

THE ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES ELEMENT

A community undergoing a comprehensive planning process strives to learn about where it has been, what it is now and where it is likely going to go. It is when the community attempts to understand these things that it can plot a course of action for the future to influence, for the benefit of the entire community, the change that is sure to come. It is hoped that through the collection and analysis of background information and community introspection that the Town of Somerset gains this understanding and is able to craft a plan that addresses town needs for the future. The Issues and Opportunities section of the plan presents the public involvement and information analysis that frames a part of the context for the Town of Somerset as it moves forward toward addressing its destiny. Other sections of the plan will address other aspects of the town to develop a more complete context from which information is considered and preferred courses of action for the Town are determined.

Development and implementation of successful land use and development plans, policies and management tools are based largely on the process by which these components were developed. Fostering community involvement is one of the most important factors in the planning process. Community involvement process is a valuable tool for gathering public input, educating the public, and fostering a sense of ownership and community support for the development and implementation of the project. Indeed, involving citizenry in all aspects of the planning process enables the community to achieve the results that most closely reflect the beliefs and desires of community residents.

The Town of Somerset is regularly engaged in some form of community involvement. The Town's elected officials, and staff, are continuously engaged in working with residents on an everyday basis. Examples of this interaction include public meetings; public hearings; news releases; and working with developers, businesses and property owners. From those experiences, officials and staff have gained an understanding of some of the important issues and concerns that residents and businesses have with the direction of current growth and development activities.

However, much of that involvement is focused on specific problems and issues and does not necessarily address the overall growth and development issues of the Town. Consequently, it is essential to conduct additional community involvement activities in order to better identify and evaluate all issues, and to fully understand the direction in which the residents and businesses want future growth and development to occur. To accomplish this, the Town of Somerset undertook several major community involvement activities to assist in obtaining public input. These activities included:

- Establishing a Planning Commission to oversee the development and implementation of the plan.
- Conducting a survey of town residents in order to gather public opinion about the resources that are important and should be preserved; and the type, amount and general location of development that should occur.
- Establishing Citizens Advisory Groups to:

- identify land use and development issues and community values;
 - develop a community vision; and
 - develop goals and objectives on which to base the formation of policies to guide the management of future development activities.
- Conducting a series of open house and informational meetings for the general public.
 - Establishing Focus Groups to review goals and objectives and develop policy recommendations.

What follows is a review of the community involvement activities that were conducted and a summary of the input that was obtained during the planning process. In the Town of Somerset, community involvement was utilized extensively to identify important growth and development issues, identify the desired future direction of growth and development activities, establish planning policies to help guide growth and development decisions, and establish management strategies for implementing the policies and achieving the desired future. The following is a summary of the community involvement activities and public input that was obtained during the planning process.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND INPUT

Thus far in the development of the plan, community involvement activities have been used to effectively gather public input into the planning process. This input provides valuable guidance for the various elected bodies, committees and staff that are responsible for the development and implementation of the plan. The input forms the basis for understanding the community's beliefs on the desired types of development and management tools that could be used to guide future development.

The following is a description of the community involvement activities that were conducted and a summary of the input that was received.

PLANNING COMMISSION

During the early stages of the project, the Town of Somerset recognized the need for a group of residents to evaluate and manage existing and future development. In order to address this concern, Somerset residents approached the Town Board and proposed the appointment of a Planning Commission. In response to the residents, the Town Board passed the motion to establish the Commission.

In addition to providing oversight and review of on-going development activities, the Commission was given the responsibility of overseeing the development and implementation of the Town of Somerset Land Use Plan and subsequent Comprehensive Plan.

LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT SURVEY

The first and most comprehensive community involvement activity that was conducted was the Town of Somerset Land Use and Development Survey. The purpose of the survey was to assess

the resident's beliefs regarding the current condition of land use and development, and the desired and valued resources of the community.

With the financial support of a Bayport Foundation grant, the Commission was able to work together with the University of Wisconsin-Extension and Rural Development Institute to assist in the development, distribution and analysis of the survey. In total, the survey was comprised of 16 questions aimed at identifying the state of development in the community and assessing some possible techniques related to the management of future development.

In the fall of 1996, the town mailed out a total of 300 surveys to randomly selected households in the Town of Somerset. Of those, 280 surveys (93%) were completed and returned for analysis. Upon completion of the analysis of the survey, two open houses were held to share the survey results with the entire community. The following is a summary of the survey results.

Land Use and Development Survey Summary

- 93% believe Town residents should be involved in community planning to determine where and how development should occur.
- 91% believe it is important to preserve the rural, scenic character of the Town.
- 91% think that land use planning should protect existing natural corridors.
- 90% believe that the Town of Somerset is generally a good place to live.
- 87% believe developers should be required to pay fees to help defray the costs of roads, parks and other public services associated with development.
- 80% believe that light industry should be allowed in the Town of Somerset, but only in designated industrial areas.
- 64% think that additional commercial businesses are needed to serve local residents.
- 58% believe only limited commercial development should be allowed on the new 35/64 highway.
- 44% think that clustered residential development, which maximizes open space, should be allowed. 42% of the residents do not.

The rural setting is what people like the most about the Town of Somerset followed by its location, the schools, the size of the community, and how friendly, quiet, safe and beautiful it is.

The things people like the least about the Town of Somerset are taxes, bars, summer concerts and traffic, bad reputation, tubing, lack of stores and businesses, and nude dancing.

CITIZENS ADVISORY GROUPS

Completion and review of the Land Use and Development Survey lead to the desire to pursue the formal development of the Town of Somerset Land Use Plan. Based on this desire, the Commission requested, and the Town Board approved, monies to support the hiring of an agency to assist the town with the development of the plan. In the spring of 1997, the Planning and Development Commission hired the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (WCWRPC) to provide the town with the necessary planning services.

