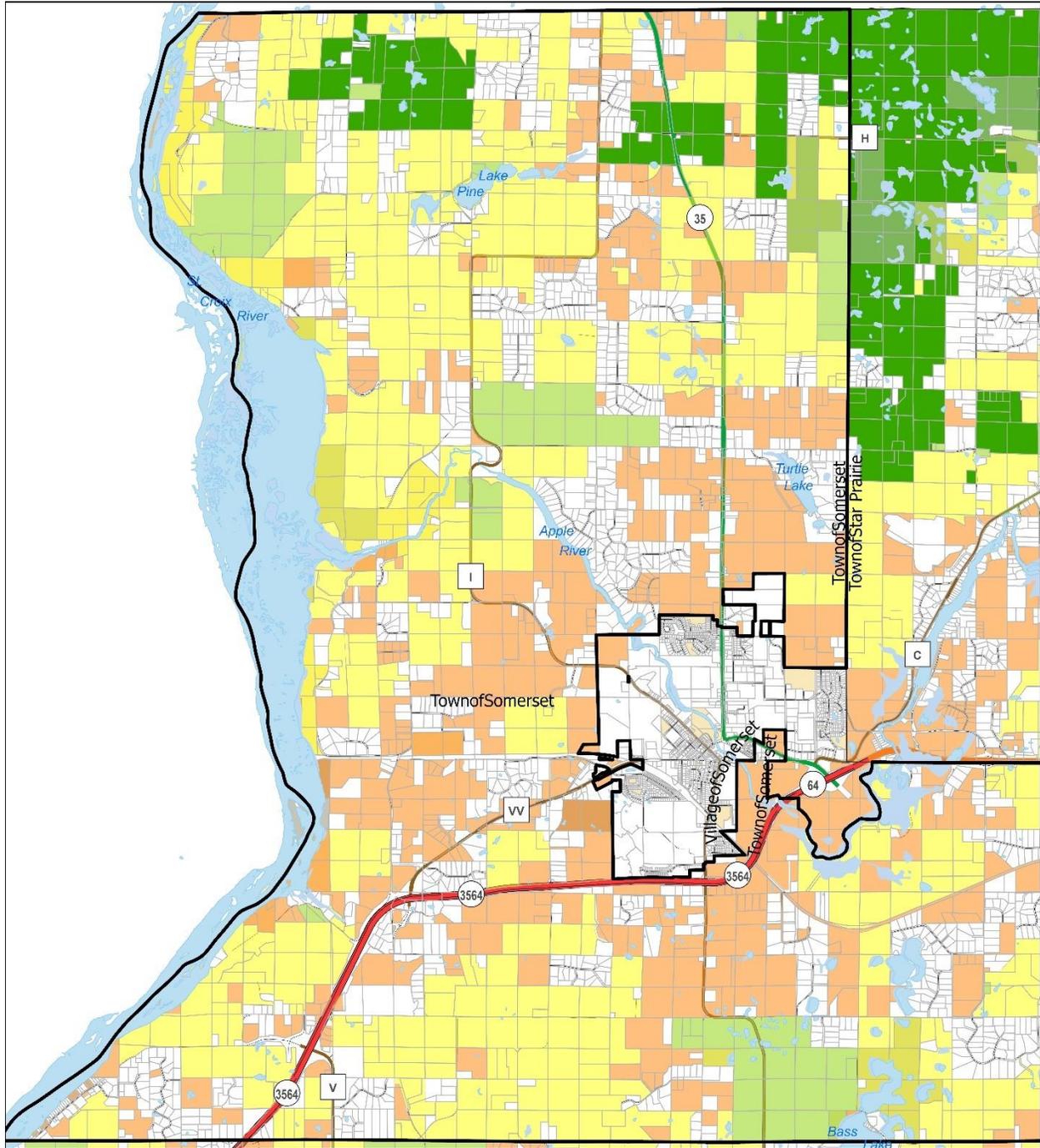
The **Agricultural Land Map** below shows existing farm preservation areas and the agricultural site assessment score of the Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) system, further described below.

### St. Croix County Size & Number of Farms

The graph below shows the number and size of farm operations in St. Croix County in according to the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Ag Census years 2002, 2007, 2012, and 2017. Of the St. Croix County farm operations, the Ag Census 2017 reported 87 agricultural operations within the Somerset zip code (54025).



### Town of Somerset Agricultural Land Map



Town of Somerset	Farmland Preservation Area	Waterbodies	48 - 61
Municipal Boundaries	Wetland	62 - 75	16 - 47 (Poorest Land for Growing Crops)
Parks	Farmland Preservation Areas	76 - 100 (Best Land for Growing Crops)	
Public Land	Add to FPA	<b>Site Assessment Score</b>	
	Remove from FPA		
	River & Stream		



ST. CROIX COUNTY  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

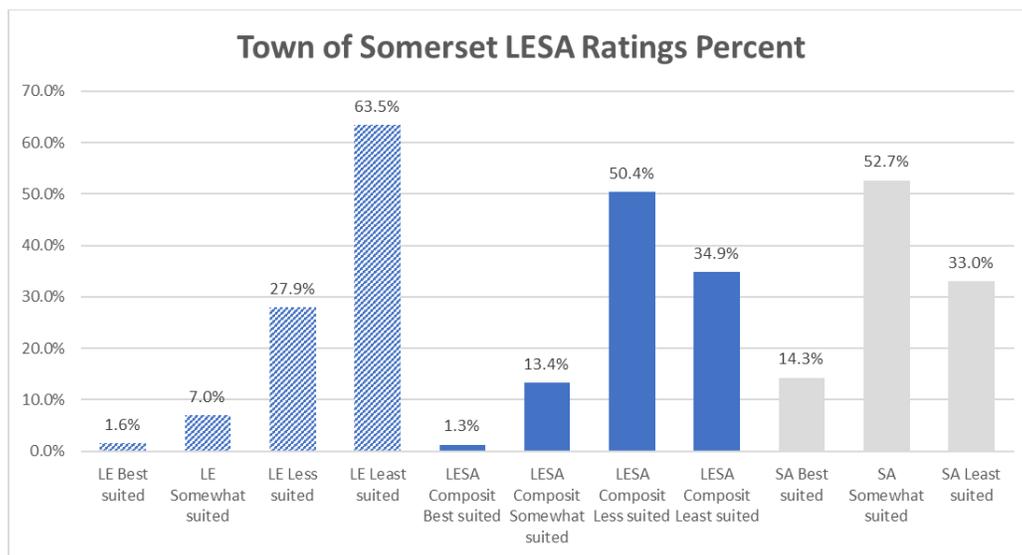
St. Croix County  
Land Information  
March 8, 2023

## Prime Agricultural Land and Farmland Preservation Areas

Prime Agricultural Land is the land that is best suited for food, feed, forage, fiber, and oil seed crops. It may be cultivated land, pasture, woodland, or other land, but it is not existing urban and developed land or water areas. The soil qualities, growing season, and moisture supply are those needed for a well-managed soil to produce a sustained high yield of crops in an economic manner. Prime agricultural land produces the highest yields with minimal inputs of energy and economic resources. Frequently, prime farmland is based solely on U.S. Department of Agriculture soil classification data for traditional row crops. The County prohibits non-farm development of productive farmland and properties identified as farmland preservation areas are given a high level of zoning protection.

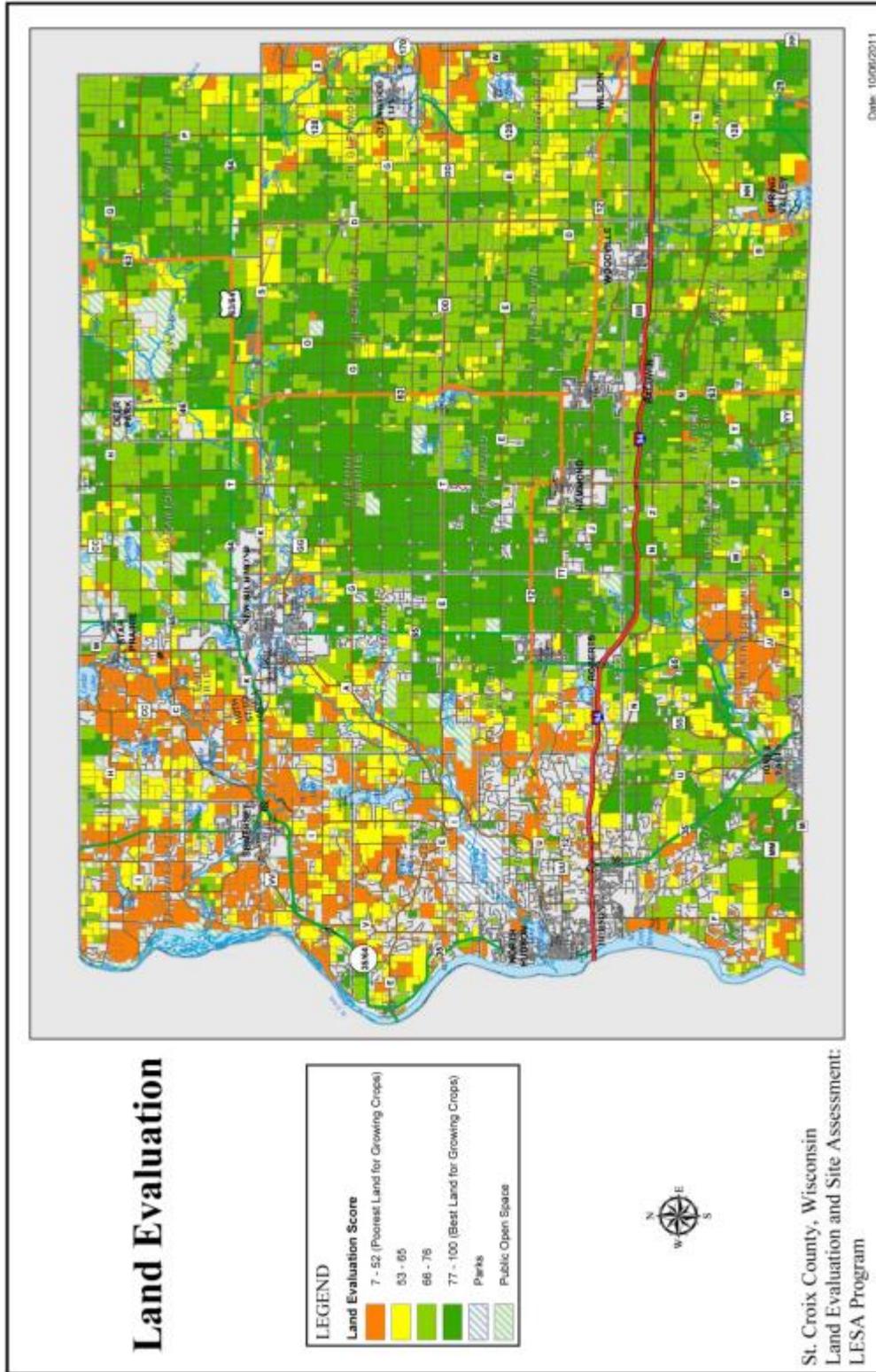
## Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA)

According to the Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) system, a relatively small proportion of the Town of Somerset is prime agricultural land with prime farmland soils (Reference graph and maps below). The LESA system is a numeric rating developed by the Soil Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture for planning, policy development, and decision-making, but refined to accommodate local soil conditions, development trends, and goals. As part of the St. Croix County Comprehensive Plan (and Farmland Preservation Plan) adopted in January 2012, the LESA system was used to identify productive agricultural lands and provide a relative rating of potential farmland preservation areas. After much community discussion and public input, St. Croix County's LESA system included two components: LAND EVALUATION (LE) and SITE ASSESSMENT (SA).<sup>6</sup>

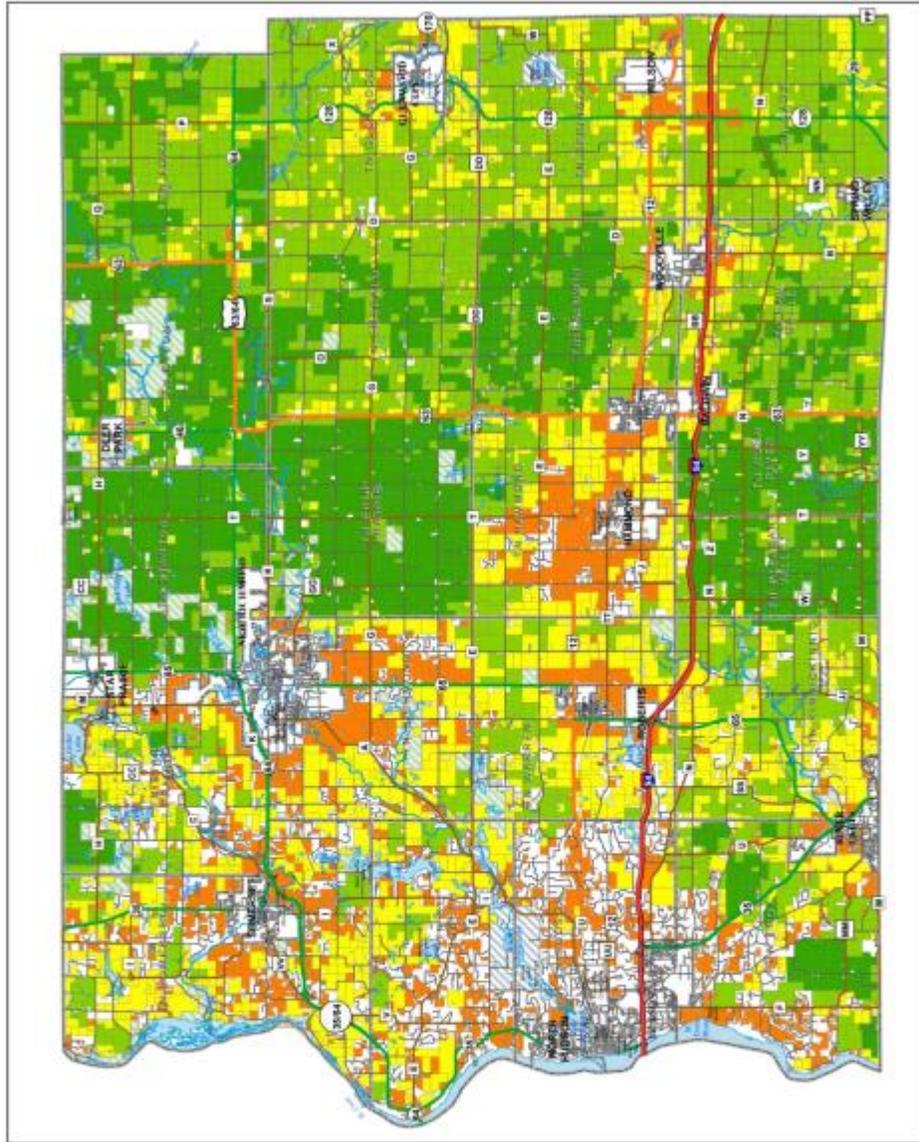


<sup>6</sup> LAND EVALUATION (LE): Based on soils and their characteristics with three primary weighted indexes: Prime Farmland (10%) Capability Class (30%) Productivity for Corn and Alfalfa (60%). SITE ASSESSMENT (SA): Is more dynamic, reflects development pressure based on adopted plans, policies, and other social, economic, and geographical attributes. Ten evenly weighted factors of property's long-term farmland preservation potential: Size and Tract of Contiguous Ownership, Compatibility of Adjacent Land Uses, Compatibility of Surrounding Land Uses, Existing Land Use Policy on Site, Existing Land Use Policy on Adjacent Sites, Future Land Use Policy on Existing Site, Future Land Use Polices on Adjacent Sites, Distance to Public Sewer, Road Classification of Site Access, Environmental and Public Values of the Site

# Land Evaluation Map

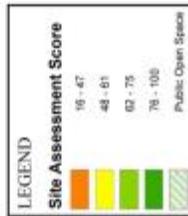


Site Assessment Map



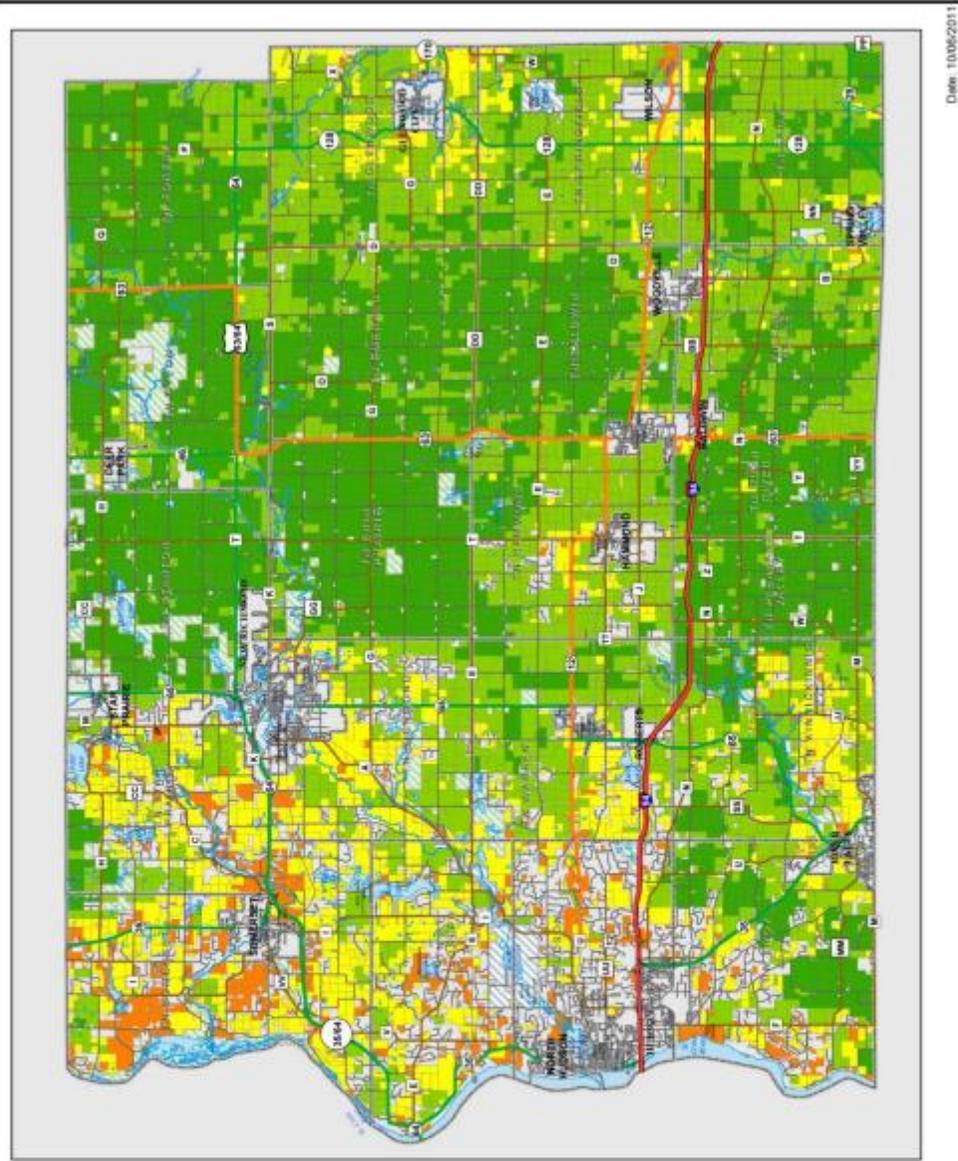
Date: 10/06/23

**Site Assessment**



St. Croix County, Wisconsin  
 Land Evaluation and Site Assessment:  
 LESA Program

Land Evaluation Site Assessment (Composite) Map



**Land Evaluation  
Site Assessment**



St. Croix County, Wisconsin  
Land Evaluation and Site Assessment:  
LESA Program



## Soils

Shown on the **Soils map** below are the general soil associations for the Town of Somerset, including:

Amery-Cromwell Association Well drained and somewhat excessively drained, gently sloping to steep, medium textured and moderately course textured soils on glacial drift plains.

Burkhardt-Chetek-Sattre Association Well drained and somewhat excessively drained, nearly level to steep, medium textured and moderately course textured soils on outwash plains and stream terraces.

Sattre-Pillot-Antigo Association Well drained, nearly level to sloping, medium textured soils on outwash plains and stream terraces.

Plainfield-Boone Association Excessively drained, gently sloping to moderately steep, course textured soils on outwash plains and stream terraces, and underlain by sandstone at a relatively shallow depth; on uplands.

Soils in the Town have been analyzed using information provided by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), formerly known as the Soil Conservation Service (SCS). Understanding the types of soils that are present in the Town is important because of the limitations that soils can have on the type and amount of development that can be reasonably supported based on the various soil characteristics. Many of the natural resource maps found in this element are based on this soils data. Examples of the soil characteristics include slope of the land, soil depth to bedrock, soil depth to ground water, and the identification of wetlands. These characteristics are then interpreted in order to establish development limitations, such as the suitability of septic systems to be constructed and function properly, the ability to construct dwellings with basements, and the identification of areas with slopes of 12% or greater.

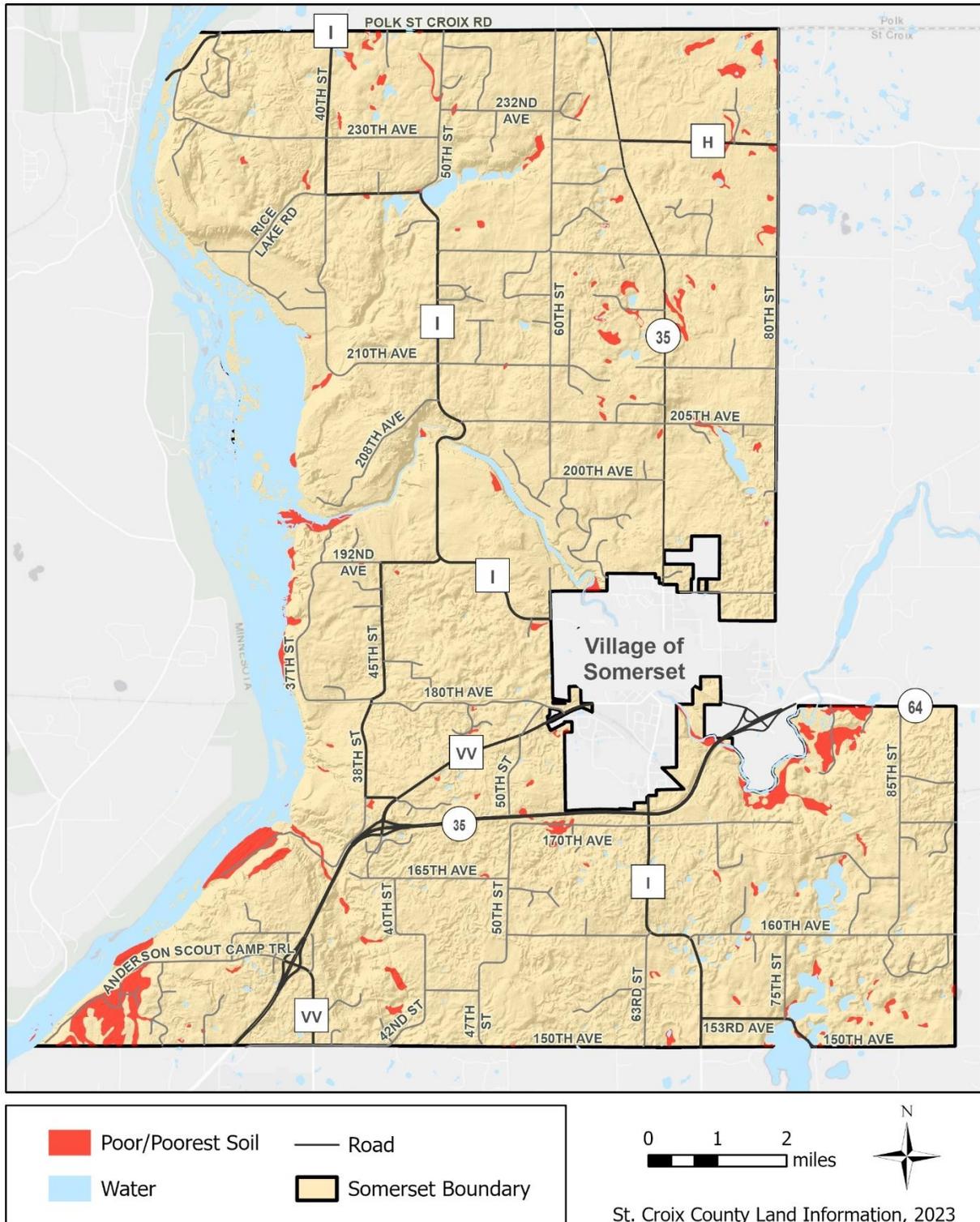
### Limitations to Septic Systems

The **Limitations to Septic Systems map** below shows, the poor soils within the Town of Somerset that pose limitations to conventional septic systems. The rating is based on the soil properties that affect absorption of the effluent, construction and maintenance of the system, and public health. Factors considered include permeability, depth to wet soils, ponding, stones/boulders, depth to bedrock, excessive slope, and flooding. Soils underlain by loose sand and gravel or fractured bedrock at a depth of less than four feet below the distribution lines may not allow adequate filtration of effluent and poses groundwater contamination concerns. Careful siting, diligent maintenance, mound systems, holding systems, pretreatment, and community wastewater treatment are a few ways to potentially mitigate or overcome some limitations.

### Town of Somerset Soils



# Town of Somerset Limitations to Septic Systems



## Topography

The glacier activity of the past greatly influenced the topography of St. Croix County. The majority of the County has gently rolling terrain, with more hilly terrain in the eastern and southern portions of the County and along some of the rivers. The contours range from roughly 650 feet above sea level in the west to over 1,330 feet in the eastern portion of the County. Within the Town of Somerset, the elevation varies by 400 feet with lower elevations found in adjacent to the St. Croix River and Apple Falls Flowage.

The topography in the Town of Somerset is gently rolling to hilly and rough. This is a result of glacial end moraine deposition that took place during the most recent glacial activity. This has created a very scenic landscape, but one that can also be more sensitive to development activities. Steep slopes are considered an environmental sensitive area due to potential erosion, run-off, and flooding concerns, which is discussed later in this section.

## Bedrock Geology

The general bedrock geology has been mapped using the Bedrock Geology of Wisconsin map series produced in 1987 by the University of Wisconsin - Extension. The **Bedrock Geology map** below shows that the depth to bedrock deep over most of the Town and does not pose a barrier to development in most locations.

Based on these maps, sandstone is shown to be the primary bedrock underlying the Town of Somerset. In addition there are some lesser amounts of dolomite located in the central and southern corners of the town. Both of these types of bedrock are

porous and have the ability serve as good natural groundwater aquifers depending on their thickness, degree of fracture, overlying soil characteristics, and proximity to the land surface. However, these types of bedrock are susceptible to contamination in areas where this fractured rock occurs at or near the land surface, especially where there is little or no soil to attenuate groundwater contaminants.

**Eau Claire Formation:** Sandstone, fine grained, light brown to buff; 1 to 40 meters thick.

**Trempealeau Group, Jordan and St. Lawrence Formation:** Sandstone, sandy dolomite, and siltstone; 1 to 20 meters thick.

**Tunnel City Group:** Sandstone and glauconitic sandstone; 20 to 30 meters thick.

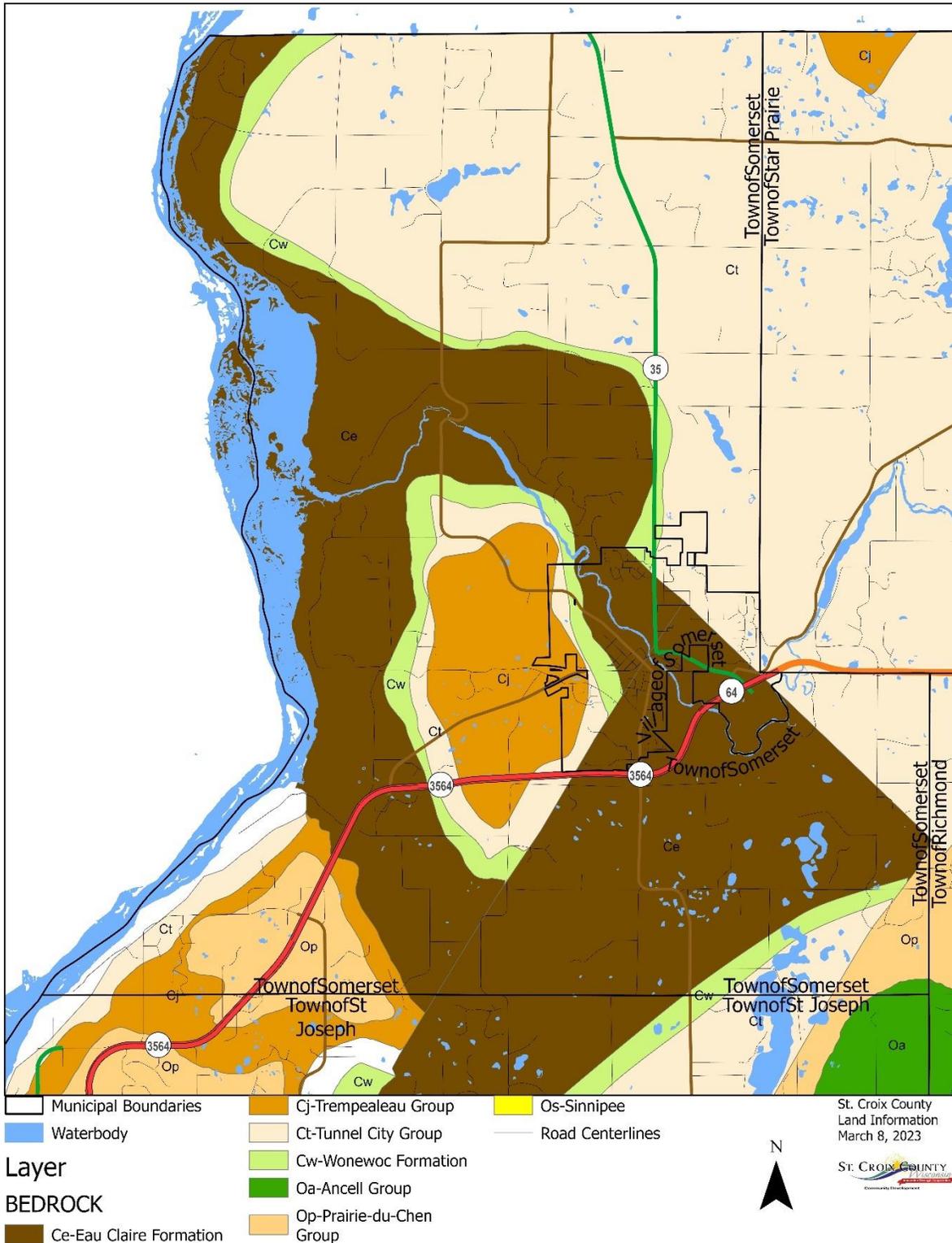
**Wonewoc Formation:** Sandstone; 10 to 25 meters thick.

**Ancell Group, St. Peter Formation:** Sandstone and quartzose; less than 5 to 20 meters thick.

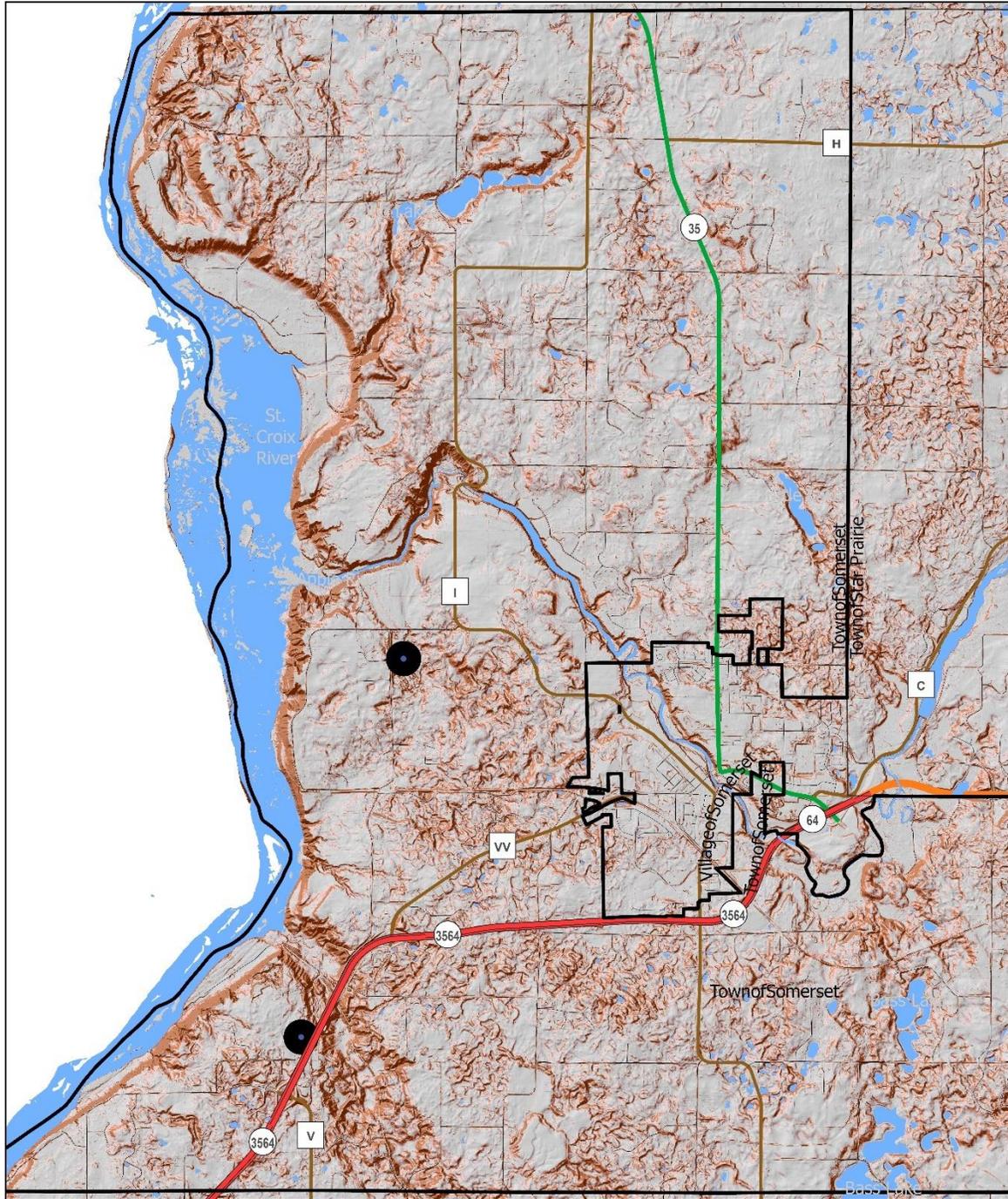
**Prairie du Chien Group:** Dolomite and sandy dolomite; 3 to 30 meters thick.



### Town of Somerset Bedrock Geology



### Town of Somerset Topography and Mining Map



- Town of Somerset
- Municipal Boundaries
- Waterbody

**Hill Shade Value**  
 High : 254  
 Low : 0

**Slope <VALUE>**  
 0 - 12  
 12 - 20%  
 20 - 25%

- > 25%
- Mining
- Mining



**ST. CROIX COUNTY**  
 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

St. Croix County  
 Land Information  
 March 8, 2023



## Mineral Resources

Mineral resources are important for construction and as an economic resource. While many such operations are privately owned, it is also not unusual for counties and communities to maintain smaller sand or gravel mines as a source of material for road construction and maintenance. However, extraction, processing, and transport of mineral resources can also create land use conflicts, impact the quality of life of nearby residents, decrease nearby property values, and pose environmental concerns. No known metallic mineral resources of economic value have been identified in the Town of Somerset.

### Non-Metallic Mining

Two non-metallic mining sites exist in the Town of Somerset as identified on **Topography and Mining map** above. St. Croix County administers County Code Chapter 14 Nonmetallic Mining that includes provisions of permitting and operation of mines. The two mines shown on the map above include the Belisle mine (Sand & gravel) and the Rivard mine (Limestone).

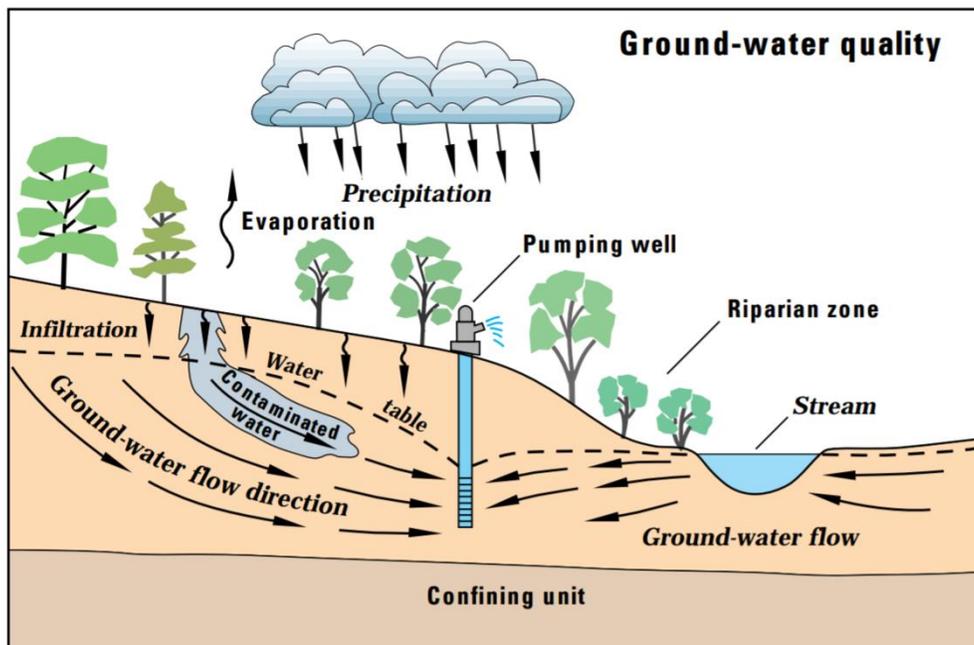
As suggested by its soils and bedrock geology, nearly all of the lands in the Town are probable sand deposits potentially of marketable value. Much of the Town also has probable gravel deposits potentially of marketable value. Knowing where potential sand and gravel deposits are is not only important for the consideration of managing such activity, but also in considering the management of other uses to keep such deposits available, protect sensitive resources, or to prevent potential use conflicts. Development can and does occur on reclaimed non-metallic mining sites. However, it is difficult to extract these valuable resources if development precedes resource extraction.

In recent years, west-central Wisconsin has experienced an explosion of silica (frac) sand mining operations. These mining operations have been primarily targeting Jordan, Wonewoc, and Mt. Simon Cambrian formations, though new mining operations have also been proposed for areas mapped as being part of the Eau Claire Formation, especially if near rail lines. The existing Canadian National Railroad, there is some potential for such a facility within the Town. However, the frac sand industry is looking for a very particular type of sand with certain characteristics (e.g., uniform size, hardness, well rounded). There have been anecdotal statements made by local officials that the sand within the Town of Somerset does not meet these characteristics. It is also possible, and even likely, that there are more valuable non-metallic mineral and frac sand deposits available elsewhere in the County or region within a less developed area where potential use conflicts are less likely, but still with convenient rail access.

## Groundwater

### Groundwater Quality & Contamination

In consideration of groundwater quality and contamination, the connection between the various water resources is important. As rain and snow fall to the ground (precipitation), some runs off into lakes, rivers and streams; some evaporates; and some is used by plants. The rest trickles down through the soil and subsurface material. This water eventually reaches a saturated zone that comprises groundwater. The groundwater then can travel to and through geologic formations that can store and transmit water called aquifers. The concept of water moving from the land's surface into groundwater is the starting point for thinking about the relationship between land use and groundwater quality. Nearly anything people can dump, spill, or spread on the ground can seep down to groundwater. This groundwater is then used by residents for drinking, farming, and other activities. Groundwater can also return to the surface as springs or as discharge to lakes, rivers, and streams. And large withdrawals of groundwater (e.g., high capacity wells) can have an impact on surface water.



*Image from US Geological Survey*

Groundwater is consistently identified by communities and residents as one of most critical resources that needs to be protected. Groundwater contamination is possible from many sources ranging from leaking underground storage tanks, hazardous materials spills, and landfills to agricultural practices, land spreading, and industrial operations. Groundwater quality can often be very site specific for certain contaminants. No site-specific hazardous materials concern or toxic release site were identified within the town. However, the transport of hazardous materials via rail and highway is always a potential contamination source. In Wisconsin, most of nitrate inputs into the groundwater are agricultural in origin (e.g., manure spreading, fertilizers), but on-site septic systems and lawn fertilizers can also be a significant nitrate source, especially in densely populated areas.

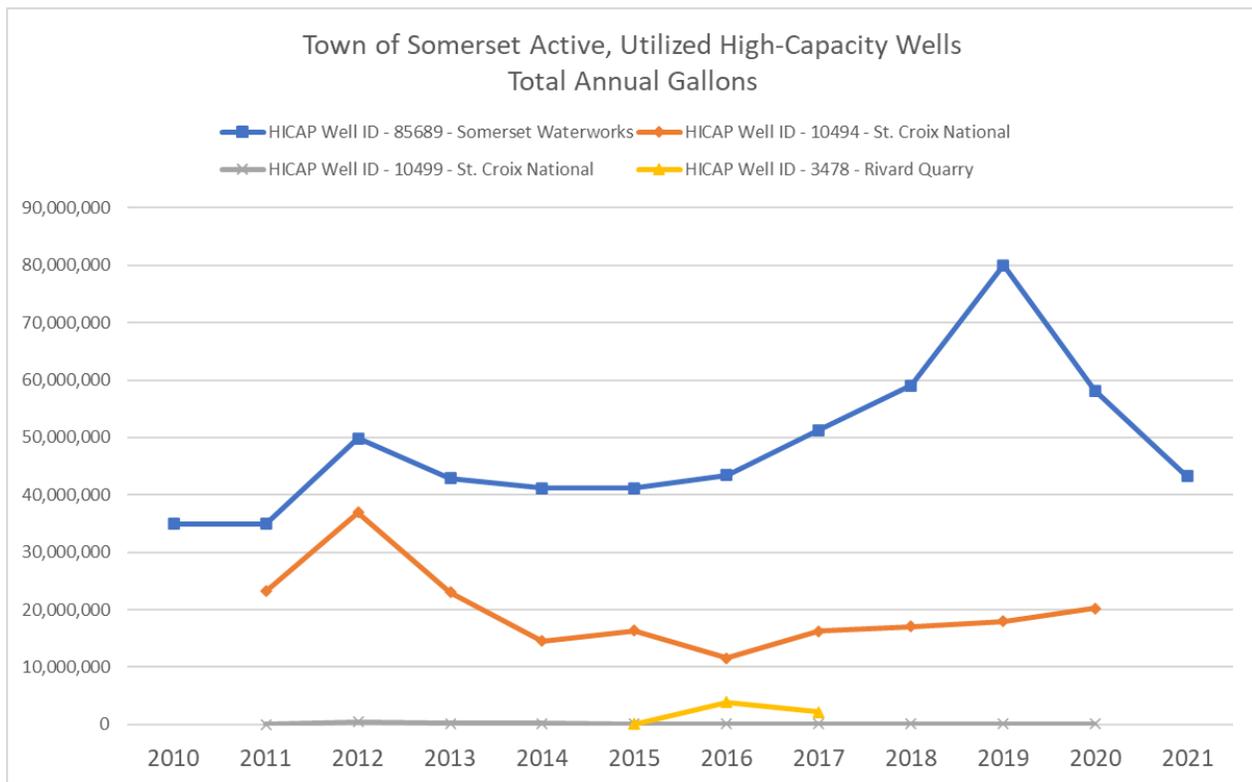
### Primary Water Source

Groundwater is the primary source of water for domestic, industrial, and agriculture uses in St. Croix County and is the main source of potable water supplies in the Town of Somerset. Groundwater in the Town of Somerset is supplied through individual, private wells; there is no municipal water supply within the Town.

### High-Capacity Wells

As of December 2022, according to St. Croix County Community Development Department, there are a total of 9 high-capacity wells, listed below. The graph below shows the current information for four active high-capacity wells in Somerset area, gathered in December 2022, from the WI DNR well water online database.

1. Somerset Waterworks HICAP Well ID: 92064 (Well is active)
2. Somerset Waterworks HICAP Well ID: 85689 (Well is active)
3. St. Croix National HICAP Well ID: 23075, (Well is active but currently not in use)
4. St. Croix National HICAP Well ID: 10495: (Well is temporarily capped)
5. St. Croix National HICAP Well ID: 23076: (Well is active but currently not in use)
6. St. Croix National HICAP Well ID: 23077: (Well is active but currently not in use)
7. St. Croix National HICAP Well ID: 10494: (Well is active)
8. St. Croix National HICAP Well ID: 10499: (Well is active)
9. Rivard Quarry Well ID: 3478: (Well is active, but currently not in use for several years)



### Private Well Water Testing

St. Croix County hosts a [Citizen Groundwater Monitoring Program](#) for private well owners. The well-water quality results below were gathered from St. Croix County Community Development Department and the online well water viewer ([LINK](#)) provided by the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point (UWSP), College of Natural Resources (CNR), Center for Watershed Science and Education.