In November of 1997, postcards were sent to all households in the Town of Somerset inviting citizens to an open house. The purpose of the open house was to meet the WCWRPC planning staff, present information on the socio-economic and physical features work that has been developed to date, and to solicit additional information regarding how citizens would like the town to address development. Residents that attended the open house were asked to indicate their willingness to be involved in further planning meetings. Those residents that indicated an interest in being part of the planning process were brought together to form a Citizens Advisory Group. All together this group was comprised of 65 residents with diverse community backgrounds and interests.

The Citizens Advisory Group's main responsibility was to participate in two major planning activities. These activities included an issues and values identification and visioning session, and a goals and objectives development session. The following is a summary of the Citizens Advisory Group sessions.

In 2003, the Citizens Advisory Group was reconstituted for the Comprehensive Plan. This group then broke into focus groups to address specific issues.

ISSUES AND VALUES IDENTIFICATION AND VISIONING SESSION

The initial activity of the Citizens Advisory Group was an issues and values identification and visioning session. The purpose of this process was to identify the various priority issues and community values that residents believed were the most important and should be addressed through the development and implementation of the plan. The identified issues could be anything positive or negative related to the manner in which development has been occurring, while the values were to reflect the community's characteristics which the residents believed should be enhanced or preserved.

The next step during this process was to develop a vision statement for the community. A vision is a conceptual description of a desired future based on the issues and values identified to be important. The vision is produced through the use of a process of inquiry into what is believed to be the best characteristics of the existing community, exploring the ideals of what residents desire the community to be, and achieving consensus on the future community. A vision defines where the community wants to go and provides the direction for developing strategies and actions to get from the present to the desired future.

The vision statement was derived from a consensus on the important growth and development issues and the identified values of the community. It is a projection of how the town wants to

grow and change during the next twenty years, and represents the desired outcomes affected by implementation of the plan and management policies.

The following is a summary of the growth and development issues and values, and vision statement that were identified.

Issues and Values

A. Preserve and protect natural and environmental resources.

- Preserve and protect surface waters (lakes, rivers, & streams), wetlands, and groundwater.
- Retain natural features.
- Preserve open space.
- Preserve and protect wildlife habitat and natural features.
- Encourage the use of cluster development.

B. Preserve and protect the rural character of the community.

- Encourage the use of cluster development.
- Preserve and protect productive farmland for agriculture and to enhance the rural character of the community.
- Preserve open space.
- Preserve and protect wildlife habitat and natural features.

C. Encourage fiscally responsible development that minimizes the impacts on public facilities and services.

- Encourage development that minimizes the cost and impacts on public facilities and services.
- Preserve and protect productive farmland for agriculture.
- Minimize the impacts of development on schools, roads and taxes.
- Control the tax increases associated with development.
- Cluster commercial and industrial development.
- Allow cluster development with shared water and sewer services.

D. Promote fair and orderly growth and development.

- Development should occur in an orderly fashion with some controls.
- Use land for best potential (farmland preservation and programs for farmers).
- Cluster commercial and industrial development.
- Do not over regulate -- maintain flexibility.

E. Encourage and promote the development of park and recreation areas and trails.

- Encourage and promote the development of trails for walking, biking, horseback riding and other uses.
- Encourage the development of parks and recreation areas.
- Encourage the development of good shoulders on road for the use of bikers and pedestrians.

F. Encourage development that fosters a sense of community.

- Encourage the use of cluster development.
- Encourage open space and park development.

G. Other issues and concerns.

- Limit multi-family rental development.
- Increase public access to the Apple River and retain access to the St. Croix.

Vision Statement

The Town of Somerset is a place where managed, flexible and orderly growth, and sustainable development will be encouraged in order to:

- *ensure the quality and availability of its natural and environmental features;*
- *protect its rural character through open space and agricultural preservation;*
- *control the impacts of development on taxes, and public services and facilities; and,*
- *retain and develop parks, trails, water access and other recreational opportunities.*

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

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES DEVELOPMENT SESSION

The next step in the planning process was to develop the goals and objectives. This was accomplished by the Citizens Advisory Group through the use of the vision statement, identified issues and values, community survey, review of the inventory data, and other community involvement input. The goals and objectives are intended to provide direction to achieve the most desirable community growth and development, and are to be used as guidelines by which development policies and decisions are made. These goals and objectives are rather timeless as they are deemed to be just as important today as they will be in the future.

For the purposes of the Somerset Comprehensive Plan, the following are the definitions of **goal** and **objective**.

GOAL

A long-term end toward which programs or activities are ultimately directed, but which might never be attained. The goal represents a general statement that outlines the most preferable situation that could possibly be achieved if all of the objectives and policies were developed to their fullest extent. The goals are the Town's desired destination.

OBJECTIVE

A specific, measurable, intermediate end that is achievable and marks progress toward a goal. Objectives are the strategic steps required to reach the Town's desired destination. There are alternative objectives capable of effecting a goal.

The following is a summary of the Goals and Objectives that were drafted based on the community information and involvement activities. The goals and objectives are also intended to serve as an overall guide for development over the next 25 years. They also guide the development and implementation of the plan and the management tools that are selected to implement the plan, as well as a tool for decision-makers to use to evaluate acceptable growth and development management practices.

Goals and Objectives

A. Preserve and protect natural environmental resources.

1. Preserve and protect surface waters (lakes, rivers, & streams), wetlands, and groundwater.
2. Conserve and protect shorelands and floodplains.
3. Retain natural physical features.
4. Preserve open space.
5. Preserve and protect wildlife habitat.
6. Encourage the use of cluster development.

B. Preserve and protect the rural character of the community.

1. Preserve and protect farmland for agriculture and to enhance the rural character of the community.
2. Preserve open space.
3. Preserve and protect wildlife habitat.
4. Preserve and protect natural physical features.
5. Encourage/Ensure development which is visually consistent with rural character.
6. Encourage infill development.

C. Encourage fiscally responsible development that minimizes the impacts on public facilities and services, and promotes fair and orderly development.

1. Encourage development that minimizes the cost and impacts on public facilities and services (i.e. schools, roads, etc...) and taxes.
2. Preserve and protect productive farmland for agriculture.
3. Minimize the impacts of development on schools, roads and taxes.
4. Control the property tax increases associated with development, by requiring development to pay its way.
5. Cluster commercial and industrial development.
6. Allow cluster development with shared water and sewer services.
7. Development should occur in an orderly fashion with some controls.
8. Use land for best potential (farmland preservation and programs for farmers).
9. Cluster commercial and industrial development.
10. Do not over regulate -- maintain flexibility.
11. Protect private property rights.

D. Encourage and promote the development of park and recreation areas and trails.

1. Encourage the development and maintenance of trails for walking, biking, horseback riding, water access, and other uses.
2. Encourage the development of parks and recreation areas.

3. Encourage the development of good shoulders on roads for the use of bikers and pedestrians.

E. Encourage development that fosters a sense of community.

1. Encourage the use of cluster development.
2. Encourage open space and park development.

F. Explore intergovernmental coordination and cooperation.

G. Encourage growth and development which contributes to the economic sustainability of the community.

FOCUS GROUPS

Based on the goals and objectives that were developed, it was the desire of the Planning and Development Committee to have smaller focus groups review the goals and objectives and recommend policies to implement the associated goals and objectives. The Commission reviewed the goals and objectives and identified 5 main areas to be evaluated by the focus groups. These five areas included Land Division, Parks and Recreation, Commerce, Agriculture, and Environment.

In order to identify members to serve on each of the focus groups, participants of the Citizens Advisory Group were asked to identify areas of interest. The five focus groups then held a number of meetings over a two-month period in order to develop policy and action statements for their area of interest. After each group had developed their policy and action statements, members from all of the focus groups held a joint meeting to review and discuss the results of their efforts.

The following are summaries of the 1997 focus groups efforts.

Land Division Focus Group Summary

The following is a summary of the tentative consensus and agreements that were reached by the Land Division Focus Group.

- Cluster development to be encouraged if the natural features of site, and ability to provide potable water and safe disposal of sewage allow it. Plat acreage to housing units would remain at one housing unit per three acres (30 acres = 10 houses). Issues as to how to manage shared open space will require careful legal attention, the town should not have to pick up the pieces.
- Natural features (water, slopes, soils, site vegetation, drainage, etc.) should be a prime factor in determining land division and plat planning. Natural drainage patterns should be retained and wooded sites be cleared only to the extent needed to allow safe access and open up canopy to provide sun and ventilation.

- That natural wildlife corridors or areas be identified prior to development and every reasonable effort be made to minimize disturbance of such areas.
- The 64/35 corridor has most of the current commercial zoning. We should work to maximize the use of current commercially zoned areas and consider identifying "fill in" areas for future commercial zoning.
- Will avoid strip development along 35/64 by setting up access requirements that encourage clusters of commercial enterprises with single access off 35/64. One cluster already exists (Chiropractor and Motorcycle Parts). If 35/64 becomes a county road, driveways every 200 feet are a disturbing possibility.
- Two additional commercial areas identified would be the intersection of CTH "V" and the 35/64 corridor and the intersection of CTH "C" east of the Town Hall. The former already has considerable commercial zoning, and the development of the latter would depend on the final location of the proposed intersection.
- Would allow only light industry that provides NO environmental impact on land, air or waters; all others would be referred to industrial park(s). We see no municipal sewage system in the Town of Somerset's future. (Sewage districts may be needed if we over develop environmentally sensitive sites; we want to avoid that!).
- The Land Division group feels that much of what we propose will likely be of benefit to those whose business it is to work in land development. First, a land use plan will offer a clear starting point for future development and, secondly, should make the Town basically a better place in which to live and work.

Parks and Recreation Focus Group Summary

Goal:

Encourage and promote the development of park and recreation areas and trails.

Objectives:

1. Encourage the development and maintenance of trails for walking, biking, horseback riding, water access, and other uses.
2. Encourage the development of parks and recreation areas.
3. Encourage the development of good shoulders on roads for the use of bikes and pedestrians.

Implementation:

1. Establish formal volunteer Parks and Recreation Planning Committee (being recognized as a town committee and not as one individual).
 - Establish a budget.
 - Committee would become educated in State, Federal and private funds available and how to acquire them.

- Educate town's people about available programs, such as nature conservancy programs and to promote these programs in environmentally sensitive areas.
 - Become more educated on full utilization of surrounding State and Federal land.
2. Protect, maintain and upgrade our current accesses to rivers and lakes.
 3. Exercise the 10% rule for parks in major subdivisions.
 4. Promote extension of shoulders to newly paved roads for walking/bike trails.
 5. Promote and plan for hiking/biking trails through private easements (similar to snowmobile club).
 6. Partnership with other interested parties.
 7. Promote the establishment of more parks.
 8. Publish a newsletter.

Commerce Focus Group Summary

General Principles

The Town of Somerset would welcome a limited number of properly located, non-polluting, environmentally safe light industries and/or businesses. The Town of Somerset does not envision community-wide sewer service within the time frame of this plan and would wish to avoid the necessity of developing a sanitary district to remediate problems created by allowing inappropriate commercial and/or industrial development.

Areas suitable for commercial/light industrial development will be identified based on proximity to existing commercial zoning, highway access, and lack of interference with residential properties. "Strip" commercial development would be prohibited.