Town of Somerset		
Well Contaminant	2006 Study Percent Positive	2000-2022 Percent Positive
Coliform	10%	10%
E. Coli	5%	6%
Triazine	<2% over 3 ppb standard	<2%
Nitrates	2.3%	3% > 10 mg/L

### Aquifers

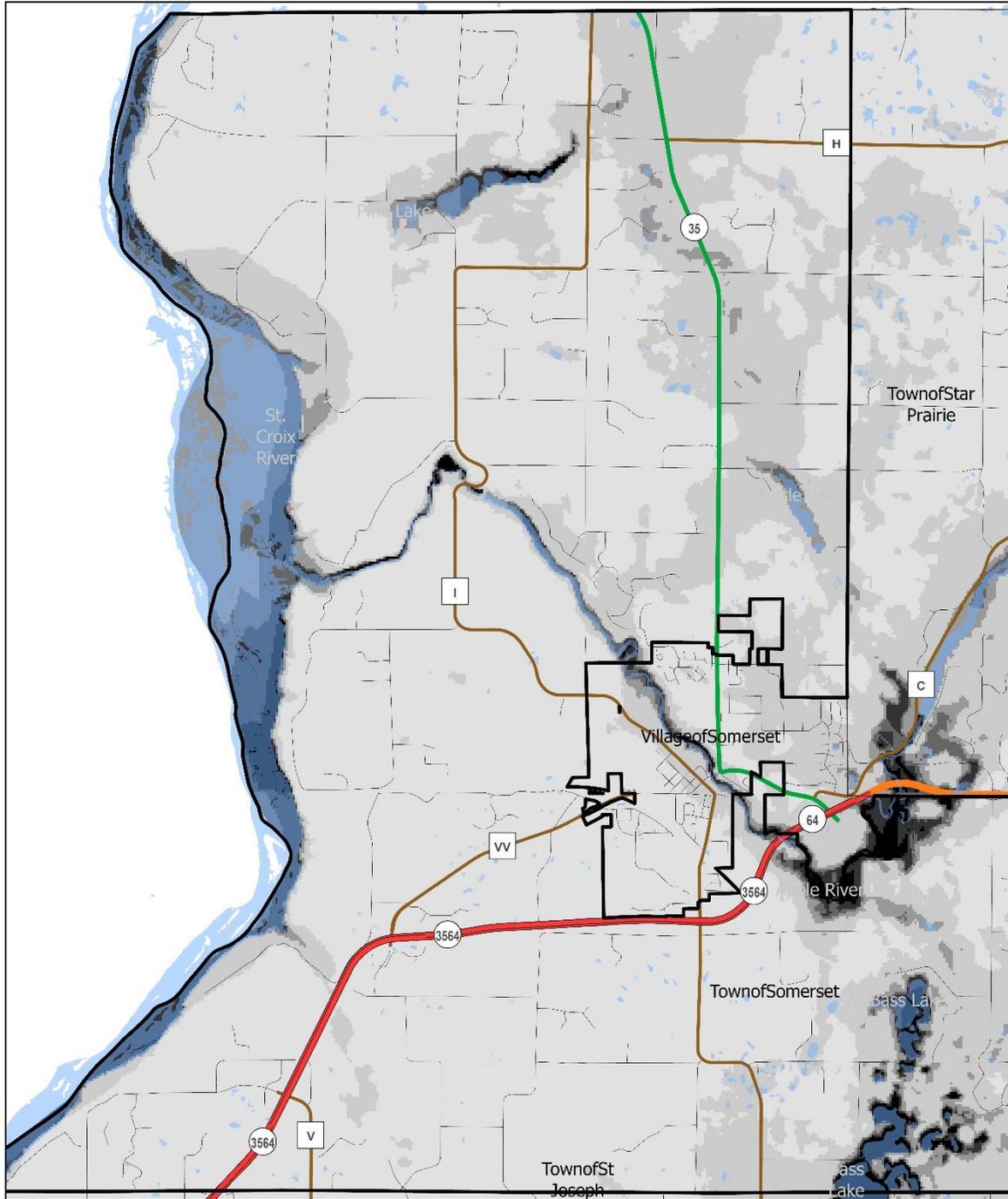
The principal aquifers in the Town of Somerset are the sand and gravel aquifer and the sandstone aquifer. The sand and gravel aquifer consists of unconsolidated sand and gravel in glacial drift and alluvium. The sand and gravel aquifer is found throughout the Town of Somerset, and is underlain by the sandstone aquifer, also located throughout the majority of the Town.

Most groundwater used for the water supply is supplied by shallow flowpaths that have been in the system only a few years or decades. Within these shallow aquifers, groundwater flows only short distances (up to a few miles) from the recharge area (where it enters the ground) to a discharge area (where it exits into a surface water). For the Somerset area, most of the local groundwater flow is towards the St. Croix River, while some local flow towards Bass Lake or other kettle lakes/ponds.

### Soil & Depth to Groundwater Relevance

The soils and depth to groundwater contribute to the quality of groundwater in the Town of Somerset. According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), all the soil associations found in Somerset are classified as soils with moderate to very rapid permeability. This is due to the type of soil and the topography of the land. Contamination of the groundwater can occur more easily in areas where the soils are very permeable or shallow. The **Depth to Groundwater Map** below shows areas with shallow depth to groundwater. As illustrated in the map, most of the town is 50 feet or more depth to groundwater. Some shallow depth areas exist in the northeastern part of town and along the Apple River. Because of the permeable soils in town, the groundwater can be contaminated more easily than non-permeable soil areas.

### Town of Somerset Depth To Groundwater



- Town of Somerset
- Municipal Boundaries
- Waterbody

#### Depth To Groundwater

Surface Water

- 1 - 5
- 6 - 10
- 11 - 25
- 26 - 75
- >75'



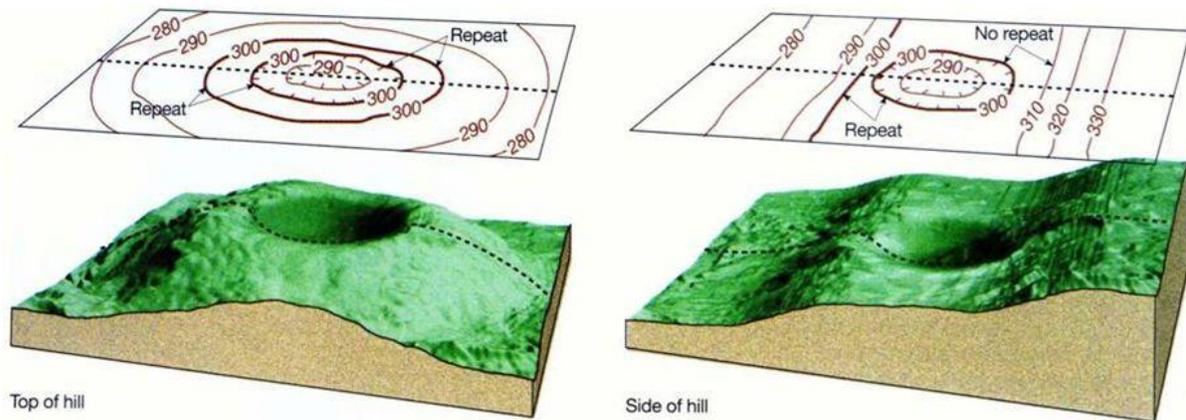
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April 5, 2023

## Closed Depressions

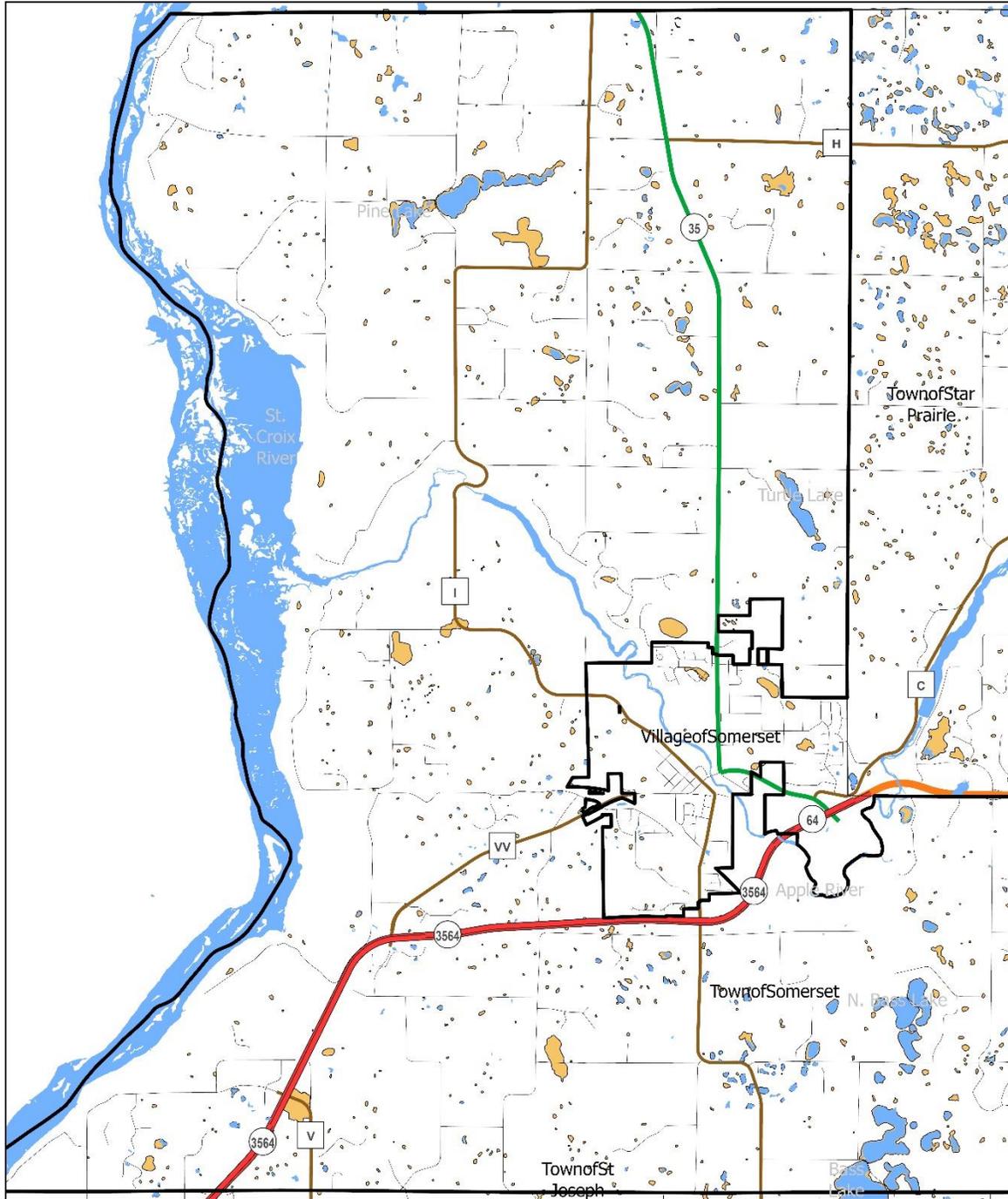
A fairly common topographic feature found throughout St. Croix County is closed depressions. Closed depressions are extremely sensitive land features because of their close association with the groundwater. The release of pollutants into or near closed depressions can reach the groundwater immediately. The **Closed Depressions Map** below shows the closed depressions within the Town of Somerset. Closed depressions can be formed through different geological processes. Many areas of St. Croix County have dolomite and limestone upper bedrock layer, which can fracture and enlarge over time to form what is known as karst topography. But in the Somerset area, sandstone bedrock is more dominant making kettles or kettleholes the primary type of closed depression. Kettles develop when large blocks of glacier ice are buried within glacial deposits and subsequently melt leaving behind a surface depression. Kettle depressions are typically round and have filled over time with surface water runoff, groundwater, sediment, or vegetation. Kettle ponds or lakes are often also seepage lakes that are primarily fed by springs or groundwater with no associated stream inlet or outlet.

# Contour lines on closed depressions



**FIGURE 8.10** Contour lines repeat on opposite sides of a depression (left illustration), except when the depression occurs on a slope (right illustration).

### Town of Somerset Closed Depressions



-  Town of Somerset
-  Municipal Boundaries
-  Waterbody
-  Closed Depressions



ST. CROIX COUNTY  
Community Development

St. Croix County  
Land Information  
April 5, 2023

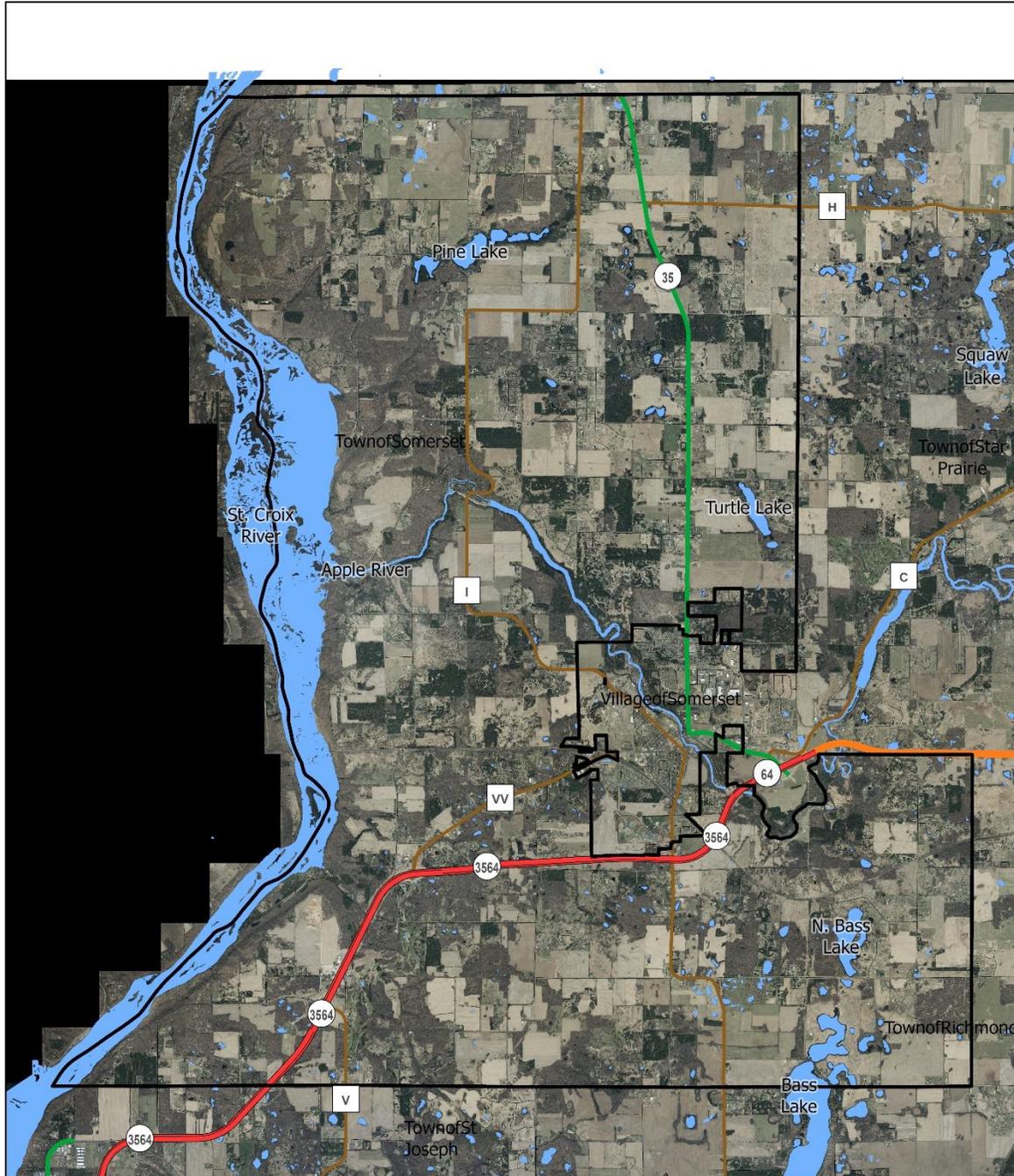
## Surface Waters

The **Surface Water map** below shows the surface waters in the Town of Somerset including lakes, rivers, and streams. These resources are important not only important to the environment, but as recreational and scenic assets. The primary surface waters in town are described below.

- St. Croix River
  - Flows along the entire western border of the community
  - Designated as a National Scenic Riverway and a National Wild And Scenic Waterway
  - Limited development near its shorelines
  - Classified as an Outstanding Resource Water
  - High levels of recreational use
  - Water quality is generally good
  - Fish consumption advisory for PCB and mercury contamination
- Apple River
  - Drains a large agricultural area
  - Has moderate water quality impacts as a result of barnyard runoff, streambank erosion, cropland runoff and erosion
  - Apple River Falls man-made flowage has problems including excessive siltation and nutrients combining to create favorable conditions for nuisance aquatic plant growth
  - Flowage receives stormwater runoff from the City of Amery
  - Heavily used for water sports, primarily commercial tubing operations
- Pine Lake
  - 33-acre seepage lake in Sections 9 and 10
  - Has a maximum depth of 9 feet with low water clarity and largely sandy bottom
- North Bass Lake
  - Approximately 40-acres Nine-acres located in Section 11
- Turtle Lake
  - 30-acre seepage lake in Section 24
- Bass Lake (south)
  - 370-acre Bass Lake located in the Towns of Somerset and St. Joseph
  - Maximum depth of 33 feet.
  - Public land on NE side



### Town of Somerset Surface Water



-  Town of Somerset
-  Waterbody



St. Croix County Land Information  
Aerial Photography 2020  
Map: February 22, 2023





## Surface Water Quality & Degradation

Of the above surface waters, only the St. Croix River has been given a special WDNR water quality or habitat designation. The Town of Somerset has only one designated trout stream. A small creek—Levesque Springs—is a Class II Trout Stream. Levesque Springs runs from the south end of 82nd Street then west to the Apple River.

While water quality is degraded on some of the surface waters, none have been designated as impaired waters for not meeting water quality standards. However, all but one of the above listed lakes, including the Apple River Flowage, are eutrophic (rich in nutrients and biological productivity), which means that a dense plant growth can potentially deprive animal life of oxygen; Bass Lake (south) is mesotrophic with medium levels of nutrients. Many, if not most, of the other ponds and lakes in the Town of Somerset are undoubtedly eutrophic or mesotrophic.

Eutrophic waters are known for their algae blooms that can result in fish kills and can even become a health hazard for people and animals. In Wisconsin, agricultural run-off is primary source of nutrient loading to surface waters. WDNR has identified the Lower Apple River Watershed as a high priority for protection from non-point source pollution, in part due to the River's use for full-body contact recreation.

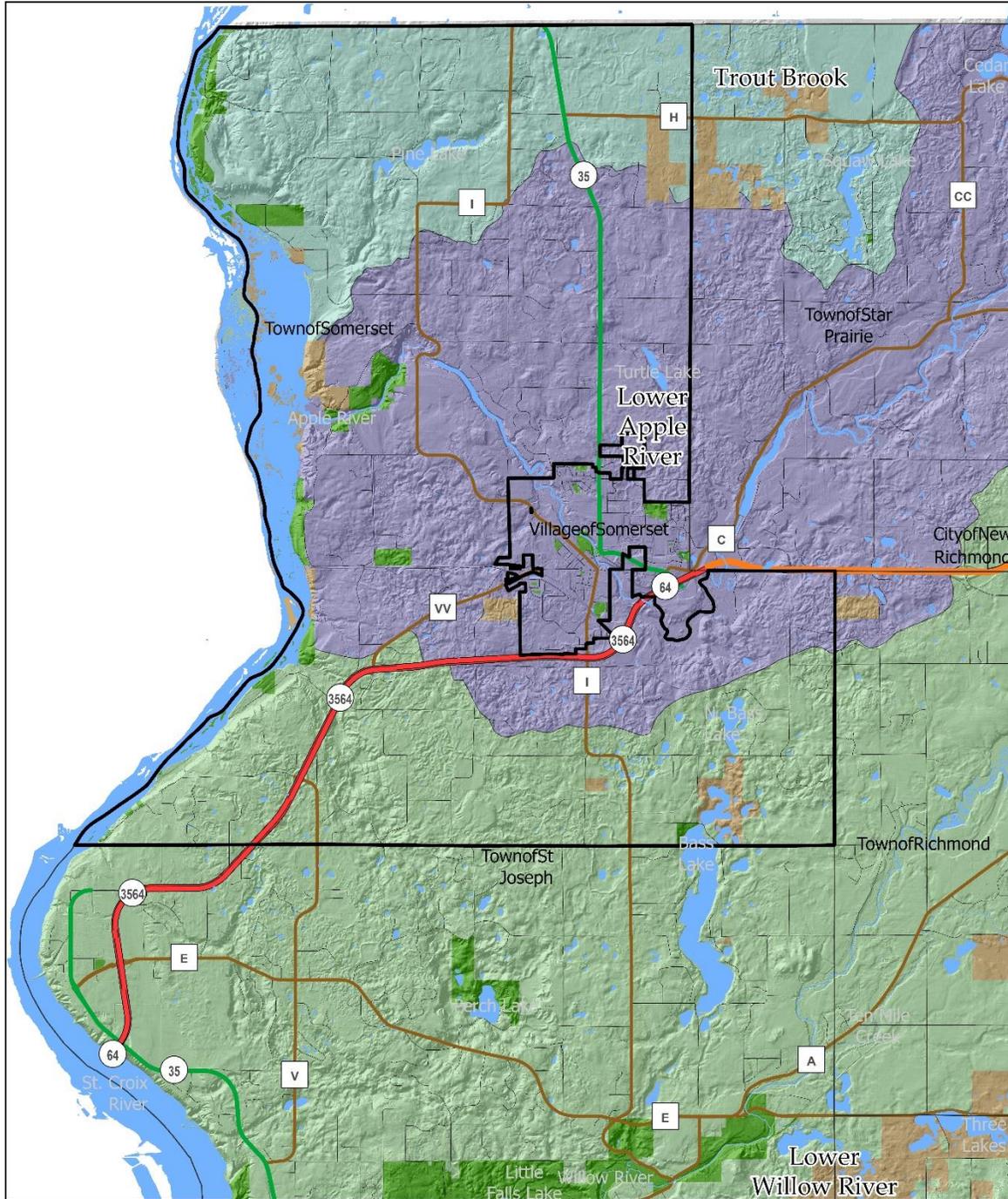
Invasive species, notably Curly-Leaf Pondweed, Eurasian Water-Milfoil, and Zebra Mussel, are present at both of the Bass Lakes, with Chinese Mystery Snail present as an additional invasive at the southern Bass Lake. These invasives may be present in other smaller lakes and ponds to varying degrees.

## Watersheds

The Town of Somerset is located within the Trout Brook, Lower Apple River, and Lower Willow River watersheds which drain into the St. Croix River Basin shown in the **Watersheds map** below. A watershed is an area of land that drains or “sheds” its water to a lake, river, stream, or wetland. The effects of natural and man-made activities in one area can have a direct impact on other areas. For example, stormwater runoff and flash flooding from a heavy rainfall upstream in a watershed will eventually reach the downstream part of that watershed.

St. Croix County is comprised of all or parts of ten watersheds which drain into one of two river basins in the county—the St. Croix River Basin and the Lower Chippewa River Basin. Water-related issues of concern in the basin include: loss and fragmentation of native habitats from growth and development; sediment and nutrient (nitrogen and phosphorus) delivery to water bodies from both point and non-point sources; and threats to the high quality and abundant groundwater sources.

### Town of Somerset Watersheds



- Town of Somerset
- Municipal Boundaries
- Waterbody
- Parks
- Public Land

**Hill Shade Value**  
 High : 254  
 Low : 0

- Watersheds Name**
- Kinnickinnic River
  - Lower Apple River
  - Eau Galle River

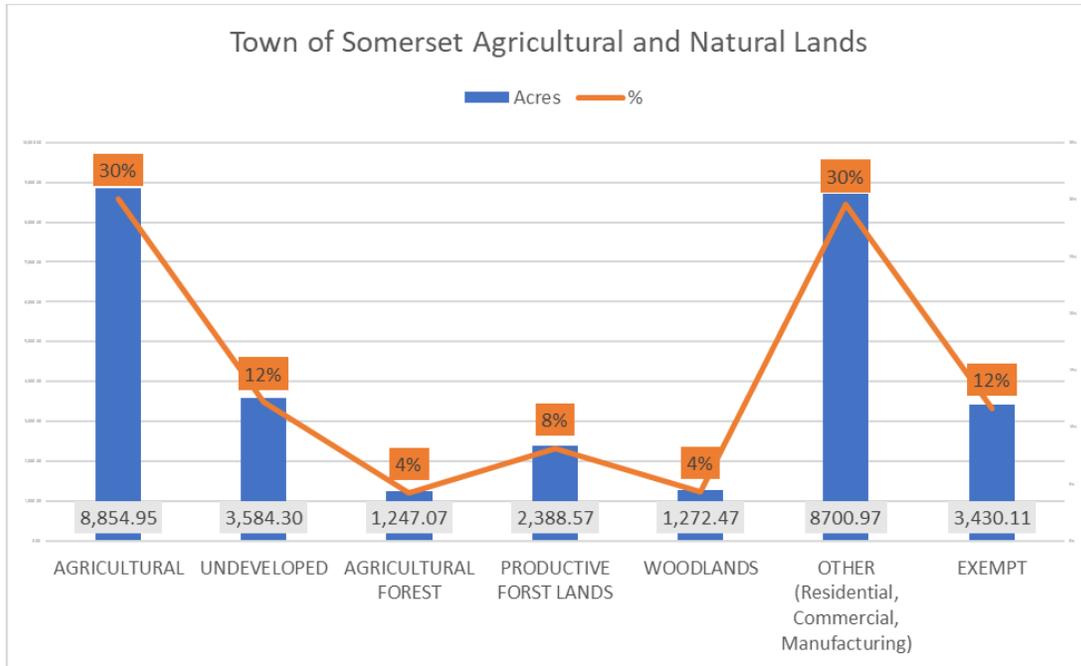
- Rush River
- Trout Brook
- Wilson Creek
- Lower Willow River
- Upper Willow River
- South Fork Hay River



**ST. CROIX COUNTY**  
 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
 St. Croix County  
 Land Information  
 April 5, 2023

## Forests, Grasslands, and Prairies

Forests, grasslands, and prairies stabilize the soil, improve air quality, and provide natural beauty and wildlife habitat. The following graph and table show land type tax assessment data gathered in December 2022 from St. Croix County parcel information database.



Town of Somerset Agricultural and Natural Lands		
Land Type	Acres	%
AGRICULTURAL	8,854.95	30%
UNDEVELOPED	3,584.30	12%
AGRICULTURAL FOREST	1,247.07	4%
PRODUCTIVE FORST LANDS	2,388.57	8%
WOODLANDS	1,272.47	4%
OTHER (Residential, Commercial, Manufacturing)	8700.97	30%
EXEMPT	3,430.11	12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>29,478.44</b>	<b>100%</b>

The Town of Somerset is part of the Western Prairie Ecological Landscape, which includes most of St. Croix County. Prairie, oak, and brush (prairie with woody plants) dominated the Town’s presettlement land cover in the mid-1800s. The Town is also part of WDNR’s Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area, which has a goal of permanently protecting 20,000 acres (or 10%) of the historic grassland acreage within fifteen townships in St. Croix and Polk counties. The far majority of this restoration acreage is publically owned land, including some lands within the Town of Somerset, such as Apple River Canyon, Parnell Prairie Reserve, Rice Lake Flats National Park Service area on 221st Avenue, and some waterfowl production areas. This demonstrates that grasslands and prairies can include a diversity of prairie types, such as wet meadows. Additional prairie remnants within the Town of Somerset undoubtedly exist. However, there has been no formal effort to inventory these remnants.

## Wildlife Habitat and Natural Areas

The Town provides habitat for a variety of plants, birds, and other animals. In particular, the forests, grasslands, and waterways offer food, cover, and water for many animal species. The Town is home to four U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Waterfowl Production Areas (WPA) and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) St. Croix Islands Wildlife Area. The St. Croix Islands Wildlife Area features a diverse and extensive mosaic of running sloughs, backwater lakes, braided stream channels, stands of emergent aquatic vegetation, old-growth lowland forest, and the delta of the Apple River. St. Croix Islands is owned by the DNR and was designated a State Natural Area in 2010.

### Waterfowl Production Areas (WPA) and DNR Wildlife Area

- Bass Lake WPA
- Prairie Flats-South WPA
- Somerset WPA
- White WPA
- DNR 160 acre Apple River Canyon State Natural Area

As the existing land use discussion and map within the Land Use Element will show, the forest and undeveloped lands are scattered throughout the Town. The fragmentation of these lands decreases their value as wildlife habitat. However, many of the public and recreational lands are located adjacent or near surface waters and do provide important corridors for recreation, resource conservation, and habitat protection. Private forest and undeveloped lands adjacent to surface waters serve a similar purpose and be important to maintaining the integrity of these corridors.

In some cases, shorelines, stormwater ponds, or ponds created for stormwater management or aesthetic reasons can create habitat for unwanted waterfowl, notably Canada Geese or gulls. In numbers, geese and gulls can become a nuisance, most notably due to accumulations of fecal matter that can carry disease and can impact water quality. The design of ponds and shorelines can deter geese in a variety of ways, such as making the water more difficult for geese to get to (e.g., slope, vegetative barriers, rocks,), limiting potential food sources, limiting fountain and aerator use, discouraging domestic waterfowl, and providing habitat for would-be predators.



In addition to the aquatic invasive species mentioned previously, a variety of terrestrial invasive species and diseases are present in the Town of Somerset, such as Common Buckthorn, Wild Parsley, and Asian Lady Beetles. Some invasives are regulated under State law. A variety of prevention and best practices can deter or slow the introduction or spread of invasives, such as limiting cutting of oak forest to certain times of year to prevent Oak Wilt, preventing the “import” of non-local firewood to slow the spread of the Emerald Ash Borer, or the use of mowing and chemicals to control Garlic Mustard, Reed Canary Grass, or Purple Loosestrife.

## Threatened and Endangered Species

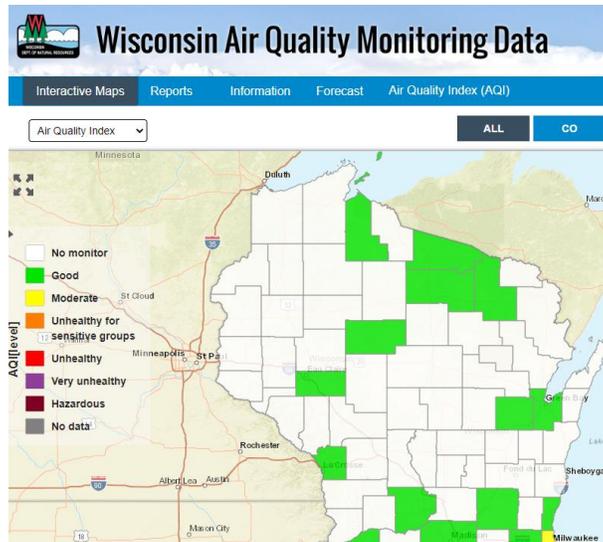
In part due to the area's mix of habitats and surface waters, there are numerous threatened and endangered species and habitats in the Town of Somerset area. In 1972, Wisconsin passed its own endangered species law. Shortly after, Congress passed the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in 1973 with a purpose "to conserve the ecosystem upon which endangered and threatened species depend". The law incorporates the Endangered Species Preservation Act of 1966 and Endangered Species Conservation Act of 1969. Wisconsin State Statute 29.604 and Administrative Rule Chapter NR 27 that establish, define and guide Wisconsin's endangered and threatened species laws. Any person in violation of these laws is subject to fines and/or imprisonment, even for unintentional violations. The Department of Natural Resources is required by law to implement conservation programs on State-listed species. The list below contains the top 5 species of each category on the WI DNR online list last updated in 2014.

### Wisconsin's Endangered and Threatened Species List (Top 1-5 in each category)

Mammals		Reptiles	
	Endangered		Endangered
	American Marten		Slender Glass Lizard
	Threatened		Queensnake
	Big brown bat		Eastern Massasauga
	Little brown bat		Ornate Box Turtle
	Northern long-eared bat		Western Ribbonsnake
Birds		Snails	
	Endangered		Endangered
	Piping Plover		Midwest Pleistocene Vertigo
	Black Tern		Occult Vertigo
	Peregrine Falcon		Threatened
	Worm-eating Warbler		Wing Snaggletooth
	Caspian Tern		Cherrystone Drop
Fishes		Insects	
	Endangered		Endangered
	Skipjack Herring		Pecatonica River Mayfly
	Crystal Darter		Red-tailed Prairie Leafhopper
	Gravel Chub		Flat-headed Mayfly
	Bluntnose Darter		A Leafhopper
	Starhead Topminnow		Swamp Metalmark
Mussels		Plants	
	Endangered		Endangered
	Spectaclecase		Pale False Foxglove
	Purple Wartyback		Carolina Anemone
	Butterfly		Large-leaved Sandwort
	Elephant-Ear		Lake Cress
	Snuffbox		Cut-leaved Anemone
Amphibians			
	Endangered		
	Blanchard's Cricket Frog		

## Air Quality

The WI DNR uses weather forecasts and data from air monitoring sites to determine air quality throughout the state, and notifies residents in real time when pollutants reach unhealthy levels. The DNR uses the U.S. EPA's Air Quality Index (AQI) to inform the public of current pollutant levels. The AQI uses colors and corresponding numbers to communicate the current air quality for air pollutants regulated by the Clean Air Act. To protect public health, the DNR issues an air quality advisory for a county when the AQI exceeds, or is expected to exceed, the ozone or fine particle (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) standard. According to the WI Air Quality Index map below at: <https://airquality.wi.gov/home/map>, there is no monitor in St. Croix County.



Color coded chart showing ozone and PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentration ranges for each AQI level

AQI Levels of Health Concern	Numerical Value	8-hr Ozone (ppb)	24-hr PM <sub>2.5</sub> (ug/m <sup>3</sup> )
Good	0-50	0-54	0.0 to 12.0
Moderate	51-100	55-70	12.1 to 35.4
Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	101-150	71-85	35.5 to 55.4
Unhealthy	151-200	86-105	55.5 to 140.4
Very Unhealthy	201-300	106-200	140.5 to 210.4
Hazardous	> 300	> 201	> 210.4

The Town of Somerset Plan Commission identified outdoor wood-fired furnaces or boilers as the only potential air quality concern. Outdoor wood boilers have become more popular in the Wisconsin, particularly in rural areas, as the prices for heating oil, propane and natural gas have increased. When the fire is rekindled, the creosote is burned and is emitted as soot. Additionally the units burn wood at lower combustion temperatures, which creates more pollution than an indoor wood stove. The chemicals emitted by outdoor wood boilers include particulate matter which can be drawn deeply into the lungs. According to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services [website](#), Public health hazards can result from excessive smoke produced when outdoor wood boilers are improperly placed and operated. Local health departments have the authority to address public health hazards and health nuisances under Wis. Stat. ch. 254.

## Environmentally Sensitive Areas

For purposes of this plan, there are seven primary types of environmental sensitive areas (ESAs) including surface waters, closed depressions, critical habitat for endangered and threatened species, steep slopes, wetlands, floodplains, and shorelands. Environmental sensitive areas within the Town of Somerset pose development limitations or where development should generally be avoided to preserve quality resources linked to community health, safety and welfare. ESAs are protected under the County subdivision and zoning regulations.

### Steep Slopes

Steep slopes are areas that are more susceptible to erosion, run-off, and flash flooding. Disrupting natural drainageways with new construction, development, and other activities can create a variety of new problems and hazards. The WI DNR considers any area of 12 percent or greater to be steep slopes (**Reference Environmentally Sensitive Areas Map below**). Soil erosion on slopes 12 percent to 20 percent is often manageable with good practices. The WDNR discourages development of slopes greater than 20 percent without more intensive or engineered best management practices and erosion controls. Where steep slopes exist, more attention to site planning, stormwater management, and erosion control should be given in these areas.

### Wetlands

Wetlands are defined by State Statute as “an area where water is at, near, or above the land surface long enough to be capable of supporting aquatic or hydrophytic (water-loving) vegetation and which has soils indicative of wet conditions.” Wetlands may be seasonal or permanent and are commonly referred to as swamps, marshes, or bogs. Wetland areas, plants, and soils have the capacity to store and filter pollutants, replenish groundwater supplies, provide wildlife habitat, and store floodwaters. Wetlands are also an important part of the Town’s rural character. The **Environmentally Sensitive Areas Map below identifies** the WDNR-mapped wetland areas within the Town according to the Wisconsin Wetland Inventory. Smaller wetland areas (generally less than 5 acres) are often not mapped. Additional



areas in the Town may not been formally mapped as wetlands, but may be natural drainage ways or have “somewhat poorly”, “poorly”, or “very poorly” drained soils according to the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Soil Survey, which are also indicators of potential wetlands. Both of these sources—the Wisconsin Wetlands Inventory and NRCS Soil Survey—should be used in combination to identify potential wetlands. Whether mapped or not, all wetlands are protected from development under WDNR and local regulations.



## Floodplains and Flooding

Flooding is defined as a general condition of partial or complete inundation of normally dry land from the overflow of inland waters, or the unusual and rapid accumulation or runoff of surface waters from any source. Often, the amount of damage from flooding is directly related to land use. If the ground is saturated, stripped of vegetation, or paved, the amount of runoff increases, adding to the flooding. Additionally, debris carried by the flood can damage improvements and infrastructure, or can obstruct the flow of water and further contribute to flooding. For the Town of Somerset, flooding can be further subdivided into two primary types: (1) riverine or overbank flooding or (2) stormwater or overland flooding.

For purposes of this plan, a **floodplain** is that land which has been or may be covered by floodwater during a flood event. The terms “100-year flood” and “floodplain” are commonly used interchangeably, and are generally treated as such within this plan. A 100-year flood, often referred to as a regional flood, special flood hazard area, or base flood, is a flood that has a one percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year. This can be misleading as a 100-year flood is not a flood that will occur once every 100 years. The 100-year flood, which is the standard used by most Federal and State agencies, is used by the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) as the standard for floodplain management and to determine the need for flood insurance.

St. Croix County, and thus the Town of Somerset, is a participant in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) in good standing. According to Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) National Flood Hazard Layer (NFHL) Online Viewer, in February 2023, the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) for St. Croix County NFIP were effective in March 2009. The official 100-year floodplains within the Town are shown on the **Land Use Map** within the Land Use chapter.

The Town has also adopted the St. Croix County Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan which makes the Town eligible for FEMA flood mitigation grant funding should it be needed. The 2015 plan identified fourteen structures in the Town which may potentially be located within the 100-year floodplain. During the 2023 plan process, Town officials shared that in 2021 one structure within the floodplain was moved.

### *Flood Types*

**River or Overbank Flooding** – River flooding is when the channel no longer has the capacity to handle the water flow. This can include flash flooding or a slow buildup of flow and velocity over many hours or days. Within the Town of Somerset, this type of flooding is primarily limited to the St. Croix River and its floodplain. The Apple River Dam has provided a measure of flood control along the Lower Apple River.

**Stormwater or Overland Flooding** – The type of flooding which occurs primarily from surface runoff as a result of intense rainfall or heavy snowmelt is referred to as stormwater flooding or overland flooding. These flooding events tend to strike quickly and end swiftly. Poorly drained soils or areas already saturated can contribute to such flooding and areas of steep slopes can be particularly vulnerable. Stormwater flooding often follows natural drainageways and may be very localized. About 20 percent of the National Flood Insurance Program claims and 1/3 of all flood disaster assistance is for flood damages to structures located outside the 100-year floodplains. No stormwater flooding “hotspots” or concerns were noted for the Town of Somerset. However, as more development occurs or if natural drainageways are disrupted, the threat of overland flooding increases.

### *Town of Somerset Flood Areas*

**Bass Lake** – The 2015 plan reported that slowly fluctuating groundwater levels have historically been a flooding problem for homes at Bass Lake in the towns of St. Joseph and Somerset. At least fourteen NFIP claims have been made for six properties on Bass Lake, making it the highest concentration of claims in the County. Groundwater levels have historically cycled, reaching an all-time high in 1998, but are 4 to 5 feet lower now; levels have been as much as 10 to 15 feet lower in the past. In the 1990's, a lake rehabilitation district was established and an extensive pumping effort undertaken to reduce waters. Water levels retreated very soon thereafter, apparently not due to the pumping, itself. There has been some speculation that removal of dams on the Willow River in the late 1990s may have helped lower groundwater levels in the area. Drier weather conditions and normal groundwater cycles may have also contributed to the lower levels. No NFIP claims were reported in the 2023 process.

**Lower Apple River** - Portions of the lower Apple River in the Town of Somerset have been subject to seasonal riverine flooding in the past, but impacts to structures have not been significant overall and limited to one NFIP claim. No NFIP claims were reported in the 2023 process. A few roadways in the Town also have occasional riverine flooding problems.

### *Shorelands*

The Town of Somerset has many shoreland areas. Shorelands provide valuable habitat for both aquatic and terrestrial animals and vegetation, and also act as buffers and thus serve to protect water quality. Shorelands are also considered prime residential building areas because of their scenic beauty. Recognizing this conflict, and to maintain the environmental, recreational, and economical quality of our water resources, the State of Wisconsin requires counties to adopt and enforce a shoreland ordinance. As required by the State, shorelands are defined as:

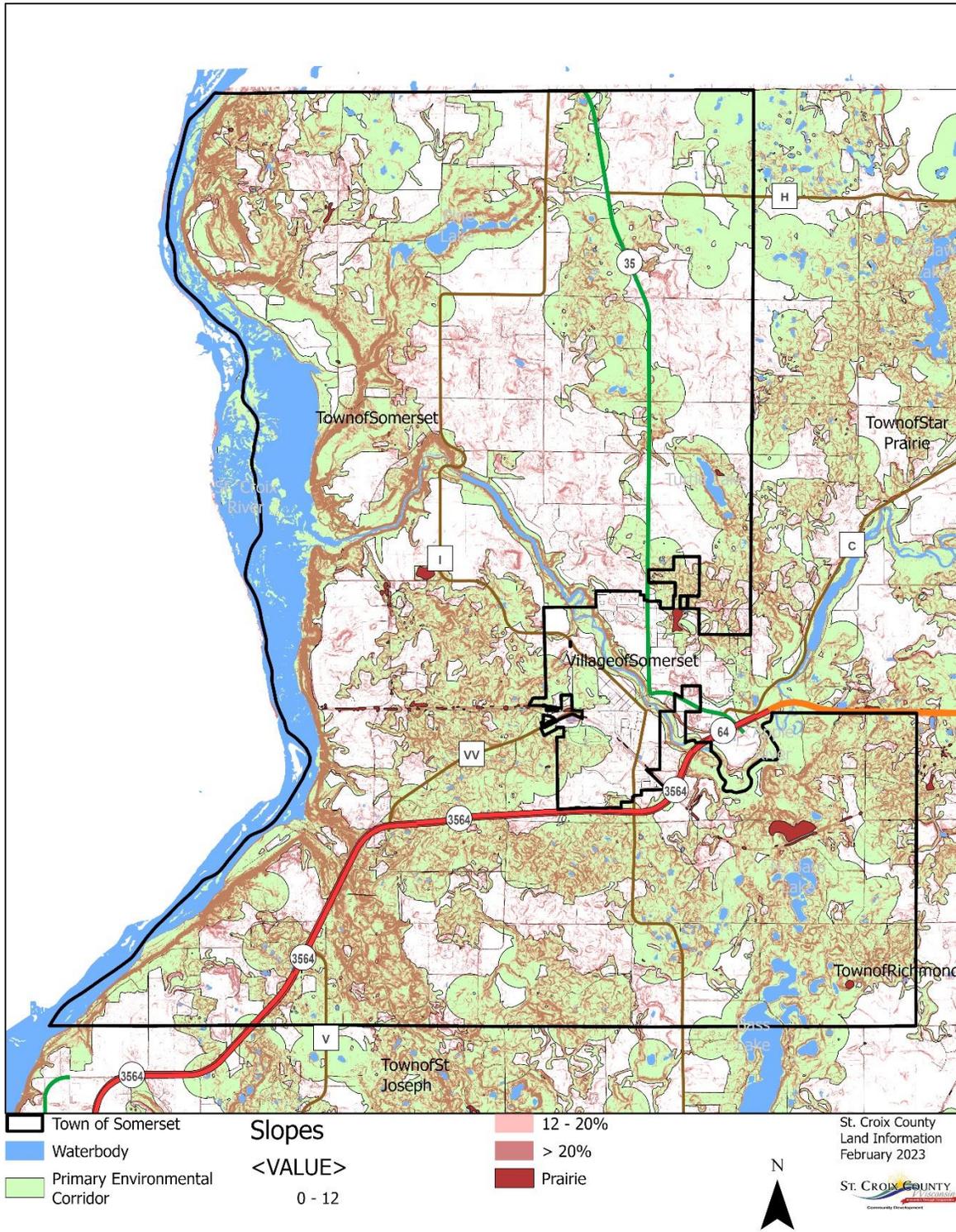
- All land within 1,000 feet of the ordinary high water mark of a lake, pond, or flowage; or
- All land within 300 feet of the ordinary high water mark of a river or stream or to the landward side of the floodplain, whichever is greater.

Shorelands in the Town are regulated by St. Croix County and State standards for shoreland protection. Due to its status as a National Wild and Scenic River, areas along the St. Croix River have additional protections to reduce adverse effects of overcrowding, bluff development, soil erosion, pollutant runoff, flooding, loss of property values, and a reduction in the exception scenic, cultural, and natural characteristics of this water and related lands. Protections are enforced in two primary ways:

- St. Croix County enforces the Lower St. Croix Riverway Overlay District as part of its code of ordinances.
- The National Park Service has purchased and enforces easements within the Riverway boundaries. The majority of these easements are scenic easements that control general use and development in a manner that restricts the visibility of development.



### Town of Somerset Environmental Corridors

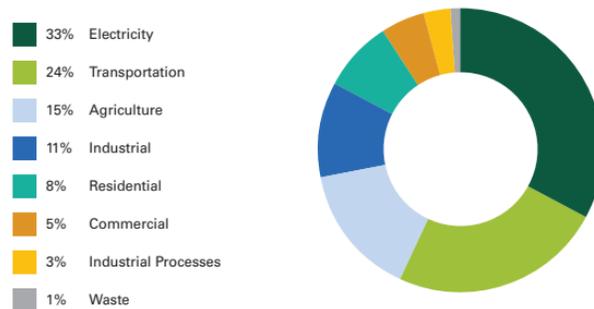


## Energy and Sustainability

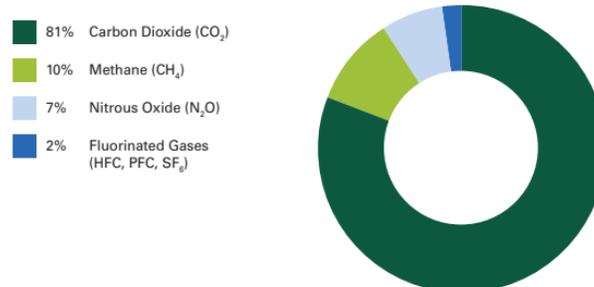
The Wisconsin Office of Sustainability and Clean Energy ([LINK](#)) leads the State of Wisconsin in addressing the effects of climate change through programs and policies that support the use of clean energy resources and technology. In April 2022, the state adopted a Clean Energy Plan. The Plan provides a pathway for Wisconsin to transition to a clean energy economy. The full plan includes Wisconsin's energy and emissions profile, cost of inaction, and pathways and strategies. The State Lead by Example ([LINK](#)) is an implementation initiative that includes the following goals. The state Climate Change Report ([LINK](#)) includes the following graph of emissions by sector reported in 2017.