Proposals for commercial or industrial development that does not fit the general criteria above will be routinely advised to find a location in the Village Industrial Park or where village sewer service is available.

Sites Suitable for Commercial/Light Industrial Development

Three sites suitable for business or light industry have been identified:

1. Existing commercially zoned area on Highway 35/64 should be first priority along with rezoning of suitable parcels contiguous to presently zoned commercial as infill.

Would limit new access roads off 35/64 and encourage "cluster commercial" by arranging easements through presently occupied commercial parcels whenever possible. One such cluster already exists in this area.

Would limit new businesses or industry in this area to those generating low traffic in order to avoid congestion on what will likely remain a heavily traveled roadway whether it remains State Highway 35 or becomes a county or town road.

Would prohibit "strip" development in this area; would encourage "cluster commercial" development using infill around and behind existing commercial entities.

2. Intersection of CTH "V", Scout Camp Road and the new 35/64 corridor would be suitable for commercial/light industry development IF the final highway design for that intersection can provide easy access and support the traffic volume such development would create. Several commercial enterprises currently operate around the existing intersection. "Strip" development would be prohibited and "cluster" development encouraged. DEPENDING ON INTERSECTION DESIGN, this area should be able to support moderate traffic loads.
3. Intersection of CTH "C" and new 35/64 corridor would be suitable for commercial/light industrial development DEPENDING ON the final path of the new 35/64 corridor in that area. This area would likely support commercial/industrial development that would generate high traffic volume.

Agricultural Focus Group Summary

Met, but was unable to develop a summary in time to be included in the 1998 Land Use Plan.

Environmental Focus Group Summary

The residents of this community that took the time to attend previous open house meetings set a number of goals and objectives. These goals represent what is important to them and clearly illustrate why people want to live in Somerset. The goals also show concern that the rural life style currently enjoyed is worth preserving for future generations.

This focus group took these goals and objectives and tried to come to a consensus as to how the different needs of current residents could be met. We also gave thought as to what the needs of new residents moving into this community for the first time might be, as many of these new residents will have needs and ideas very different from current residents.

First and foremost for all residents is a source of good, clean drinking water. Given the nature of the soils in the Town of Somerset this should be a major concern. If you look at the soil and topography maps you will see that severe limitations exist for septic systems over most of the town. Also, there are hidden and open geologic formations (sink holes, closed depressions, etc.) that can further restrict land development. Since our drinking water is ground water that must be recharged from the surface, it is critical that we also protect surface waters and the land from pollutants as much as possible. If you don't believe that our water can be polluted you have not been keeping up with the news from Hudson, new Richmond and Farmington to name just a few.

Secondly, the rural character of this town can and should be preserved, after all, isn't this why we live here? People move here because they want to see farms, wildlife, and open spaces. These should be preserved and enhanced if possible. Development must be consistent with these needs.

Does this mean that Somerset needs to adopt a no growth policy in order to preserve and protect this community? Not at all, but it does mean that careful thought must be given to how growth is allowed to proceed. If we allow a no-control type growth, then those of us that wish to live in this community must be prepared for the consequences of that decision.

Responsible development can be allowed, however, we must take into account the impact on our roads, schools, taxes, water and the land itself. If not, then the current practice of chopping up the land into lots that look like another Twin Cities suburb will result in this town experiencing many of the problems that they are incurring. However, if the people of this community are willing, we believe other more appropriate forms of subdivision design that enhance and preserve the existing natural resources can and should be done.

More specific findings that were developed by the Environmental Focus Group can be found in the Appendix.

In 2003, the Planning Commission convened a series of citizen meetings beginning with an open house where ninety citizens filled the Town Hall and shared their concerns. Out of that group thirty-four citizens agreed to work in small groups focusing on specific aspects of the comprehensive plan. These focus groups then met over a three-week period and developed a group statement explicating their views on the plan element they had addressed. Their findings are also found in the Appendix.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

A review and analysis of selected demographic and economic characteristics help identify the factors that influence growth and development. These characteristics can also help determine the direction of future change and the development activities that can consequently occur. Combined with information on land use patterns and land suitability characteristics, future development patterns can be influenced through various land use management strategies and practices that provide for development compatible with the environment and the desires of the community.

The inventory of the socio-economic characteristics will include a review of two major areas of the socio-economic environment, population and economy. The population analysis includes a review of characteristics such as: the number of people, age-sex of the population, family-household characteristics, income characteristics, housing characteristics, and population projections. The analysis of the economy consists of a review of employment, labor force, and economic sector trends that exist in the Town of Somerset. In addition population, household and employment forecasts that are used for the plan were developed. The timely release of the Census 2000 information available for this plan positions the Town for future plan updates. A 10 year plan update schedule will allow the Town to easily access future Census releases for use in those updates.

POPULATION

Shown in Table 1, is the population and population change for the Town of Somerset for the period from 1950 to 1990. Population in the Town of Somerset increased steadily between the years of 1950 and 1970. During this 20 year period, the population increased by 308 people, 35.1%. From 1970 to 1980 the growth in the Town of Somerset increased dramatically. The population increased by 638 people, 54.7%. This growth coincides with a trend that occurred

TABLE 1
HISTORIC POPULATION AND PERCENT CHANGE FROM PREVIOUS PERIOD • 1900 to 2003
Town of Somerset

1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2003*
1,451	1484	1,102	1,087	854	877	976	1,185	1,833	1,975	2,644	2,957
--	2.3	-25.7	-1.4	-21.4	2.7	11.3	21.4	54.7	7.8	33.9	11.8

Sources: U.S. Census, * WiDOA estimate

TABLE 2
COMPARATIVE POPULATION CHANGE • 1960 to 2003 Percent Change
Town of Somerset, St. Croix County, State of Wisconsin and Surrounding Communities

	1950-1960	1960-1970	1970-1980	1980-1990	1990-2000	2000-2003*
Town of Somerset	11.3	21.4	54.7	7.8	33.9	11.8
St. Croix County	12.6	17.8	25.9	16.2	25.7	11.0
Village of Somerset	37.3	6.7	10.5	23.8	46.1	20.4
Town of Star Prairie	16.3	37.0	36.7	10.4	40.3	10.6
Town of Richmond	25.2	55.6	22.6	4.6	11.1	20.6
Town of St. Joseph	26.2	27.1	60.7	21.9	29.3	4.5
Town of Farmington	29.8	15.2	3.4	6.0	28.3	4.7
State of Wisconsin	15.1	11.8	6.5	4.0	9.6	2.4

Sources: U.S. Census, * WiDOA 2003 estimate

TABLE 3
HISTORICAL POPULATION AND POPULATION CHANGE • 1960 TO 2000
St. Croix County by Minor Civil Division

Municipality	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	Percent Change			
						1960-70	1970-80	1980-90	1990-00
Towns:									
Baldwin	833	890	943	911	903	6.8	6.0	-3.4	-0.9
Cady	762	670	724	643	710	-12.1	8.1	-11.2	10.4
Cylon	614	620	717	639	629	.9	15.7	-10.9	-1.6
Eau Galle	717	720	897	756	882	.4	24.6	-15.7	16.7
Emerald	647	588	638	630	691	-9.1	8.5	-1.3	9.7
Erin Prairie	499	516	661	647	658	3.4	28.1	-2.1	1.7
Forest	674	649	631	614	590	-3.7	-2.8	-2.7	-3.9
Glenwood	835	764	715	700	755	-8.5	-6.4	-2.1	7.9
Hammond	773	764	822	819	947	-1.2	7.6	-.4	15.6
Hudson	649	925	2,012	3,692	6,213	42.5	117.6	83.5	68.3
Kinnickinnic	667	755	1,051	1,139	1,400	13.2	39.2	8.4	22.9
Pleasant Valley	310	330	360	384	430	6.5	9.1	6.7	12.0
Richmond	701	1,091	1,338	1,400	1,556	55.6	22.6	4.6	11.1
Rush River	403	439	476	419	498	8.9	8.4	-12.0	18.9
St. Joseph	1,068	1,357	2,180	2,657	3,436	27.1	60.7	21.9	29.3
Somerset	976	1,185	1,833	1,975	2,644	21.4	54.7	7.8	33.9
Springfield	814	811	816	772	808	-.4	.6	-5.4	4.7
Stanton	640	975	1,083	1,042	1,003	52.3	11.1	-3.8	-3.7
Star Prairie	1,015	1,390	1,900	2,098	2,944	37.0	36.7	10.4	40.3
Troy	845	1,517	2,326	2,850	3,661	79.5	53.3	22.5	28.5
Warren	614	622	897	1,008	1,320	1.3	44.2	12.4	31.9
Villages:									
Baldwin	1,184	1,399	1,620	2,022	2,667	18.2	15.8	24.8	31.9
Deer Park	221	217	232	237	227	-1.8	6.9	2.2	-4.2
Hammond	645	768	991	1,097	1,153	19.1	29.0	10.7	5.1
North Hudson	1,019	1,547	2,218	3,101	3,463	51.8	43.4	39.8	11.7
Roberts	308	484	833	1,043	969	57.1	72.1	25.2	-7.1
Somerset	729	778	860	1,065	1,556	6.7	10.5	23.8	46.1
Star Prairie	331	362	420	507	574	9.4	16.0	20.7	13.2
Wilson	140	130	155	163	176	-7.1	19.2	5.2	7.98
Woodville	430	522	725	942	1,104	21.4	38.9	30.0	17.20
Cities:									
Glenwood City	835	822	950	1,026	1,183	-1.6	15.6	8.0	15.30
Hudson	4,325	5,049	5,434	6,378	8,775	16.7	7.6	17.4	37.58
New Richmond	3,316	3,707	4,306	5,106	6,310	11.8	16.2	18.6	23.58
River Falls	625	991	1,498	1,769	2,318	58.6	51.1	15.3	31.03
ST. CROIX COUNTY	29,164	34,354	43,262	50,251	63,155	17.8	25.9	16.2	25.68

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

across the United States that saw a shift from growth in the urban, metropolitan areas, to rural, non-metropolitan areas. By the 1980's, growth had slowed significantly. During the period from 1980 to 1990, the population increased by 142 people, 7.8%. This was perhaps due to the recession of the early 1980s. The decade of the 1990s again saw dramatic population growth in the Town of Somerset, again increasing by over 600 people or about 3.4% a year. As the Town

ventures into the 21st Century it can be seen that rapid population growth continues at about 4 percent a year.

Shown in Table 2, are the actual and estimated population and population change for the Town of Somerset and other surrounding Wisconsin communities. Table 3 shows population change for all communities in St. Croix County. It is evident that the Town of Somerset has been one of the fastest growing communities in St. Croix County during the past 32 years. This high growth rate is consistent with many of the municipalities located in the western part of St. Croix County.

Although the rate of growth in Somerset declined during the 1980s, future growth for municipalities in western St. Croix County, including the Town of Somerset, rebounded in the 1990s which is expected to continue. Factors, such as the physical attractiveness of the area, much available land for residential development, recreational opportunities, and expected highway improvements should continue to spur fast-paced development into the future.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POPULATION

Shown in Table 5, are the population by age and sex characteristics for the Town of Somerset from 1980 to 2000. There are not any significant trends in gender distribution, with the overall occurrence keeping steady at around 52% male and 48% female. It is important to note the change in the general age distribution during this period. In 1980, about 50% of Somerset's population was less than 25 years old, 30% were 25 to 44 years old, 16% were 45 to 64 years old, and 4% were age 65 or older. In 1990, less than 40% of the population was less than 25 years old, 37% were 25 to 44 years old, about 17% were 45 to 64 years old, and nearly 7% were age 65 or older. By 2000, only 35% of the population was less than 25 years old, 33% were 25 to 44 years old, almost 25% were 45 to 64 years old, and 7% were age 65 or older.