- Ensure the state is fulfilling the carbon reduction goals of the 2015 Paris Climate Accord (26-28% below 2005 by 2025).
- Develop energy efficiency, sustainability and renewable energy standards for all new and existing state facilities, office buildings and complexes.
- Accelerate new and existing policies to reduce carbon pollution and promote clean energy deployment at the state level.
- Energy consumption reduction
- Sustainable procurement
- Transitioning the fleet to clean fuels and zero-emission vehicles
- Reducing solid waste
- Reducing water consumption

2017 WISCONSIN EMISSIONS  
BY SECTOR



2017 WISCONSIN EMISSIONS  
BY GREENHOUSE GAS



## Historical and Cultural Resources

Historical and cultural resources are often core to a community's identity. They are often what makes a community unique, while archeological sites can offer invaluable insights into history or be of sacred, cultural importance. Society has a responsibility to protect all human remains and burial sites. Historical and cultural resources can also be important to attracting visitors, new residents, and business investment. A community's culture and history builds community pride, provides a sense of place, and add to the overall quality of life.

The Town of Somerset is rich in cultural history and structures. This history includes the expeditions of early explorers, trappers and missionaries who used the St. Croix River as their "highway" to explore the land, harvest furs, and bring Christianity to the existing Native American tribes that populated the area. One of the missionaries gave the river the name it carries today because he saw the form of a cross in the rocks of the palisades at present day St. Croix Falls. The 2012 Adopted St. Croix County Comprehensive Plan states that the St. Croix River, especially the federally owned lands and Ferry Landing site in Town of Somerset is a valuable cultural resource.

## Archeological Sites

As of Fall 2014, the Wisconsin Archeological Site Inventory included 23 entries that appear to be located in the Town of Somerset, including: Two cemeteries, five campsites/villages/finds of Historic Euro-American and/or Pre-European significance, Sixteen sites of Pre-European Woodland or Prehistoric significance (e.g., mounds, campsites, rock art, other finds). These sites range from a site on the St. Croix River that contain scatterings of ancient pottery and arrow heads to a site with remnants of thirty effigy mounds, a campsite/village area, and a burial ground. The far majority of the inventoried sites are located along or near the St. Croix and Apple Rivers, some of which are afforded a certain level of protection since they are located on public lands. However, there are undoubtedly unrecorded historic period sites found in other areas of the Town where survey work as not been performed or access has been limited. In order to protect archeological sites and property owner rights, access to this database is very limited and closely monitored.



In a January 2023 search for the current Wisconsin Archeological Site Inventory within the Wisconsin Historic Preservation Database (WHPD) archeological sites in January 2023, the Wisconsin State Historical Society provided a price guide to obtain the state's inventory ([LINK](#)).

## Historical Sites and Structures

The Town of Somerset has one structure on the National Register of Historic Places. The Soo Line High Bridge is a magnificent iron bridge that is 185 feet high and 2600 feet long. This bridge, built in 1910-1911, and is still in use today. During the summer, restored steam engines pulling restored coaches take passengers on excursions from Osceola and New Richmond, Wisconsin to the bridge and back.



The National Register of Historic Places “Statement of Significance” declares that:

*“The Soo Line High Bridge is significant for the innovative engineering techniques used in its design, for the length and height of its span, and for the beauty and drama of its structure. It remains an important transportation link between the Minneapolis-St Paul area and western Wisconsin.”*

The following list shows the 27 historic structures on the Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory (AHI). The list was gathered from the Wisconsin State Historical Society ([LINK](#)).

### Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory (AHI) for Somerset Area (Town and Village)

1. Soo Line High Bridge Railroad (#17142)	15. Old Town Hall (#26177)
2. Papenfuss Farm House (#229523)	16. House Spring St (#26178)
3. Papenfuss Farm (#229524)	17. Church Spring St (#26179)
4. Papenfuss Farm Cattle Pass (#229525)	18. Building Spring St (#26180)
5. House County Highway I (#23745)	19. House Spring St (#26181)
6. House White Tail Dr (#23747)	20. House Spring St (#26182)
7. House Pine Lake Rd (#23790)	21. House Spring St (#26183)
8. Rivard Farmstead (#23791)	22. Building Spring St (#26184)
9. House High Bridge Rd (#23792)	23. Building Spring St (#26185)
10. House Elm St (#26172)	24. House Spring St (#26186)
11. House 1 <sup>st</sup> St (#26173)	25. Farm State Hwy 64 (#46045)
12. Church 1 <sup>st</sup> St and Main St (#26174)	26. Emmanuel Lutheran Church (1896)
13. House Garfield St (#26175)	27. Emmanuel Church Cemetery
14. Church, Church Hill Rd (#26176)	

## Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources Plans and Programs

### Agricultural Resources Programs

1. U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) Federal farm conservation - <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/>
2. Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Program Wis. Stats. §91 - <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/91>
3. Farmland Use Value Assessment – WI Department of Revenue - <https://www.revenue.wi.gov/Pages/FAQS/slf-useassmt.aspx>
4. State of Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, Livestock Facility Siting Ordinances Wis. Stats. §93.90 & ATCP 51 - [https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs\\_Services/LivestockSiting.aspx](https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/LivestockSiting.aspx)
5. University of Wisconsin-Extension UW-Extension support in agribusiness, land use and soil management - <https://extension.wisc.edu/>
6. St. Croix County Farmland Preservation Plan - <https://www.sccwi.gov/370/Farmland-Preservation-Program>
7. St. Croix County Nutrient Management Program (landspreading primarily regulated by WDNR)

### Natural Resources Programs

1. U.S. Department of the Interior - National Park Service St. Croix River National Scenic Riverway - <https://www.nps.gov/sacn/index.htm>
2. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service St. Croix Wetland Management District - <https://www.fws.gov/refuge/st-croix-wetland-management-district>
3. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources programs, plans, and permitting: [www.dnr.state.wi.us](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us)
  - a. Forest Land Tax Programs Wis. Stats. §70 & 77
  - b. Division of Water and Watershed Management
  - c. Wisconsin Act 307 – Notification to Nonmetallic Resource Owners
  - d. Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) conservation practices soil and water quality
  - e. Non-Point Pollution Abatement Program Funds
  - f. River Management and Planning Grants
  - g. Stewardship Grants for Municipalities and Non-Profit Conservation Organizations Funds
  - h. Land Recycling Loan Program (LRLP)
4. St. Croix County Comprehensive Plan - <https://www.sccwi.gov/369/Comprehensive-Plan>
5. St. Croix County General, Shoreland, and Floodplain Zoning Regulations - <https://www.sccwi.gov/Faq.aspx?QID=369>
6. St. Croix County Drinking Water Program (e.g., testing, education) - <https://www.sccwi.gov/539/Drinking-Water-Program>
7. St. Croix County Sanitary/Septic - <https://www.sccwi.gov/328/Sanitary-Program>
8. St. Croix County Solid Waste Management and Recycling - <https://www.sccwi.gov/420/Recycling>
9. St. Croix County Mining Regulations - <http://online.encodeplus.com/regs/stcroixcounty-wi/doc-viewer.aspx?secid=15#secid-15>

- 
10. St. Croix County Planning Resources - <https://www.sccwi.gov/735/Land-Use-Planning-and-Development>
  11. Village of Somerset Wellhead Protection Plan and Ordinance
  12. [Village of Somerset Comprehensive Plan](#)
  13. St. Croix River Association - <https://www.stcroix360.com/2017/11/st-croix-river-association-why-we-love-clean-water/>
  14. Wild Rivers Conservancy - <https://wildriversconservancy.org/>

#### Cultural and Historical Resources Programs

1. Wisconsin Historical Society, Preservation Tax Credits, Historic Building Code restoration and rehabilitation of historic structures - <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/>
2. National Historic Landmarks Program - <https://www.nps.gov/>
3. National Trust for Historic Preservation - <https://savingplaces.org/>
4. Wisconsin Humanities Council, Historic Preservation Program Grants - <https://wisconsinhumanities.org/>
5. Certified Local Government Program Certified historic preservation ordinances <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org>
6. St. Croix Heritage Initiative [www.stcroixheritage.org](http://www.stcroixheritage.org)
7. St. Croix County Historical Society - <https://www.scchistory.org/>
8. School District cultural and community activities: plays, musicals, sporting events, and other events. In addition, the Village of Somerset hosts a number of festivals and large music events
9. Emmanuel Lutheran Church Preservation Society Ice Cream Social and Annual Meeting

#### Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources Goals and Objectives, Policies

##### Agricultural and Natural Resources

Goal: Retain the rural character of the Town of Somerset landscape, while protecting and maintaining healthy ecological systems.

##### Objectives

1. Encourage agricultural land use through support of land use policies that encourage farming the land.
2. Development and non-agricultural use of the land, including new construction and recreational activities, should be conducted in a manner that minimizes or prevents the negative impacts to groundwater, surface waters, wetlands, steep slopes, and other environmental sensitive areas. Agricultural uses should also be encouraged to minimize or avoid such impacts.
3. Guide growth in a manner that: conserves and enhances natural or scenic resources; protects groundwater and surface water quantity and quality; promotes the conservation of wetlands and flood storage areas; preserve native prairie remnants, protects endangered or threatened habitat and species; and enhances public recreation opportunities.
4. When opportunities allow, encourage the preservation, enhancement, and linkages of environmental corridors, wildlife habitat, and conservancy areas.

- 
5. Maintain natural, open spaces within the community that accessible by residents, while protecting habitats and environmentally sensitive features from development, overuse, and commercialization.

### Cultural Resources

Cultural Resources Goal: Retain and preserve the Town's historical and cultural resources.

#### Objectives

1. Identify and protect sites and features of archeological interest.
2. Encourage the protection and rehabilitation of structures of significant historical interest.
3. Support partnerships with local residents and community organizations that encourage preservation, education, and celebration of the area's historical and cultural resources.
4. Preserve open space, historical resources, and the Town's rural character as a reflection of the Town's past and the cultural importance to our quality of life in the future.

### Agricultural Resources Policies

1. Strong preference shall be given to agricultural uses over non-agricultural development within farmland preservation areas. Non-farm related development on productive farmland shall be discouraged. (policy)
2. Productive farmlands that are intended to be preserved long-term should be identified as farmland preservation areas within the County's plans and protected through agricultural zoning. (policy)
3. Continue to encourage in-fill and manage growth through zoning, conservation design, and other tools within the Town in a manner that helps to preserve productive agricultural areas. (policy)
4. Through cooperation and land use regulations, avoid or mitigate potential conflicts between agricultural-related uses and residential uses within the Town and at the Town-Village boundary. (policy)
5. Encourage St. Croix County to revisit its zoning ordinance to consider excluding or mitigating potential use conflicts (e.g., livestock facilities with 500+ animal units) within rural residential areas. (short-term)

### Natural Resources Policies

6. Working with St. Croix County and the National Park Service, continue to maintain and enforce Town and County ordinances in a manner that ensures the protection and conservation of groundwater, surface waters, environmentally sensitive areas, and the natural environment. Utilize the environmentally sensitive areas map (or more accurate information if available) when considering zoning and land use decisions. (policy)
7. Discourage landspreading and disposal of septic sludge, solid waste, and contaminated materials within environmental sensitive areas and near residential areas. Monitor related trends and explore adoption of appropriate landspreading and other solid waste regulations, if needed. (policy & ongoing)
8. Promote and utilize the Town and County conservation design standards to preserve and link environmental corridors and sensitive areas. (policy)

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9. Community land use plans, subdivision plats, and individual site plans should provide convenient public access to natural, open spaces in the community for recreational purposes when possible, but should also support the restoration or protection of natural habitats and environmentally sensitive areas. (policy)
  10. Discourage the development of significant intact native prairie remnants and encourage the restoration of prairie or grassland systems through cooperative efforts of landowners and State, County, and Federal agencies. (policy)
  11. Create an inventory of known prairie remnants within the Town of Somerset. (long-term)
  12. Mining-related uses, including mining, processing, transload facilities, and haul routes, shall be treated similarly to a heavy industry and should be closely regulated. Such uses should be discouraged from siting near existing or planned residential areas. The Town may require additional studies on noise, traffic, real estate value, air quality, groundwater, economic costs-benefits, and other potential impacts for site-specific non-metallic mineral extraction and processing proposals. (policy)
  13. Encourage St. Croix County to revisit its zoning ordinance and consider the establishment of a separate non-metallic mining zoning district. (short-term)
  14. The Town Plan Commission shall explore the future potential for mining-related development within the Town and whether the Town should develop its own non-metallic mining ordinance. (short-term)
  15. Meet with St. Croix County, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and the National Park Service to identify strategies to prevent the potential over-commercialization of the Apple River and its associated shorelands and facilities (e.g., boat ramps). Explore the potential adoption of a special Town licensing overlay district to address this issue if needed. (short-term and long-term)
  16. Through the Town website and/or other outreach, work to increase resident knowledge of the radon risks in the area and encourage testing. (short-term, then ongoing)
  17. Create a Town of Somerset “Rural Living Guide” to include information on environmental sensitive areas, protection of water quality, applicable regulations, best management practices, Town services, and key contact information. (short-term)
  18. Make residents aware of existing conservation and farmland preservation efforts within the community as best practices and models. (short-term)
  19. Explore and promote energy conservation and sustainability initiatives in the community. (ongoing).
  20. In order to protect air quality in the Town of Somerset, the outdoor burning of solid wastes, including but not limited to garbage, trash, construction debris, and industrial waste, shall be prohibited. Prescribed burns for the purpose of regenerating and/or maintaining wildlife habitat ecosystems shall be allowed. Consider the creation of a Town ordinance regarding outdoor wood furnaces and boilers. (policy and short-term)
  21. Steep slopes with a grade of 20 percent or more shall not be developed. Development shall only be allowed on steep slopes with a grade from 12 to 20 percent where best management practices for erosion and sediment control and stormwater management can be implemented successfully. (policy) Policies & Recommendations – Water Resources. County now allows 25% for recreational purposes (ski hill)

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22. The Town of Somerset will work with St. Croix County to identify and monitor potential pollution sources in the Town that might contaminate groundwater. (ongoing)
  23. Promote proper well abandonment and wellhead protection. (policy)
  24. Discourage uses in the Town that place a high demand on the local aquifer that could potentially impact nearby wells or surface waters. The cumulative impacts of groundwater withdrawals should be considered prior to approving uses that require high capacity wells. (policy)
  25. Continue to work cooperatively with the National Park Service, St. Croix County, and the St. Croix River Association in the protection of the St. Croix Riverway. Continue disseminating information to landowners and local realtors regarding the scenic easements, bluff setbacks, and other applicable protections. (policy; ongoing)
  26. All structures and roads shall be built at least 75 feet from the ordinary high water mark of all surface waters and wetlands. Development and re-development should be discouraged or prohibited within 100-year floodplains and dam failure inundation areas. Under no circumstances shall development be allowed that would increase the base flood level of the floodplain; the Town may require an engineering certification to this effect at their discretion. Support efforts by St. Croix County to increase the accuracy of FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (D-FIRMs). (policy)
  27. The Town of Somerset will work with St. Croix County to ensure that shoreland regulations are enforced and appropriate buffers are maintained to reduce runoff, prevent contamination, reduce erosion, and protect and preserve water quality. (policy)
  28. Closed depressions shall not be developed, drained or filled, nor shall closed depressions be used for the dumping or storage of any substance, material, or equipment. Best management practices to repair damage near residences and structures shall be exempt from this provision. (policy)
  29. The Town of Somerset will require landowners to provide at least a 75-foot buffer of permanent vegetation between closed depressions, kettles, or sinkholes and yards, croplands, feedlots, buildings, roads, parking areas, etc. to protect the groundwater from contamination. Closed depressions, kettles or sinkholes which are associated with farm fields actively cropped any two out of the last five years shall be exempt from this provision. (policy)
  30. Support the education of Town residents and businesses on the proper disposal of household, pharmaceutical, and agricultural hazardous waste at county collection programs. (policy)
  31. All development shall attain pre-development levels of stormwater runoff after development. Stormwater runoff as the result of development and the use of land should not adversely impact shorelands, wetlands, closed depressions, or other waterbodies. As needed, require maintenance agreements and develop an inspection schedule for stormwater management systems on private lands that are approved as part of a development. (policy)
  32. The Town of Somerset will require plans for controlling and minimizing water runoff, erosion, and sedimentation for all development. Erosion control and drainage plans shall be required for all roads and driveways, any portion of which, including rights-of-way, has a grade of 10 percent and over. (policy)
  33. The Town of Somerset standards for controlling and minimizing water runoff, erosion, and sedimentation shall include, but not be limited to (policy): a. New development and roads should conform to the natural topography of the site. b. Bare soil must be protected from rain,



snow, or meltwater induced erosion. c. The infiltration function of the soil must be maintained. d. Runoff velocities must be kept low. e. All areas on the site must be protected from runoff which flows from land above the site. f. Sediment at the perimeter of the site must be controlled. g. There must be permanent controls established for the release of excess runoff which result from the completed development. h. Installed controls must be properly constructed and maintained both during and after the construction period. i. Stormwater runoff shall not be discharged to closed depressions, kettles, or sinkholes.

34. The Town of Somerset will not allow the development, filling, or draining of wetlands, nor should development negatively impact wetlands. Wetlands shall not be used for the purpose of stormwater retention or as development related detention basins. Runoff shall be controlled so that the natural functions of wetlands are not overloaded or disrupted. (policy)
35. Continue to support and promote use of the St. Croix County well-testing program. (ongoing)
36. Encourage discussion and partnerships with St. Croix County Land Conservation, UW-Extension, Bass Lake Management District, area farmers, and other municipalities in the watershed to reduce phosphorus loading, explore adaptive management strategies, and improve the water quality of area surface waters. (short-term)
37. Work cooperatively with the National Park Service, Wisconsin DNR, St. Croix County Land Conservation, St. Croix River Association, and the Bass Lake Management District to increase public awareness and support initiatives which work to prevent or eliminate invasive species and the spread of these species. (policy)
38. Continue to participate in the Highway 64 Wastewater and Stormwater Coalition's initiative regarding stormwater and wastewater planning and management. Consider implementation of the recommendations from this initiative as deemed feasible and beneficial to the Town. (ongoing)
39. Encourage the use of rain gardens, natural or vegetated swales, and other infiltration systems that reuse water, limit stormwater runoff, and add aesthetic appeal to the landscape. Policies & Recommendations – Wildlife Habitat
40. The Town of Somerset considers wildlife habitat to be an essential part of the Town's character and heritage, and something that residents have voiced clear interest in retaining as a major element of our future community. Wildlife habitat is generally recognized as any and all native flora and fauna and insects, terrestrial and aquatic, and the soils, wetlands, streams and lakes on which they depend. Wildlife habitat is further considered to be: a. Any and all of the naturally occurring resources that are necessary or useful to support and assure the presence and well-being of native wildlife populations. b. Any and all wildlife plants, terrestrial and aquatic, that help provide the food, shelter, and cover requirements for the support and well-being of any and all animal and insect wildlife populations, terrestrial and aquatic. c. Any and all man-made structures, ponds, cultivated crops, plants, etc., that are useful to support the presence and well-being of wildlife populations, whether or not such is the primary intent of such structures, crops, plants, etc. (policy)
41. Natural wildlife habitat shall be identified prior to development and the impacts of development on such habitat shall be minimized. All development plans adjacent to or within areas of wildlife habitat will be reviewed for the purpose of protecting and preserving said habitat to the greatest extent which is practical. (policy)

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42. The Town of Somerset will encourage that undeveloped lands (open spaces), that are not agriculturally productive, be utilized for the purpose of protecting, preserving, enhancing, and/or establishing wildlife habitat. (policy)
  43. The Town of Somerset will encourage the use of conservation subdivision design to maintain as much of the wildlife habitat value of a site as possible, with priority given to quality habitat and encouraging connected environmental corridors. (policy)
  44. The Town of Somerset will encourage all resident landowners to maintain and/or establish appropriate vegetation in order to provide wildlife habitat and preserve the rural character of the community. (policy)
  45. The Town of Somerset will encourage the preservation, protection, enhancement, and/or establishment of fence rows, hedge rows, and wind breaks wherever they will not adversely affect agricultural operations or significantly jeopardize the safe operation of motor vehicles on Town roads, in order to provide wildlife habitat, reduce erosion, control snow drifts, and enhance the aesthetics and rural character of the community. (policy)
  46. The Town of Somerset will discourage the development of significant intact prairie remnants and will encourage the restoration of prairie or grassland systems through cooperative efforts of landowners and State, County, and Federal agencies. (policy)
  47. The Town of Somerset will continue to allow the activities of regulated sport hunting and fishing within the community. These activities function both as wildlife management tools and help to finance wildlife management programs and projects. (policy)
  48. Encourage stormwater and aesthetic ponds, including adjacent shorelines and vegetation, to be built and maintained in a way that deters Canada Geese. (policy) Policies & Recommendations – Cultural Resources
  49. Through the Town newsletter, website, information at the Town Hall, and other activities, increase awareness of the Town’s history and culture as a means of strengthening a sense of community and ownership among residents of the Town. (short-term)
  50. Encourage and support the development of groups interested in the identification, preservation, and increase awareness of lands or sites that are part of the Town’s history. (policy)
  51. Continue to partner with the Village to maintain the original Town Hall and explore uses and events at the Town Hall that celebrate local history. (ongoing)
  52. As part of the Town’s “rural living guide”, raises awareness that sites of archeological interest exist within the Town, the importance of preserving such sites, and to encourage the reporting of known or suspected sites. (short-term)
  53. Amend the Town’s subdivision checklist to require that the State inventory list of archeological sites be checked prior to issuing building or use permits and prior to taking action on zoning applications. (short-term)

## Economic Development

Through planning, a community can anticipate economic change and guide development to the best of its abilities to achieve its economic vision and objectives. Economic development is about working together to maintain a strong economy which provides a good standard of living for individuals and a reliable tax base for the community. A community's economic development plan should reflect the values of the community and must be carefully linked to the goals, objectives, and strategies of the other plan elements. This plan element provides a variety of economic data and indicators, existing plans and programs, local economic strengths, weaknesses, and redevelopment opportunities and goals and objectives.

The eastern edge of the Twin Cities Metro area is only a 30-minute drive from the Town and most working Town residents commute to Minnesota for employment. The beauty of the area attracts people to it, and the Town of Somerset now faces issues all too common for a rural community on the fringe of a major metropolitan area including new residential development that is viewed as an opportunity for some and a threat to the rural lifestyle of others.

As the demand for land, roads, and public facilities increases, the community recognizes the need to plan for effectively managing change. In addition to residential growth, the influence of the metropolitan area is apparent in Somerset as many of the Town's residents drive to the Twin Cities for employment, shopping, and events, while the natural amenities and surface waters of the Town are attracting visitors from outside the community.

Transportation is vital to business recruitment, expansion, and retention. The St. Croix River Crossing bridge was constructed in 2017 that spans the St. Croix River, between Oak Park Heights, Minnesota (Hwy 36) and St. Joseph, Wisconsin (Hwy 64). The completion of the bridge allows safer, faster, and more convenient vehicle transportation between the Somerset area and the Twin Cities (Impact study key findings right).



### Crossing Impact Study Key Findings:

- 1) New bridges can facilitate continued growth in already growing communities, but do not drive or spur growth
- 2) The improved river crossing will increase access to jobs in the region and may make employers located in the Somerset area more attractive to potential employees and the talent pool located in the more urbanized areas of the Twin Cities region.
- 3) Population growth will drive demand and support for additional retail, hospitality, health care, construction, real estate, and governmental services. New resident income in the corridor could support new private-public sector jobs.
- 4) New economic development and activity will likely occur in an incremental manner. Most employment growth is driven by new startups and through the expansion of existing companies. Most firm relocations are executed by smaller businesses less than 100 employees. An opportunity is to develop economic strategies that target certain industry and occupational clusters within the metro area, since the Corridor Communities will become more accessible due to the new bridge.

## Town of Somerset Financial Report & Tax Rates

Wisconsin State Statutes 86.303(5)(e) - Wisconsin Legislative Documents and 65.90 Municipal budgets requires that the town submit annual municipal financial reports and budgets. The following table shows the Town of Somerset 2020 annual municipal revenues and expenditures as reported to the Wisconsin Department of Revenue on the municipal financial report. As stated in the table below, the Town of Somerset carries no debt burden and reported more revenue than expenditures in 2020.

CountyName	ST CROIX
MuniTypeCode	TOWN
Municipality	SOMERSET
Population	4401
General Property Taxes	\$757,867.00
Tax Increments	0
InLieu of Taxes	0
Other Taxes	\$8,540.00
Total Taxes	\$766,407.00
Special Assessments	0
Federal Aids	\$57,053.00
State Shared Revenues	\$39,372.00
State Highway Aids	\$264,219.00
All Other State Aids	\$33,099.00
Other Local Govt Aids	\$2,690.00
Total Inter Government Revenues	\$396,433.00
Licenses and Permits	\$84,935.00
Fines, Forfeits and Penalties	0
Public Charges for Services	\$12,516.00
Intergovernmental Charges for Services	0
Interest Income	\$9,475.00
Other Revenues	\$21,603.00
Total Miscellaneous Revenues	\$31,078.00
<b>Subtotal-General Revenues</b>	<b>\$1,291,369.00</b>
Other Financing Sources	0
Total Revenue and Other Financing Sources	\$1,291,369.00
General Government	\$280,776.00
Law Enforcement	\$2,025.00
Fire	\$107,166.00
Ambulance	0
Other Public Safety	\$56,252.00
Highway Maintenance and Administration	\$543,017.00
Highway Construction	\$198,578.00
Road- Related Facilities	0
Other Transportation	0
Solid Waste Collection and Disposal	\$6,700.00
Other Sanitation	0
Health and Human Services	\$3,619.00
Culture and Education	\$5,000.00
Parks and Recreation	\$23,077.00
Conservation and Development	\$2,466.00
All Other Expenditures	0
Sub-total Operation and Capital Expenditure	\$1,228,676.00
Debt Service - Principal	0
Debt Service - Interest & Fiscal Charges	0
Total Debt Service	0
Sub-total Expenditure	\$1,228,676.00
Other Financing Uses	0
<b>Total Expenditures and Other Financing Uses</b>	<b>\$1,228,676.00</b>
<b>Total General Obligation Debt</b>	<b>0</b>

The Wisconsin Department of Revenue (WDOR) reported the following current state and county sales and use tax rates as of October 18, 2022.

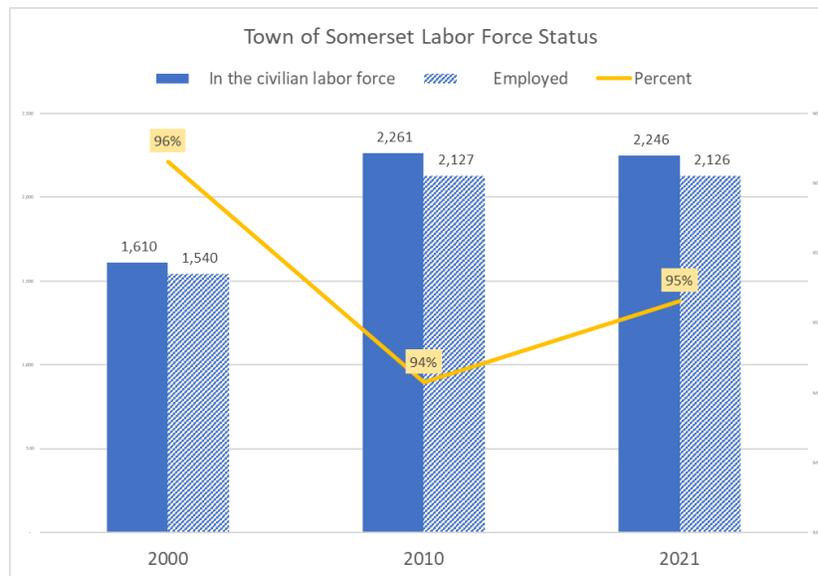
- WI state sales tax rate as 5% tax imposed on the sales price of retailers who sell, license, lease, or rent tangible personal property.
- WI use tax is a 5% tax imposed on the purchase price of tangible personal property, certain coins and stamps, certain leased property affixed to realty, certain digital goods, or taxable services that are used, stored, or consumed within Wisconsin, but upon which a Wisconsin sales or use tax has not previously been paid.
- County sales tax - For the 68 Wisconsin counties who have adopted a county tax, the county tax is a 0.5% tax imposed on the sales price from retail sales, licenses, leases, or rentals of tangible personal property. St. Croix County adopted said 0.5% county tax.

## Use Caution with Economic Data

The data in this section should be used for general planning purposes and consideration of trends, but must be used cautiously and with a critical eye. Critical decisions may require additional data collection. The data found here is taken from different sources and, sometimes, for different geographic areas. Some data sources use different definitions which may differ from each other (as well as your own definition). Further, when dealing with small samples or a single community, a single oversight during data collection (e.g., missing one business) or a change after the data is collected can make large differences. And in some cases, data may be withheld due to confidentiality.

## Labor Force

The following graph and table show Town of Somerset labor force status in 2000, 2010, and 2021. According to Census data, the number of Town residents in the civilian labor force decreased from 2,261 in 2010 to 2,246 in 2021.<sup>7</sup> However, the percentage of employed residents in the labor force increased from 94% in 2010 to 95% in 2021. As shown in the table below, the American Community Survey Census 2021 data reports that 97% of employed persons have a computer and 100% of unemployed persons have a computer.



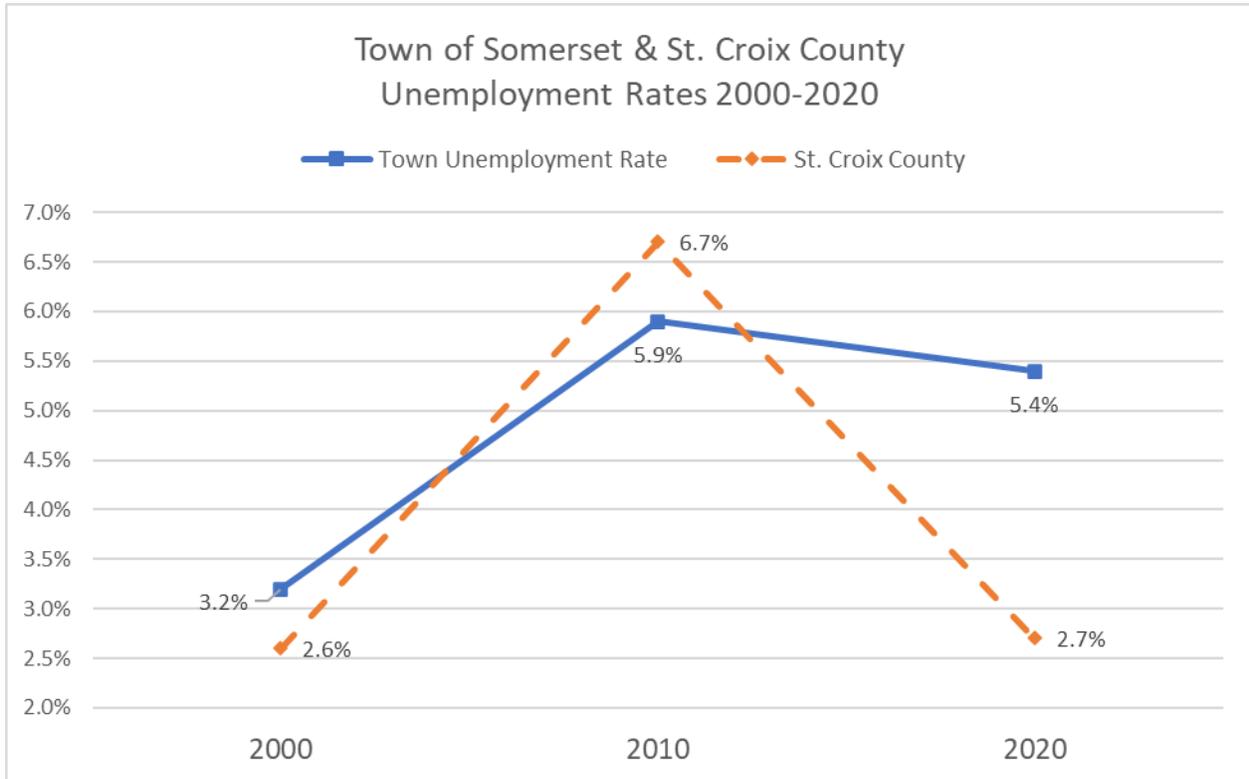
LABOR FORCE STATUS (BY PRESENCE OF A COMPUTER AND TYPES OF INTERNET SUBSCRIPTION IN HOUSEHOLD 2021 ONLY)			
	2000	2010	2021
In the civilian labor force	1,610	2,261	2,246
Employed	1,540	2,127	2,126
Percent	96%	94%	95%
Has a computer:			2,055
Percent			97%
With dial-up Internet subscription alone			-
With a broadband Internet subscription			2,030
Without an Internet subscription			25
No computer			71
Unemployed:	65	134	120
Has a computer:			120
Percent			100%
With dial-up Internet subscription alone			-
With a broadband Internet subscription			85
Without an Internet subscription			35
No computer			-
Not in labor force:	248	605	1,193
Has a computer:			1,156
With dial-up Internet subscription alone			-
With a broadband Internet subscription			1,102
Without an Internet subscription			54
No computer			37
Total:	1,858	2,866	3,439

Sources Census 2000, 2010, and 2021: ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables

<sup>7</sup> US Census Glossary Definition: The civilian labor force does not include members of the U.S. Armed Forces and consists of people classified as employed or unemployed.

## Unemployment

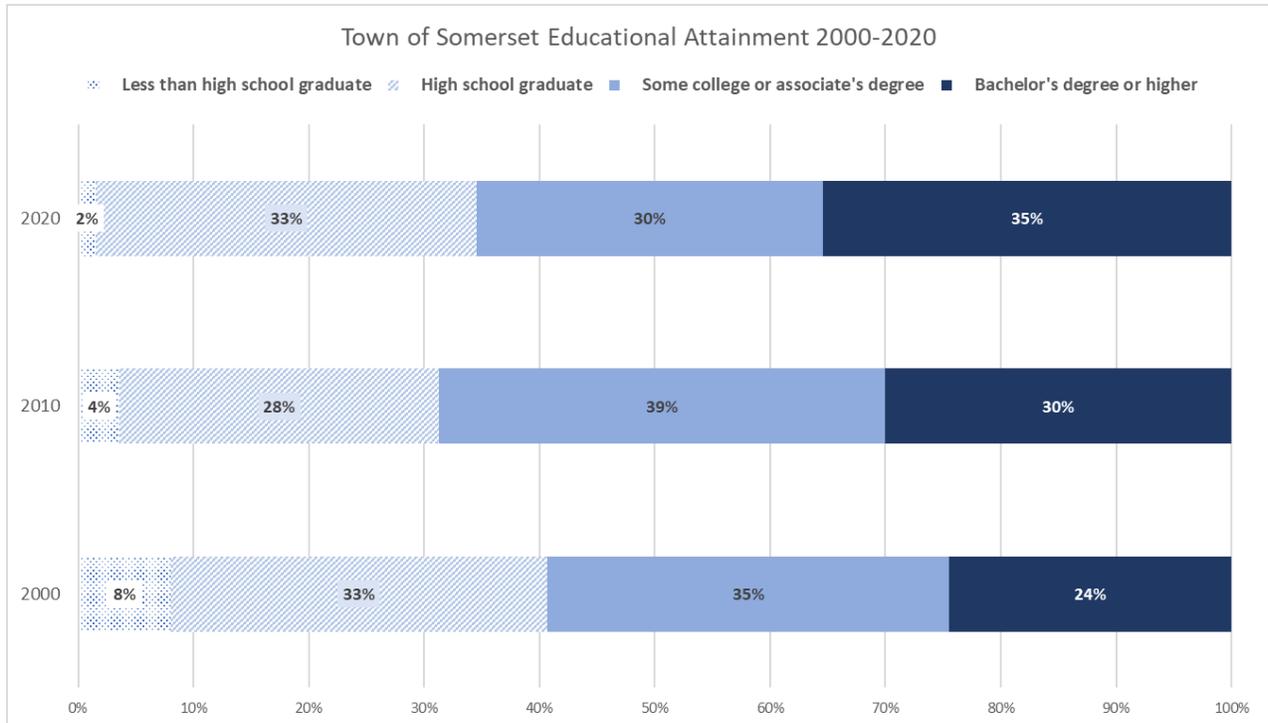
The graph and table below show a comparison of the unemployment rate and number employed in the Town of Somerset and St. Croix County from 2000-2020. According to Census data, the Town unemployment rate decreased slightly from 5.9% in 2010 to 5.4% in 2020. The unemployment rate of St. Croix County drastically reduced 4%, from 6.7% in 2010 to 2.7% in 2020 as shown in the graph and table below.



Number Employed and Unemployment Rate						
	2000		2010		2020	
	Employed	Unemployment Rate	Employed	Unemployment Rate	Employed	Unemployment Rate
Town of Somerset	1,540	4.0%	2,127	5.9%		5.4%
St. Croix County	34,905	2.6%	44,716	6.7%		2.7%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau and American Community Survey 2000, 2010, 2020						

## Educational Attainment

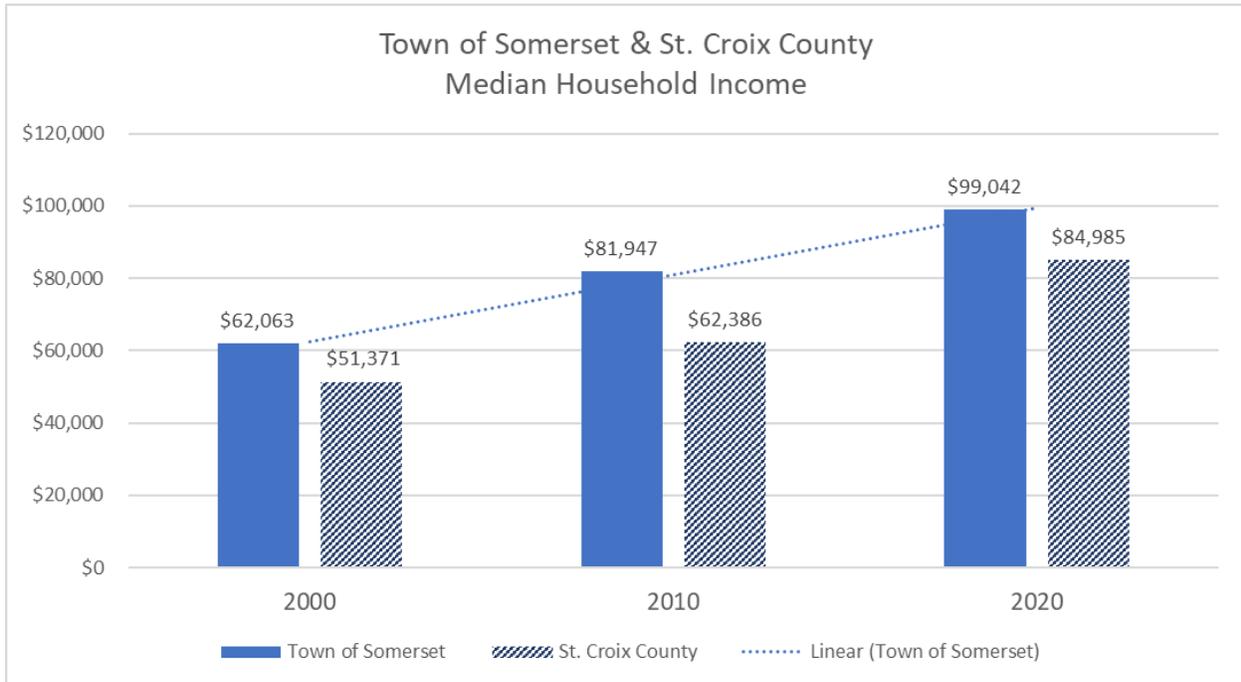
The graph and table below displays the educational attainment level of residents in the Town of Somerset that were age 25 and older in 2000, 2010, and 2020. The educational attainment level has consistently increased since 2000 evidenced by the increase in percentage of residents with a Bachelor's degree or higher from 24% in 2000 to 35% in 2020, and the decrease in the percentage of residents with less than a high school diploma from 8% in 2000 to 2% in 2020. According to US Census data, Town of Somerset residents are becoming more educated since 2000.



Town Educational Attainment	2000	%	2010	%	2020	%
Less than high school graduate:	141	8%	83	4%	35	2%
High school graduate:	575	33%	642	28%	753	33%
Some college or associate's degree:	614	35%	896	39%	683	30%
Bachelor's degree or higher:	431	24%	697	30%	808	35%
Total:	1761	100%	2318	100%	2279	100%
Source: US Census 2000, 2010, 2020						

## Income

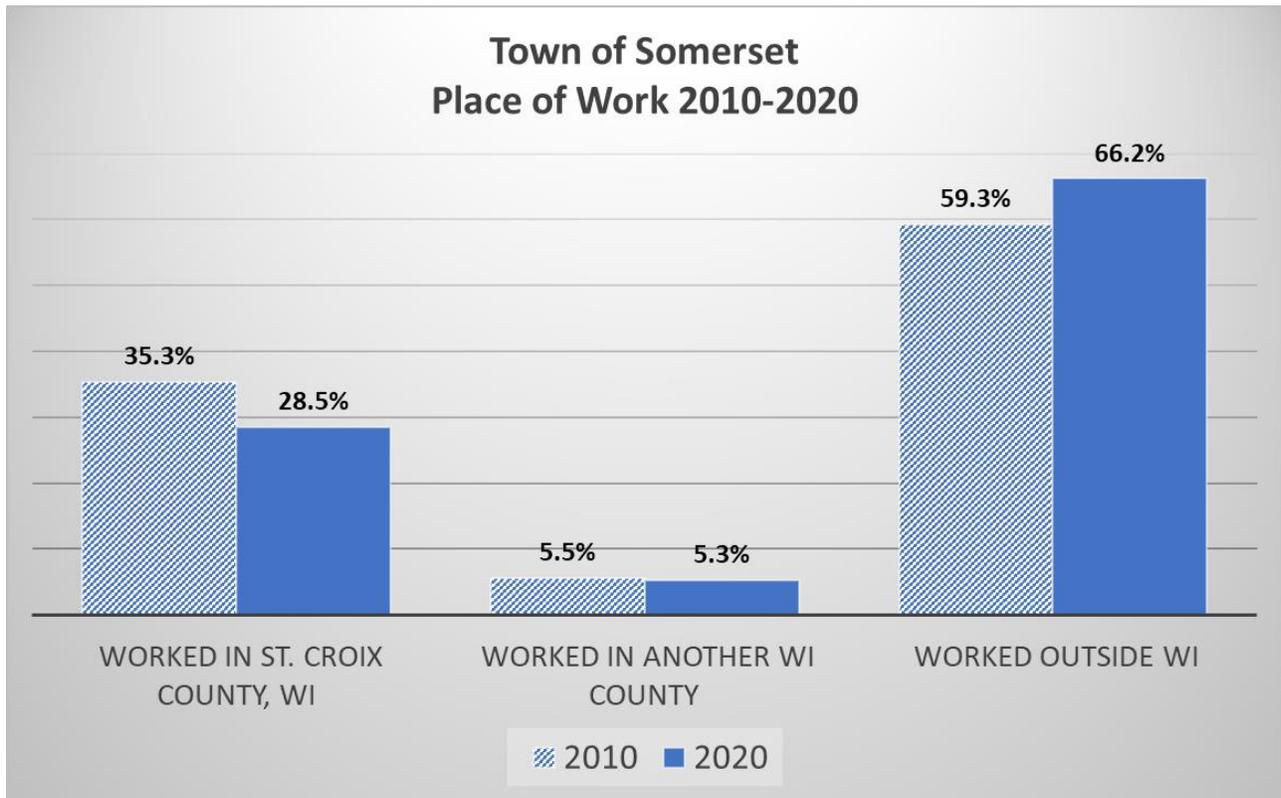
The median household income in the Town of Somerset increased has consistently increased since 2000 and 2010. The Town’s median income is also consistently above the County median income in 2000, 2010, and 2020 shown in the graph and table below.



Median household income	2000	2010	2020
Town of Somerset	\$62,063	\$81,947	\$99,042
St. Croix County	\$ 51,371	\$62,386	\$84,985
Source: US Census			

## Place of Work and Commute Time

The eastern edge of the Twin Cities Metro area is approximately 30 minutes from the Town and most working Town residents commute to Minnesota for employment. The graph and table below show town residents place of work for 2010 and 2020. According to Census data, the percentage of residents working outside Wisconsin increased from 59.3% in 2010 to 66.2% in 2020. This finding, combined with the town’s population growth results in economic and social impacts. The beauty of the area attracts people to it, and the Town of Somerset faces common issues of a rural community on the fringe of a major metropolitan area including new residential development. Increased population and development can be viewed as an opportunity for economic growth with the benefits of increased incomes and spending in the community with the realized costs of increased infrastructure and service needs and impacts to the rural landscape and lifestyle.

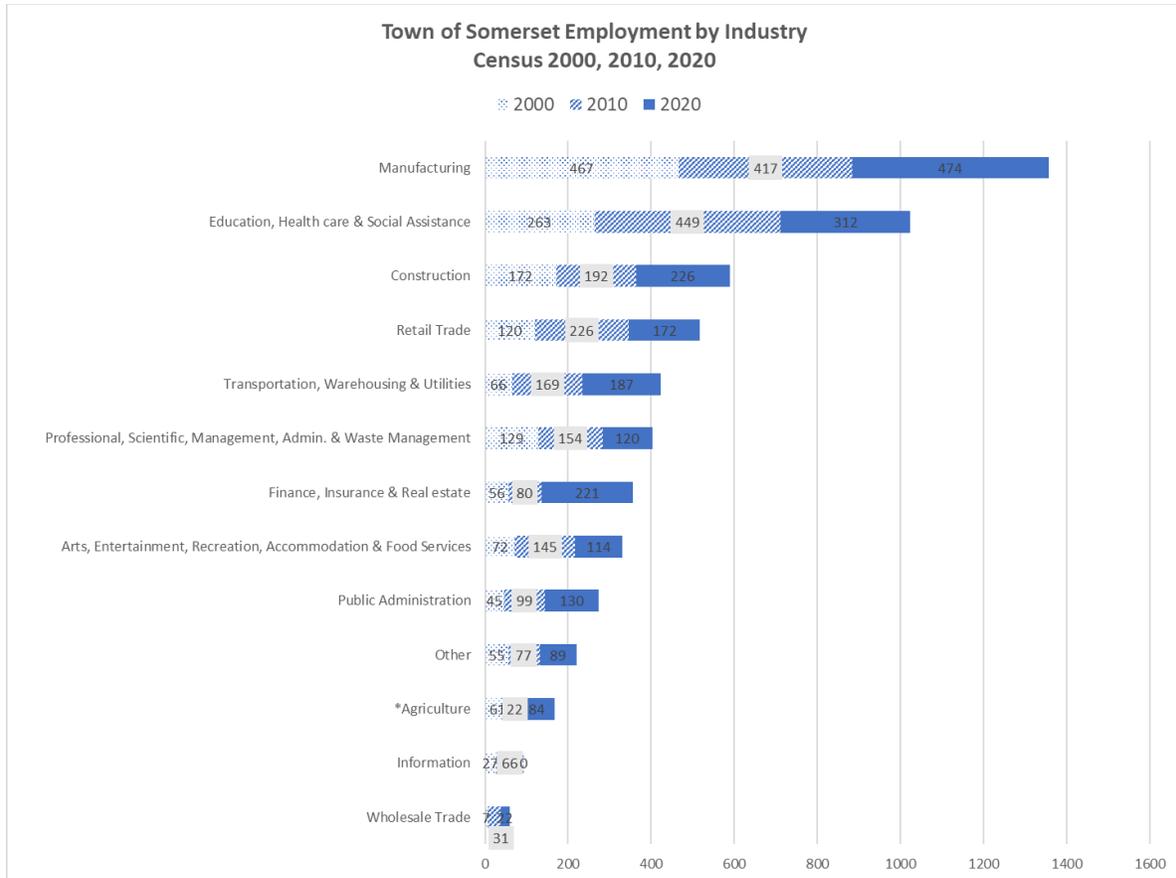


Town of Somerset Place of Work	2010	2020	Difference
Worked in St. Croix County, WI	35.3%	28.5%	6.8%
Worked in another WI county	5.5%	5.3%	0.2%
Worked outside WI	59.3%	66.2%	6.9%
Source: US Census 2010 and 2020			

According to the census data, town residents average travel time to work has decreased from 2010 to 2020. Specifically, the average (mean) travel time to work decreased from 2010 (31.6 minutes) to 2020 (27.7 minutes). More information is provided in the transportation chapter.

## Employment by Industry

According to US Census data, the top 3 employment industries of residents in the Town of Somerset include: Manufacturing, Education, health care & social assistance, and Construction. The graph and table below show the Town of Somerset employment by industry for Census 2000, 2010, and 2020.<sup>8</sup>



INDUSTRY	2000	2010	%	2020	%
Manufacturing	467	417	19.6%	474	22.0%
Education, Health care & Social Assistance	263	449	21.1%	312	14.5%
Construction	172	192	9.0%	226	10.5%
Retail Trade	120	226	10.6%	172	8.0%
Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities	66	169	7.9%	187	8.7%
Professional, Scientific, Management, Admin. & Waste Management	129	154	7.2%	120	5.6%
Finance, Insurance & Real estate	56	80	3.8%	221	10.3%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation & Food Services	72	145	6.8%	114	5.3%
Public Administration	45	99	4.7%	130	6.0%
Other	55	77	3.6%	89	4.1%
*Agriculture	61	22	1.0%	84	3.9%
Information	27	66	3.1%	0	0.0%
Wholesale Trade	7	31	1.5%	22	1.0%
Civilian employed population 16 years and over/ Total		2127	100.0%	2151	100.0%

Source: Census 2000, 2010, 2020

<sup>8</sup> \*Agriculture includes farming, forestry, mining, fishing, hunting, agricultural inspectors, equipment operators, graders and sorters, animal breeders, greenhouse/nursery operators, fallers, and loggers

## Economic Forecast and Trends

An important feature of determining the economic health and future of St. Croix County and its communities is to determine the amounts and types of jobs currently available as well as making predictions for the future. The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (WDWD), Office of Economic Advisors produced employment projections in October 2013 for West Central Wisconsin, which includes Barron, Chippewa, St. Croix, Dunn, Eau Claire, Pepin, Pierce, Polk, and St. Croix counties. The 2013 report included the following listed 'Projected Growing Industries' and percent projected growth. The bottom table below shows the actual number change from 2010 to 2020 of selected Census industries with growth highlighted in green text and loss highlighted in red. The projections were correct in 5 out of 11 industries including construction, financial activities, other services, manufacturing and government (public administration) highlighted with green background.

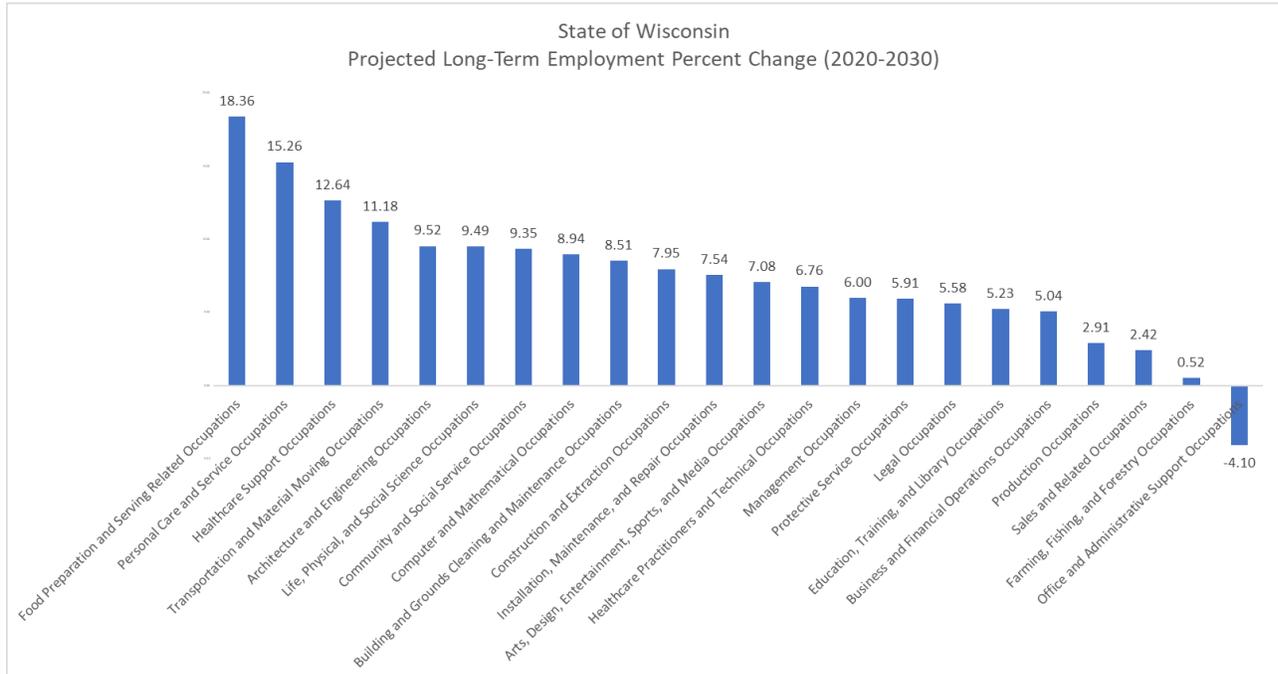
2013 Projected Growing Industries	Projected %
Construction/Mining/Natural Resources	27.64
Leisure and Hospitality	21.06
Health Care & Social Assist. (Including State and Local Govt)	21.02
Education and Health Services (Including State and Local Government)	15.08
Financial Activities	14.12
Other Services (Except Govt)	11
Trade	8.06
Educational Services (Including State and Local Government)	6.06
Manufacturing	5.03
Information	3.71
Government (Excluding US Postal, State and Local Education and Hospitals)	0.36

INDUSTRY	2010	%	#Change	2020	%
Finance, Insurance & Real estate	80	3.8%	141	221	10.3%
*Agriculture	22	1.0%	62	84	3.9%
Manufacturing	417	19.6%	57	474	22.0%
Construction	192	9.0%	34	226	10.5%
Public Administration	99	4.7%	31	130	6.0%
Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities	169	7.9%	18	187	8.7%
Other	77	3.6%	12	89	4.1%
Wholesale Trade	31	1.5%	-9	22	1.0%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation & Food Services (Leisure and Hospitality)	145	6.8%	-31	114	5.3%
Professional, Scientific, Management, Admin. & Waste Management	154	7.2%	-34	120	5.6%
Retail Trade	226	10.6%	-54	172	8.0%
Information	66	3.1%	-66	0	0.0%
Education, Health care & Social Assistance	449	21.1%	-137	312	14.5%
Civilian employed population 16 years and over/ Total	2127	100.0%		2151	100.0%

Source: Census 2000, 2010, 2020

## State Occupation Employment Forecast

The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (WDWD) produces occupation employment projections. The graph and table below show the long-term occupation employment projections to 2030. The top 5 projected occupations include: Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations, Personal Care and Service Occupations, Healthcare Support Occupations, Transportation and Material Moving Occupations, and Architecture and Engineering Occupations.



Wisconsin Long Term Occupation Employment Projections, 2020-2030					
SOC Code	Occupation Title	Employment 2020 <sup>(2)</sup>	Projected Employment 2030	Numeric Change (2020-2030)	Percent Change (2020-2030)
35-0000	Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	205,999	243,822	37,823	18.36
39-0000	Personal Care and Service Occupations	78,034	89,942	11,908	15.26
31-0000	Healthcare Support Occupations	144,320	162,566	18,246	12.64
53-0000	Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	258,815	287,741	28,926	11.18
17-0000	Architecture and Engineering Occupations	53,554	58,653	5,099	9.52
19-0000	Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	25,366	27,772	2,406	9.49
21-0000	Community and Social Service Occupations	40,511	44,300	3,789	9.35
15-0000	Computer and Mathematical Occupations	91,571	99,753	8,182	8.94
37-0000	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	89,236	96,830	7,594	8.51
47-0000	Construction and Extraction Occupations	126,068	136,095	10,027	7.95
49-0000	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	117,423	126,282	8,859	7.54
27-0000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	42,760	45,786	3,026	7.08
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	183,660	196,072	12,412	6.76
11-0000	Management Occupations	155,943	165,297	9,354	6.00
33-0000	Protective Service Occupations	52,111	55,189	3,078	5.91
23-0000	Legal Occupations	16,590	17,516	926	5.58
25-0000	Education, Training, and Library Occupations	182,702	192,256	9,554	5.23
13-0000	Business and Financial Operations Occupations	183,672	192,924	9,252	5.04
51-0000	Production Occupations	319,263	328,547	9,284	2.91
41-0000	Sales and Related Occupations	270,025	276,561	6,536	2.42
45-0000	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	31,128	31,291	163	0.52
43-0000	Office and Administrative Support Occupations	371,446	356,224	-15,222	-4.10
00-0000	Total, All Occupations	3,040,197	3,231,419	191,222	6.29

Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (WDWD) Occupational Employment Projections

## Wisconsin Economic Development Strategy

The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation's (WEDC) Wisconsin Tomorrow report outlines a comprehensive approach to economic development. The report includes strategies in the following topics: The new COVID response and recovery, economic well-being, wisconsin's perspectives, fuel financial stability, educate everyone, support healthy living, reinforce community, infrastructure, respect the environment, and innovation. The report executive summary states the following.

*A strategy for investment, for economic recovery and for growth must draw upon the authentic Wisconsin ideal – that everyone deserves an opportunity to prosper. That opportunity will no doubt come with challenges, with a need to persevere, and with a requirement to work hard — and Wisconsinites should not be held back because of inequity or lack of access to infrastructure, health care or education.*

*Central to this strategy is a comprehensive approach that promotes economic well-being for every person in our state. It's a strategy that must focus on removing obstacles and providing the necessary support, which requires valuing all individuals and understanding their needs and their dreams. As we look forward, we must use the experience and knowledge gained from the COVID-19 pandemic to reinforce the elements of each individual's economic well-being – their financial stability, their education and health, the infrastructure of the community they live in and their immediate environment – to find gaps and opportunities so we know where to invest.*





## Environmentally Contaminated Sites

At the 2022 comprehensive plan vision session, an example contaminated site was highlighted. The current Parnell Prairie Preserve is a former town and village land fill that was redeveloped in 1980's.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) urge the clean-up of environmentally contaminated commercial or industrial sites to utilize the lands for more productive uses. According to the WDNR's Bureau of Remediation and Redevelopment Tracking System (BRRTS) there are six basic types of environmentally contaminated sites in St. Croix County: Leaking Underground Storage Tanks, Environment Repair Program sites, Abandoned Continued, No Action Required, General Property, and Spills.

As of January 2023, there were no active environmentally contaminated sites located within the Town of Somerset listed in the BRRTS. The Somerset list contained 67 historic closed sites, historic spills, and non-status locations. One site was listed as open with a start date of 9/12/2002. The WDNR states that, "BRRTS data comes from various sources, both internal and external to DNR. There may be omissions and errors in the data and delays in updating new information." The Town may wish to follow-up with the report to identify any issues.

The US EPA develops a national priorities list of contaminated sites and Superfund Alternative Approach. The list contains sites proposed to, currently on, and deleted from Superfund's National Priorities List (NPL) as well as sites being addressed under the Superfund Alternative Approach (SAA). In a January 2023 search of the state of Wisconsin sites Somerset was not on the list.

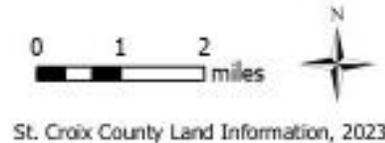
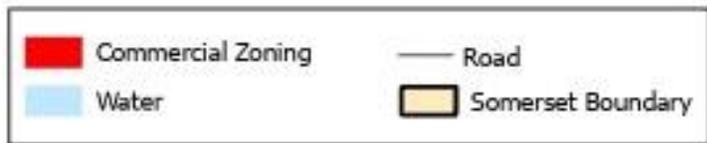
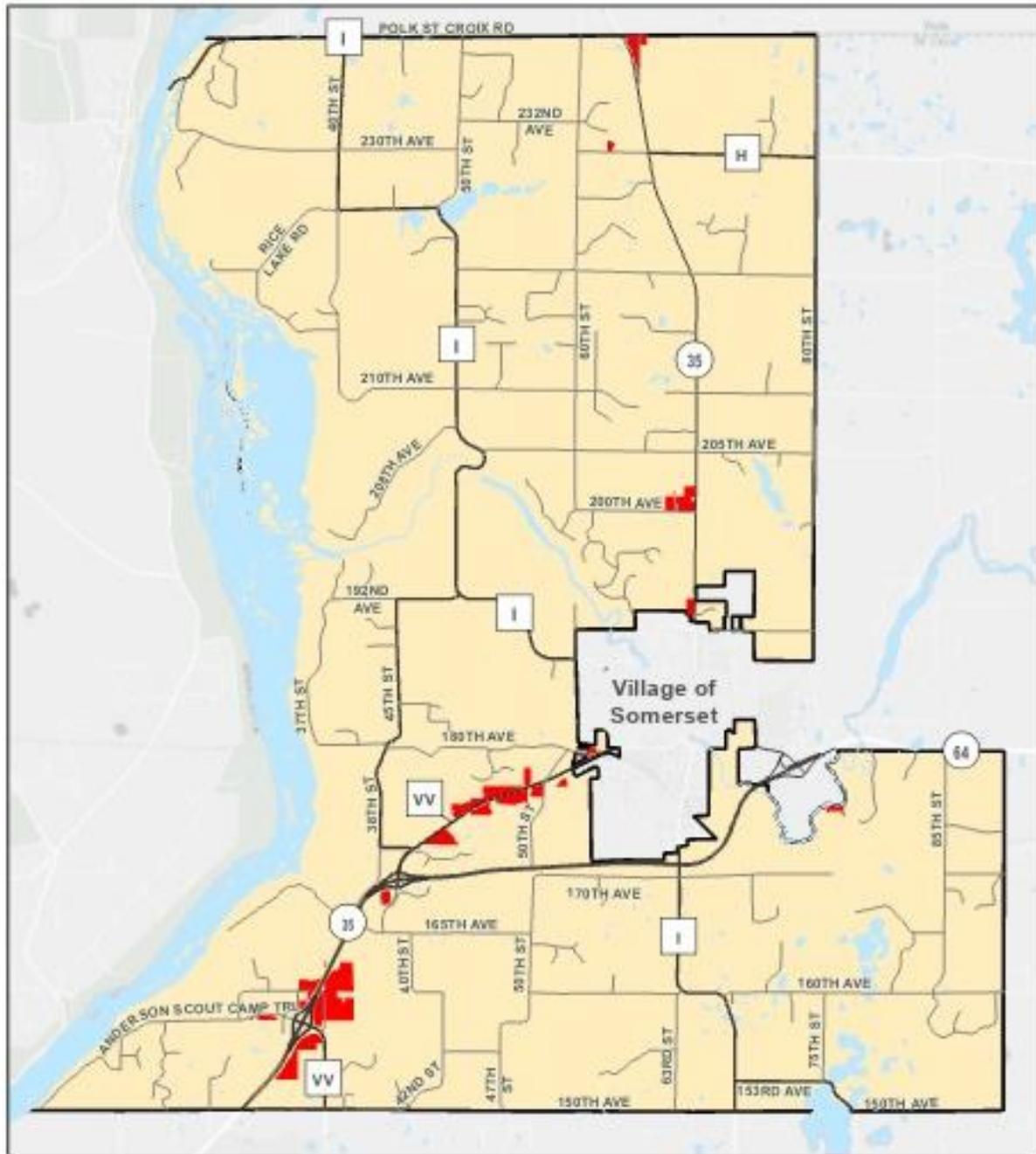
## Town Commercial and Industrial Areas

As reflected on the **Commercial Zoning Map** on the following page, there are four general commercially zoned areas within the community:

- Highway 64 and County "V" intersection.
- Highway 64 and County "VV" intersection, and along County "VV" to the Village limits
- Highway 35 north of the Village to 205th Avenue
- Highway 35 and 65th Street area

The above four areas have already experienced some commercial growth. However, this above list should not be considered a guarantee that commercial and light industrial development in these areas will occur or will be allowed. Any proposed development will be individually evaluated to determine if the nature and design of the development is appropriate at the location, is designed in a manner that does not conflict with the rural character of the community and is deemed compatible with surrounding uses. Not shown on the map are various home-based businesses, in which the commercial activities are secondary to the principal residential use. There are no industrial or manufacturing assessed businesses currently located in the Town of Somerset.

# Town of Somerset Commercial Zoning - 2023





## Economic Strengths and Weaknesses

An effective economic development strategy should build upon local strengths, while improving or mitigating potential weaknesses. Many of the strengths and weaknesses are also economic goals or opportunities.

### Strengths – Town of Somerset

1. Access to Highway 64 and 35 for commuting and travelers
2. Rail access
3. Proximity to the Twin Cities, as well as to other smaller urban areas
4. Natural resources base provides recreational and tourism opportunities
5. Location and proximity to larger urban areas
6. Small town atmosphere, rural character, natural resources, and open space
7. Educated population
8. School system
9. Partnerships and intergovernmental collaboration

### Weaknesses – Town of Somerset

1. Lack of municipal water and sewer limits some types of development
2. Some new residents may have “big city” expectations in terms of services
3. Aging population and workforce development needed
4. “Brain drain” as youth leave community for college, etc., and don’t return
5. Current trend is that more households are moving to urban areas
6. Telecommunications and cable service
7. No specific business park area within the Town
8. Competition outside the Town for retail goods and services; retail leakage

### Discussion Items

1. The large number of working residents employed outside the community presents challenges (e.g., retail leakage), but also opportunities for new retail and employers.
2. More commercial and light industrial development is desired, but should be sited, designed, and maintained in a way that does not conflict with adjacent uses, contributes to the quality of life of residents, and is compatible with the community’s rural character.
3. The natural resources of the community must be protected since they are vital to the community’s quality of life. Access to natural recreational amenities, such as the Apple River, should be provided, but care is needed to ensure that these resources are not over-commercialized and the experience is not diminished or destroyed.
4. The development of multi-community recreational trail linkages connecting cultural & historic resources would be a positive economic tool to increase quality of life and encourage tourism.
5. Town residents generally feel that the Town should not use significant tax dollars to encourage or promote economic development within the community.



## Desired Businesses and Industries

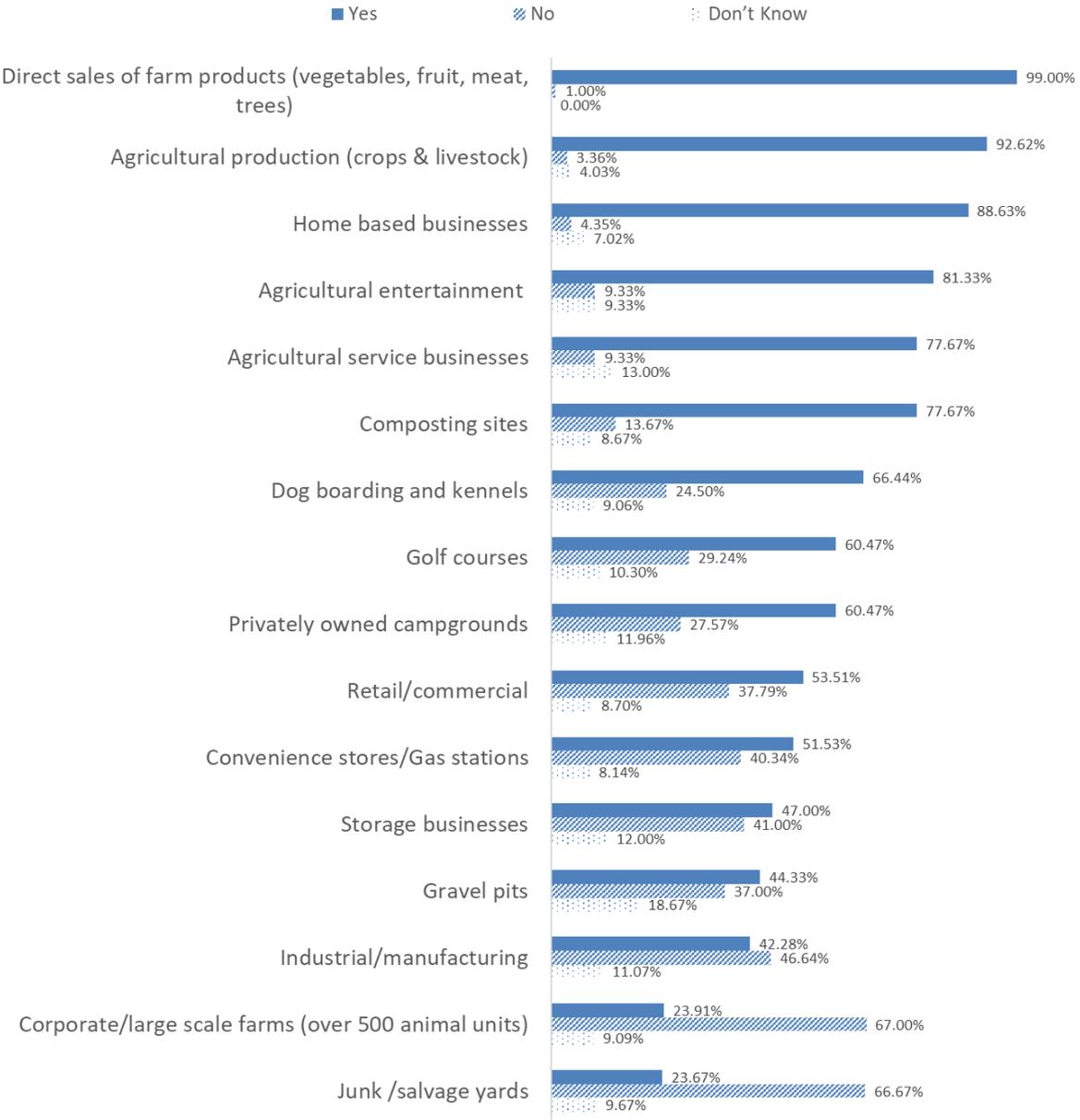
The Town of Somerset would welcome most commercial and light industrial businesses that do not threaten natural resources, sacrifice community character, create significant land use conflicts, reduce nearby property values, or add a disproportionate level of Town services per taxes gained. Generally, such businesses should be low impact and low water use. The Town should pursue a limited number of non-polluting, environmentally safe light industries and/or businesses that would not need municipal water and sewer service. The Town should also actively support the installation of a high-speed internet service which would allow high-tech home businesses to thrive without any impact on the visual rural character of the Town.

## Public Opinion

The 2022 public opinion survey and public vision session provided the following insights into desired economic development by community members. Findings below also include relevant and comparable survey results from the 2014 public opinion survey.

- Business Location
  - 70% of 2022 survey respondents agreed that business/commercial developments should be restricted to designated areas in town (rural area outside the village of Somerset)
  - Similarly in 2014, 79% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that commercial and industrial development should be located near the village, 72% along major highways and county roads, and 82% only in designated areas
  - 2022 Vision Session: Location of commercial and industrial uses should be in the village and primarily along major transportation corridors in town, and carefully contain commercial that is on local roads
- 2022 Vision Session Economic Development Comments
  - Commercial and industrial development needs to be responsible and follow development standards including consideration of lighting and light pollution
  - Commercial and industrial development can help offset taxes to residents
  - Industrial development should be within an industrial park
  - Limit industry in environmental sensitive areas and mitigate contamination
  - Promote restaurants, farm to table and community farming, and ski area
  - Promote youth employment
- Type of Businesses: The 2022 survey results below show support or opposition for 16 different business types within the Town of Somerset

Q22 Town of Somerset Economic Development:  
Should the following types of businesses be allowed in town?  
(301)





## Economic Development Plans and Programs

There are many organizations, programs, grants, and services available to assist with economic development planning and activities. The following are some commonly referred to economic development plans and programs.

### Federal Agencies & Programs

- U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA) - <https://www.eda.gov/>
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Wisconsin Rural Development Programs - <https://www.rd.usda.gov/wi>
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – Contaminated sites nation priorities - <https://www.epa.gov/cleanups/site-specific-national-cleanup-databases>
- US Small Business Administration (SBA) website: [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov)

### State Agencies & Programs

- Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development - <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/>
- Wisconsin Economic Development Association - <https://weda.org/>
- Wisconsin Department of Administration - <https://doa.wi.gov/Pages/home.aspx>
- Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation - <https://wedc.org/>
- Wisconsin Department of Tourism - <https://www.travelwisconsin.com/>
- Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection Agricultural Development and Diversification (ADD) Grant Program - <https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Homepage.aspx>
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources - <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/>
- Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) - <https://www.wheda.com/>
- Wisconsin Department of Transportation - <https://wisconsin.gov/Pages/home.aspx>
- Wisconsin Brownfields Redevelopment and Reuse Initiative - <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Brownfields/WISRR.html>

### Regional Agencies & Programs

- Momentum West - <https://www.momentumwest.org/>
- West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission - [www.wcwrpc.org](http://www.wcwrpc.org)
- St. Croix County Economic Development Corporation & Tourism Bureau - <https://stcroixedc.com/>
- St. Croix County, University of Wisconsin-Extension, Cooperative Extension - <https://stcroix.extension.wisc.edu/>
- St. Croix County Job Center, New Richmond- <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/srvprovider/stcroix>
- St. Croix County UW-Extension Office, Baldwin - <https://stcroix.extension.wisc.edu/>
- Chippewa Valley Technical College Employment Services, River Falls
- University of Wisconsin River Falls Career Services, River Falls
- Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College Employment Services (WITC), New Richmond website: [www.witc.edu/jobs/index.htm](http://www.witc.edu/jobs/index.htm)
- UW-River Falls Small Business Development Center (SBDC), River Falls website: [x.edu/sbdc](http://x.edu/sbdc)
- Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), Eau Claire and St. Paul website: <http://www.score.org>



## Current Town of Somerset Economic Plans and Designated Sites

The Town of Somerset has no formal economic development plan. Nor does it have a tax increment financing district, central business district, or other similar commercial district. There is an existing business park on Hwy 35 and 200th that contains CME business. Development and siting of new businesses is regulated through zoning. Economic and business development in the area is largely promoted through multi-jurisdictional partnership organizations, such as St. Croix County Economic Development Corporation, Momentum West, and West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

## Economic Development Goals and Objectives

### Economic Development Goal:

Ensure the continuation of a quality environment by promoting economic development activities and productive businesses that strengthen the local economy while maintaining a commitment to protecting the environment.

### Objectives

- Provide opportunities for commercial and light industrial development within the community.
- Commercial and light industrial development and activities should occur in a manner that:
  - a. is high quality in site design, landscaping, and architectural design;
  - b. is compatible with, and if possible, contributes to the rural character of the community;
  - c. does not negatively impact or over-commercialize the Town's natural resources;
  - d. is compatible with the neighborhood context and does not create significant land use conflicts with adjacent and nearby land uses; and,
  - e. does not require additional public services without significant benefits to the Town or create unsustainable economic conditions.
- Most commercial and light industrial development should be limited to specific areas and sites located along highways. Home-based businesses, agri-businesses, and certain tourism businesses may be appropriate in other areas of the Town, if planned and operated in a manner that does not conflict with the other goals and objectives of this plan.
- Maintain productive partnerships that advance the economic wellbeing of the Town and larger areas.

### Economic Development Policies (Decision-making Guidance)

1. Continue to support agriculture, agri-business, agri-tourism, and related agricultural service industries within the community, and especially within farmland preservation areas to the extent allowable, if performed in a safe manner using best management practices.

- 
2. Business growth and expansion, including home-based businesses, should not significantly increase noise, traffic, odors, lighting, or would otherwise negatively impact property values, nearby businesses, and the surrounding area. All businesses and industry should be developed and maintained in a manner that minimizes land use conflicts and aesthetic impacts, while preserving the rural character of the community.
  3. Consider the conservation of non-renewable resources and the natural physical environment when evaluating a commercial or industrial development request. The Town of Somerset will only allow light industry and commercial development that have no adverse environmental impact on the land, air, or water of the Town. Work with businesses to maintain and protect the air quality, water quality, and rural character of Somerset.
  4. When considering community investments, keep in mind that aesthetics, social offerings, rural character, recreational amenities, and “welcoming/openness” all contribute to quality of life and the local economy. People spend money where their heart is.
  5. Encourage bike and pedestrian connections between commercial nodes and residential areas.
  6. General areas suitable for commercial/light industrial development will be identified as part of the Planned Land Use Map based on proximity to existing commercial zoning, highway access, and lack of interference with residential properties.
  7. Business signage, landscaping, screening, and lighting should be compatible with the rural character of Somerset.
  8. Light industrial and commercial development shall also be evaluated based on ability of the land, roads, and other infrastructure to handle and support the proposed development. The long-term costs and benefits to the Town and its residents will be considered, including the economic sustainability of the business.
  9. Light industrial and commercial development that does not meet the goals, objectives, and policies of this plan element shall be referred to Village of Somerset and other areas having municipal water and wastewater treatment facilities.
  10. Implement those housing, transportation, utilities, community facilities, and land use policies in other elements related to economic development, in particular the commercial and industrial policies of the Land Use element.

### **Recommendations (Action-Oriented Strategies)**

1. Encourage the improvement of the telecommunications network and broadband services serving the community and local businesses as described in the Utilities and Community Facilities Element. (ongoing)
2. Continue to maintain and promote partnerships between the Village of Somerset, St. Croix County Economic Development Corporation, and other partners (e.g., WCWRPC) to encourage appropriate economic development and tourism within the community. (ongoing)
3. Coordinate with St. Croix County Community Development Department to enforce review standards for all commercial ventures from home occupations to the largest of commercial establishments. Such standards should deal with traffic volume, outdoor lighting, type of business, hours of business, landscaping, screening, parking, noise, pollution, etc. (ongoing)
4. The Town of Somerset believes that higher standards for new commercial development and signage are needed within the community in order to ensure quality commercial development



that is compatible with the Town's rural character, prevents visual clutter, and encourages a common aesthetic. To this end, the Town should work with St. Croix County to develop the appropriate mix of regulatory and design review controls to meet the goals, objectives, and policies of this plan element. (short-term)

This strategy can potentially be accomplished in a number of ways:

1. Cooperatively work with St. Croix County to develop a design manual or guidelines with an emphasis on rural commercial development/redevelopment site design, aesthetics, etc.
2. Cooperatively work with St. Croix County to create a new zoning district, overlay district, or other design criteria.
3. If needed, explore the potential creation of a Town of Somerset commercial licensing ordinance with site design and architectural review standards that requires a Town committee approval prior to issuing a Town building permit. The committee would help ensure that applicable codes/zoning is being met and that the exterior functional appeal and site plan, within the discretionary judgment of the committee, would not be contrary to accepted design standards, the neighborhood context, and the underlying aesthetic values of the community.
4. Explore the need for other Town nuisance ordinances (e.g., junk, light, health/safety) to address negative impacts not regulated under zoning.
5. Explore the use of tax incremental financing (TIF) as a tool to support eligible business development within the community. (long-term)
6. If a large economic development project is proposed, provide a description of planned infrastructure improvements that support economic development projects to West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission for inclusion within the *West Central Wisconsin Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy* (CEDS) as a recommended pre-requisite for Federal Economic Development Administration grant dollars. (long-term)

## Intergovernmental Cooperation

Advances in technology and improved mobility have resulted in the faster and easier movement of people, money, goods, and other resources across jurisdictions. Likewise, budget constraints are encouraging many municipalities to explore partnerships and collaborative efforts to provide services more efficiently. Many issues cross intergovernmental boundaries, affecting more than one community or governmental unit. And the decisions, plans, and strategies of one community can impact neighboring jurisdictions.

Through intergovernmental cooperation, communities can anticipate potential conflicts in plans and policies to identify potential solutions to mitigate such conflicts. Governmental units may also identify opportunities for cost-sharing, competitive bidding, and other strategies to leverage available resources for everyone's benefit.

### Adjacent and Overlapping Local Governments

The Town of Somerset has coordinated with the following local governments on a wide variety of planning and programming activities listed below. Wisconsin State Statute section §66.1001 identifies the need to recognize joint planning and decision making with other jurisdictions in the following areas: drainage - watershed, event venues, cultural art, heritage, health, housing, land use and annexations, library system, sanitary, sewer, solid waste, school districts, sharing public services, siting and building public facilities, transit, water body protection. Areas of collaboration are listed under each jurisdiction with links to available, relevant information.

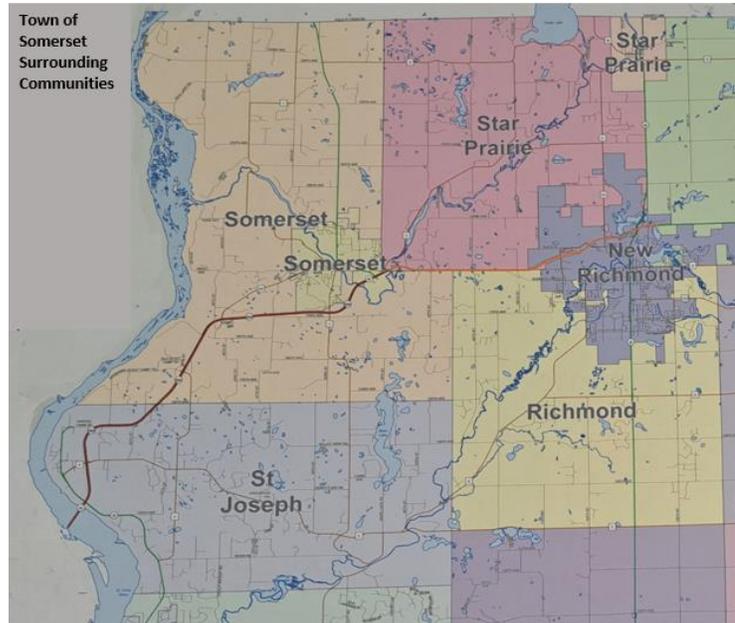
#### St. Croix County (SCC)

- [SCC Community Development Department](#)
  - Comprehensive planning (2012 St. Croix County Comprehensive Plan)
  - Zoning and land use planning and enforcement (shared responsibility)
  - Farmland preservation
- [County Sheriff – 911 Dispatch](#)
- St. Croix [County Transportation](#) planning for road maintenance and improvements
- Natural hazards mitigation planning - [2013-2018-All-Hazard-Mitigation-Plan](#)
- Recycling - [St. Croix County Recycling](#)
- Well testing - [SCC Private Well Water Testing](#)
- Meal site for seniors at Town Hall - [St. Croix County Aging & Disability Resource Center](#)



### Surrounding Communities

- Village of Somerset, St. Croix County
  - Fire District
  - Library
  - Official mapping
- Town of East Farmington, Polk County
- Town of St. Joseph, St. Croix County
- Town of Star Prairie, St. Croix County
- Town of Richmond, St. Croix County



### Bass Lake Rehabilitation District

The Bass Lake Rehabilitation District

located, in part, in the southern part of

the Town has taxing authority. The District undertakes projects to implement those goals found within the Bass Lake Management Plan. WI DNR grant project webpage:

<https://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/grants/Project.aspx?project=128402237>

### Public School Districts

The Town of Somerset is served by three School Districts including Somerset, Osceola, and New Richmond and has a good working relationship with the districts. The Town and districts work together regarding snow removal and road maintenance.

### Regional Coordination

Numerous non-governmental entities can have a role in multi-jurisdictional or regional coordination, ranging from the County Economic Development Corporation and St. Croix County UW-Extension to the Indianhead Community Action Agency, and various special interest groups. These entities are largely discussed in other plan elements.

### West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (WCWRPC)

St. Croix County is a member of the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. There are nine regional planning commissions (RPCs) that represent 67 of 72 Wisconsin counties. RPCs are designed to offer local planning assistance and support to county and municipal governments; WCWRPC's role is advisory, not regulatory. Typical functions of an RPC include, but are not limited to: comprehensive, intergovernmental planning; transportation planning and programming; water quality planning; collecting and analyzing data; conducting studies; sewer service area planning; economic development planning and grant writing; and meeting area wide requirements so local jurisdictions can receive Federal grants. The WCWRPC has assisted St. Croix County and its municipalities with numerous projects and a variety of planning efforts, including the development of the Town of Somerset 2003-2028 Comprehensive Plan.



## Federal and State Agencies

Coordination with various Federal and state agencies is sometimes required by the Town, with the following agencies of particular interest to the Town of Somerset:

### U.S. Department of the Interior - National Park Service

The National Park Service has an active presence in the Town through its management of the St. Croix River National Scenic Riverway. NPS was contacted during the planning process and their comments have been incorporated into this plan update.

### U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service maintains the St. Croix Wetland Management District, which is one of only two such districts in the state. The St. Croix District was established in 1974 and consists of 41 waterfowl production areas totaling 7,700 acres as well as 15 easements protecting wildlife habitat on private land in Barron, Burnett, Dunn, Pepin, Pierce, Polk, St. Croix, and Washburn counties. A number of USF&WS lands are located within the Town.

### Wisconsin Department of Administration (WDOA) – Division of Intergovernmental Relations

As per its webpage, “[t]he Division of Intergovernmental Relations provides a broad array of services to the public and state, local and tribal governments. It supports counties, municipalities, citizens and businesses by providing support services in land use planning, land information and records modernization, municipal boundary review, plat review, demography and coastal management programs.”

The Division administers the state’s comprehensive planning grant program and includes a library of completed comprehensive plans throughout Wisconsin at its website. The Division also includes the State’s Municipal Boundary Review agency which regulates the transition of unincorporated lands to city or village status through municipal annexation, incorporation, consolidation, or cooperative boundary agreement. State review of subdivision plats also occurs within the Division. The Division’s Demographic Services Center also provides population and demographic estimates and projections for planning purposes.

To increase the efficiency and effectiveness of services through greater intergovernmental cooperation, the Wisconsin Partnership initiative is also administered through the Division. State government can offer its public sector partners access to procurement contracts, technologies, grants and other resources that can either reduce costs or expand the range of available options.

### Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WDOT)

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation maintains several plans with statewide policies regarding various aspects of transportation. Plan recommendations were consulted and incorporated into local comprehensive plans where applicable. WDOT plans and programs are discussed previously in the Transportation Element.



### Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR)

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is responsible for implementing the laws of the state and, where applicable, the laws of the Federal government that protect and enhance the natural resources of the state. It is the one agency charged with full responsibility for coordinating the many disciplines and programs necessary to provide a clean environment and a full range of outdoor recreation opportunities for Wisconsin citizens and visitors.

During the St. Croix County comprehensive planning process, the WDNR provided natural resource information for such components as wetlands, surface waters, watersheds, groundwater, air quality, threatened and endangered species, wildlife habitat, and more. The WDNR also provided information on recreational activities and use such as hunting and fishing. Opportunities to work collaboratively with the WDNR are numerous as the department maintains programs for shoreland management, stormwater, public water supply, solid waste management, recycling, dam permitting, and much more.

### Wisconsin Historical Society

The Wisconsin Historical Society provided data for this planning effort through its Wisconsin Architecture & History Inventory (AHI). Coordination with the Historical Society would be required should the Town pursue the archeological-related strategies identified previously in the plan.

### Other State Agencies

In addition to the above, the following state agencies also contributed data and other trend information towards the St. Croix County comprehensive planning process:

1. Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (school enrollments and district information)
2. Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (economic information)
3. Wisconsin Public Service Commission (information on public utilities)

### Existing Partnerships, Agreements and Intergovernmental Plans

The primary intergovernmental agreements and plans involving the Town of Somerset are:

1. Participation in County zoning and coordination on farmland preservation planning
2. Emergency services agreement (EMS, Fire, Ambulance, etc.)
3. Recycling/Clean Sweep participation with the County
4. Library support through County tax and 2020 donation of furniture in the library addition.
5. Official mapping with the Village for a number of potential roadways
6. Public works mutual aid and support with the Village if needed
7. Agreement with County ADRC as a senior meal site
8. Coordination with the Village on parks (e.g., Parnell Prairie)
9. Somerset Community Food Pantry donations and support for new facility built in 2022 at 770 Rebar Street in the village

## Intergovernmental Issues and Opportunities

### Trends

The following intergovernmental trends are anticipated during the planning period:

1. Intergovernmental cooperation will increase as state, county, and local budgets become more restrictive and partnerships are pursued.
2. As more jurisdictions create comprehensive plans and share them with surrounding communities, new opportunities for intergovernmental cooperation will become apparent.
3. The sharing of employees, equipment, and facilities will increase locally to meet demand at reduced costs.

### Opportunities

Numerous opportunities for service or program administration exist for cooperation with other units of government. Several of the key opportunities are:

Opportunity	Other Governmental Unit Assistance
1. Reduce cost for providing services through working with neighboring communities and the county for such items as road maintenance, fire and emergency service, police protection, solid waste and recycling, local parks, trails, etc.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Adjacent Towns</li> <li>2. Village of Somerset</li> <li>3. St. Croix County Board of Supervisors</li> <li>4. St. Croix County Department Staff</li> </ol>
2. Continue to protect the area's water quality and natural resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. National Park Service, WDNR</li> <li>6. St. Croix County</li> <li>7. All adjacent and overlapping jurisdictions</li> </ol>
3. Build a connected regional bike and pedestrian trail network	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. St. Croix County Bike and Pedestrian Trails Coalition</li> <li>9. All adjacent and overlapping jurisdictions</li> </ol>
4. Improve transit connections between the Somerset area and the Twin Cities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Wisconsin DOT, MetroTransit</li> <li>11. WCWRPC</li> <li>12. Village and adjacent Towns</li> </ol>

The policies within the other plan elements mention additional intergovernmental opportunities to coordinate with State, County, Village of Somerset, and area towns to achieve the Town's goals.

### Potential Conflicts and Resolutions

The Town of Somerset identified the following potential conflicts through the course of the planning period. Potential conflicts can be most effectively addressed in a “pro-active” fashion. In other words, pursuing opportunities will often avoid future conflicts. Thus, several of the potential conflicts identified may be similar to the opportunities discussed earlier. Potential conflicts and the process to resolve the conflicts are summarized as follows:

Potential Conflicts	Process to Resolve
1. Potential land use compatibility and planning concerns regarding properties adjacent to or near the Village boundary. This include impacts from large festivals (e.g., noise, traffic, garbage)  2. Annexation for new industrial, residential, or commercial development.	Maintain an open, regular dialogue with the Village.  Explore the potential use of cooperative boundary agreements and plans to develop solutions that benefit both jurisdictions.

### Intergovernmental Programs

The following general intergovernmental programs may impact the Town, in addition to those plans and programs mentioned in other sub-sections of this element.

#### Annexation

Wisconsin Statute, 66.021, Annexation of territory, provides three petition methods by which annexation may occur. Annexation involves the transfer of one or more tax parcels from a town to a city or village. Cities and villages cannot annex property without the consent of landowners as required by the following petition procedures:

1. Unanimous Approval - A petition is signed by all of the electors residing in the territory and the owners of all of the real property included within the petition.
2. Notice of intent to circulate petition (direct petition for annexation) - The petition must be signed by a majority of electors in the territory and the owners of one-half of the real property either in value or in land area. If no electors reside in the territory, then only the landowners need sign the petition.
3. Annexation by referendum - A petition requesting a referendum election on the question of annexation may be filed with the city or village when signed by at least 20 percent of the electors in the territory.

The 2012 adopted Village of Somerset Comprehensive Plan suggests that the possibility of future annexation by the Village will continue to increase.

### Extraterritorial Zoning

Wisconsin Statute, 62.23(7a) allows a city or village to participate with towns in the zoning of lands outside their incorporate boundaries. For the Village of Somerset, the extraterritorial area would encompass 1.5 miles. The steps for exercising this power are identified in the Statutes and includes the Town working with the Village to create a joint extraterritorial zoning committee with three city/village and three town members to create the extraterritorial zoning plan. A majority of the joint committee members must approve the zoning plan recommendations.

The 2012 adopted Village Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use map recommends land uses outside the village boundaries and states the following regarding annexation.