TABLE 4
POPULATION BY AGE • 1980, 1990 and 2000
Town of Somerset

Age	1980	1990	2000	1980-90 Change		1990-00 Change	
				Number	Percent	Number	Percent
0-4	166	160	183	-6	-3.6	23	14.4
5-17	528	456	585	-72	-13.6	129	28.3
18-24	217	162	164	-55	-25.3	2	1.2
25-44	552	732	878	180	32.6	146	24.6
45-54	166	195	420	29	17.5	225	115.4
55-64	130	135	228	5	3.8	93	68.9
65-74	50	97	123	47	94.0	26	26.8
75-84	20	31	57	11	55.0	26	83.9
85+	4	7	6	3	75.0	-1	-14.3
TOTAL	1,833	1,975	2,644	142	7.7	669	33.9
Median Age	25.2	31.6	36.0	6.4	25.4	4.4	13.9

Source: U.S. Census

As shown in Table 4, decreases in the population during the 1980s were experienced in the 0-4, 5-17, and 18-24 age groups, with the 5-17 age group experiencing the largest numerical (-72) and the 18-24 age group the largest percent (-25.3%) declines. Conversely, in the 1980s, the 25-44 and 65-74 age groups experienced the greatest increases in the number people, 180 people and 47 people respectively. The decrease in the younger age groups and increase in older age

groups, is also reflected in the change in the median age of the town from 25.2 years in 1980 to 31.6 years in 1990. During the 1990s, there was only slight decline in numbers in the 85 and older age group, with the largest increases coming in the 45-54 (115.4%), 75-84 (83.9%) and 55-64 (68.9%) age groups. Again the median age increased from 31.6 to 36.0 years of age.

TABLE 5
POPULATION BY AGE AND SEX • 1980, 1990 and 2000
Town of Somerset

1980										
Age	Male	Percent	Female	Percent	Total	Percent	Male	Female	%Male	%Female
0-4	78	8.2	88	10.0	166	9.1	78	88	47.0	53.0
5-17	275	28.8	253	28.8	528	28.8	275	253	52.1	47.9
18-24	125	13.1	92	10.5	217	11.8	125	92	57.6	42.4
25-44	281	29.5	271	30.8	552	30.1	281	271	51.0	49.0
45-54	83	8.7	83	9.4	166	9.1	83	83	50.0	50.0
55-64	72	7.5	58	6.6	130	7.1	72	58	55.4	44.6
65-74	29	3.0	21	2.3	50	2.7	29	21	58.0	42.0
75-84	8	0.8	12	1.4	20	1.1	8	12	40.0	60.0
85+	3	0.3	1	0.1	4	0.2	3	1	75.0	25.0
TOTAL	954	100.0	879	100.0	1,833	100.0	954	879	52.0	48.0
Median Age	24.9		25.4		25.2					
1990										
Age	Male	Percent	Female	Percent	Total	Percent	Male	Female	%Male	%Female
0-4	92	8.9	68	7.2	160	8.1	92	68	57.5	42.5
5-17	240	23.3	216	22.8	456	23.1	240	216	52.6	47.4
18-24	87	8.5	75	7.9	162	8.2	87	75	53.7	46.3
25-44	366	35.6	366	38.7	732	37.1	366	366	50.0	50.0
45-54	111	10.8	84	8.9	195	9.9	111	84	56.9	43.1
55-64	59	5.7	76	8.0	135	6.8	59	76	43.7	56.3
65-74	52	5.0	45	4.8	97	4.9	52	45	53.6	46.4
75-84	19	1.8	12	1.3	31	1.6	19	12	61.3	38.7
85+	3	0.3	4	0.4	7	0.4	3	4	42.9	57.1
TOTAL	1,029	100.0	946	100.0	1,975	100.0	1,029	946	52.1	47.9
Median Age	n/a		n/a		31.6					
2000										
Age	Male	Percent	Female	Percent	Total	Percent	Male	Female	%Male	%Female
0-4	98	7.1	85	6.7	183	6.9	98	85	53.6	46.4
5-17	302	21.9	283	22.4	585	22.1	302	283	51.6	48.4
18-24	88	6.4	76	6.0	164	6.2	88	76	53.7	46.3
25-44	449	32.5	429	34.0	878	33.2	449	429	51.1	48.9
45-54	225	16.3	195	15.4	420	15.9	225	195	53.6	46.4
55-64	129	9.3	99	7.8	228	8.6	129	99	56.6	43.4
65-74	57	4.1	66	5.2	123	4.7	57	66	46.3	53.7
75-84	30	2.2	27	2.1	57	2.2	30	27	52.6	47.4
85+	3	0.2	3	0.2	6	0.2	3	3	50.0	50.0
TOTAL	1,381	100.0	1,263	100.0	2,644	100.0	1,381	1,263	52.2	47.8
Median Age	36.0		36.1		36.0					

Source: U.S. Census

It can be seen that later working age people and retirees are increasing significantly in the Town of Somerset. If this trend continues, changes in the economic status of the Town of Somerset's residents will continue as well (See Tables 15 and 16).

Other characteristics of the population that can be significant for changing communities is race and ethnicity. Table 6 shows the distribution of the population by race. The Town of Somerset has been and continues to have an overwhelmingly white or Caucasian population. This is not unusual for rural areas in the Midwest, even those experiencing growing pains on the fringe of metropolitan areas. Indeed, it is the mobility of those in-migrating into the Town of Somerset that will eventually make more change in the racial make-up of the community. It takes but small change where small numbers of people previously existed to create large percentage increases. It is evident that the migration of other races into the Town of Somerset is beginning. As more non-whites attain a certain economic status they are able to make such a move. It can be expected that these small numerical increases of non-whites entering the Town of Somerset population will continue.

TABLE 6
POPULATION BY RACE • 1980, 1990 and 2000
Town of Somerset

Race	1980	1990	2000	1980-90 Change		1990-00 Change	
				Number	Percent	Number	Percent
White	1,825	1,957	2,583	132	7.2	626	32.0
Black	0	0	1	0	0.0	1	1000.0
American Indian	2	10	8	8	400.0	-2	-20.0
Chinese	0	0	8	0	0.0	8	8000.0
Filipino	0	0	1	0	0.0	1	1000.0
Korean	0	1	7	1	1000.0	6	600.0
Asian Indian	0	0	4	0	0.0	4	4000.0
Japanese	0	0	2	0	0.0	2	2000.0
Vietnamese	0	0	1	0	0.0	1	1000.0
Other Asian	0	0	1	0	0.0	1	1000.0
Samoan	0	0	1	0	0.0	1	1000.0
Other race	6	6	3	0	0.0	-3	-50.0
Two or more races	*	*	24	*	*	24	*

Source: U.S. Census, * Two or more races not collected before 2000

TABLE 7
POPULATION BY HISPANIC ORIGIN • 1980, 1990 and 2000
Town of Somerset

Race	1980	1990	2000	1980-90 Change		1990-00 Change	
				Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Mexican	1	6	4	5	500.0	-2	-33.3
Puerto Rico	0	0	1	0	0.0	1	1000.0
Other	3	7	5	4		-2	-28.6

Source: U.S. Census

Table 7 also shows small numbers of people living in the Town of Somerset are of Hispanic origin. It is likely there will be small increases of Hispanics in the future.

EDUCATION

The Decennial Census provides information on the educational attainment levels, which are shown in Table 8. It should be no surprise with the large investments in education and the increasing requirement for technical or post-secondary degrees for job placement that people are obtaining higher levels of education than in the past. However, the residents of the Town of Somerset have historically had significant numbers of people who have attained high school or

higher educational levels. Since 1980, more Somerset residents have pursued an education past high school. Indeed, in 2000, 6 of 10 Town of Somerset residents 25 years or older had attended a post secondary institution, with over one-third achieving a degree. This certainly demonstrates a well-educated population.

TABLE 8
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT LEVELS • 1980, 1990 and 2000
Town of Somerset

Educational Level	1980		1990		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Persons 25 Years and Over						
• Less than high school diploma	296	25.8	199	16.6	141	8.0
• High school graduate	540	47.1	515	43.0	575	32.7
• Some college, no degree	190	16.6	189	15.8	443	25.2
• Associate degree	--	--	94	7.9	171	9.7
• Bachelor's degree or higher	121	10.5	200	16.7	431	24.5
High school graduate or higher	851	74.2	998	83.4	1,620	92.0

Source: U.S. Census

ECONOMY

The review of the economy will include an examination of employment trends and trends in the economic sector. This information will provide the town with an understanding of the changes that have occurred in the economy and employment sectors over the past 20 year period.

EMPLOYMENT

The current growth of the area's economy is a major contributor to the employment opportunities available to residents of the Town of Somerset. The principal economic factors that influence an individual's quality of life and provide a choice of residential options are employment opportunities and income. A comparison of labor force and employment statistics for 1980 to 2000 provides some insight into the economic well being of the residents of the Town. The labor force and employment information presented show "place of residence" and not "place of work". Hence, from this data we can tell how many Town of Somerset residents are working and what they are working at, but not where they work. Place of work information is subsequently provided below.

As indicated by the data presented in Table 9, while the segment of the population eligible for the labor force grew by nearly 67 percent between 1980 and 2000, the actual number in the labor

TABLE 9
LABOR FORCE • 1980, 1990 and 2000
Town of Somerset Residents

	1980	1990	2000	1980-1990 change	1990-2000 change
Persons 16 Years and Over	1,230	1,423	2,054	15.7%	44.3%
• In labor force	892	1,078	1,610	20.9%	49.4%
• Percent in labor force	72.5	75.8	78.4	4.6%	3.4%
• Employed	811	1,022	1,540	26.0%	50.7%
• Unemployed	71	56	65	-21.1%	16.1%
• Percent unemployed	7.9	5.2	3.2	-34.2%	-38.5%

Source: U.S. Census

force increased by 80 percent. The employed residents in the labor force increased by 90 percent over the same period, while the percentage of unemployed residents decreased by more than 8 percentage points. Based on these statistics, it appears that a growing number of Town residents have been finding employment opportunities. The economic downturn early in the decade starting in 2000 makes it uncertain how the labor force and employment has been affected in the Town of Somerset.

Employment information can give an indication of the economy of a community. Again, employment information is reported by the industry in which residents work and their occupation, this information does reflect place of work. Table 10 summarizes employment by industry for 1980, 1990 and 2000.

During the 1980s, industries that experienced the greatest growth in employment from Town of Somerset residents were *Other Professional and Related Services* (288.9%), *Personal, Entertainment and Recreation al Services* (133.3%), and *Public Administration* (129.4%). Industries experiencing a loss of employment included *Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, and Mining* (-40.9%), *Educational Services* (-33.9%), and *Business and Repair Services* (-12.9%). By 1990, the largest segments of the town’s labor force worked in *Manufacturing* (33.0%) and *Retail Trade* (13.8%) industries.