*Annexation: As the Village of Somerset expands outward the possibility of land annexation will continue to increase. As annexations occur, there will be a number of issues that will need to be addressed, some of which include the extension of municipal services, loss of property tax revenue for the Town of Somerset, zoning and land use differences, housing densities and types of development that will occur upon the annexed property.*

### Extraterritorial Subdivision Review

Wisconsin Statute, 236.10 allows a city or village to exercise its extraterritorial plat review authority in the same geographic area as defined within the extraterritorial zoning statute. However, extraterritorial zoning requires town approval of the zoning ordinance, while extraterritorial plat approval applies automatically if the city or village adopts a subdivision ordinance or official map. The town does not approve the subdivision ordinance for the city or village. The city or village may waive its extraterritorial plat approval authority if it does not wish to use it.

The purpose of extraterritorial plat approval jurisdiction is to help cities and villages influence the development pattern of areas outside their boundaries that will likely be annexed to the city or village. This helps cities and villages protect land use near its boundaries from conflicting uses outside its limits. Overlapping authority by the city and village is prohibited.

### Office of Land Information Services, Municipal Boundary Review

Municipal Boundary Review regulates the transition of unincorporated areas to city or village status through municipal annexation, incorporation, consolidation, or by joint city-village-town activities involving cooperative boundary plans and agreements. Such agreements may change territorial boundaries and may provide for the sharing of municipal services. Staff members are available upon request to meet with local officials and citizens to discuss annexation, incorporation, consolidation, and cooperative boundary plans. Contact the Wisconsin Department of Administration, Office of Land Information Services for further information.





## UW-Extension Local Government Center

The mission of the Local Government Center is to provide focus, coordination, and leadership to UW System educational programs for local government, and to expand the research and knowledge base for local government education. The Center conducts and coordinates educational programming in general local government, local government finance, growth management, and community planning and design. Additional programs are under development. Educational programs are delivered through the two-way audio Educational Telecommunications Network (ETN), satellite television, and state-wide and regional workshops. The Center supports the programming of county-based Extension faculty. A variety of resources regarding intergovernmental cooperation are available through the Local Government Center. For further information visit its web-site at [www.uwex.edu/lgc/](http://www.uwex.edu/lgc/).

## Wisconsin Intergovernmental Statute Agreements

The following statutes in Wisconsin promote and allow for intergovernmental cooperation:

### *66.0301 - Intergovernmental Cooperation*

Wisconsin Statute, 66.0301 permits local agreements between the state, cities, villages, towns, counties, regional planning commissions, certain special districts, including school districts, public library systems, public inland lake protection and rehabilitation districts, sanitary districts, farm drainage districts, metropolitan sewerage districts, and sewer utility districts, Indian tribes or bands, and others. Intergovernmental agreements prepared in accordance with s. 66.0301, formerly s. 66.30, are the most common form of agreement and have been used by communities for years, often in the context of sharing public services such as police, fire, or rescue. This type of agreement can also be used to provide for revenue sharing, determine future land use within a subject area, and to set temporary municipal boundaries. However, the statute does not require planning as a component of any agreement and boundary changes have to be accomplished through the normal annexation process.

### *66.0307 - Boundary changes pursuant to approved cooperative plan*

Under Section 66.0307, Wisconsin Statutes, combinations of municipalities may prepare cooperative boundary plans or agreements. Each city, village, or town that intends to participate in the preparation of a cooperative plan must adopt a resolution authorizing its participation in the planning process.

Cooperative boundary plans or agreements involve decisions regarding the maintenance or change of municipal boundaries for a period of 10 years or more. The cooperative plan must include: a plan for the physical development of the territory covered by the plan. It must also include; a schedule for changes to the boundary; plans for the delivery of services; an evaluation of environmental features and a description of any adverse environmental consequences that may result from the implementation of the plan; and it must address the need for safe and affordable housing. The participating communities must hold a public hearing prior to its adoption. Once adopted, the plan must be submitted for state approval. Upon approval, the cooperative plan has the force and effect of a contract.



*66.0309 Creation, Organization, Powers and Duties of Regional Planning Commissions*

Wisconsin Statute 66.0309 permits local governments to petition the governor to create a regional planning commission (RPC). If local support for a commission is unanimous, the governor may create it by executive order. The governor may also create a commission if local governments representing over 50% of the population or assessed valuation of the proposed region consent to the creation. Either local governments or the governor appoints commission members.

State Statutes require the RPC to perform three major functions:

1. Make and adopt a master plan for the physical development of the region.
2. If requested by a local unit, report recommendations to that local unit on the location of, or acquisition of, land for any of the items or facilities that are included in the adopted regional master plan.
3. Make an annual report of its activities to the legislative bodies of the local governmental units within the region.

RPCs are also authorized to perform several other functions, however, by law, they serve a strictly advisory role. St. Croix County is a member of the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.



## Cooperation Goals and Objectives

### ***Intergovernmental Cooperation Goal 1: Continue and improve intergovernmental cooperation with the Village of Somerset and St. Croix County.***

#### Objectives

1. Continue working relationships with neighboring communities, the School District, and the County to provide efficient and cost effective emergency services, street maintenance, and other services when appropriate.
2. Maintain participation in effective, intergovernmental partnerships for local planning, resource protection, and the improvement of the quality of life of residents.
3. Explore cost-sharing opportunities and seek cooperative solutions to potential intergovernmental challenges, conflicts, and disagreements
4. Work cooperatively and proactively to prevent or minimize land use conflicts along or near the Town's boundaries.

#### Intergovernmental Cooperation Policies

##### ***Policies (Decision-making Guidance)***

1. The Town of Somerset will continue to maintain communication with the Village of Somerset regarding all joint concerns.
2. When needed, create ad-hoc committees with appropriate governmental entities to study opportunities to coordinate activities and reduce costs.
3. Seek out intergovernmental solutions to effectively and efficiently implement the policies and recommendations found in this comprehensive plan.

##### Recommendations (Action-Oriented Strategies)

4. Continue participation on the St. Croix Bike and Pedestrian Trails Coalition and work with nearby communities and St. Croix County to promote recreational trail and route linkages. (ongoing)
5. Continue to coordinate official mapping efforts with the Village of Somerset, and adjacent towns if needed. (ongoing)
6. Maintain the Town's existing cooperative relationship with St. Croix County Community Development Department through regular communications. (ongoing)
7. Encourage the development and passage of ordinances at the County level that will support the implementation of the *Town of Somerset Comprehensive Plan*. (short-term)
8. The Town of Somerset will continue to support the ongoing efforts to better organize the presently very good joint Somerset Fire and Rescue Department. (ongoing)
9. Work with the Village of Somerset to explore development of a cooperative boundary agreement and plan as an alternative to incremental, unplanned annexation. (long-term)

## Land Use

The use of land is a critical factor in guiding the future growth and decision-making of any community. This plan element identifies a land use goal, objectives, and strategies for the Town of Somerset, based on current and projected land use trends as well as local land use issues and conflicts. General land use categories of residential, commercial, industrial, and open space are utilized to analyze land use trends, identify issues and develop land use policy. Several different land use category names have been used in previous town plans. Therefore, care must be used in interpreting this data due to the different methodologies used in data collection and reporting for each previous town comprehensive plan.

### Public Comment

The Town of Somerset comprehensive planning public opinion surveys conducted in 2014 and 2022 provided the following land use-related insights:

#### 1. Preserve small town feel

- 2022 survey: 62% selected the Town’s most important action as, “Preserve green space, productive agricultural land, rural and small-town character, and minimize urban sprawl”, ranked as the top action.
- 2014 survey: 58% identified “small town atmosphere & rural character” as one of their three most important reasons why they choose to live in Somerset. This was the highest-ranking response. The next highest response was “natural features”, closely followed by “cost of home/land.”

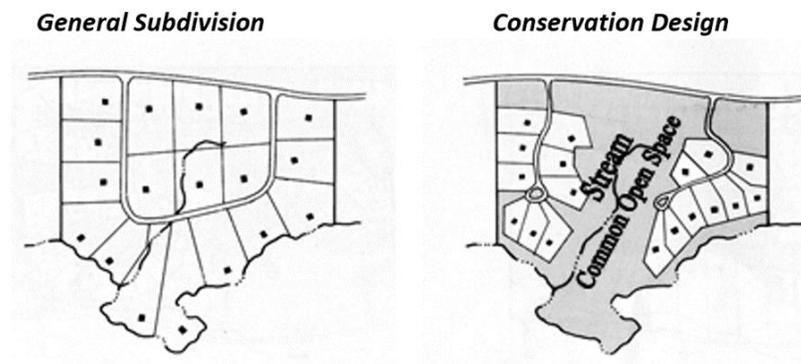
#### 2. Protect natural, agricultural, and cultural resources

- 2022 survey: Over 90% of respondents believe its important or very important to preserve the following resources: Air quality, groundwater quality, surface water quality (lakes, rivers, streams), wildlife habitat, native prairie land/grasslands, cultural resources, wetlands, open space, scenic views and woodlands
- 2022 survey: Combined 53% selected the Town’s most important topic as “Natural and Cultural Resources” -33% and “Agricultural Resources”-20%, ranked as the top two.
- 2022 survey: Combined 65% agreed-38% or strongly agreed-27% that “Private purchase and transfer of development rights programs should be used to preserve agricultural and natural resources”
- 2014 survey: 43% identified “protect environmental/cultural resources” as one of their top three most important functions for the Town of Somerset, ranking number three overall. Not far behind were “regulate land use” at 34% and “protect agricultural resources” at 31%.
- 2014 survey: It is not clear how residents feel about the Town using tax dollars to purchase development rights to preserve prime farmland or open space, since 27% of respondents did not know enough on this topic to express an opinion.



### 3. Some support for conservation design

- 2022 survey: 79% support conservation design answering ‘yes’ to the question, “Do you support conservation design subdivision for protection of conservation areas such as wetlands, floodplains, streams, steep slopes, wildlife habitat, native woodlands (example image below)? However, in another question, 72% disagreed with “support conservation design subdivision that allows smaller residential lot sizes and shared septic system on common land”. The results reveal support for subdivision design that protects conservation areas but does not allow smaller residential lot sizes nor shared septic systems.



- 2014 survey: Based on pictures of example layouts, 61% of respondents preferred a more traditional subdivision design, yet 39% preferred an open space/cluster design, though a different survey question yielded strong support for subdivision designs that preserve open space (63%).

### 4. Support for current 3-acre minimum residential lot size

- 2022 survey: Combined 88% strongly agree-53% or agree-36% are “satisfied with the residential lot sizes in [their] neighborhood. The Town minimum residential lot size is 3 acres.”
- 2014 survey: A strong majority of respondents (67%) preferred a 3-5 acre minimum lot size.

### 5. Location of commercial and industrial land uses

- 2022 survey: 70% agreed that “business/commercial developments [should] be restricted to designated areas in the Town of Somerset (rural area outside the village of Somerset)”
- 2014 survey: A strong majority of respondents believed that commercial and industrial buildings should be located near the Village of Somerset (79%), along major highways (72%), and only in designated commercial or industrial areas (82%).

## Public Comment Comparison Table

The following table shows a comparison of land use survey questions from 2014 and 2022. The highlighted boxes show changes in percent agreement or disagreement. The far right column reports the change in opinion from 2014 to 2022. Question changes are shown in the question column.

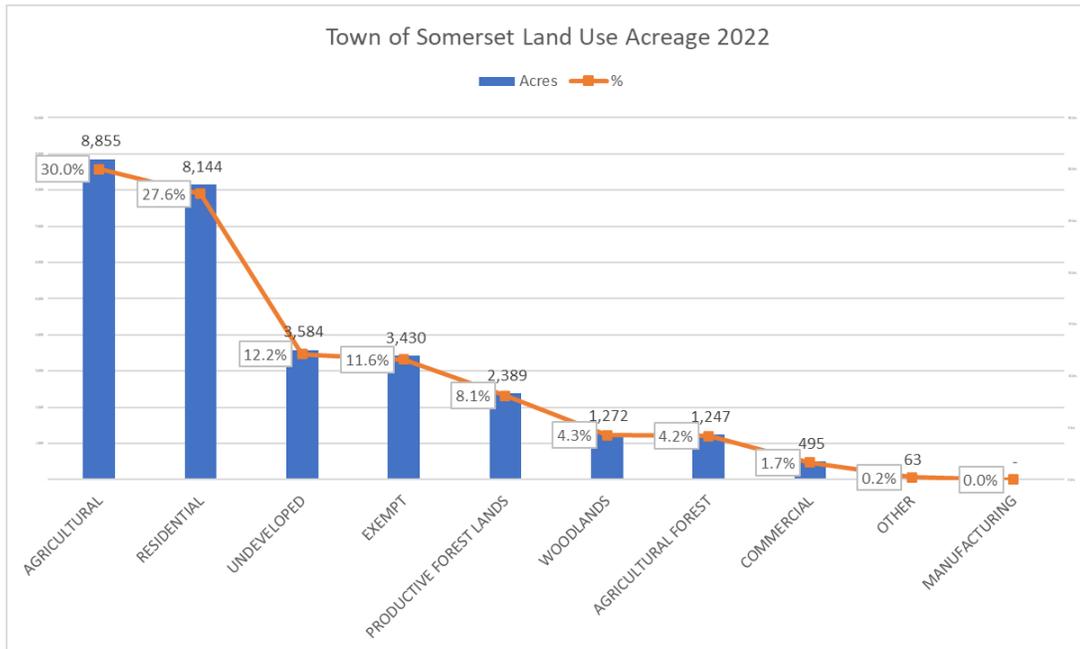
	Question statements 2014 (2022 changes)	2014 Agree	2014 Disagree	2022 Agree	2022 Disagree	No Opinion (Don't Know)	Change
1	2014: The Town of Somerset should be involved in community planning to determine where and how development should occur. 2022: (I am satisfied with the enforcement of existing land use regulations)	90%	8%	53%	16%	2% (29%)	Agreement decreased
2	2014: Landowners should be allowed to develop land any way they want. 2022: (Land owners should be allowed to develop their land without any restriction)	23%	74%	8%	81%	3% (11%)	Disagree increased
3	2014: It is important to protect my quality of life and property values from impacts due to activities or development on neighboring properties. 2022: (I am satisfied with the external appearance, condition, and maintenance of property in my neighborhood.)	94%	4%	93%	7%	3% (<1%)	Agreement about same
4	2014: The visual impacts of development are an important consideration when evaluating proposed development. 2022: (I support strong enforcement of Town and County Zoning Ordinances [to regulate aesthetic impacts of development])	92%	6%	74%	11%	3% (15%)	Agreement decreased
5	2014: New development should be required to pay impact fees to help defray costs of roads, parks, and other public services associated with that development. 2022: (Currently for every new residential lot that is created the developer is assessed a fee of \$400 per lot. That fee is used toward park development in the Town. Should this policy be continued?)	86%	9%	83%	9%	4% (8%)	Agreement decreased
6	2014: More parks and public open space are needed in the Town of Somerset, such as Parnell Prairie. 2022: (Town should establish new Town Park(s))	60%	25%	49%	25%	15% (26%)	Agreement decreased
7	2014: New residential development should be clustered or designed in a manner which preserves open space. 2022: (Development should use less rural land and be more compact around existing cities and villages.)	63%	25%	68%	22%	11% (11%)	Agreement increased

### Summary

1. Town involvement in land use / development: Question change resulted in decreased agreement from 90% to 53%
2. Landowner allowance to develop without regulation: Agreement increased from 74% to 81%
3. Impacts of development and condition of property: Question change resulted in about the same level of agreement from 94% to 93%
4. Visual impacts of development and enforcement of zoning: Question change resulted in decrease in agreement from 92% to 74%
5. Development impact fees and current park dedication fee: Question change resulted in decreased agreement from 86% to 83%
6. More parks needed in Town: Question change resulted in decreased agreement from 60% to 49%
7. Residential development should be clustered/compact around existing villages: Question change resulted in increased agreement from 63% to 68%

## 2022 Existing Land Uses

The existing land use tables and map below show acreage of land use categories within the Town of Somerset based on property tax assessment and parcel GIS data provided by the St. Croix County Land Information Office with category definitions from Wisconsin Department of Revenue.<sup>9</sup> The graph and table below show preliminary land use category acreage and percentage in the Town of Somerset. Agriculture and residential are the primary assessor land use categories in town.

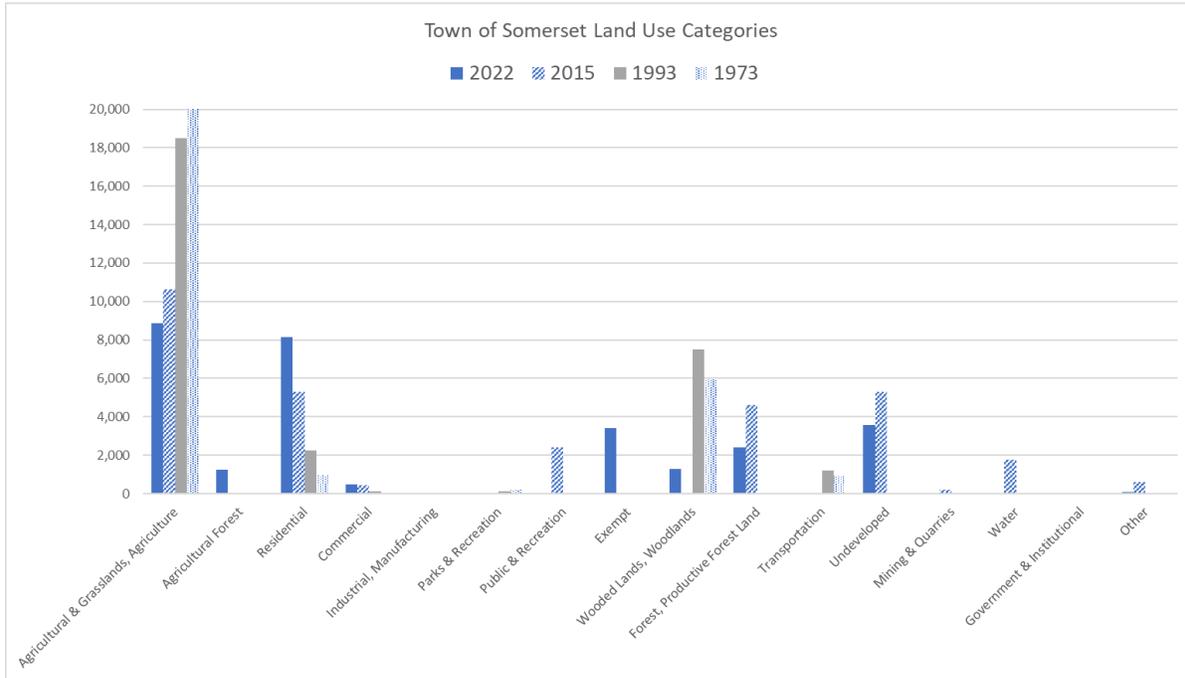


Town of Somerset Assessor Land Type		
Land Type	Acres	%
AGRICULTURAL	8,854.95	30%
UNDEVELOPED	3,584.30	12%
AGRICULTURAL FOREST	1,247.07	4%
PRODUCTIVE FORST LANDS	2,388.57	8%
WOODLANDS	1,272.47	4%
RESIDENTIAL	8,143.59	28%
COMMERCIAL	494.628	2%
MANUFACTURING	0	0%
OTHER	62.75	0%
EXEMPT	3,430.11	12%
Total	29,478.44	100%

<sup>9</sup> Category Definitions: Undeveloped (class 5) – sec. 70.32(2)(c)4., Wis. Stats. Areas commonly called marshes, swamps, thickets, bogs or wet meadows, Fallow tillable land (assuming agricultural use is the land’s highest and best use), Road right-of-way, ponds and depleted gravel pits, Land because of soil or site conditions is not producing or capable of producing commercial forest products. Other (class 7) – sec. 70.32(2)(c)1m., Wis. Stats. Buildings and improvements on a farm (ex: houses, barns and silos along with the land necessary for their location and convenience)

## Land Use Acreage Comparison

The graph and table below show a comprehensive list and comparison of land use categories for 1973, 1993, 2015, and 2022. The land use categories changed over time making the comparison incomplete with unavailable categories labeled 'na' in the table below. The results of this comparison illustrate the difficulties in planning and identifying trends when there is unavailable, comparable data. To compare the assessor land use acreage over time, similar categories were combined and analyzed below.



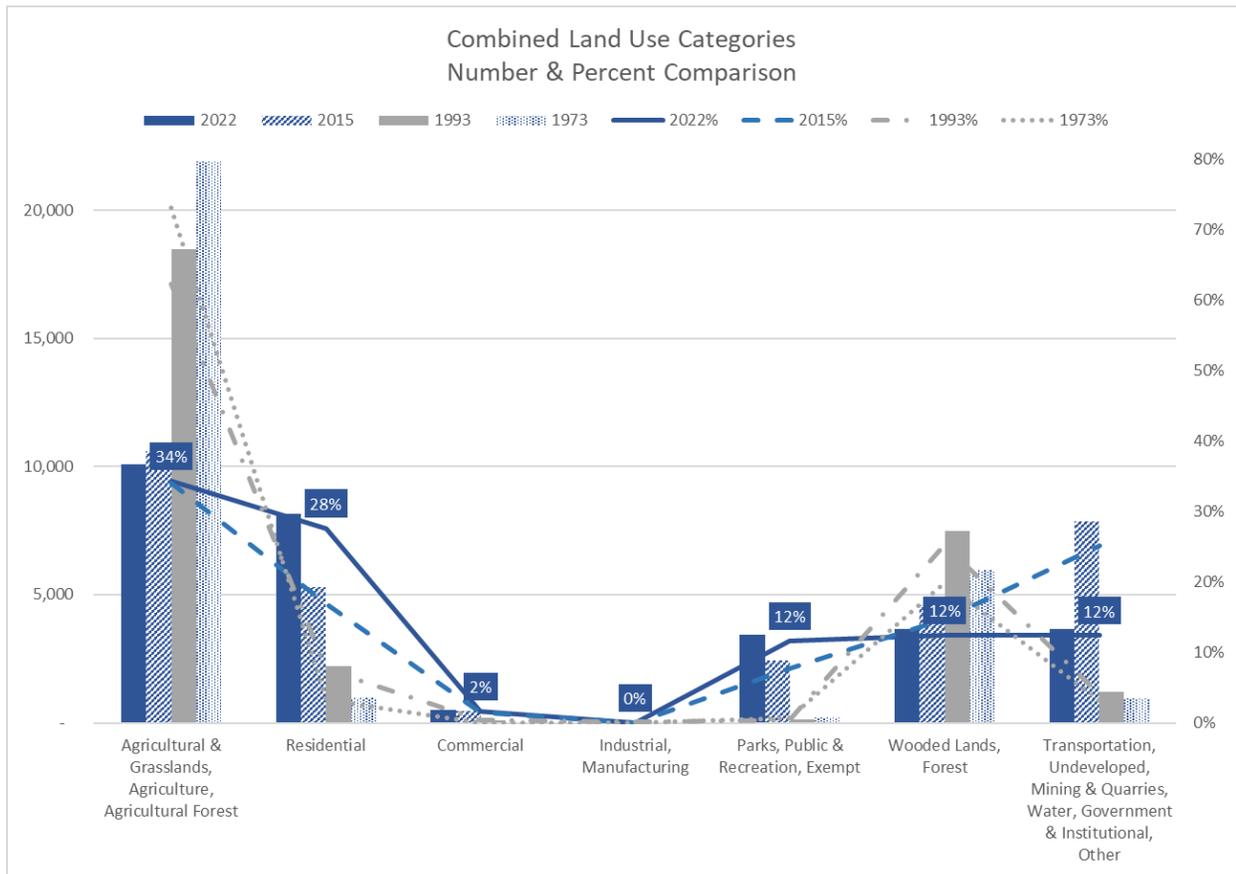
Land Use Categories	2022	2015	1993	1973
Agricultural & Grasslands, Agriculture	8,855	10,617	18,495	21,901
Agricultural Forest	1,247	na	na	na
Residential	8,144	5,289	2,228	982
Commercial	495	451	111	18
Industrial, Manufacturing	0	0	32	6
Parks & Recreation	na	na	122	188
Public & Recreation	na	2,426	na	na
Exempt	3,430	na	na	na
Wooded Lands, Woodlands	1,272	na	7,501	5,958
Forest, Productive Forest Land	2,389	4,603	na	na
Transportation	na	na	1,196	943
Undeveloped	3,584	5,288	na	na
Mining & Quarries	na	203	na	na
Water	na	1,779	na	na
Government & Institutional	na	na	5	1
Other	63	589	na	na
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>29,478</b>	<b>31,244</b>	<b>29,690</b>	<b>29,997</b>

Sources: 1973, 1993, and 2015 Town of Somerset 2015 Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Policy Plan for West Central Wisconsin; St. Croix County Development Plan, 2022 St. Croix County Land Information GIS parcel data

## Land Use Trends – Combined Categories

As stated above the assessor land use categories for 1973, 1993, 2015, and 2022 changed over time. To compare and identify land use trends, similar categories were combined. The graph and table below show the number of acres and percent of the total acres in each combined land use category. The data reveals the following land use trends in the Town of Somerset.

- Agriculture continues to be the dominant assessor land use in town since 1973 and continues to decrease
- Residential land use has consistently increased over time from 3% in 1973, to 8% in 1993, to 17% in 2015 and to 28% in 2022 due to development and assessor category changes
- Commercial land use has increased from 0% in 1973, 0% in 1993, 1% in 2015 to 2% in 2022
- Industrial land use has decreased from 32 acres in 1993 to 0 acres in 2022

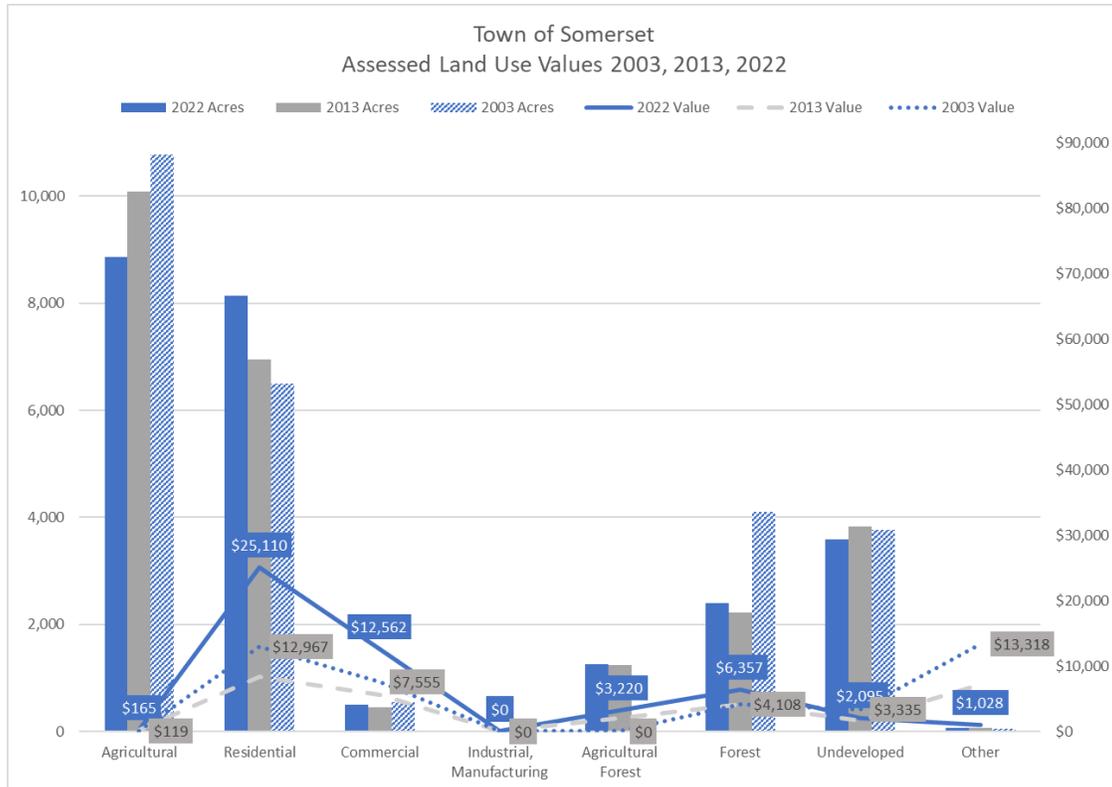


Combined Land Use Categories Number & Percent Comparison	2022		2015		1993		1973	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Agricultural & Grasslands, Agriculture, Agricultural Forest	10,102	34%	10,617	34%	18,495	62%	21,901	73%
Residential	8,144	28%	5,289	17%	2,228	8%	982	3%
Commercial	495	2%	451	1%	111	0%	18	0%
Industrial, Manufacturing	0	0%	0	0%	32	0%	6	0%
Parks, Public & Recreation, Exempt	3,430	12%	2,426	8%	122	0%	188	1%
Wooded Lands, Forest	3,661	12%	4,603	15%	7,501	25%	5,958	20%
Transportation, Undeveloped, Mining & Quarries, Water, Government & Institutional, Other	3,647	12%	7,859	25%	1,201	4%	944	3%
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>29,478</b>		<b>31,244</b>		<b>29,690</b>		<b>29,997</b>	

## Assessed Value of Land

The following data shows a comparison of County Assessor land use categories and land value per acre in 2003, 2013, and 2022 with the following general findings.

- Agricultural land acres decreased and value gradually increased from 2003-2022
- Residential land acres increased and value fluctuated with decrease from 2003-2013 and increase from 2013-2022
- Commercial land acres decreased and value fluctuated with decrease from 2003-2013 and increase from 2013-2022



Combined Land Use Categories Assessed Value Per Acre	2022		2013		2003	
	Acres	Value	Acres	Value	Acres	Value
Agricultural	8,855	\$165	10,091	\$140	10,782	\$119
Residential	8,144	\$25,110	6,947	\$8,311	6,498	\$12,967
Commercial	495	\$12,562	457	\$5,549	549	\$7,555
Industrial, Manufacturing	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0
Agricultural Forest	1,247	\$3,220	1,244	\$2,037	0	\$0
Forest	2,389	\$6,357	2,219	\$4,083	4,102	\$4,108
Undeveloped	3,584	\$2,095	3,826	\$1,625	3,771	\$3,335
Other	63	\$1,028	61	\$7,110	44	\$13,318

Source: 2022 St. Croix County Land Information, 2013 & 2003 Wisconsin Department of Revenue  
 Values are stated per acre and do not include unassessed, exempt or woodland

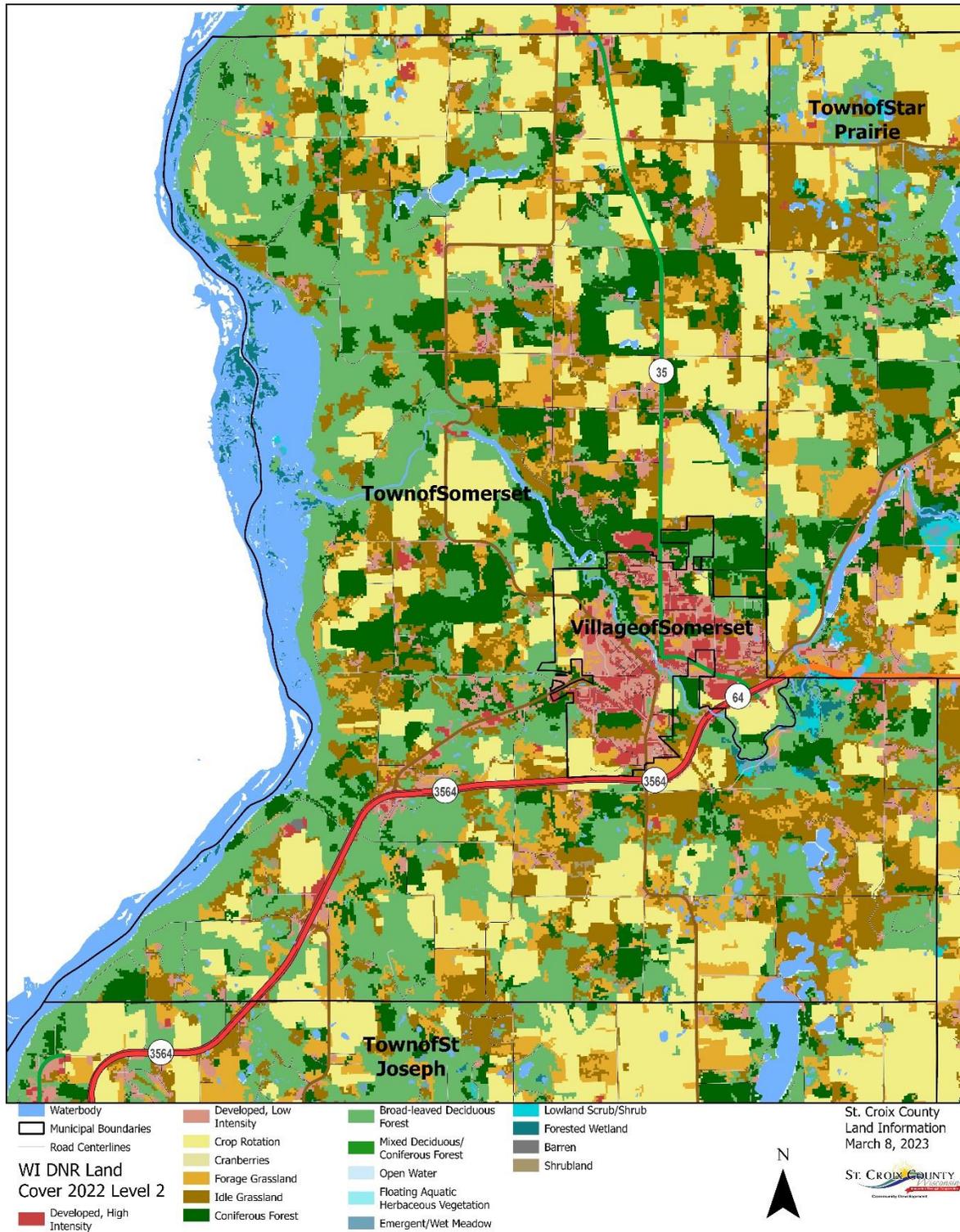
## Land Use Acreage and Assessed Value

The following data shows a comparison of County Assessor land use categories, number of parcels, number of improved parcels, acres, land value per acre, improved value per improved parcel, and differences in 2003, 2013, and 2022 with the following general findings.

- Agricultural land parcels decreased, acres decreased and value increased from 2013-2022
- Residential land parcels increased (160), improved parcels increased (204) and improved value increased (\$135,782) from 2013-2022
- Commercial land parcels increased (3), improved parcels increased (1) and improved value increased (\$169,342) from 2013-2022

Land Use Acreage and Assessed Value Per Acre, 2003, 2013, 2022	Agricultural	Forest	Ag Forest	Undeveloped	Residential	Commercial	Industrial, Manuf.	Other	Total
<b>2003</b>									
# Parcels	468	282	0	394	1,566	44	0	20	2,774
# Improved	0	0	0	0	1,212	32	0	21	1,174
Acres	10,782	4,102	0	3,771	6,498	549	0	44	25,746
Land Value per Acre	\$119	\$4,108	\$0	\$3,335	\$12,967	\$7,555	\$0	\$13,318	-
Improved Value per Imp. Parcel	-	-	-	-	\$138,260	\$154,172	\$0	\$70,290	-
<b>2013</b>									
# Parcels	514	162	125	501	1,763	41	0	21	3,127
# Improved	0	0	0	0	1,437	32	0	61	1,490
Acres	10,091	2,219	1,244	3,826	6,947	457	0	61	24,845
Land Value per Acre	\$140	\$4,083	\$2,037	\$1,625	\$8,311	\$5,549	0	\$7,110	-
Improved Value per Imp. Parcel	-	-	-	-	\$169,048	\$286,913	0	\$102,314	-
<b>Difference 2003-2013</b>									
# Parcels	+16	-12	+125	+107	+197	-3	0	+1	+353
# Improved	0	0	0	0	+225	0	0	0	+316
Acres	-691	-1883	+1244	+55	+449	-92	0	+17	-1001
Land Value per Acre	+21	+65	+2037	-1710	-4656	-2006	0	-	-
Improved Value per Imp. Parcel	-	-	-	-	+30,788	+132,741	0	-	-
<b>2022</b>									
# Parcels	473	157	120	471	1,923	44	0	23	3,211
# Improved	0	0	0	0	1,641	33	0	23	1,697
Acres	8,855	2,389	1,247	3,584	8,144	495	0	4,765	29,479
Land Value per Acre	\$165	\$6,357	\$3,220	\$2,095	\$25,110	\$12,562	\$0	\$1,028	\$50,537
Improved Value per Imp. Parcel	-	-	-	-	\$304,830	\$456,255	-	\$146,900	-
<b>Difference 2013-2022 (Increase)</b>									
# Parcels	41	5	5	30	(160)	(3)	-	(2)	(84)
# Improved	-	-	-	-	(204)	(1)	-	(23)	(207)
Acres	1,236	(170)	(3)	242	(1,197)	(38)	-	(4,704)	(4,634)
Land Value per Acre	(25)	(2,274)	(1,183)	(470)	(16,799)	(7,013)	-	6,082	-
Improved Value per Imp. Parcel	-	-	-	-	(135,782)	(169,342)	-	(44,586)	-

### Town of Somerset Land Cover

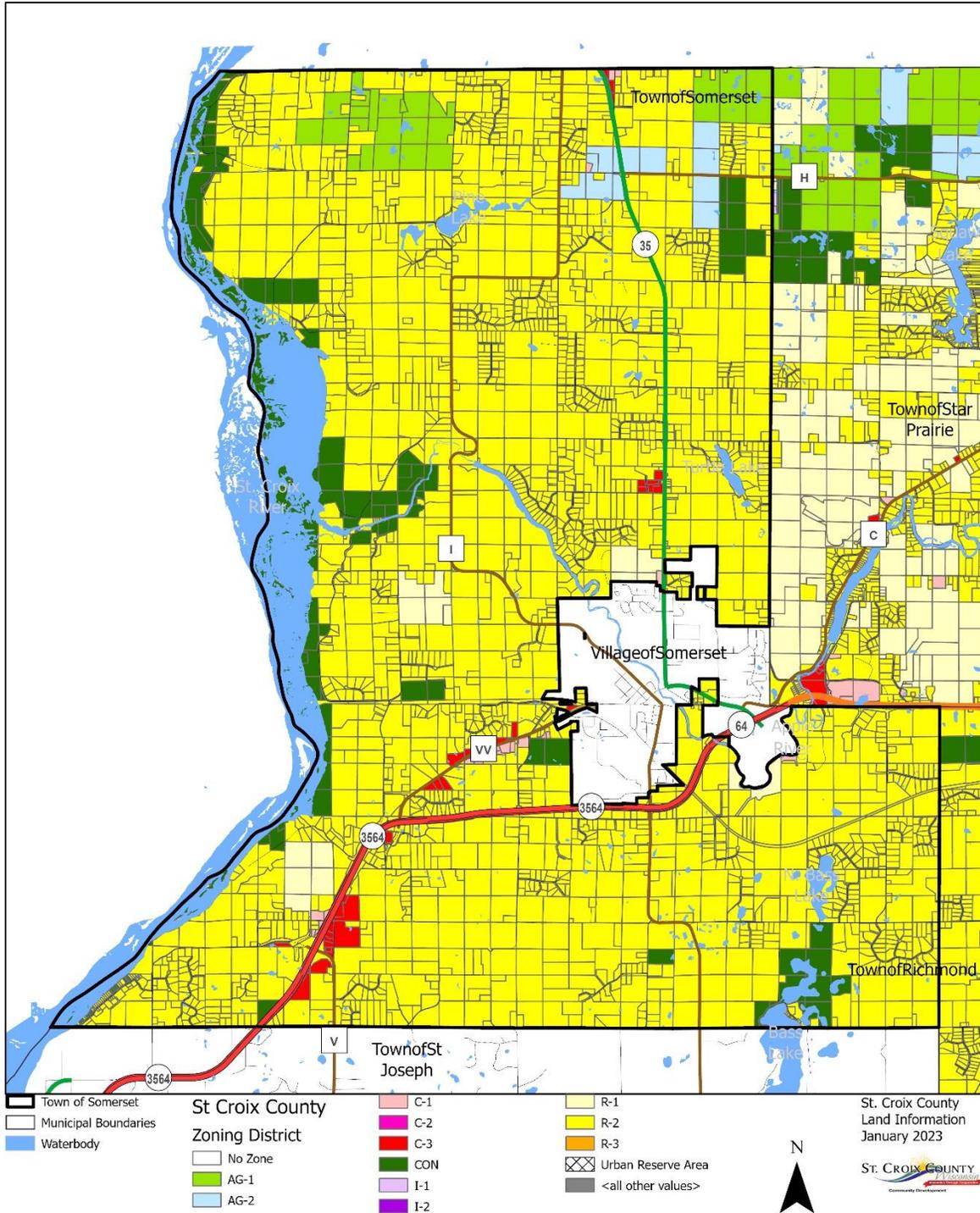


St. Croix County  
Land Information  
March 8, 2023

ST. CROIX COUNTY  
Wisconsin  
Durable Management

# Zoning Map

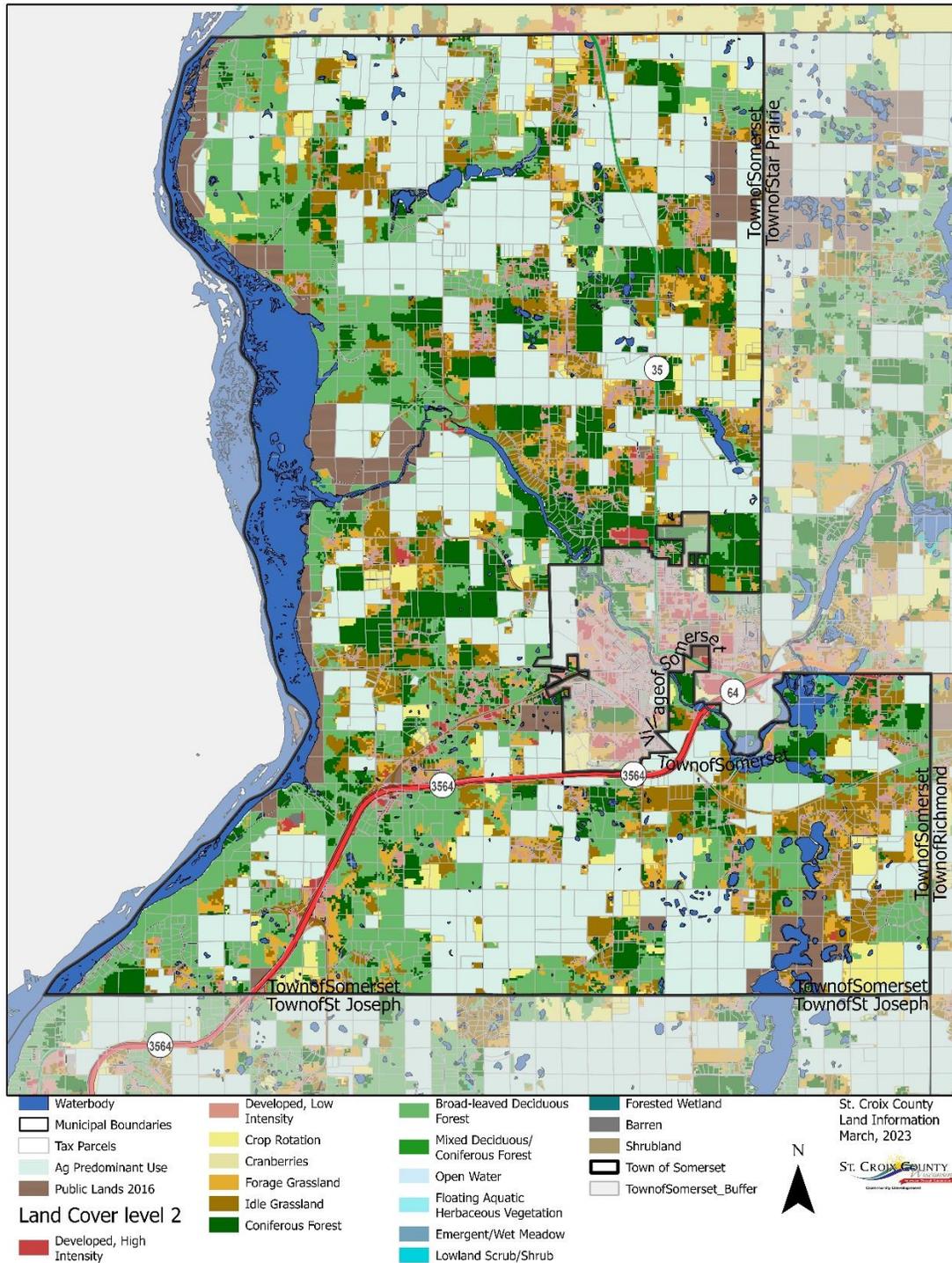
## Town of Somerset St. Croix County, WI Zoning Map



## Existing Land Use Map

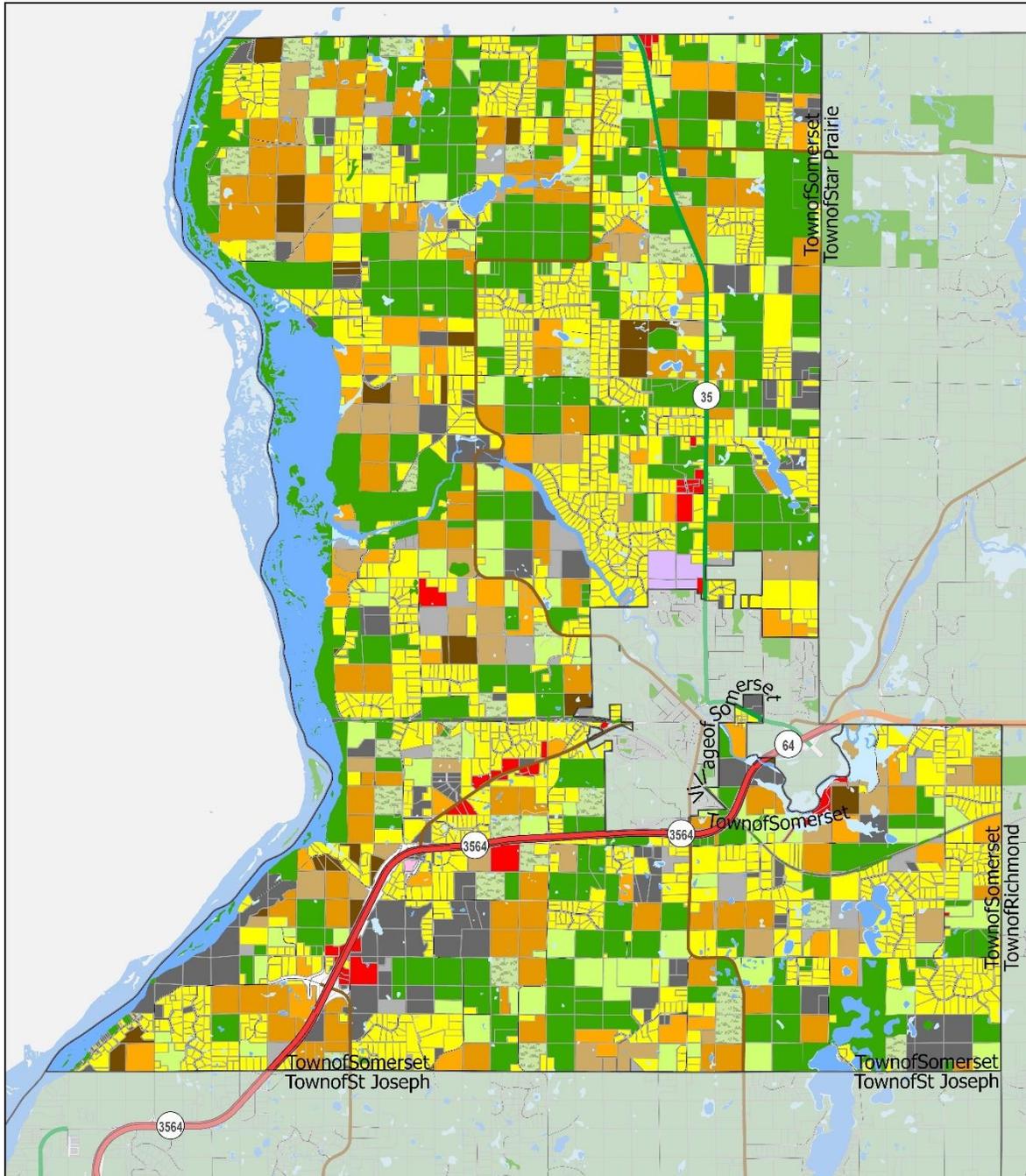
The existing land use map below is a compilation of 2022 land cover, waterways, and St. Croix County assessor data showing primarily agricultural classified land. WI DNR land cover categories primarily distinguish the following land uses: developed, crop rotation, grassland, and forest.

### Town of Somerset Existing Land Use



Existing Assessor Land Use

**Town of Somerset Assessor Land Use 2021**



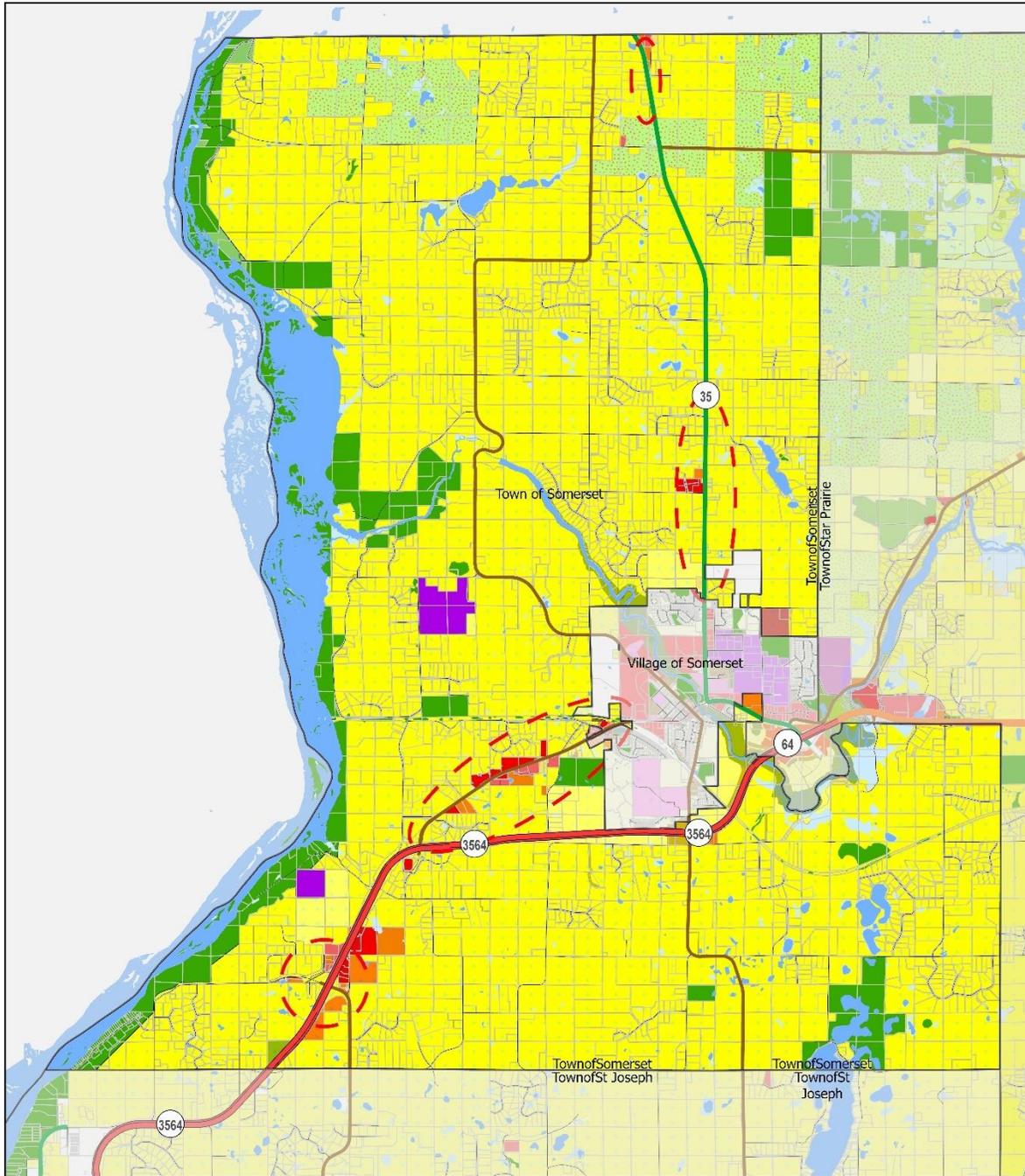
Municipal Boundaries	Commercial	Undeveloped
Residential	Commercial, Forest	Other
Residential, Ag	Agriculture	other values
Residential, Ag, Forest	Agriculture, Forest	
Residential, Forest	Productive Forest Land	
Residential, Commercial	Undeveloped, Forest	

St. Croix County Land Information  
Verify data with County  
April 10, 2023



2023 Planned - Future Land Use Map

**Town of Somerset Planned-Future Land Use**



Municipal Boundaries	Commercial	Town Somerset Mining	Multi Family Residential	St. Croix County Land Information Verify data with County April 10, 2023 
<b>Future Land Use</b>	Industrial	<b>Village Somerset PLU-2002</b>	Park/Conservancy	
Residential	Utility and Institutional	Commercial	Public	
Mixed Rural Residential	Parks and Public Lands;	Highway Commercial	Single Family Residential	
Mixed - Rural Agriculture	Wetland	Industrial	<b>SOMERSET</b>	
Agriculture - Farm Preservation Areas	Water	Institutional		
	Town Somerset Commercial Nodes			

## Planned-Future Land Use Classifications

The Town of Somerset planned vision and desired pattern of future land use is depicted by the arrangement of the following land use classifications, as shown on Map above. Land use classifications were revised from the 2015 plan to include the county adopted future land use categories described below. The following land use classifications are descriptions used to define areas within the Town that are of consistent character, use, and identity. The classifications correspond to the planned land use areas shown on the **Future Land Use Map** above.

The future land use map is one of the primary components of the comprehensive plan that can be used as a guide for local officials when considering future development within the community. The plan is long-range and will need to be re-evaluated periodically to ensure that it remains consistent with changing trends and conditions.

As the existing land use map above showed, the land use pattern in Town of Somerset is quite diverse and fairly fragmented. Residential subdivisions are mixed among predominantly forested and agricultural lands throughout the community. This land use pattern makes it challenging to create a future or planned land use map with different, individual uses in separate, distinct zones. This is especially true in the Town of Somerset, which has traditionally preferred flexibility in land management and has shown great respect for individual property rights.

### Future Land Use

	Residential
	Mixed Rural Residential
	Mixed - Rural Agriculture
	Agriculture - Farm Preservation Areas
<hr/>	
	Commercial
	Industrial
	Utility and Institutional
	Parks and Public Lands;
	Wetland
	Water

### Residential

The primary intent of this classification is to identify areas suitable for future residential development. Residential areas include lands that are delineated as existing residential properties or vacant platted areas. In addition, some undeveloped land has been designated for Residential development where subdivision expansion is likely to occur. These additional areas tend to be adjacent to existing rural subdivisions or where local roads and utilities exist to serve the area efficiently and economically. As mapped, this designation includes single-family residential development, existing farmland, scattered open lands, woodlots, agricultural-related uses, and home occupations. This land may be zoned R-2 or R-3, Residential under current county zoning regulations.

 Residential

### Mixed Rural Residential

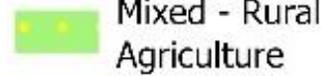
Intent and Description: The primary intent of this classification is to identify areas suitable for future residential development.

 Mixed Rural Residential

Mixed Rural Residential areas include lands that are delineated as existing residential properties or vacant platted areas. In addition, undeveloped land has been designated for residential development where subdivision expansion is likely to occur. These additional areas tend to be adjacent to existing rural subdivisions or where local roads and utilities exist to efficiently and economically serve the area. These additional areas are also delineated by local comprehensive plans. As mapped, this designation includes existing farmland, scattered open lands, woodlots, agricultural-related uses, cottage industries, mineral extraction operations, and single-family residential development. These lands may be zoned R-1, R-2, Residential under current zoning regulation.

### Mixed Rural Agriculture

Intent and Description: The primary intent of these areas is to preserve productive agricultural lands, while allowing more residential development than is allowed in the Agriculture area, protect existing farm and forestry operations from encroachment by incompatible uses, promote further investments in farming, maintain farmer eligibility for incentive programs, and preserve wildlife habitat and open spaces, in other words, to preserve the rural character of these areas.



As mapped, this designation includes farmland, scattered open lands, woodlots, agricultural-related uses, cottage industries, mineral extraction operations, and limited low-density, single-family residential development subject to certain requirements. These developments shall be located in order to minimize the fragmentation of productive agricultural or forest land and to minimize any disruption to existing uses. These lands may be zoned R-1 Residential, AG-1, AG-2 Agriculture under current county zoning regulation.

### Agriculture - Farmland Preservation Areas

The AGRICULTURE-FARMLAND PRESERVATION AREAS classification includes those existing and planned areas in which traditional agricultural practices and accessory uses will remain the predominant use. These areas should be used and maintained in a manner that allows certification as a Farmland Preservation Zoning District under State Statute §91.38. To the extent allowable under State Statute, the Town is supportive of compatible agricultural-related uses, such as agri-tourism and direct-market farm sales, as long as farming remains the predominant use and any potential negative impacts are mitigated or avoided. Identification as a farmland preservation area within this amended plan was at the consent of the property owners.



Agriculture Intent and Description: The primary intent of these areas is to preserve productive agricultural lands, protect existing farm & forestry operations from encroachment by incompatible uses, promote further investments in farming, maintain farmer eligibility for incentive programs, and preserve wildlife habitat and open spaces, in other words, to preserve the rural character of these areas.

The preferred housing unit density for this area is a combination of both one unit per 20 acres and one unit per 35 or 40 acres; local comprehensive plans provide direction on how to apply this guideline and where the differing densities should be evaluated. The preferred density is based on the State's Working Land Initiative density of one unit per 20 acres or greater for eligibility for the Farmland Preservation Program. These lands may be zoned R-1 Residential, AG-1, AG-2 Agriculture under current county zoning regulation.

### Commercial and Commercial Nodes

The COMMERCIAL classification identifies existing, non-residential properties within the Town of Somerset that are assessed commercial. It is envisioned that these properties will continue to be used for commercial or light industrial use. The Town may encourage the reuse of unused commercial properties prior to rezoning additional properties for commercial use. The COMMERCIAL NODES are three generalized areas near or along major highways or key intersections that have the potential for commercial and light industrial development in the future. The exact boundaries of these nodes are not set-in-stone and are flexible based on distance to the highway and close proximity to other existing or planned commercial development. These nodes include many of the existing, smaller commercial assessed parcels.



Proposed commercial development that are higher impact and not appropriate for the Residential and Open Space areas should be guided to these nodes. These higher impacts could including retail, services, and employers that have extended hours of operation, create higher levels of noise, or have a relatively large amount of hardscape (e.g., buildings, parking), or generate large numbers of vehicle trips, including for shipping or warehousing. With careful planning, senior housing facilities and smaller multi-family housing facilities may be appropriate within the Commercial Nodes close to the Village of Somerset, if adequate water and septic can be provided. However, these uses should still be planned, sited, designed, and maintained in a high-quality manner that is compatible with nearby uses and the rural character of the community as discussed within the Economic Development Element policies, Land Use Element policies, and the examples within the next three pages. Proposed commercial or light industrial uses deemed incompatible may be required to modify their plans or may be directed to nearby incorporated areas.

Given the distribution of closed depressions, surface waters, and existing residential subdivisions throughout the community, heavy industries and large commercial ventures should be guided to communities with municipal water or sewer, or to other less populated areas of St. Croix County. For example, heavy industries include facilities such as food processing, heavy equipment manufacturing, petro-chemical plants, facilities that use large amounts water or hazardous materials, salvage yards, solid waste processing, landfills, transfer stations, freight terminals, and large warehousing.

### Industrial

The primary intent of this classification is to identify areas suitable for planned industrial development. The town recognizes industrial uses within the commercial areas and recognition of the existing non-metallic mining. Appropriate industrial uses would need to be supportive and compatible with agriculture and the natural resources of the area.





### Parks and Public Land

The PARKS AND PUBLIC LAND classification includes tax-exempt properties, and public-owned recreational areas. Overall, these lands are very compatible with the RURAL LIVING AND OPEN SPACE classification. As such, the Town may allow new PUBLIC AND RECREATIONAL LANDS development within the Residential areas without needing to amend the Future Land Use Map. For example, a new park could be development as part of a subdivision or a new Town Hall site may be acquired within the RURAL LIVING AND OPEN SPACE area. However, some proposed public or institutional uses (e.g., schools, hospitals, special care facilities, prisons) may be directed to the COMMERCIAL nodes or to an incorporated municipalities depending on traffic created, nuisances (light, noise), security needs, hours of operation, or water use.

 Parks and Public Lands

Intent and Description: The primary intent of this classification is to identify areas suitable for open space and passive outdoor recreation. The existing open space sites owned by the County, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, US Fish and Wildlife, National Park Service or Army Corp of Engineers are listed and mapped in the Natural Resources Element of this plan. Future Open Space was identified on individual town plans. These sites were along natural corridors and included shorelands, wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes and scenic areas. In most cases, the towns would not actively pursue acquisition but would encourage public or private ownership that maintained the areas in a natural state available to citizens as part of future development plans.

### Utility and Institutional

The Utility and Institutional classification includes existing governmental facilities.

 Utility and Institutional

### Mining and Quarries

The MINING AND QUARRIES classification covers the two existing non-metallic mining sites within the community. These sites should be reclaimed by the owner in accordance with an approved reclamation plan once mining activities have halted. The Town encourages that reclamation take place incrementally as excavation within an area of a mining site has been completed. Given the distribution of closed depressions, surface waters, and existing residential subdivisions throughout the community and the potential use conflicts that mining creates, no new or expanded non-metallic or metallic mining operations (excavating, processing, or transload facilities) are envisioned for the Town of Somerset. Other areas in St. Croix County are better suited for such mining operations.

 TownSomersetMining



## Existing and Potential Land Use Issues

The primary types of existing and potential land use issues or conflicts in the Town of Somerset are common for a rural community. Residential development within an agricultural area can create related conflicts over odors, manure on roads, hours of harvesting, etc. Loss and fragmentation of farm and forest lands can also decrease the viability of such uses within a community. Commercial and recreational activities (e.g., tubing, ATV use, festival grounds, quarries) can also create land use issues conflicts or negatively impact natural resources. Three specific potential land use issues were identified during the planning process listed below.

1. The potential for over-use or over-commercialization of land, sensitive resources, and natural areas. The desire to preserve the rural character and quality of life within the community.
2. The potential impacts of commercial and light industrial development on adjacent residential properties.
3. The maintenance of town infrastructure, property and structures for aesthetic, health, and safety reasons.

### 1. Town Resources & Natural Areas

The first land use issue listed above is the potential for over-use or over-commercialization of land, sensitive resources, and natural areas and the desire to preserve the rural character and quality of life within the community. The Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources chapter identifies town resources including natural features, environmentally sensitive areas, and culturally or aesthetically significant areas that are important for preserving the rural character and quality of life in the Town of Somerset. Primary concerns include the following.

1. Most or nearly all of the residential growth projected for the next twenty years could potentially be met by developing only the undeveloped small parcels in town.
2. The loss of agricultural land will be somewhat restrained by the creation of the Farmland Preservation Areas. However, the Town of Somerset has the opportunity to influence the rate of loss of other farmland, forest land, and open space, if growth can be guided to current undeveloped small parcels and through the use of tools such as conservation subdivision design.

#### Town Resources

- a. Lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, floodplains, and shorelands
- b. Bluffs, steep slopes, bedrock outcrops
- c. Springs, prairie potholes, wetlands, marshes
- d. Crop and pastureland
- e. Existing sand, gravel, and non-metallic mining operations
- f. Woodlands, hedgerows, prairie, savannas, grasslands
- g. Rare or endangered plant and animal communities and their habitats
- h. River valleys, drainage ravines
- i. Scenic areas and parks
- j. Rustic roads, archeological, cultural or historical structures and sites
- k. Closed depressions, kettles, sink holes



St. Croix County administers zoning and development regulations that protect the town's natural resources (e.g., floodplain zoning, shoreland zoning, wetlands). In addition, areas along the St. Croix River have additional development restrictions. St. Croix County enforces the Lower St. Croix Riverway Overlay District as part of its code of ordinances. And the National Park Service has purchased and enforces easements within the Riverway boundaries. Many of these easements are scenic easements that control general use and development in a manner that restricts the visibility of development.

The St. Croix County Farmland Preservation Plan was completed in 2012. Based on this plan and with landowner consent, several parcels in the north part of the Town have been designated as Farmland Preservation Areas and have tighter zoning restrictions that limit redevelopment of these areas. Also as noted previously, the Town has numerous archeological sites that also impact potential development at the locations.

## 2. Commercial & Industrial Development

The second land use conflict listed above identified the potential impacts of commercial and light industrial development on adjacent residential properties. Town officials identified the need for enforcement of existing commercial Conditional Use Permits for town businesses. St. Croix County issues permits for commercial uses that regulate traffic, parking, screening, hours of operation, and business intensity and impacts on adjacent properties. Land use regulations are in place to protect the health, safety and welfare of town residents.

## 3. Maintain Transportation, Utilities and Community Facilities

The third land use conflict listed above identified the maintenance of property and structures for aesthetic, health, and safety reasons. Transportation, utilities, and community facilities can pose development limitation, or be used to guide development. The status of the Town's utilities and community facilities was discussed previously in the Utilities and Community Facilities element. The following potential issues were identified:

1. The Town has good highway connections, but not all roadways of the Town are suitable for heavy truck or vehicle traffic. New commercial and light industrial development can be guided to the Commercial Nodes where adequate transportation and utilities exist.
2. There are no municipal sewer or water services in the Town. Businesses and uses that require large amounts of water for cleaning, processing, septic service, etc., or have special wastewater treatment needs should be guided to municipalities with such public utilities.
3. Availability of high quality, fast broadband connections may influence development decisions. No accurate map of broadband service area gaps or concerns within the Town exists.
4. Availability of natural gas

In an attempt to implement the Town of Somerset **Planned-Future Land Use Map**, the Town should utilize this map and the classification descriptions when acting on zoning decisions, amendments to the Town's zoning map, and for other land-use decision making. The review of Planned-Future Land Use Map and the Town's zoning map concurrently will ensure consistency between planning and zoning decisions. Zoning decisions must be consistent with the guidance of Town of Somerset Comprehensive Plan considered as a whole and in its entirety.



## Opportunities for Redevelopment

During the plan update process, the Town Plan Commission identified no specific sites for potential redevelopment requiring action that should be addressed in the plan. However, reclamation at the two mining sites will be required in accordance with approved reclamation plans.

## Current Land Use Plans, Programs, and Regulations

The following are the key land use-specific plans and programs that may have implications for the Town of Somerset. Some of these and others are described previously in other plan elements.

### Town of Somerset Plans and Ordinances

1. The Town previously adopted a comprehensive plan in 2015, which is fully updated as part of this document.
2. Town of Somerset Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan
3. Code Chapter 6 – Amusements and Entertainment
4. Code Chapter 10 – Buildings and Building Regulations
5. Code Chapter 12 – Businesses, including RV campgrounds and junkyards
6. Code Chapter 22 – Manufactured and Mobile Homes, including related communities
7. Code Chapter 30 – Roads, Streets, Sidewalks, and Other Public Places
8. Code Chapter 34 – Subdivisions, including conservation design development

### St. Croix County

1. County Comprehensive Plan, 2012
2. County Farmland Preservation Plan, 2012
3. County Development Management Plan, 2000
4. County zoning, sanitary, non-metallic mining, animal waste, and land division ordinances, including floodplain, shoreland, and riverway overlay zoning regulations
5. St. Croix River development regulations - Lower St. Croix Riverway Overlay District
6. St. Croix County Farmland Preservation Plan was completed in 2012. Based on this plan and with landowner consent, several parcels in the north part of the Town have been designated as Farmland Preservation Areas and have tighter zoning restrictions that limit redevelopment of these areas.
7. \*Also as noted previously, the Town has numerous archeological sites that also impact potential development at the locations.

1. National Park Service - National Park Service has purchased and enforces easements within the St. Croix Riverway boundaries. Many of these easements are scenic easements that control general use and development in a manner that restricts the visibility of development.
2. AB608, Wisconsin Act 233 – Clarification of Smart Growth Law This bill was signed into law in April 2004. This new law reduces the number of programs or actions with which a comprehensive plan must be consistent. Under the new legislation, the only actions which must be consistent with a comprehensive plan are official mapping, local subdivision regulation, and zoning ordinances, including zoning of shorelands or wetlands in shorelands. The bill also reiterates that an RPC’s comprehensive plan is only advisory in its applicability to a political subdivision (a city, village, town or county), and a political subdivision’s comprehensive plan.
3. Wisconsin Land Information Program The Wisconsin Land Information Program is a voluntary, statewide program that provides financial support to local governments for land records modernization efforts. All 72 Wisconsin counties voluntarily participate in the Program. The Wisconsin Land Information Board oversees the Program's policies. The Board's statutory authority includes preparing guidelines to coordinate the modernization of land records and land information systems; implementing a grant program for local governmental units; approval of countywide plans for land records modernization; serving as the clearinghouse for access to land information; and providing technical assistance and advice to state agencies and local governmental units with land information responsibilities.
4. Division of Intergovernmental Relations, Wisconsin Department of Administration The Division of Intergovernmental Relations provides staff support to the Wisconsin Land Council, and it administers the Wisconsin Land Information Program in conjunction with the Wisconsin Land Information Board. It also houses Plat Review and Municipal Boundary Review, both of which have statutory authority for approval of specific land use related requests, and the GIS Services, dedicated to the efficient use of geographic information systems. For further information about the division visit its web-site via the WDOA web-site at: [www.doa.state.wi.us](http://www.doa.state.wi.us).
5. UW-Extension Center for Land Use Education The Center for Land Use Education uses a team-based approach to accomplish its dual missions in campus based undergraduate and graduate education and Extension outreach teaching related to: land use planning, plan and ordinance administration, project impact and regional trends analysis, and public involvement in local land use policy development. For more information on the Center for Land Use Education visit its web-site at [www.uwsp.edu/cnr/landcenter/](http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr/landcenter/).
6. West Central Wisconsin Comprehensive Plan As required by State Statute, West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission adopted a regional comprehensive plan in September 9, 2010. This advisory document includes all of the nine elements required under State comprehensive planning statutes, plus an additional energy and sustainability element. The plan includes land use trends for the region.



## Land Use Goals and Objectives

### Land Use Goal:

Provide for a compatible mix of land uses within the community in a manner that preserves and protects the natural environmental resources and rural character of the Town of Somerset while maintaining a high quality of life for residents.

### Objectives

1. Preserve and protect surface waters, wetlands, groundwater, wildlife habitat, steep slopes, natural drainage systems, and other natural features.
2. Protect farmland preservation areas and productive farmland for agriculture.
3. Encourage the preservation of open spaces, the infill of residential areas, and the use of cluster development.
4. Require good design and a sustainable development pattern that is compatible with the rural character and agricultural heritage of the community, fosters a sense of community, and prevents incompatible land uses and negative impacts on natural and agricultural resources.
5. New commercial and light industrial development should be clustered and low impact, with a high-quality design compatible with the community's rural character. New development should be directed to commercial nodes on the planned land use map.
6. Minimize the visual impact of development to maintain the rural, undeveloped character and feeling of the community.
7. Land development should support and enhance multi-modal linkages and connections.
8. Provide residents with access to quality parks, outdoor recreation areas, and natural amenities.
9. Encourage development that minimizes the cost and impacts on public facilities and services and in regard to transportation connectivity and maintenance, discourage cul-de-sacs and dead-end roads.
10. Manage the rate of development to maintain a distinctive rural community and efficient, well-maintained road and utility infrastructure in the Town of Somerset.
11. Development should occur in a fair and orderly fashion with some controls, while maintaining flexibility and avoiding over regulation.

### Land Use Policies — General Land Use (Decision-making Guidance)

1. The Town of Somerset will continue to participate in County zoning, to the extent that the County's zoning regulations are compatible with this plan and addresses the community's needs and this plan.
2. The Town of Somerset will require a preliminary site review and development planning checklist for all development within the community.
3. The Town of Somerset will encourage clustered residential development using conservation subdivision design in accordance with the Town conservation design standards, if the natural features of the site and ability to provide potable water and safe on-site wastewater treatment allow it. Open space held in common shall be required to be under a perpetual conservation easement and managed by a homeowners association per specification in the deed of each lot of the development, or by a land trust organization, which if dissolved the conservation easement reverts to the homeowners association.

- 
4. The Town of Somerset will continue to enforce its land division ordinance.
  5. The Town of Somerset will require appropriate fees for all development to cover the costs related to its density or intensity and its environmental impact, and the additional administration, services, and infrastructure that it will impose upon the Town and its residents as enforced through the Town's ordinance.
  6. Utilize the existing road network to accommodate most future development and require multi-modal connectivity of new roadways and between land uses whenever possible and appropriate as enforced through the Town's ordinance.
  7. Development plans and site plans shall be evaluated with regard to accommodating the safe and efficient travel of pedestrians and bicycle users and providing linkages to existing and planned trail systems as discussed in the Transportation element and the Town of Somerset Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan.
  8. Participate in land use permitting and zoning decisions, ensure that the quality of the public outdoor recreational lands in the Town are used in a manner that is compatible with and does not unduly detract from the character of these natural areas and the overall experience of users. If needed, engage St. Croix County, Wisconsin DNR, the National Park Service, and nearby communities in a discussion of design, regulatory, and management options to protect sensitive features, prohibit over-commercialization, and prevent over-use.
  9. Work with developers to ensure that residents of proposed subdivisions will have convenient, safe access to outdoor recreational opportunities. If no public amenities are available, the Town may require the development to provide and maintain such amenities at their cost.
  10. The Town will review and utilize setbacks and screening to help minimize visual and noise impacts in a manner that reinforces the community's rural character, such as:
    - a. Protect the visual quality of rural roadways through site planning, driveway location, landscaping, signage control, and other standards, such as placing driveways along property lines, fence rows, or existing vegetation, wherever possible and safe.
    - b. Encourage tree preservation and tree planting to screen new structures from neighboring properties and public roadways in residential areas and require such screening for Land Use 156 Land Use commercial and industrial development.
    - c. Use landscaping, such as plants, trees, or decorative fencing, to reduce the visual impact of parking lots, garbage storage, and other unsightly storage areas as seen from streets, trails, and public rights-of-way.
  11. Property should be used and maintained in a manner that does not pose health or safety hazards, create use conflicts, decrease nearby property values, or otherwise become a health, safety, visual, auditory, or other similar nuisance.
  12. The Planned Land Use Map should be used as a guide for land use decision-making, but it does not take precedence over the goals, objectives, and policies of this plan.
    - a. The descriptions of the planned land use classifications in this chapter should be generally followed when making land use decisions.
    - b. Farmland preservation areas as shown on the Planned Land Use Map should not be used for non-eligible uses as described under Wisconsin's farmland preservation Laws unless the Planned Land Use Map is first amended.

- c. To the extent reasonably possibly, agricultural, forestry, wildlife habitat and open spaces should be preserved or not fragmented within the Rural Living and Open Space area of the Planned Land Use Map.
  - d. Proposed commercial and light industrial development that is not home-based businesses or agricultural-related should be directed to the Commercial Nodes shown on the Planned Land Use Map.
  - e. Senior housing, group homes, and special care facilities should be directed to the Commercial Nodes shown on the Planned Land Use Map or to nearby incorporated communities.
  - f. The Planned Land Use Map is a vision, but it is not a zoning map, nor is it an assurance that certain land uses or development will be allowed or approved. The Town may use site analysis, impact reports, zoning, and other tools to determine the feasibility of specific development proposals, guide development to preferred or better suited locations, and manage the phasing of growth.
13. When possible, the Town of Somerset will encourage the infill of those existing, previously subdivided smaller lots (<10 acres) available for sale prior to approving new residential subdivisions.
14. Land use decisions should be consistent with and not contradict the goals, objectives, and policies of this element, as well as the goals, objectives, and policies of the other plan elements.

#### Policies – Natural Resources and Conservation (Decision-making Guidance)

15. Any development near or within certain Town Resources must be carefully planned and executed. Town Resources are natural features, environmentally sensitive areas, and culturally or aesthetically significant areas that are important for preserving the rural character and quality of life in the Town of Somerset. These Town Resources include, but are not limited to:
- a. Lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, floodplains, and shorelands
  - b. Bluffs, steep slopes, bedrock outcrops
  - c. Springs, prairie potholes, wetlands, marshes
  - d. Crop and pasture land
  - e. Existing sand, gravel, and non-metallic mining operations
  - f. Woodlands, hedgerows, prairie, savannas, grasslands
  - g. Rare or endangered plant and animal communities and their habitats
  - h. River valleys, drainage ravines
  - i. Scenic areas and parks
  - j. Rustic roads, archeological, cultural or historical structures and sites
  - k. Closed depressions, kettles, sink holes
16. The Town of Somerset will review all proposed development adjacent to or within Town Resources in order to ensure the protection or proper use of these valued features.
17. Town Resources shall be a major factor in determining approvals for land divisions, plat plans, development proposals, rezonings and other planning and development decisions made by the Town of Somerset Plan Commission and Board of Supervisors. Natural drainage patterns shall not be altered. Wooded sites being developed shall only be cleared to the extent necessary to allow safe access and to adequately open the canopy for sunlight exposure and ventilation, and



care should be taken to protect all remaining trees from disturbance and subsequent exposure to disease.

18. For the purposes of the *Town of Somerset Comprehensive Plan* the term "Open Space" is used to describe a combination of Town Resources on public or private land within the Town, that when observed by Town residents and visitors are recognized as contributing to the rural character and aesthetic qualities of the Town. Open Space is usually undeveloped, but can have an active use such as agriculture or can be developed for passive use such as a park with predominant natural areas.
19. When reviewing development proposals, the Town of Somerset will encourage the preservation and/or creation of open spaces that are grouped and combined into connecting, undeveloped units called environmental corridors. Areas of low-density development may serve as connecting corridors between open space corridors where undeveloped units are not available to serve this function. The scenic, open space and habitat function of corridors will be maintained to the greatest extent which is practical.
20. The Town of Somerset will request that agencies and bodies--governmental and/or private--responsible for the location of improvements such as roads, highways, pipelines, power lines, towers, rail lines, airports, billboards, etc. recognize and do not violate the intent of the Town's goals and policies for open spaces.

#### Policies — Commercial and Industrial Uses (Decision-making Guidance)

21. The spot zoning of commercial and industrial land or activity will be prohibited in the Town of Somerset
22. All existing and proposed commercial and light industrial uses within the Town of Somerset should be planned, sited, designed, and maintained in a high-quality manner that is compatible with the rural character of the community. Proposed commercial or light industrial uses deemed incompatible may be required to modify their plans or may be directed to nearby incorporated areas.
23. Proposed high impact commercial and light industrial development that are not appropriate for the residential areas should be guided to the Commercial Nodes identified on the Planned Land Use Map.
24. In those areas deemed suitable for commercial and light industrial use, discourage commercial and light industrial development designs, site plans, and land use practices that have one or more of the following characteristics:
  - a. A corridor of automobile-oriented business development generally in a linear arrangement, yet people cannot park in a single location and safely visit several places of business;
  - b. Development along a corridor with numerous road access points and a lack of shared vehicle access;
  - c. Development along a corridor, when viewed separately or as a whole, creates a cluttered appearance from an abundance of signs, lights, etc.; and,
  - d. New business development with a lack of a shared design standard, common aesthetic, or identity.

- 
25. Encourage commercial and light industrial development designs, site plans, and land use practices that include the following characteristics:
    - a. New commercial and industrial development is designed and concentrated in a manner that shares common highway access and promotes internal connectivity;
    - b. Maximize the infill of existing commercial- and industrial-zoned areas, before zoning new lands for commercial or industrial use;
    - c. Low-traffic generating commercial development should be sited behind existing commercial development;
    - d. A unified streetscape in commercial and industrial areas with quality landscaping and plantings, shared design characteristics, and internal wayfinding and circulation systems, when possible;
    - e. Avoid large parking lots between the commercial buildings and the primary street if possible, with parking preferably behind buildings and the use;
    - f. Use landscaping, vegetative swales, rain gardens, and permeable pavement in parking areas; and,
    - g. Diligent site plan review with a focus on desired outcomes and allows flexibility to achieve these outcomes.
  26. Following adoption of the updated Town of Somerset Comprehensive Plan, the Town Plan Commission shall:
    - a. Review the current Town ordinances to determine if modification is needed for consistency with the plan.
    - b. Consider the adoption of a development impact fee ordinance or other special assessment policies for new development and infrastructure improvements.
    - c. Work with St. Croix County to explore potential County regulatory changes suggested within this Plan, such as greater flexibility to allow compatible agri-tourism activities within farmland preservation areas and greater design standards for rural commercial development nodes.
  27. The Town of Somerset will consider establishment of purchase and transfer of development rights programs to preserve the remaining agricultural lands and highly valued open space land in the Town and to guide development to existing undeveloped (or underdeveloped) subdivided lots or areas immediately adjacent to existing residential subdivisions. Any such effort should include or be preceded by an educational component to increase awareness of such tools among community members.
    - a. The Town of Somerset Plan Commission will study funding mechanisms for a purchase of development rights (PDR) program for agricultural land and highly valued open space land, and make a recommendation to the Town Board.
    - b. The Town of Somerset will investigate a transfer of development rights (TDR) program with development rights "sending" areas of agricultural land and highly valued open space land and development rights "receiving" areas well suited for development within two years of plan certification.
    - c. The Town will engage in discussions with St. Croix County on potential participation in a county-level TDR or PDR, but with caution. Participation in such a program must be



consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies of this comprehensive plan and the long-term best interests of the Town.

28. Encourage the National Park Service and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to consider acquisition of key undeveloped or underdeveloped properties along the St. Croix and Apple Rivers that would strengthen and permanently preserve environmental corridors, while offering more public recreational opportunities, river access at the Apple River falls and mouth of Apple River, and improve the portage around the Falls Dam and falls on the navigable Apple River waterway for increased safety and ease of use, and potential trail linkages.

#### Planned-Future Land Use Map Policies

The **Planned-Future Land Use Plan map** is intended to be a graphic and pictorial description of the desired pattern of land use showing the general location, character, and intensity of land uses for the foreseeable future. The general land use categories depicted represent the predominant land use as described previously. It is recognized that there may be other land uses within these areas as provided for in comprehensive plan policy. The Planned Land Use map is not intended to be a rigid end-product document, but a necessary and useful planning tool in helping the community clarify and better evaluate its position on development issues and thereby formulate policies which will best achieve local objectives in an effective but flexible manner. The map also helps to illustrate the implications of related goals, objectives, and policies, but is subordinate to them. The form, character, and impacts of a proposed development are typically more important than the Town's planned land use map.

The Town of Somerset Plan Commission and Town Board shall use the following general guidelines and considerations in delineating preferred development areas, as well as when reviewing potential amendments to the Town's Planned Use Map and zoning map amendment requests:

1. Impacts to existing development and roads, as well as the ability to enhance road, pedestrian, and bicycling connectivity.
2. Terrain and site conditions that are suitable for development, considering slopes, wetlands, depth to water table, soils, geology, closed depressions, archeological and historical features, and other physical limitations.
3. Appropriateness of development adjacent to or in proximity to rivers, wetlands, lakes, floodplains, and conservancy areas.
4. Protection of farmland preservation areas and carefully consider applications for the rezoning of other high-quality agricultural lands without justification for non-agricultural uses on such land.
5. Consistency with and supportive of the rural character of the community, including the preservation of open spaces, scenic vistas, and environmental corridors and mitigating impacts to wildlife habitat.
6. Preventing or minimizing potential use conflicts and negative impacts to nearby properties, including but not limited to: noise, light, odors, traffic, health and safety risks, or loss of property values.
7. Availability or provision of convenient access for emergency vehicles.
8. Ability to provide public facilities and services will not place an unreasonable burden on the Town and other governmental units.

9. The public need for the proposed use or change in the planned land use map. Are other areas of the Town better suited for the proposed use?
10. Consistency with the vision, goals, objectives, and policies found within this Comprehensive Plan.

The above are considerations and not absolute requirements. Additional factors may be considered such as traffic, environmental, fiscal, or other impacts. When development is proposed, it shall be the responsibility of the petitioner to provide the information necessary to demonstrate consistency with the above general guidelines and their approach to prevent or mitigate any potential negative impacts. Further, the Town of Somerset may require the petitioner to provide independent traffic, environmental, fiscal, or other impact studies.

### Reference Only Maps

The other maps found in this land use chapter including Land Cover Map, Zoning Map, Existing Land Use Map, and Existing Assessor Land Use Map are for reference only. Each map was developed with different data sources and offers a different perspective of land use categories. The data sources of each map accompany different regulatory uses and categorical considerations briefly described below.

Map	Land Use Data Source	Categories
<b>Land Cover Map</b>	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources	Developed, High Intensity; Developed, Low Intensity; Crop Rotation; Cranberries; Forage Grassland; Idle Grassland; Coniferous Forest; Broad-leaved Deciduous Forest; Mixed Deciduous/Coniferous Forest; Open Water; Floating Aquatic Herbaceous Vegetation, Emergent/Wet Meadow; Lowland Scrub/ Shrub; Forested Wetland; Barren; Shrubland
<b>Zoning Map</b>	St. Croix County Community Development	AG-1, AG-2, C-1, C-2, C-3, CON, I-1, I-2, R-1, R-2, R-3, Urban Reserve Area
<b>Existing Land Use Map</b>	Combination of Land Cover and Assessor Land Use maps	Combined Land Cover categories above and Assessor land use category 'Ag Predominant Use'
<b>Existing Assessor Land Use Map</b>	St. Croix County Assessor	Residential; Residential, Ag; Residential, Ag, Forest; Residential, Forest; Residential, Commercial; Commercial; Commercial, Forest; Agriculture; Agriculture, Forest; Productive Forest Land; Undeveloped, Forest; Undeveloped; Other



## Implementation

To achieve the community's vision, the plan must be put into action. This plan element discusses the timeframe for specific actions to be completed in order to achieve the plan's vision, goals, and objectives. Also included is a description of how each of the plan's elements is integrated and consistent with each other.

The comprehensive plan must also be a "living," dynamic document which considers or allows for change in the community. An evaluation strategy provides a mechanism to measure progress toward achieving all aspects of the comprehensive plan and monitors progress in the context of local change and a process for plan amendments and updates is described.

### Action Plan

The policy subsections of most plan elements are separated into policies and recommendations. The policies are general, ongoing decision-making guidance which further supplement or expand upon the objectives, while the recommendations are action-oriented strategies with a measurable timeframe.

Initial focus should be on the ongoing and short-range recommendations. Generally, the Town of Somerset has expressed its desire to maintain its "pay-as-you-go" approach, with large expenditures paid from general revenues, grants, development fees, and funds saved over time, rather than loans or bonding.

This Town Board has the primary responsibility of implementing the plan recommendations, but it may delegate such responsibility to the Plan Commission, other committees, or Town departments. Many times, collaboration will be required for implementation. In some cases (e.g., certain housing or social services programming) the Town may not be the lead implementing entity. Prior to implementation, the Town will consider and reassess each action item to further determine if each is in the best interest of the community. Some recommendations will require further analysis and exploration, and may later be deemed unfeasible. Changing conditions in the community may necessitate an addition or modification to the action plan.

### Implementation Resources

The plan implementation programs and resources are largely covered by the programs, resources, and tools identified in the other elements of this plan. One unique plan implementation resource which covers multiple plan elements is the *Plan Implementation Guide for West Central Wisconsin*. The Implementation Guide for West Central Wisconsin as part of its regional comprehensive planning effort. The Guide discusses best practices from around the region and other ideas and resources for some of the key concepts and trends identified in the regional comprehensive plan. Many of the ideas found within the Guide were considered by the Plan Commission during this plan update. The Town of Somerset can use this Guide as the Town moves forward with implementation of its comprehensive plan. And for land use issues and regulations in particular, the Town maintains a strong working relationship with St. Croix County Community Development Department.



## Plan Integration and Consistency

*The Town of Somerset Comprehensive Plan* has an important role as a guide for future action and policy decisions in the Town. When the Town Board, Plan Commission, or other Town officials are considering policy or programmatic decisions or developing other Town plans, this comprehensive plan can provide important guidance. In addition to using the Town's plans, communities and counties should consider the vision, goals, objectives, and strategies of the *West Central Wisconsin Regional Comprehensive Plan* and adjacent and overlapping comprehensive plans for potential opportunities and collaboration.

The elements of this plan are also internally consistent and there is much overlap in issues and policy between many of the elements. A review of the plan goals, objectives, and policies has been performed to ensure consistency. As the plan developed, major consistent themes emerged which moved the plan toward consistent conclusions and compatible approaches to solving identified problems among the elements. When using and interpreting this plan, the vision, goals, objectives, and policies should be considered in total and as a whole. Any future plan amendments should be evaluated for consistency with the overall comprehensive plan.

## Plan Monitoring and Evaluation

Every comprehensive plan is required by statute to include a "mechanism to measure the local governmental unit's progress toward achieving all aspects of the comprehensive plan." As the entity primarily responsible for development and use of the comprehensive plan, plan monitoring and evaluation naturally falls under the responsibilities of the Town Plan Commission. To ensure the plan is achieving intended results, the Town Plan Commission should review the plan at least annually with any recommendations reported to the Town Board. The Plan Commission's review should particularly focus on whether the identified policies are: (1) being implemented in accordance with the recommended timelines and (2) are the recommended policies effective in meeting the plan's goals and objectives.

## Plan Amendments and Updates

Frequent comprehensive plan amendments or updates should be avoided. However, plan monitoring and evaluation is an ongoing process and may lead to the realization that the Plan requires an amendment or updating.

## Amendments

The Town of Somerset should regularly evaluate its progress towards achieving the goals, objectives, policies within the comprehensive plan. It may be determined that amendments are needed to maintain the effectiveness and consistency established within the plan. Plan amendments are typically minor changes or additions to Plan maps or text as deemed necessary and appropriate. The Town Plan Commission must be given sufficient opportunity to make a recommendation to the Town Board on proposed amendments prior to the Town Board decision.

A change to the Town's future land use map shall be considered a plan amendment. A proposed change to the preferred future land use map may be initiated by a landowner requesting a zoning map amendment if the proposed rezoning is inconsistent with the Plan's future land use map. Since zoning decisions must be consistent with the comprehensive plan and the Town is under St. Croix County



zoning and is part of the County's Comprehensive Plan, the following sequence of approvals may be required:

- 1) Amend Town Comprehensive Plan
- 2) Amend County Comprehensive Plan
- 3) St. Croix County Zoning Map Amendment (Rezoning) Process

During proposed plan and map amendments, the petitioner(s) should demonstrate how their proposal is consistent with the *Town of Somerset Comprehensive Plan* as a whole. The proposal should not contradict the objectives, goals, and policies of the Plan, or else additional plan changes must be considered. There should be a clear public need for the proposed change or unanticipated circumstances have resulted in a need for the change. The proposed change should also not result in substantial adverse impacts to the community, nearby properties, or the character of the area. The Town may require the petitioner(s) to prepare reports or fund other such studies prior to a decision on amending the Comprehensive Plan.

### Updates

The *Town of Somerset Comprehensive Plan* will be updated at least once every ten years as required by State law, unless a more frequent update is deemed necessary by the Town Board. Unlike an amendment, an update is often a substantial re-write of the text, updating of the inventory and tables and substantial changes to maps, if necessary. The Town Plan Commission is responsible for facilitating the Plan update, working within any general guidelines provided by the Town Board. The plan update process will likely involve a similar process as the one allowed for during the initial creation of this plan.

The adoption process for plan amendments and plan updates is similar. Consistent with State law, a public hearing must be held. The Plan Commission must then adopt a resolution recommending the proposed plan changes or updates to the Town Board. The Town Board will then adopt the plan changes or updates by ordinance. Whether the Town of Somerset is considering a plan amendment or update, the Town will encourage public participation during the plan amendment and update processes. A public participation plan should be developed and adopted at the beginning of any plan update process.

## Appendix A: Public Participation Results

### Public Participation Process

On September 7, 2022 the Town Board adopted Resolution No. 2022-04 approving the public participation plan as required by Wisconsin Statutes sec. 66.1001(4). The resolution outlined the participation strategies to solicit public opinion. The town and county worked together to implement the public participation plan strategies including a vision session and survey. The results of the vision session and survey were presented at a public Board meeting on November 2, 2022. The summarized results of the vision session and survey within this appendix are generally organized by the plan elements including: Housing, Transportation, Utilities & Community Facilities, Agricultural, Natural, & Cultural Resources, Economic Development, Intergovernmental Cooperation, Land Use.

### Project Webpage

St. Croix County hosted a dedicated project webpage for the 2023 Town of Somerset comprehensive plan update. The webpage was launched in August 2022 and provided a project description, plan purpose, plan update process schedule, the adopted 2015 plan, and the draft 2023 plan.



### Vision Session Process Summary

The Town of Somerset comprehensive plan update public Vision Session was held on September 22, 2022 at Town Hall. Approximately 22 participants attended the 2-hour vision session. Participants were asked to sign-in and share their email contact information to receive updates about the process. St. Croix County staff delivered an informational presentation about the plan process and purpose and facilitated small group discussions at four tables. The discussion topics covered each comprehensive plan element including housing, transportation, utilities & community facilities, agricultural, natural, & cultural resources, economic development, intergovernmental cooperation, land use, issues & opportunities, and implementation.

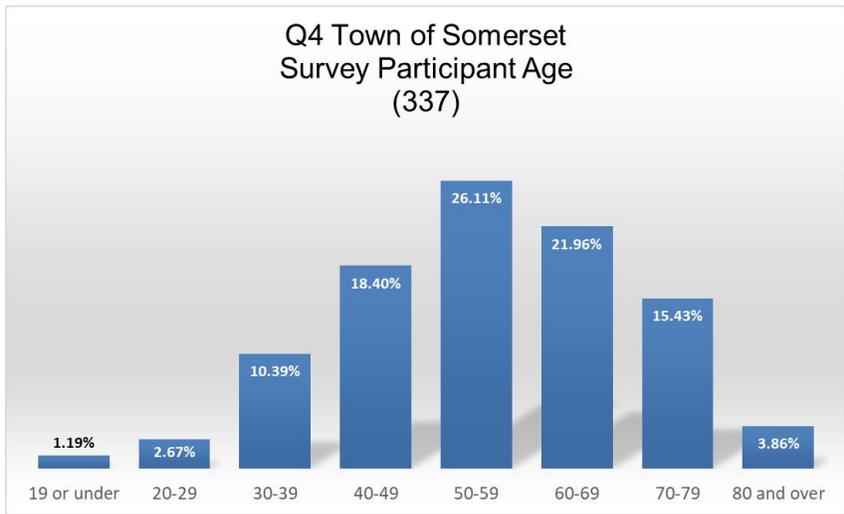
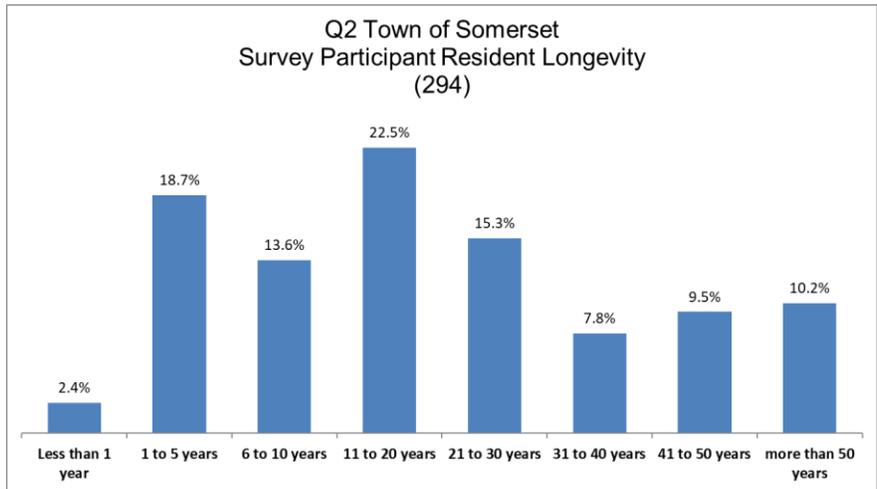
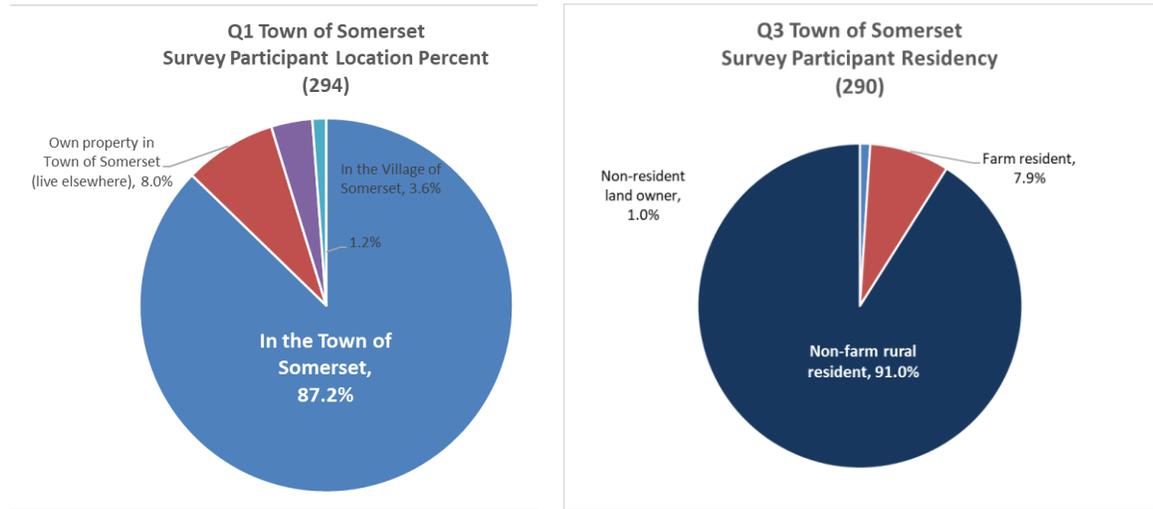
### Survey Process Summary

Staff developed and administered the 2023 Town of Somerset comprehensive plan update survey in August 2022. The final survey participant count was 338 total responses. The survey results found throughout the comprehensive plan show the number of responses in parenthesis at the top. The 30-question online (312) and paper (26) survey was gathered from August 22, 2022 – October 20, 2022. The survey was promoted through a post card to property owners (1,887) mailed on August 29, 2022, on the town website, flyers around town, and the [county project website](#).

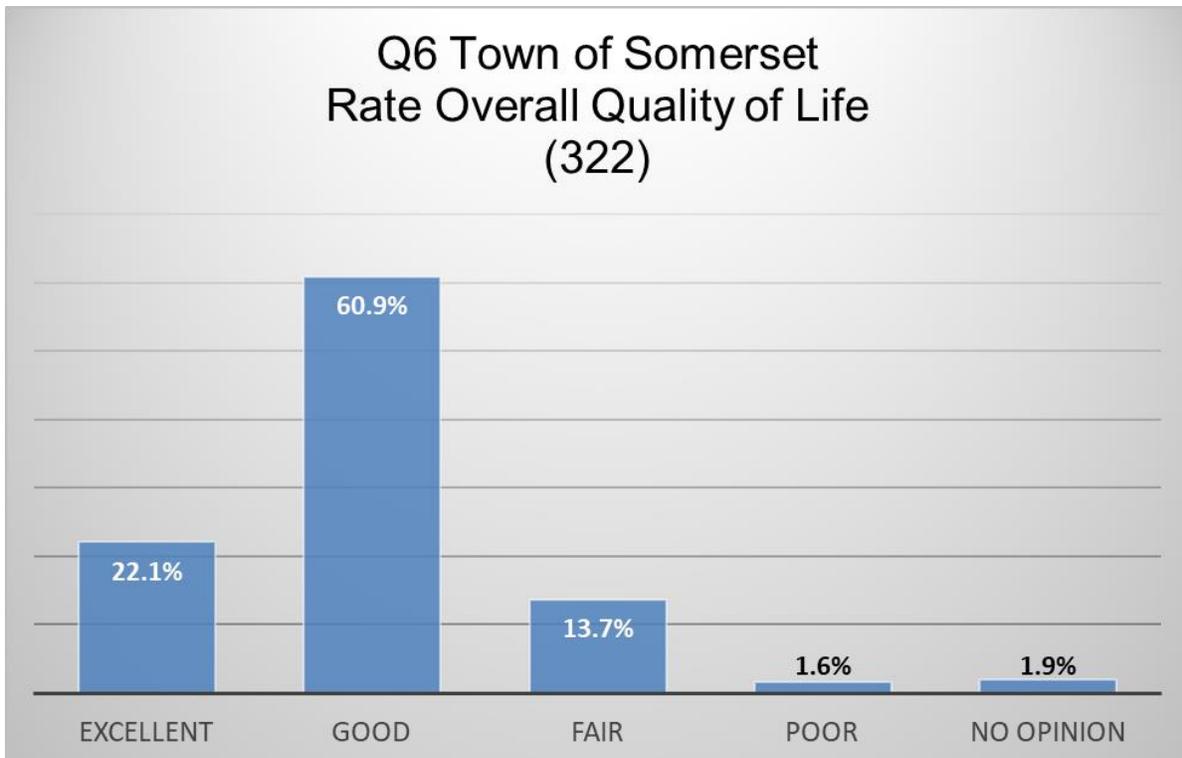
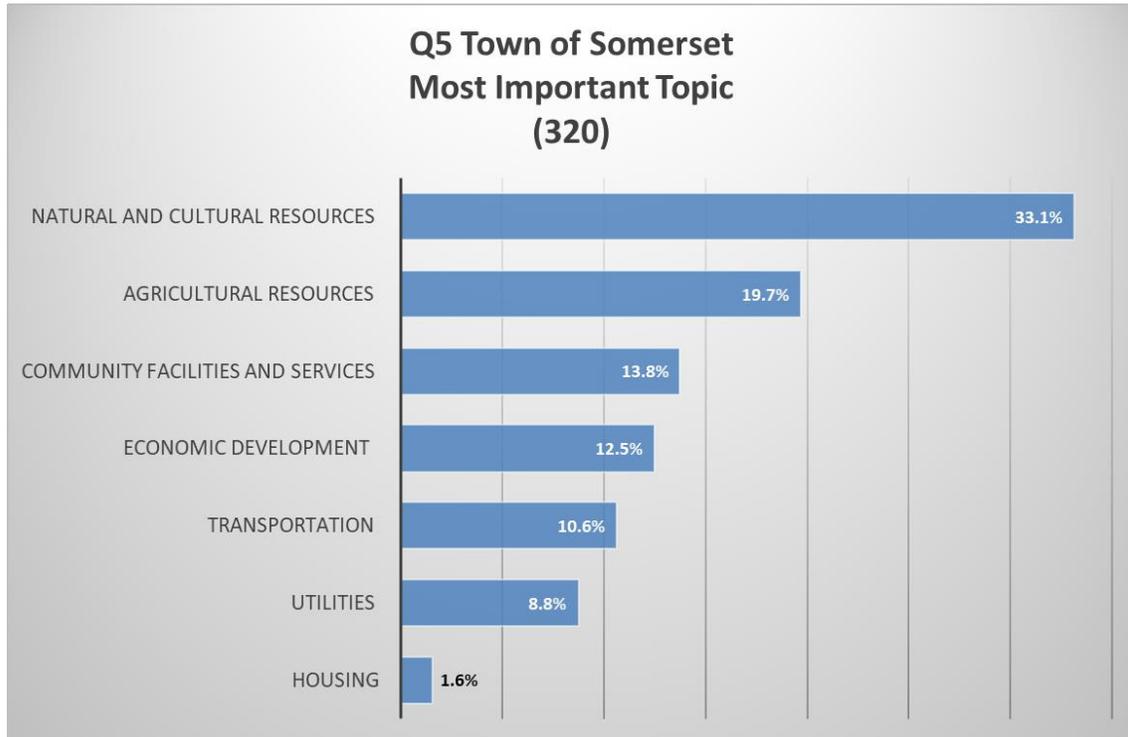
### Public Hearing and Meetings

St. Croix County staff presented the draft 2023 Town of Somerset comprehensive plan at public joint Board and Plan Commission meetings from January to April 2023 to gather information and solicit any plan corrections. On May 3, 2023, the Town of Somerset public officials held a public hearing to gather public comment on the draft 2023 Town of Somerset comprehensive plan. The plan was made available for public review and comment 10 days prior to the public hearing both online at the project webpage and a paper copy at Town Hall.

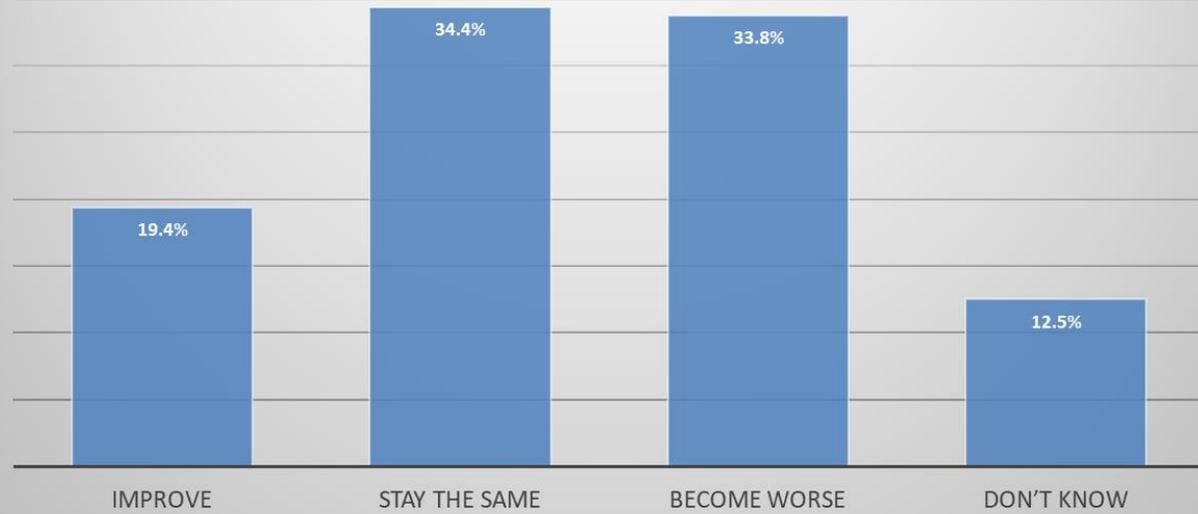
# Survey Demographics



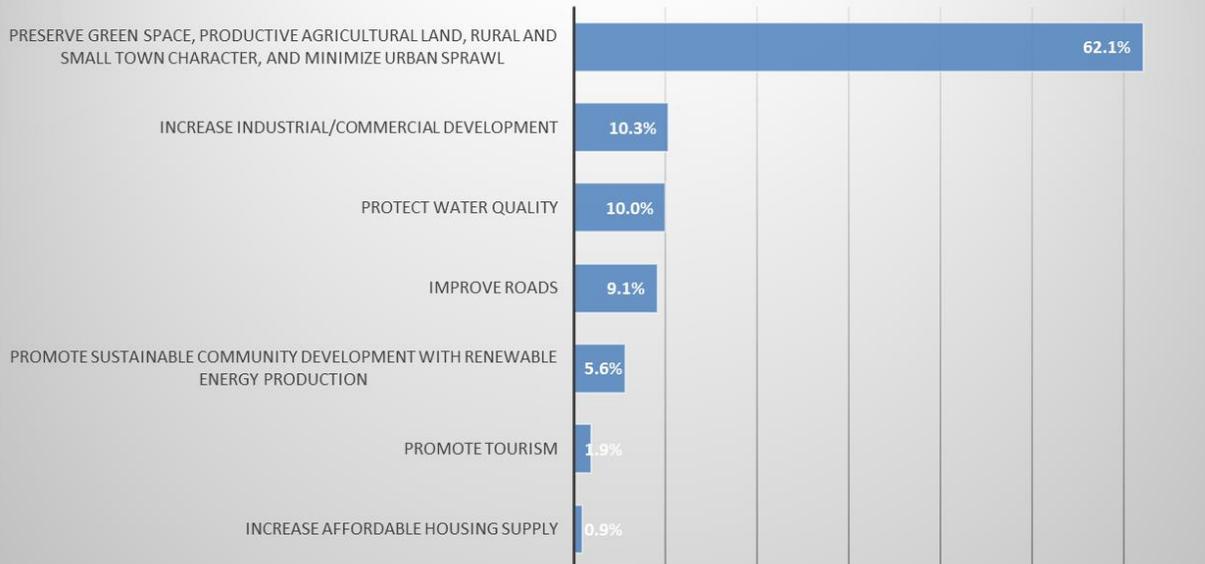
## Quality of Life Survey Question Results



**Q7 Over the next 10 years, do you think the quality of life in Town of Somerset will:  
(320)**



**Q8 Town of Somerset Most Important Action  
(319)**



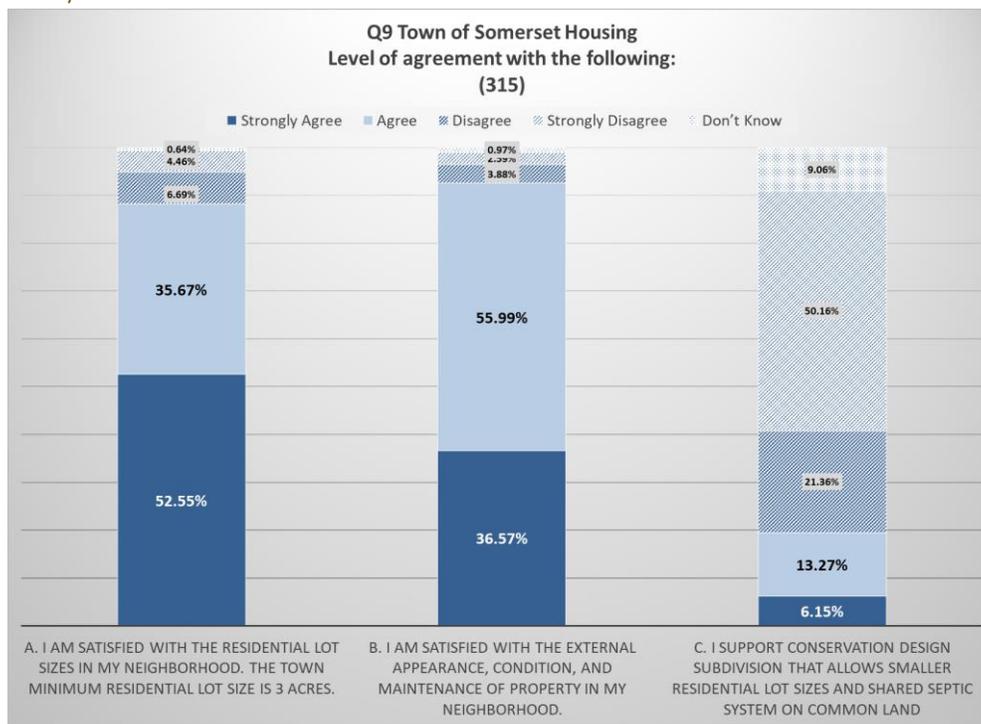
## Housing Public Participation Results

The following public participation results were gathered at a public meeting vision session and online survey that solicited public opinion in each comprehensive plan element. More information about the public vision session and online survey processes can be found in the introduction chapter. The results of the vision session and survey are summarized below in this plan topic area.

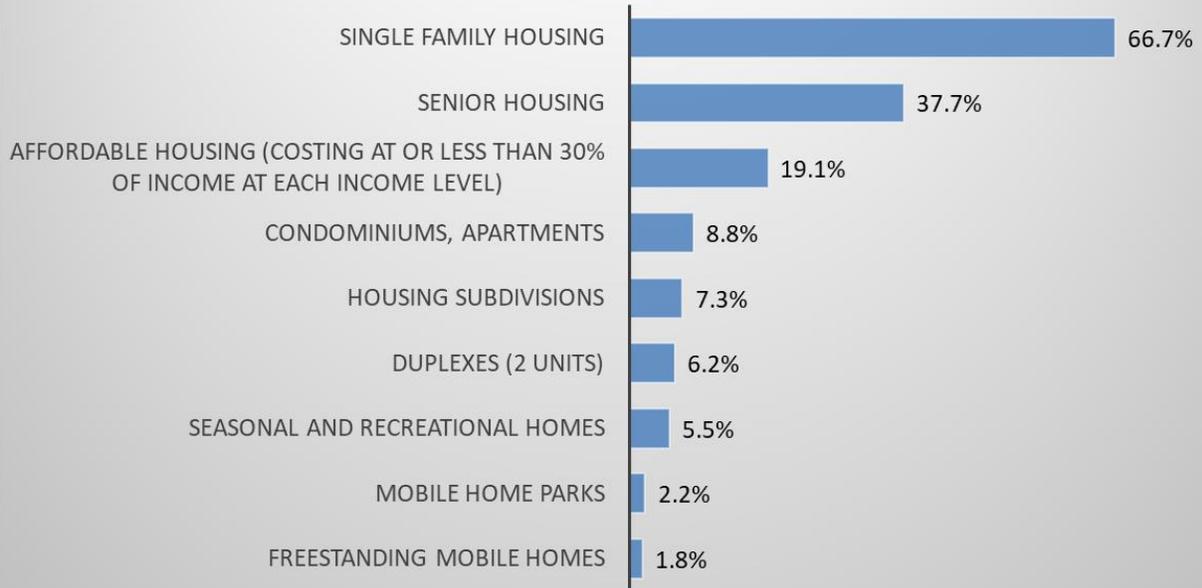
### Housing Vision Session Summary

1. Residential lot size: Maintain current regulation of 3-acre minimum (4), question about increasing to 5 acre minimum unless conservation development, Conservation design is allowed
2. Residential development placement: Keep development in or adjacent to Village (3) Keep high development towards village, Build-up in Village, Focus multi-family home in/on lots adjacent to village or in conservation development elsewhere
3. Housing maintenance: Code enforcement enhancement; Junk accumulation stuff; Homeowner association – telling what to do
4. Rural lifestyle: Don't want suburban mentality; Balance rural feel with development; Buyers should be aware of where buying
5. Landscape design: Keeping woodland & resources; Incorporating natural beauty into design – Buffers, Infrastructure support for growth
6. Housing Type: Concern about longevity of mobile homes

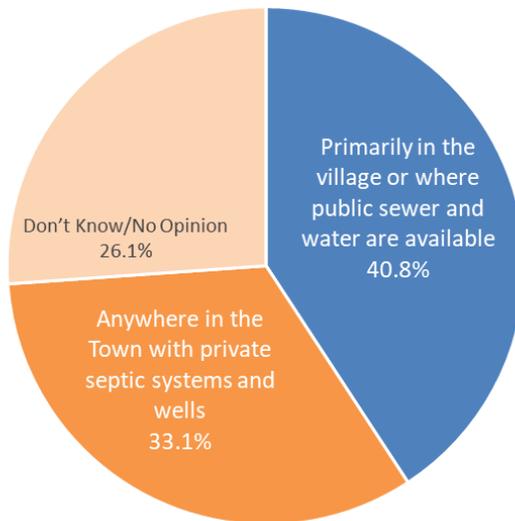
### Housing Survey Results



**Q10 Town of Somerset Housing:  
More of the following housing types are needed (Check all that apply)  
(273)**



**Q11 Town of Somerset Housing:  
New homes should be built: (Select one)  
(314)**



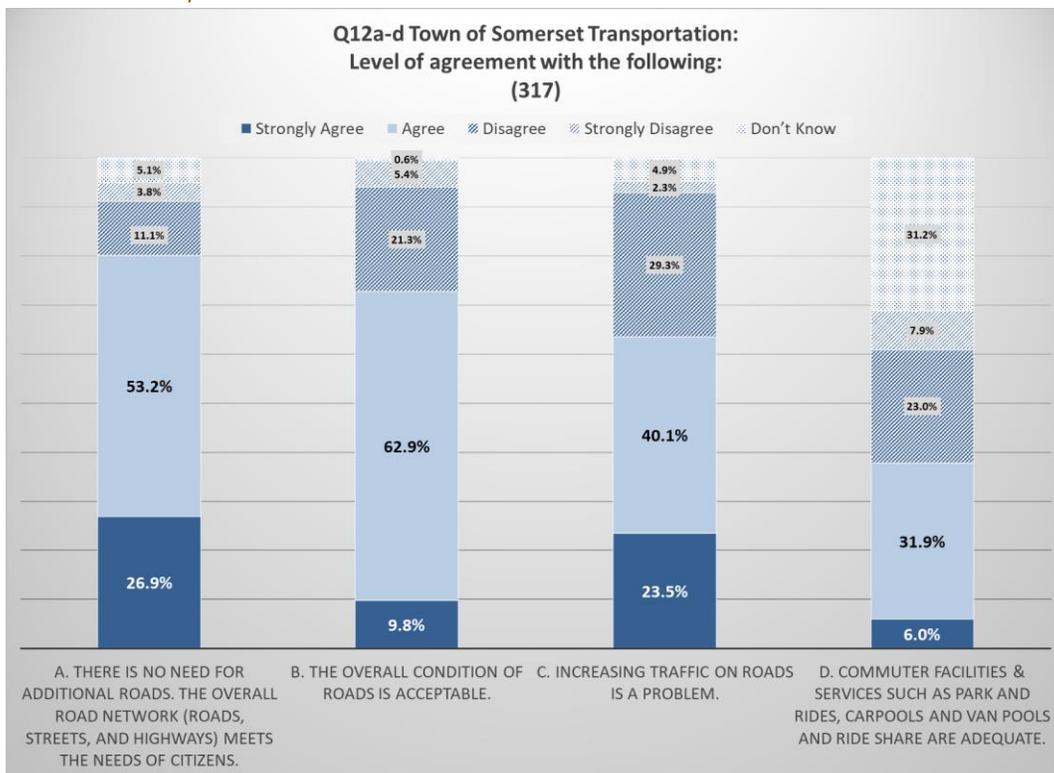
## Transportation Public Participation Results

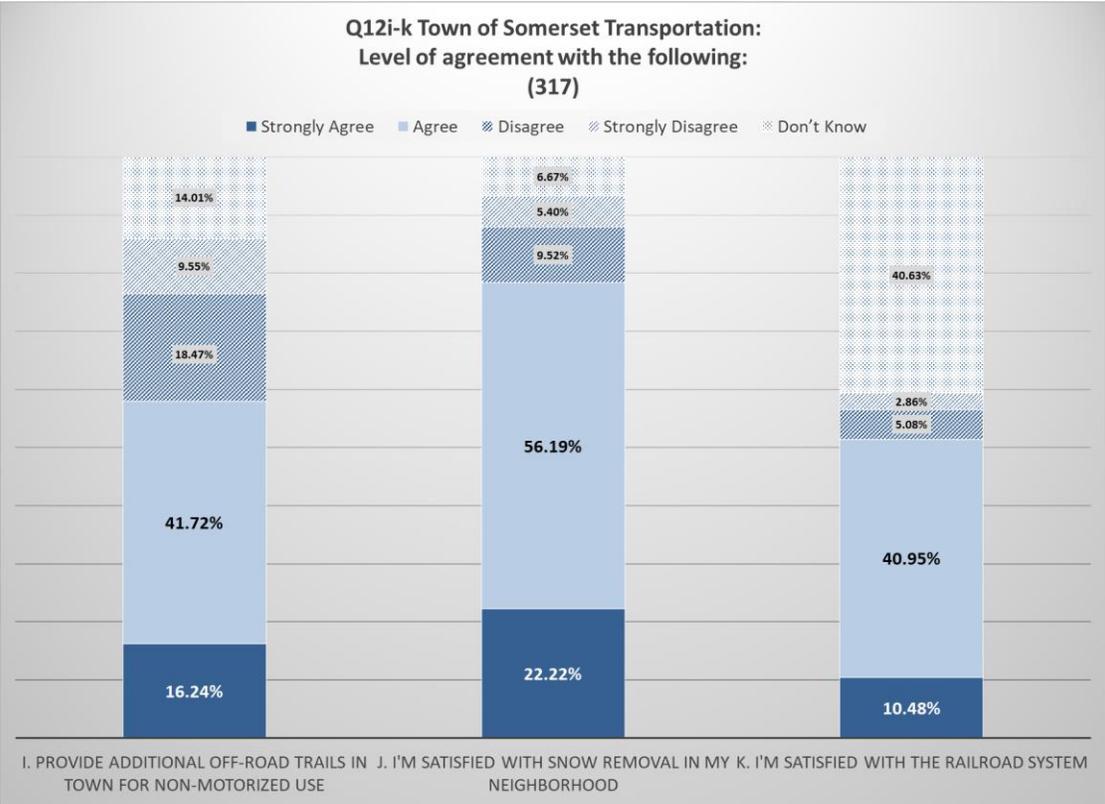
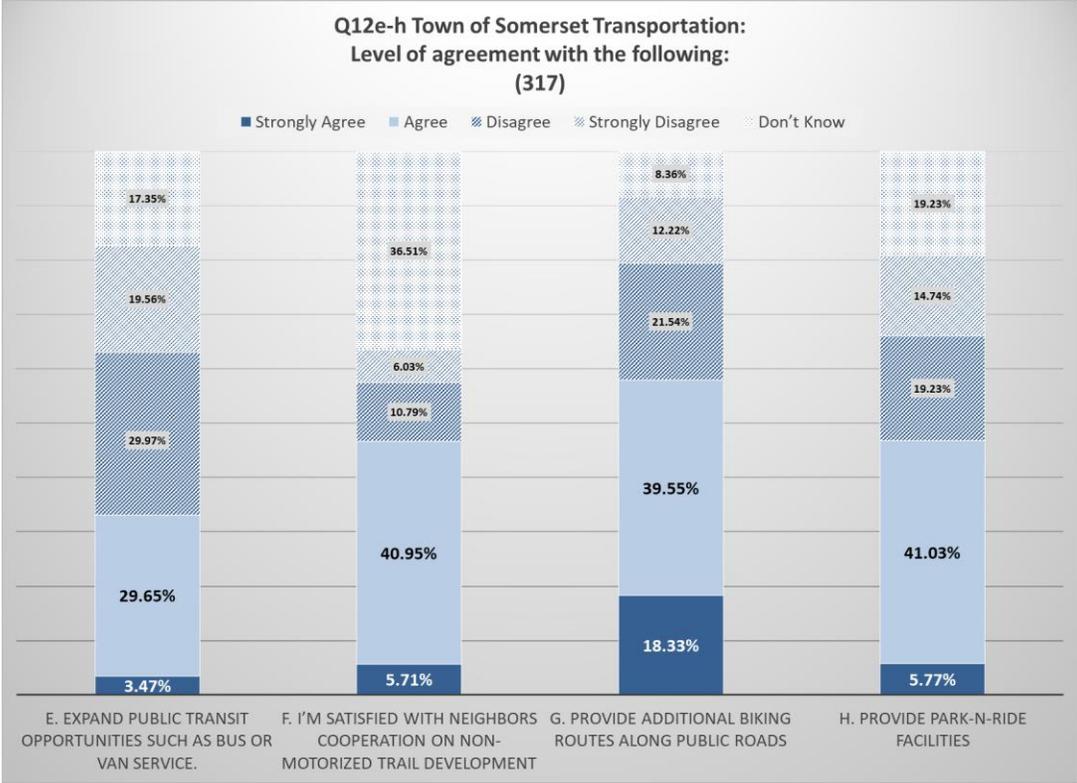
The following public participation results were gathered at a public meeting vision session and online survey that solicited public opinion in each comprehensive plan element. More information about the public vision session and online survey processes can be found in the introduction chapter. The results of the vision session and survey are summarized below in this plan topic area.

### Transportation Vision Session Summary:

1. **Safety:** Road safety was discussed including widening roads, adding buffers, expanding shoulders and speed control.
2. **Road Network - Design:** Overall participants were happy with the road network. Since the new St. Croix Crossing bridge construction, traffic has increased. Some detailed road improvements were discussed for 200th & 35 and better designed collector streets to handle increased traffic on local roads, that by-pass the village from 35 to the northern residential neighborhoods.
3. **Road Maintenance:** Overall participants were happy with the road maintenance.
4. **ATVs:** ATV were discussed and several questions arose regarding opening all roads to access, enforcement, speed limits and signage.
5. **Bicycles, Walking:** Bicycle and walking trail discussion topics included the Town's efforts as funding allows, additional trail locations, widening bike paths, and safety concerns. Detailed improvements that were recorded include extending the bike path from 35 north, and the addition of an off-road bike trail off 35.
6. **Railroad:** Railroad discussion topics included noise and horn usage, upkeep of train tracks and maintenance of the rail buffer.

### Transportation Survey Results



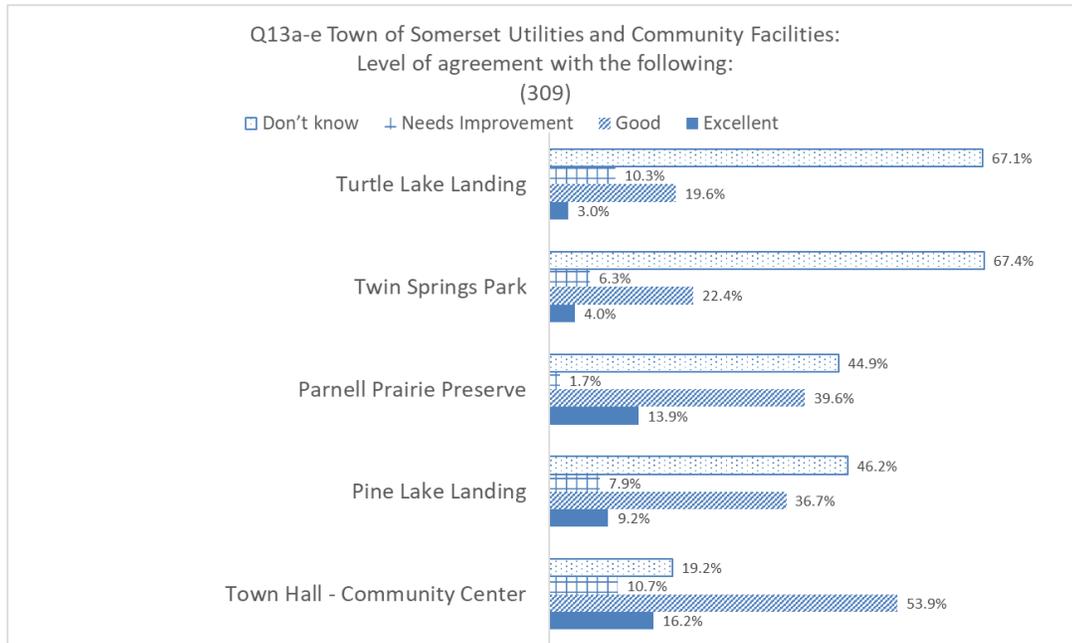


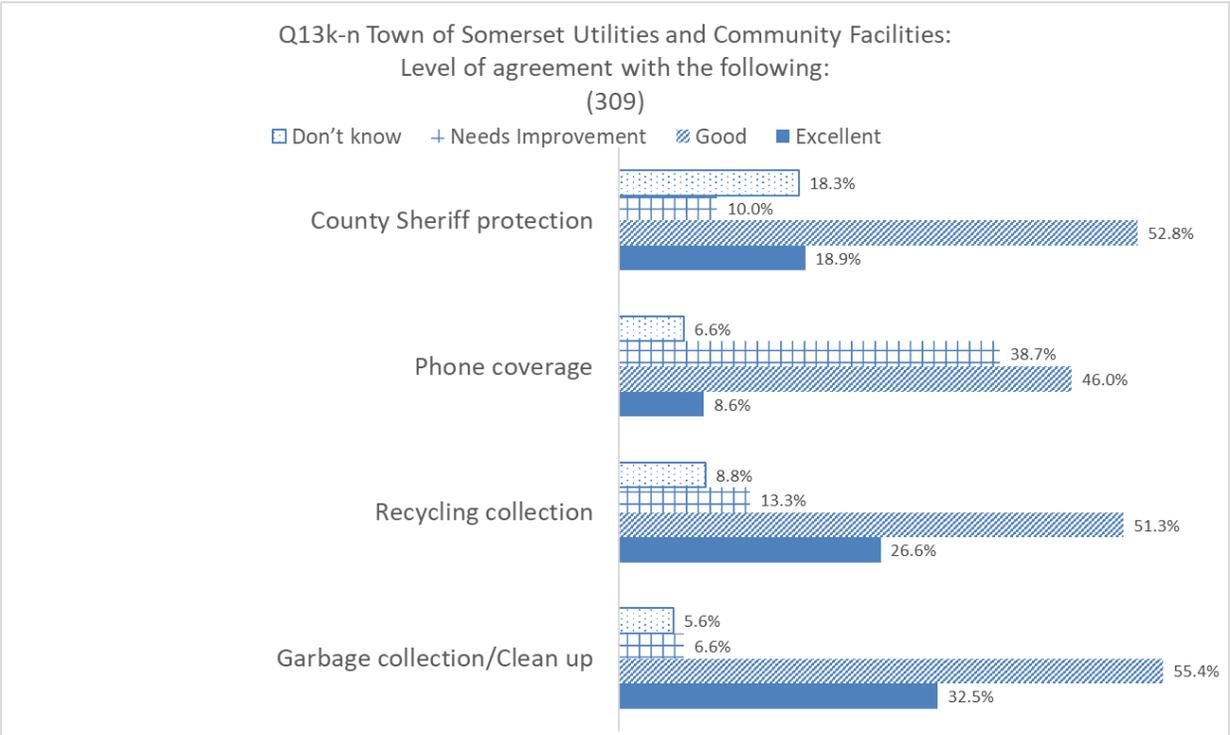
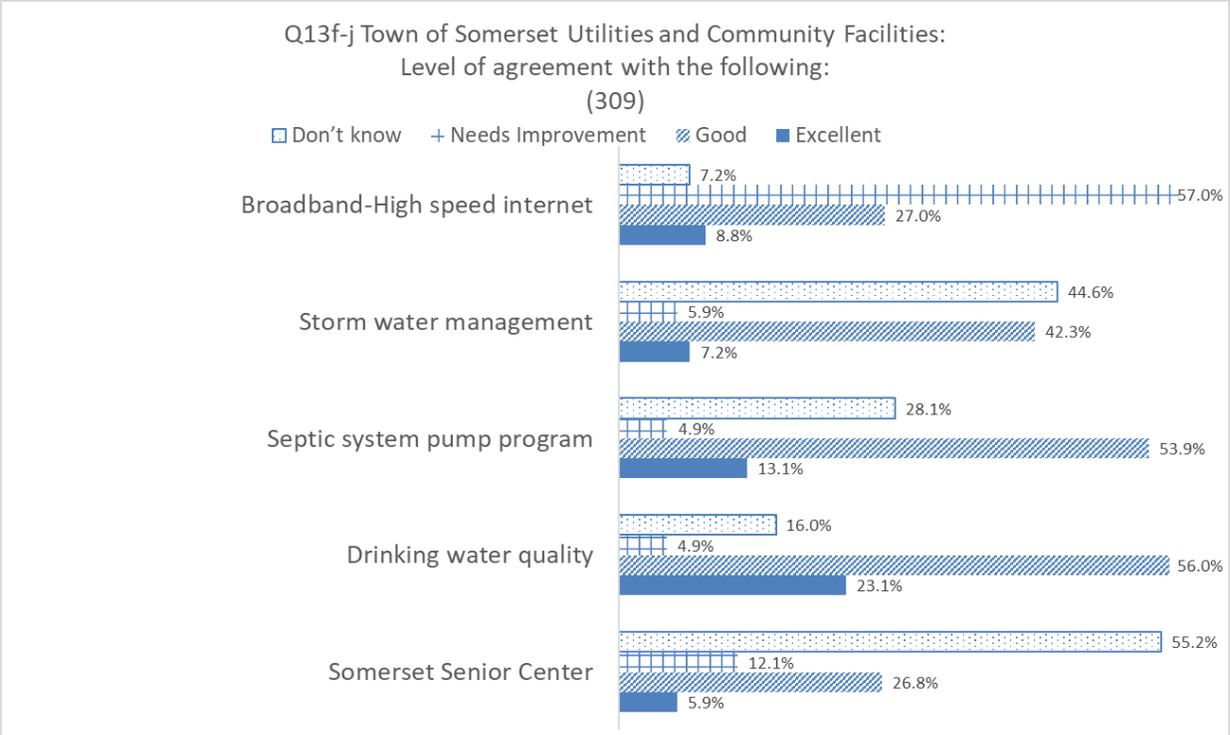
## Utilities & Community Facilities

The purpose of the Utilities & Community Facilities section is to document, analyze and guide the future development of the Utilities & Community Facilities. Utilities & Community Facilities Vision Session Summary:

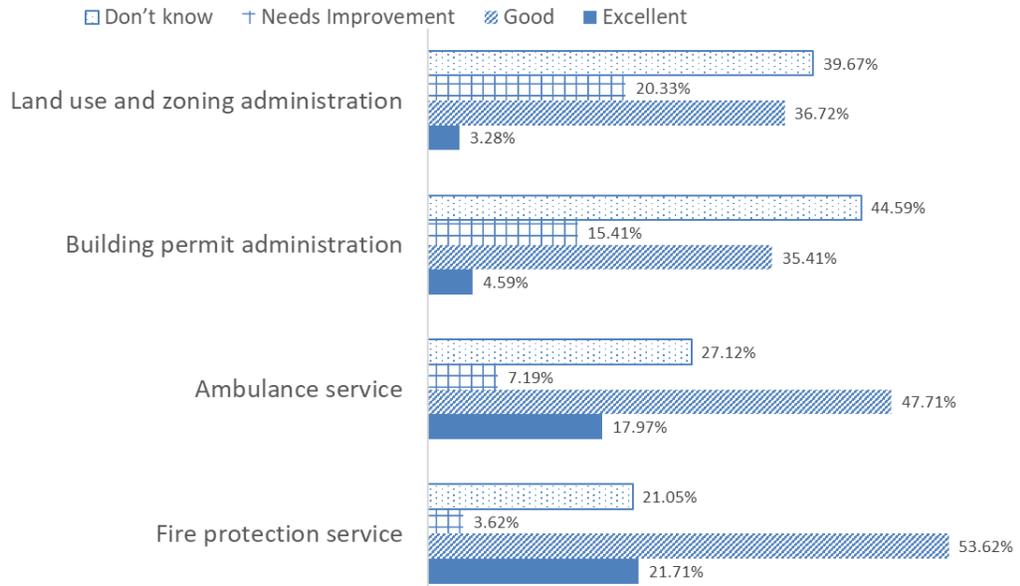
1. Internet: (4) Unreliable internet; Keep internet coming; Missing broadband, bring in more cellular towers if not broadband
2. Parks & Trails: (11)
  - i. More parks/ walking opportunities included in development;
  - ii. Connect developments on busier east/west collectors;
  - iii. Grants for walking trails,
  - iv. Turtle Lake improvements;
  - v. Twin spring park - parking limited difficult to change;
  - vi. Somerset/ Marine Landing;
  - vii. Dog park;
  - viii. Parnel Prairie frisbee golf;
  - ix. Ice Arena
  - x. Community center & theatre
  - xi. More boat landings
3. Water Systems: Water quality tests
4. Electricity: (2) Improve to electric grids – outages; 3 power companies (legal monopolies - no one to trust)
5. Ambulance - first responders
6. Ordinances in Township are not consistent with county, documentation & ownership of ordinance - conflicts
7. Promotion of and signage for public places open to residents
8. Natural gas - no communication with gas company
9. Capped solar panel reimbursement, Talk like it's wanted but no follow through

## Utilities & Community Facilities Survey Results

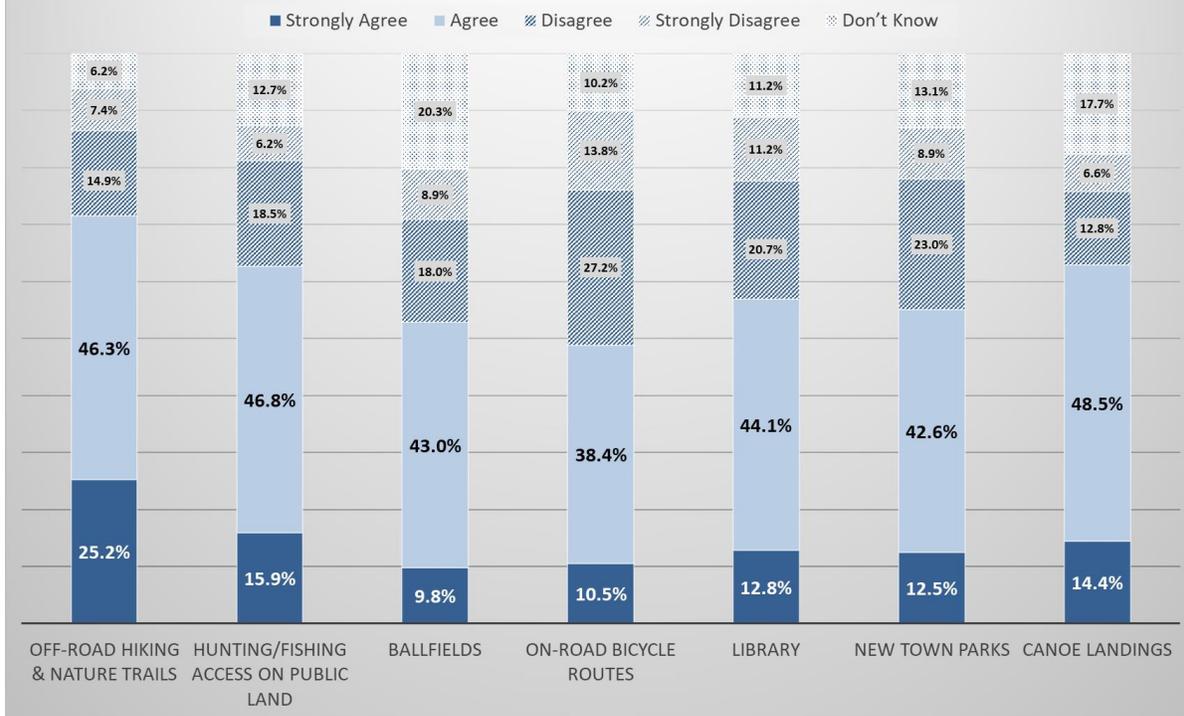




Q13o-r Town of Somerset Utilities and Community Facilities:  
Level of agreement with the following:  
(309)



Q14 Town of Somerset Utilities & Community Facilities  
Level of agreement with the following uses for public funds  
to expand facilities or improve:  
(310)



## Agricultural, Natural, & Cultural Resources

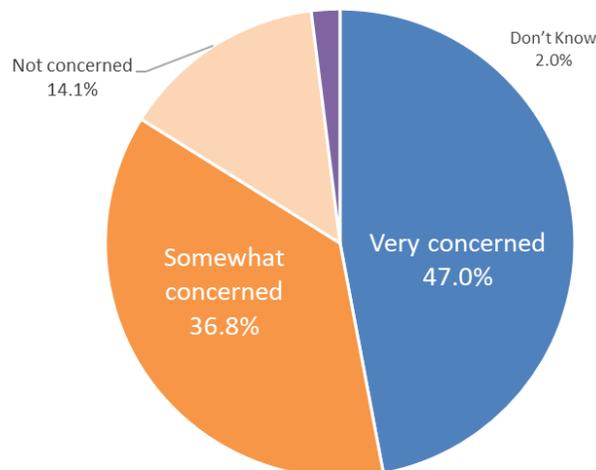
The purpose of the Agricultural, Natural, & Cultural Resources section is to document and analyze the conservation and promotion of the effective management, of resources.

### Agricultural, Natural, & Cultural Resources Vision Session Summary:

1. Wetlands/Water: Public swimming open; Strong wetland/shoreland buffers and enforcement; Water & well back-up plan
2. Lakes: Turtle Lake, manage cattails, invasive species, well used; Pine Lake upgrades
3. Rivers: Recreation opportunities along riverway, Public access to Apple River & St. Croix River; More authorized access to Apple River, Riverway historical sites?
4. Agriculture: More agricultural preservation areas, encourage & promote, Land is getting to expensive to buy for farmland; Agriculture/ residential conflicts; Good/ better farmland is staying farm
5. Noise / light pollution
6. Preserve Andersen Scout Camp - currently R-2
7. Parks with dense development
8. Planning good connections
9. Be responsible stewards
10. Spaces set aside for natural beauty & the future

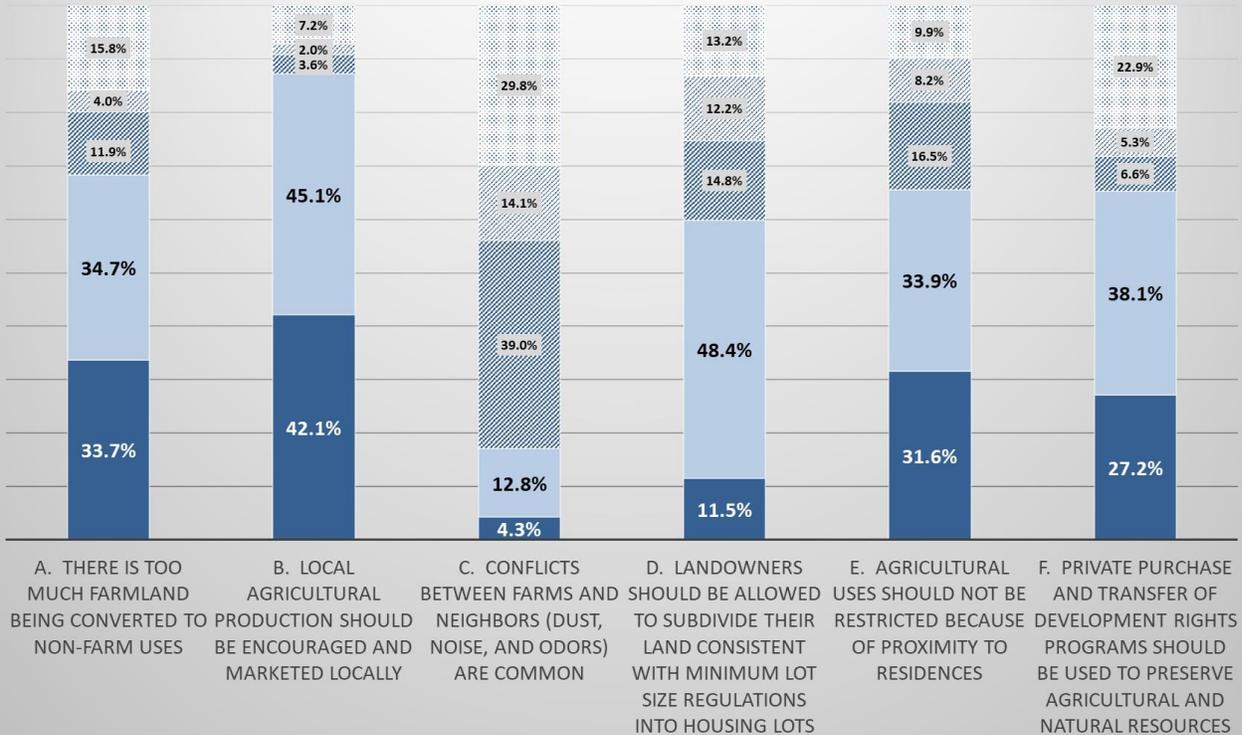
### Agricultural Resources Survey Results

Q15 Town of Somerset Agricultural Resources:  
How concerned are you if farmland in the Town  
is converted to non-farm uses?  
(304)

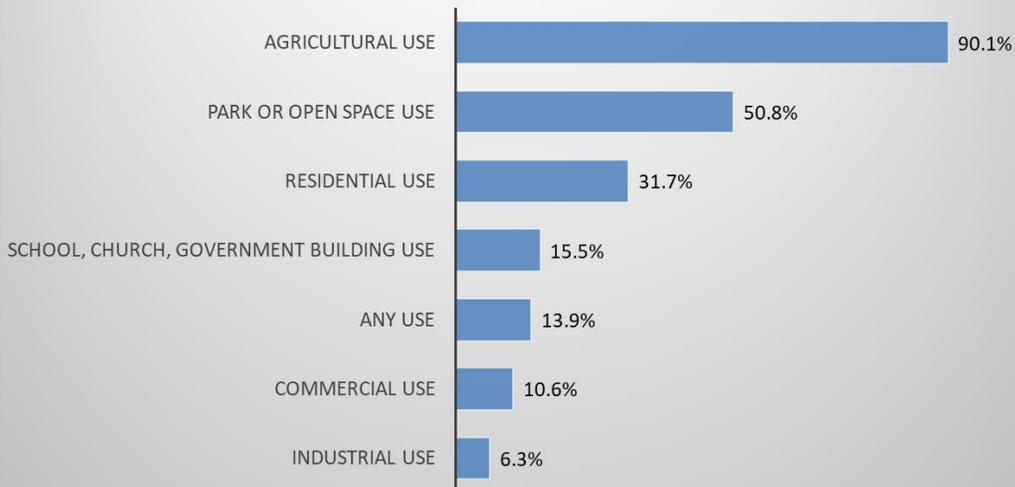


**Q16 Town of Somerset Agricultural Resources**  
**Level of agreement with the following :**  
**(305)**

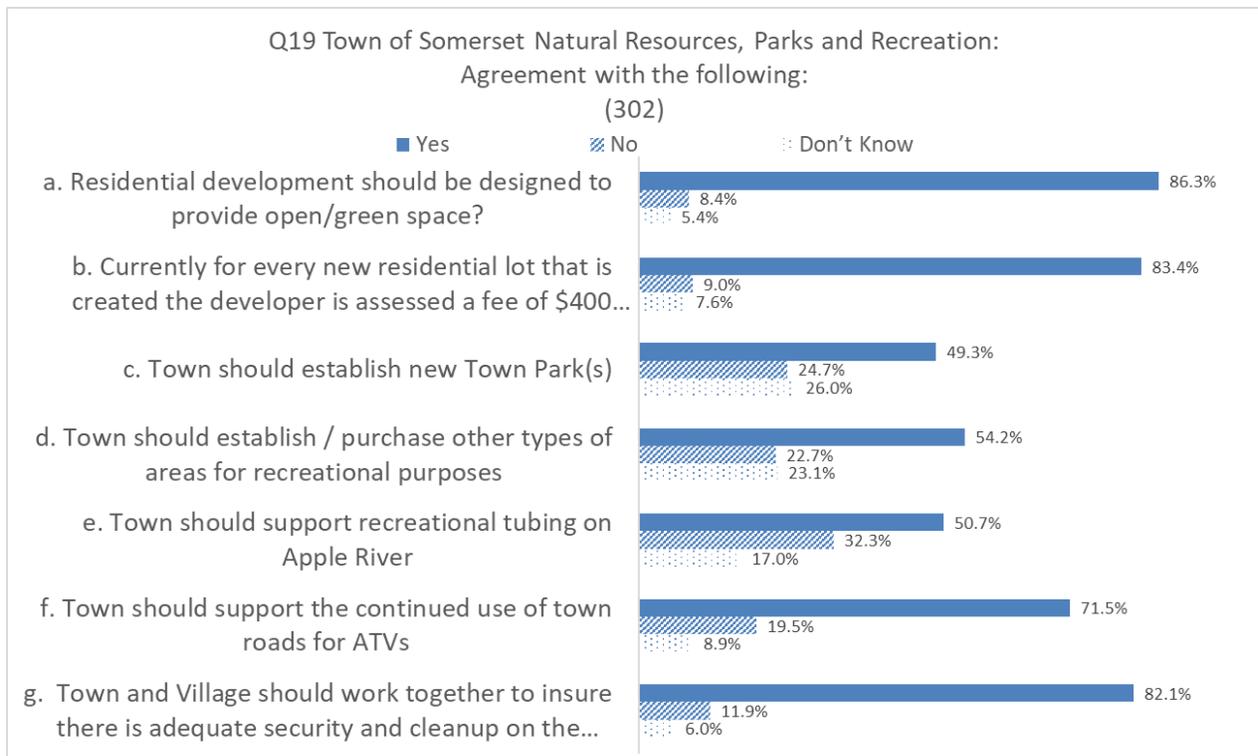
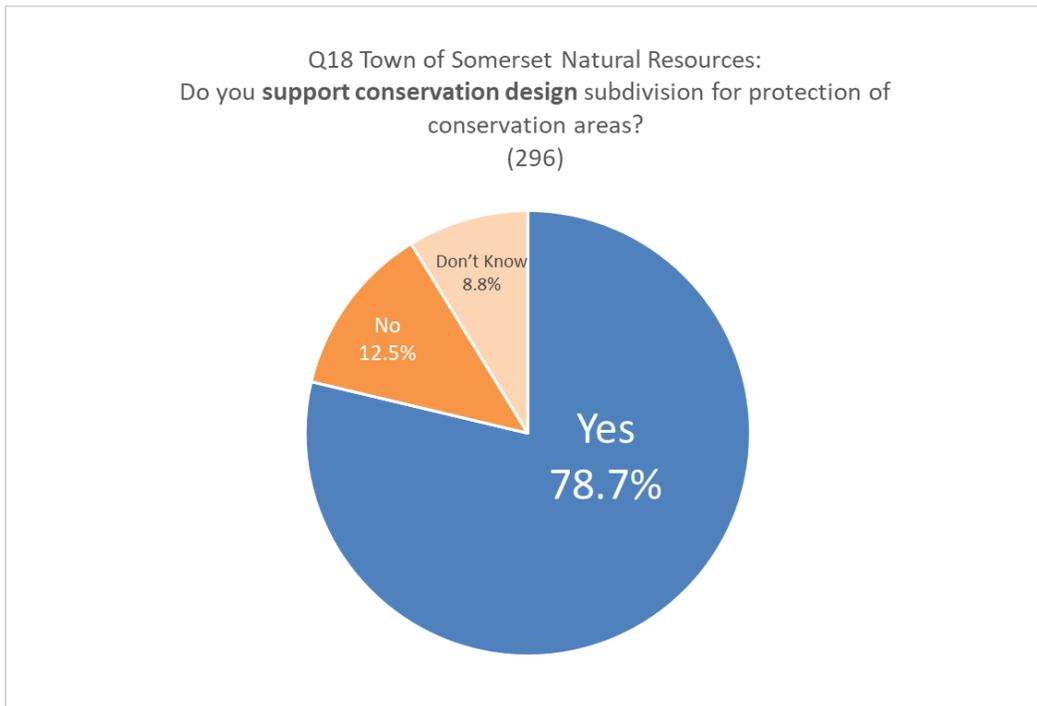
■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree ■ Don't Know

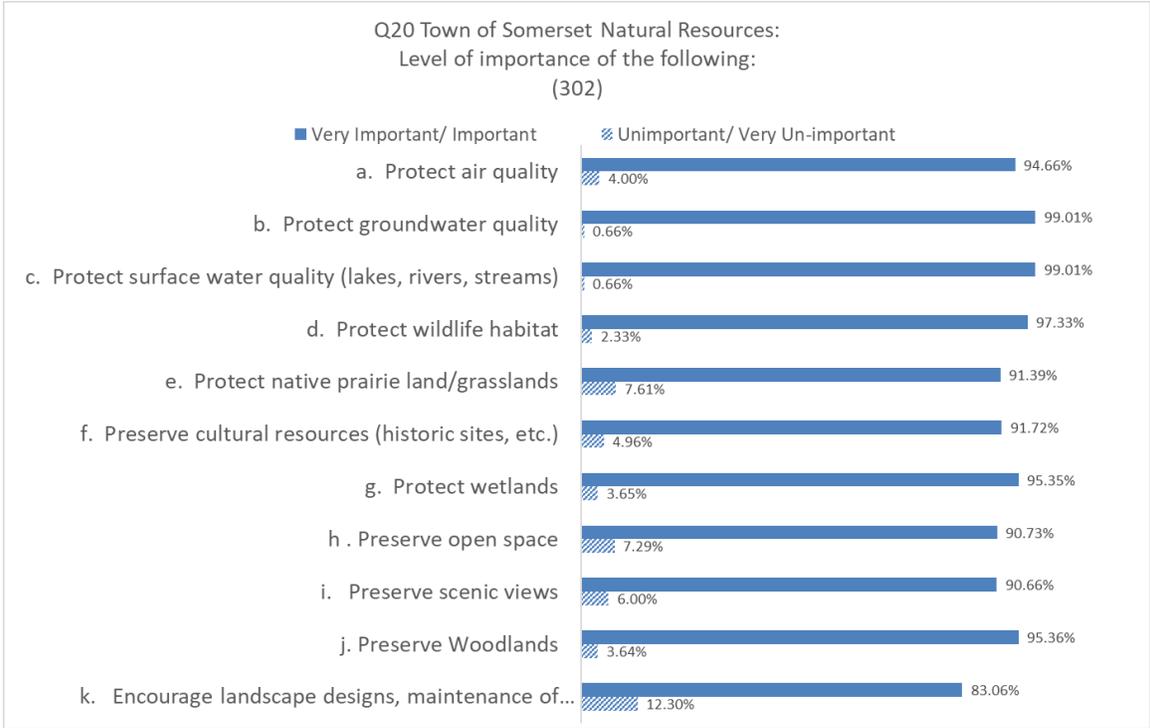


**Q17 Town of Somerset Agricultural Resources:**  
**Productive agricultural land should be used for**  
**(Check all that apply)**  
**(303)**

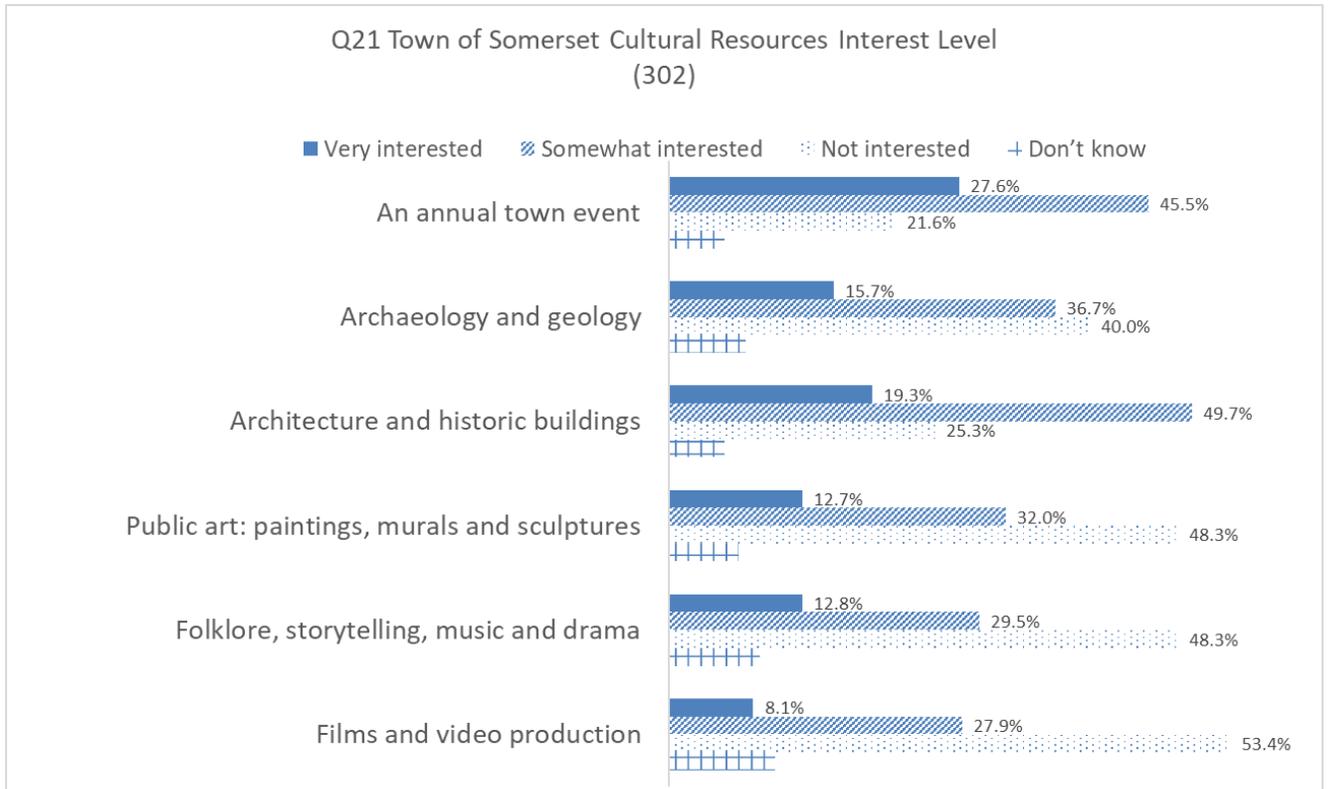


Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation Survey Results





Cultural Resources Survey Results



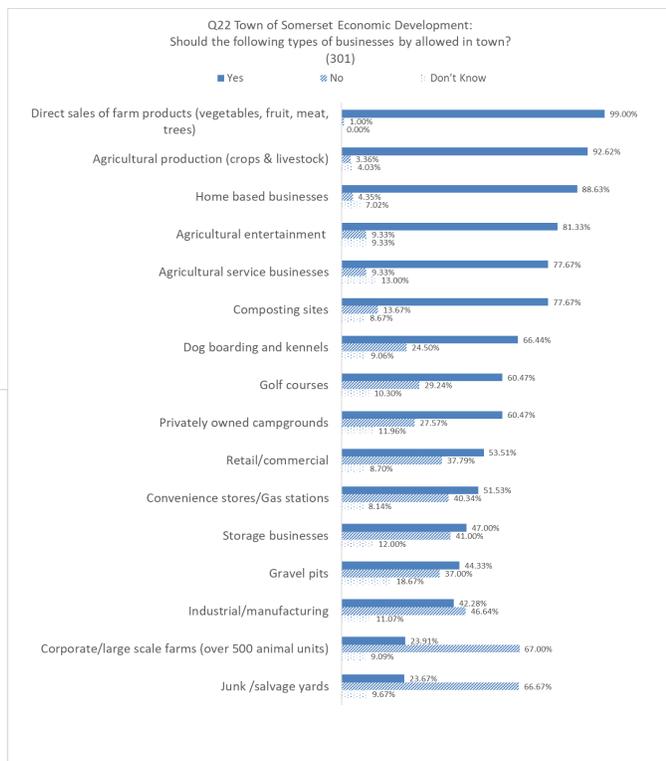
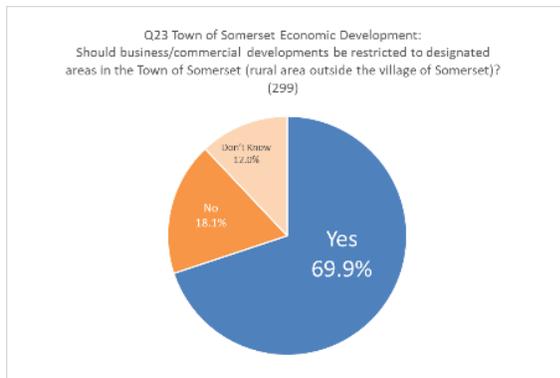
## Economic Development

The purpose of the Economic Development section is to document, analyze, and promote the stabilization, retention or expansion, of the economic base and quality employment opportunities.

### Economic Development Vision Session Summary:

1. Commercial – Industrial Design: Development standards – lighting; Light pollution
2. Locations of commercial/industrial uses: In between NR & Stillwater; Contain commercial not on 35; Keep commercial and industrial along 35 and VV, help offset taxes to residents; If industrial development, keep it in industrial park; Limit industry in environmental sensitive areas and mitigate contamination; Much of commercial development is going to village
3. Type of commercial/industrial uses: Promote restaurants; Farm to table and community farming; Ski area
4. Responsible development
5. Youth employment promotion
6. Example contaminated site - Parnell Prairie is former town dump, was redeveloped in 1980's

### Economic Development Survey Results



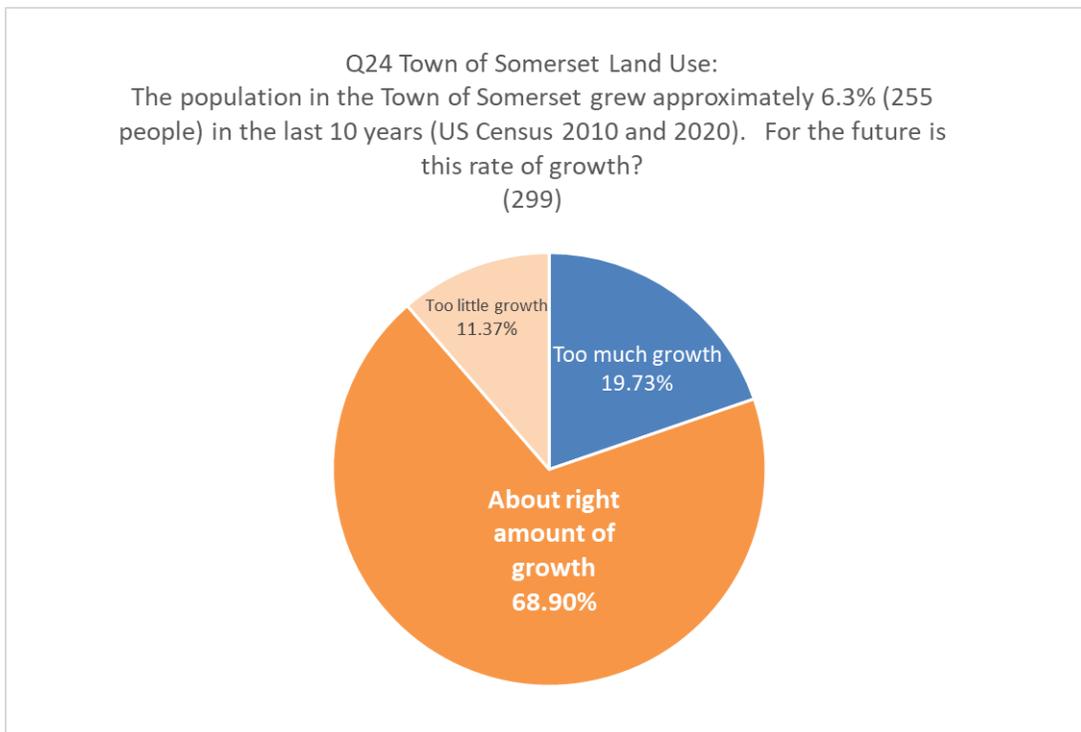
## Land Use

The purpose of the Land Use section is to document, analyze, and guide the future development and redevelopment of public and private property. Participants were given the following sub-topics to discuss in small groups, with notes from the vision session below.

### Land Use Vision Session Summary:

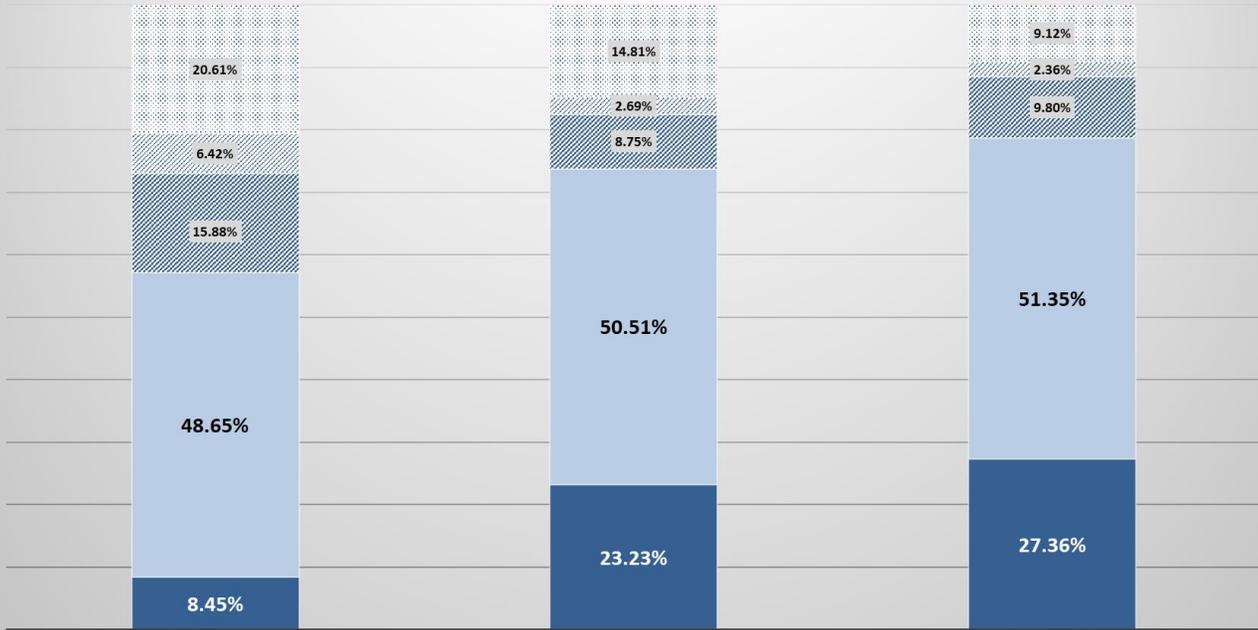
1. Conservation of Open Space in Development: Conservation design – limits; Open space in development, walk paths, parks, land dedication; horse trails; Live here because we like land, lack of light pollution; Certain types of agriculture needs a buffer from residential
2. Lot size and density: 3 acre minimum unless conservation development, What is maximum density?
3. Opportunities for redevelopment: Redevelopment corridors, existing camp; Repurpose mining (gravel pits) when they are ready or it becomes public land
4. Growth: Roads, growth development; Controlled growth, slow it down
5. Animal Operations: Most large cattle operations are gone; Limited area where Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) allowed
6. Access by foot and vehicles to Apple and St. Croix River
7. Pesticide, herbicides in water
8. Incentives for solar, reimbursements
9. What percentages of land use types?
10. What are we supposed to do about unaffordability?

### Land Use, Development, Growth, and Zoning Survey Results



**Q25 Town of Somerset Land Use  
Level of agreement with the following:  
(297)**

■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ▨ Disagree ▨ Strongly Disagree ▨ Don't Know

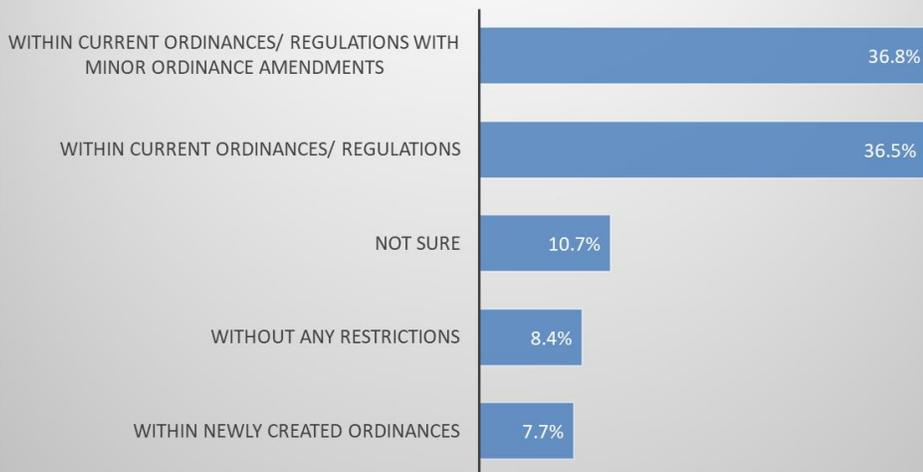


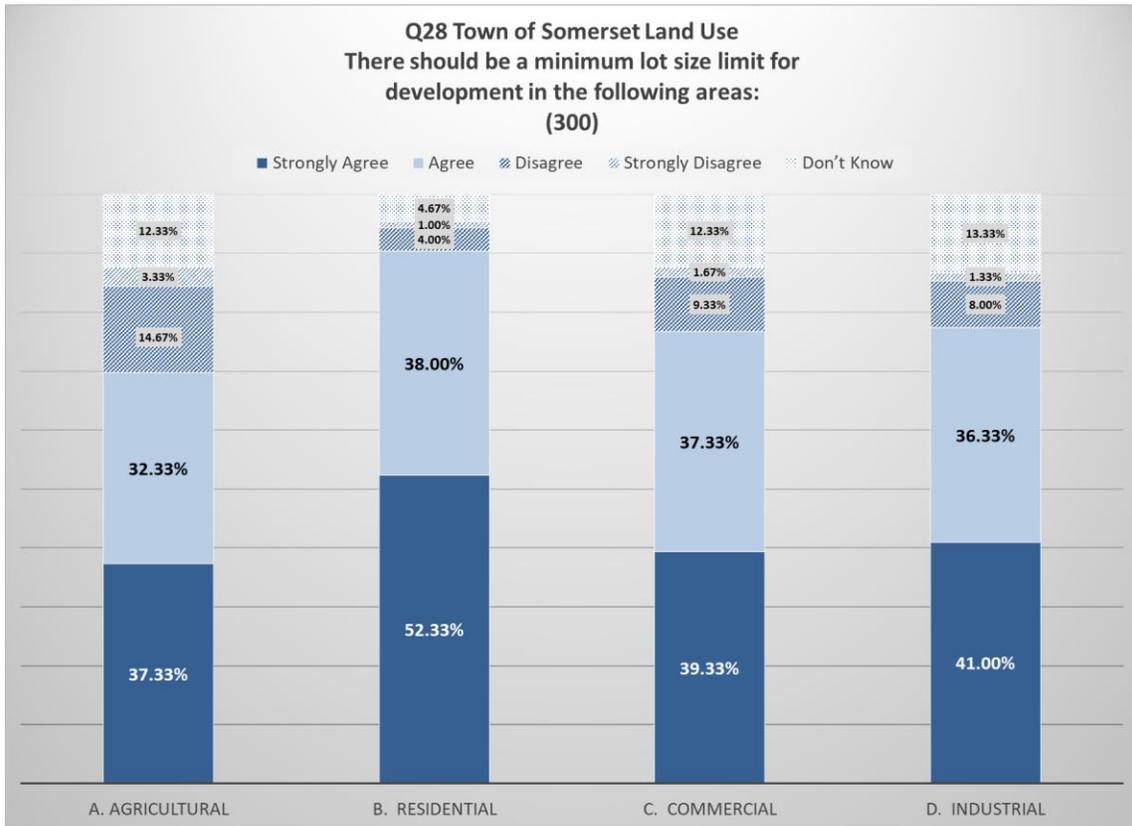
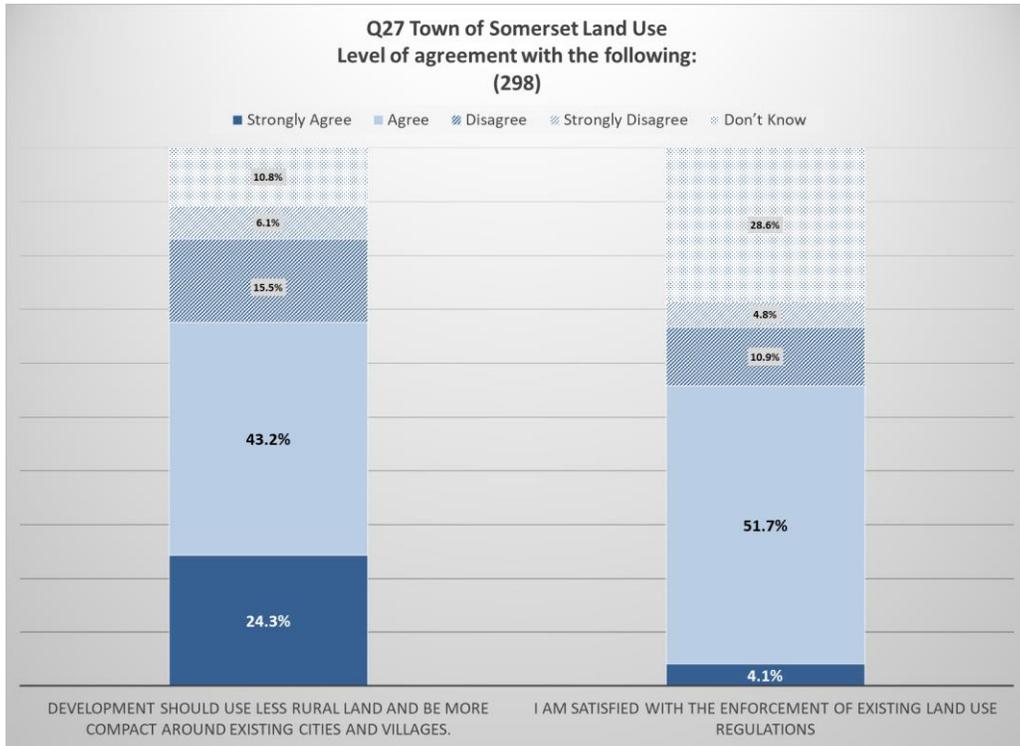
A. I AM SATISFIED WITH THE WAY THE TOWN OF SOMERSET IS DEVELOPING UNDER THE PRESENT LAND USE ZONING AND SUBDIVISION ORDINANCES

B. I SUPPORT STRONG ENFORCEMENT OF TOWN AND COUNTY ZONING ORDINANCES.

C. I SUPPORT STRONG ENFORCEMENT OF BUILDING CODES AND PERMITS.

**Q26 Town of Somerset Land Use:  
Land owners should be allowed to develop their land:  
(Select one)  
(299)**







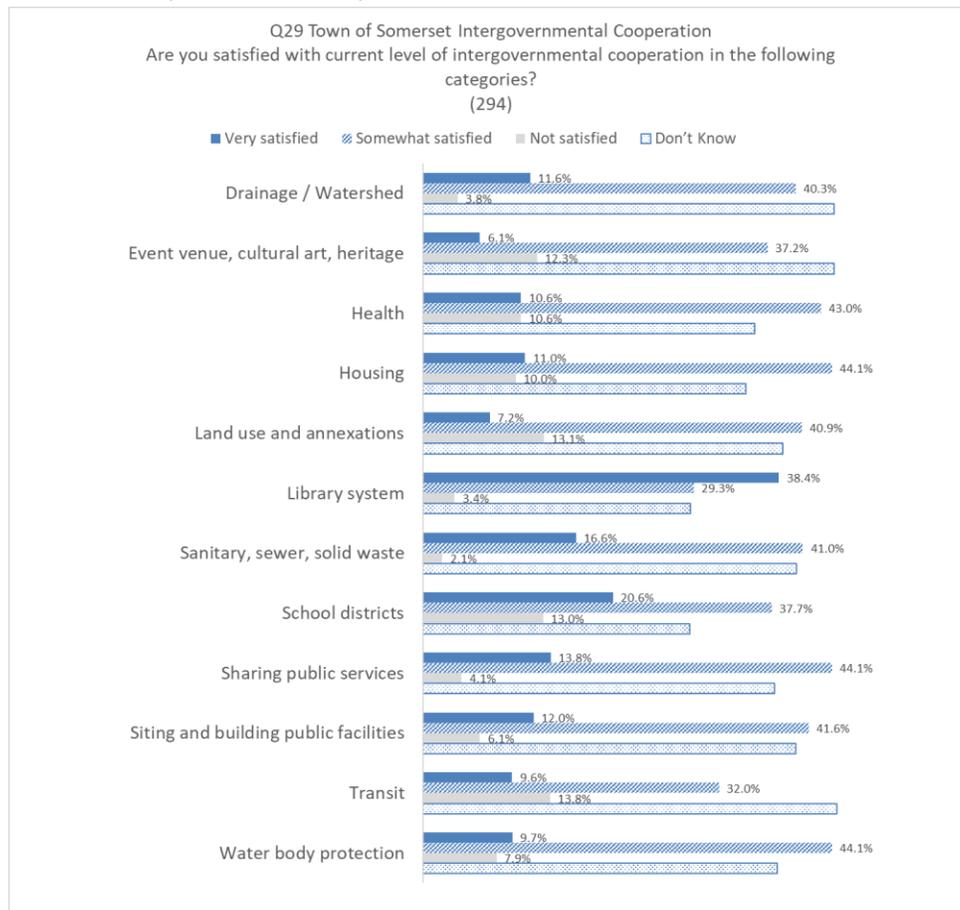
## Intergovernmental Cooperation

The purpose of the Intergovernmental Cooperation section is to document and analyze joint planning and decision making with other jurisdictions. Participants were given the following sub-topics to discuss in small groups, with notes from the vision session below.

### Intergovernmental Cooperation Notes Vision Session Summary:

1. Work on comprehensive plan with Village
2. School districts: Recreation areas for kids: ballfields, biking; Charter school - Education options, choices; 3 school districts
3. Housing: Senior housing, senior center; More information about available housing programs
4. Transportation: Transit for seniors; Taxi or other transportation for elderly or handicapped or mobility for everyone; Park & ride - 35/VV intersection; Better snow plowing
5. Parks: Work with school district and village on parks; More access to national park lands
6. Annexation coordination between village/town
7. Difficult to work with village for a variety of reasons
8. County library system
9. Village of Somerset
10. Tax base primarily to schools, tax allocation to village is twice the amount to the town
11. Town is fiscally responsible and has no debt

## Intergovernmental Cooperation Survey Results



### Issues & Opportunities – Implementation

The purpose of the Issues & Opportunities – Implementation section is to document, analyze, and make a statement of overall objectives, policies, goals and programs. At the vision session participants were given an opportunity to revisit all the elements of the comprehensive plan including: Housing, Transportation, Utilities & Community Facilities, Agricultural, Natural, & Cultural Resources, Economic Development, Intergovernmental Cooperation, and Land Use. The summary of the small group discussions of general issues and opportunities is written below.

#### Issues & Opportunities – Implementation Vision Session Summary:

1. Transportation: Roadway congestion and better access if developments are going in; Bike trails & shoulders - offroad on 35; More turning lanes/ passing lanes on 35; Electric vehicle infrastructure, disposal of batteries and vehicles, Charging stations
2. Environment and Renewable Energy: Solar-wind farm requirements; Environmental responsibility
3. River Access: Can federal lands be better utilized? (St. Croix River); Ability to get to land on river; One more boat launch
4. Growth and development: 20-year infrastructure; Additional land/ public space with development; Responsible growth
5. Overall Vision: Guiding principles & keywords, Vision statement



6. Joint cooperation for funding, schools, village & town

### Issues & Opportunities Survey Results Summary

Survey respondents were asked to identify any strengths (Sources of pride, things to preserve), weaknesses (Areas for improvement), issues and opportunities (Suggested changes or ideas) in the town. One hundred forty-three (143) respondents provided text answers summarized by the list of key themes below.

1. **Small town feel** (27) – Preserve small town feel, country living, quiet, and rural landscape. The rural composition is a legacy to Somerset and should be protected to reflect that in future growth.
2. **Preserve Natural Resources** (14) – Preserve natural resources and wildlife habitat, environmentally sensitive areas, protection and management for Parnell Prairie keep native prairie, waterways. Preserve the beauty of the St. Croix River valley. Develop a master plan that protects our land and water resources. The local lakes and wildlife management areas are an excellent example of recreational open space and should be preserved and even expanded, restrict development to preserve open space
3. **Too much growth** (12) – Increased traffic, noise, demand on schools and public services
4. **Bike-walk trails** (12) – Support trail development and connections for safety and to encourage healthy lifestyle for residents
5. **Parks, Water Access** (12) – Support for funding parks and recreational areas and ensuring quality maintenance, upgrades to playgrounds, provide garbage services at all of the boat landings
6. **Preserve Agriculture** (9) – Preservation of agricultural land is a priority. Agriculture and livestock should be considered a norm.
7. **Intergovernmental cooperation** (2) - Ensure quality services through collaboration. Address the overlap between the Town and Village with planning and working to together to benefit the community as a whole.
8. **Support Sheriff – Law Enforcement** (6) – Support for department sustaining its current level of services and enforcement, need for more enforcement along Apple River, protect reputation of community through enforcement of noise ordinances, improvement in management of the campgrounds, especially the unreasonably loud concerts at River's Edge and Apple River Hideaway, Restrict Rivers Edge (3) – Reduce noise and restrict hours of operation, More enforcement of noise disturbances is the township
9. **Lot size** (Minimum residential) – The current minimum is 3-acre lots
  - a. Increase minimum residential lot size (7)
  - b. Support current minimum 3-acre lot size (5)
  - c. Encourage conservation design (3)
  - d. Making the lot sizes larger for residential development would keep the amount of housing down
10. **Improve internet** (7)
11. **Policy** (5) – Develop unbiased, updated policies and plans that address the growing needs of the community including road improvements, schools, transit services, utilities. Create ordinances for the types and sizes of temporary and permanent signage



## 12. Tubing

- a. Restrict tubing (6)
- b. Support tubing (5) preserve the Apple River and also some form of tubing, Keep tubing but more family friendly (maybe no alcohol), and some security

13. **Businesses** – recruit businesses, job creation (2), more restaurants (1), retail (2), have enough businesses don't need in town(1), Limit the number of gas stations and convenience stores (1)

14. Keep major industrial and farming operations out of the town (2)

15. Community pride (2) – Promote the town through website

16. Public works – support

17. View corridors – Protect rural landscape with viewshed analysis from highways and major town roads

18. Taxes - reduce school spending (2), Considerably higher tax rates need to be levied on farmland making it more appealing for development

## 19. Transportation suggestions

- i. Need an over pass at 85th street and hwy 64 (4): additional ramp over the highway because the crossing of 64 can be very dangerous as well. Hwy 64 at 85th is becoming dangerously busy and needs an on and off ramp.
- ii. Lights at the RR crossing on at the 38th st and 180th Ave
- iii. Limit train whistle between 10pm and 5 or 6 am
- iv. Wish the cattle pass had been left usable at 2224 Highway 35
- v. Maintain road surfaces (2)
- vi. ATV Access - support the continued use of town roads for ATVs - more enforcement of laws, no ATVs too loud
- vii. No parking on the roadside by Bass Lake boat landing
- viii. Enforcement of speed limits in the area
- ix. Start change the new road development to allow for culdesacs
- x. Add shoulders (2) - to high traffic roads such as 160th Ave, 85th street, shoulders of the roads in the town are too narrow and make for hazardous biking
- xi. Good to have a traffic flow study done to understand the areas needing improvement
- xii. Snow plowing (3) need improvement on 170th Ave and 69th street as in more timely plowing not at 2pm the day after since its only one way in and out. more snow removal equipment/personnel
- xiii. HWY 35 needs to be upgraded by widening it and adding turn lanes etc. Way too many accidents when people are trying to turn against oncoming traffic!
- xiv. 85th Street is too small for the amount of traffic and needs shoulders.
- xv. Would like ditches mowed faster and brush trimmed. Speed on town roads is excessive-more patrol. Please keep lots to 2 per driveway. Do not allow private roads.
- xvi. No passing signs/ turn lane only signs on hwy 35 at intersections going north
- xvii. Put an exit by the school on Hwy 64.

## Appendix B: Highway 64 Stormwater and Wastewater Coalition

In 2012, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed between MN DOT and St. Croix County that outlined funding awarded to St. Croix County to address the potential negative impacts to area resources, including water resources, and specifically the Lower St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, from accelerated growth in St. Croix County influenced by the River Crossing bridge project. The goal of the MOU was to promote natural, cultural and historic resource protection in the St. Croix River watershed, thus helping to preserve water quality and scenic values. A primary purpose of the MOU and funding was to provide support to assist local governments in managing growth through local plans, ordinances and other related tools.

The Highway 64 Stormwater and Wastewater Coalition's was formed in the Summer 2013 in response to the St. Croix River Crossing Project Growth Management MOU Fund. The purpose of the MOU was to prepare for and mitigate the environmental impacts associated with population growth by coordinating water quality planning efforts and encouraging water resource stewardship. The Coalition worked to form a common understanding of the region's growth and to coordinate strategies associated with the collection, treatment, and disposal of wastewater and stormwater.

### Coalition Members

- |                         |                         |                         |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Town of Somerset     | 4. Village of Somerset  | 6. Town of Richmond     |
| 2. Town of St. Joseph   | 5. City of New Richmond | 7. Town of Stanton      |
| 3. Village of Deer Park |                         | 8. Town of Star Prairie |

### 2014 Recommendations

1. Prepare population projections for each community based on the UW-Extension report, plus spatial distribution of new residents based, in part, on local comprehensive plans.
2. Development of a sewer service area plan and address how sewer will be provided in rural areas.
3. Review existing stormwater regulations and prepare a stormwater water quality plan for each coalition community; most of the stormwater assessment focuses on urban water quality.
4. Complete an erosion assessment of the Apple and Willow River channel corridors.
5. Complete a riparian corridor assessment with the purpose of identifying existing and potential stream buffers.
6. Conduct a restorable wetland feasibility assessment.
7. Evaluate current water resources management ordinances.
8. Complete a rural water quality assessment and prepared watershed plans for communities and the watershed.

### 2022 Outcomes

1. Population projections report
2. Zoning ordinance revision
3. Land acquisition of 6 properties that enhance preservation of St. Croix County natural resources