TABLE 10
EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY • 1980, 1990 and 2000
Town of Somerset Resident Workers 16 years of age and older

	1980		1990		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting and mining	66	8.1	39	3.8	61	4.0
Construction	47	5.8	83	8.1	172	11.2
Manufacturing	280	34.5	337	33.0	467	30.3
Wholesale trade	17	2.1	25	2.4	7	0.5
Retail Trade	120	14.8	141	13.8	120	7.8
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	61	8.5	85	8.3	66	4.3
Information	--	--	--	--	27	1.8
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing	24	3.0	43	4.2	56	3.6
Professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management services	--	--	--	--	129	8.4
Business and repair services	31	3.8	27	2.6	--	--
Educational, health and social services	110	13.6	105	10.3	263	17.1
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	30	3.7	98	9.5	72	4.7
Other services, except public administration					55	3.6
Public administration	17	2.1	39	3.8	45	2.9

Source: U.S. Census

Shaded area indicates combined categories

During the 1990s, industries that experienced the greatest growth in employment from Town of Somerset residents were *Educational, Health and Social Services* (150.5%), *Construction* (107.2%), all other Service Industries (85.7%), *Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, and Mining* (56.4%) and *Public Administration* (53.0%). Industries experiencing a loss of employment included *Retail Trade* (-40.9%), *Educational Services* (-33.9%), and *Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities* (-12.9%). By 2000, the largest segments of the town’s labor force worked in *Manufacturing* (29.0%) and *Educational, Health and Social Services* (16.3%) industries.

TABLE 11
EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION • 1980, 1990 and 2000
Town of Somerset Resident Workers 16 years of age and older

	1980		1990		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Executive, administrative and managerial	64	7.9	99	9.7		
Professional	80	9.9	99	9.7	543	35.3
Technician	6	0.7	25	2.4		
Sales	43	5.3	67	6.6	354	23.0
Administrative support, including clerical	118	14.5	144	14.1		
Service	110	13.6	144	14.1	123	8.0
Farming, forestry, fishing	65	8.0	27	2.6	14	0.9
Construction, extraction, and maintenance	--	--	--	--	196	12.7
Precision production, craft and repair	129	15.9	170	16.6		
Machine operators, assemblers & inspectors	104	12.8	132	12.9	310	20.1
Transportation and material moving	48	5.9	64	6.3		
Handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers and laborers	44	5.4	51	5.0		
Total Employment (16 years and over)	811	100.0	1,022	100.0	1,540	100.0

Source: U.S. Census

Shaded area indicates combined categories

Shown in Table 11, is employment by occupation for 1980, 1990 and 2000. Employment by occupation identifies the type of work residents do. Between 1980 and 1990, the occupations that had the greatest increases were *Technicians* (316.7%), *Sales* (55.8%), and *Executives, Administrators and Managerial* (54.7%). The only occupation that experienced a decrease was *Farming, Forestry and Fishing* (-58.5%).

In 1990, the occupations that employed the most residents included *Precision Production, Crafts and Repairs* (16.6%), *Administrative Support Including Clerical* (14.1%), *Service* (14.1%), and *Machine Operators, Assemblers and Inspectors* (12.9%). The way occupation data were collected changed somewhat in 2000 and the occupations that employed the most residents included *Professional* (35.3%) and *Sales and Administrative Support, Including Clerical* (23.0%).

An indication of where residents might work can be derived from a review of travel time and journey to work information, shown in Tables 12 and 13. From 1980 to 1990, the average travel time to work increased slightly from 26.1 minutes to 27.2 minutes. The greatest increase, both numerically and as a percent, was in the 10 to 19 minutes category. Overall, in 1990, 60% of working residents traveled 20 minutes or more to reach their place of work.

TABLE 12
TRAVEL TIME TO WORK • 1980, 1990 and 2000
Town of Somerset Resident Workers 16 years of age and older

	1980		1990		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Worked at home	60	8.1	80	7.7	80	5.3
Less than 5 minutes	12	1.6	35	3.4	63	4.2
5 to 9 minutes	100	13.6	77	7.4	105	7.0
10 to 19 minutes	138	18.8	223	21.6	278	18.5
20 to 29 minutes	124	16.9	201	19.4	341	22.7
30 to 44 minutes	144	19.6	202	19.5	279	18.6
45 to 59 minutes	104	14.2	146	14.1	221	14.7
60 minutes or longer	52	7.1	70	6.8	133	8.9
Average Travel Time (Min.)	26.1		27.2		28.3	

Source: U.S. Census

From 1990 to 2000, the average travel time to work increased slightly from 27.2 minutes to 28.3 minutes. The greatest increase, both numerically and as a percent, was in the 20 to 29 minutes category. Overall, in 2000, 65% of working residents traveled 20 minutes or more to reach their place of work.

From 1980 to 1990, the number of Somerset residents working in Washington County, Minnesota increased by 120 residents, 67.4%, to 298. This nearly equaled the number of residents that worked in St. Croix County, 330. During this same period, the number of Somerset residents working in the State of Minnesota increased by 216 residents, 53.7%, from 402 to 618.

From 1990 to 2000, the number of Somerset residents working in Washington County, Minnesota increased by 156 residents, 52.3%, to 454. During the same period, the number of Somerset residents working in St. Croix County increased by 213 residents, 64.5%, to 543. This perhaps indicates that there are increasing employment opportunities in St. Croix County available for Town of Somerset residents. The number of Somerset residents working in the State of Minnesota increased by 219 residents, 35.4%, from 618 to 837.

TABLE 13
PLACE OF WORK • 1980, 1990 and 2000
Town of Somerset Residents

Place of Work	1980		1990		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Minneapolis, MN	46	5.9	40	4.0	37	2.5
Bloomington, MN	2	0.3	15	1.5	10	0.7
Edina, MN	0	0.0	9	0.9	4	0.3
Remainder of Hennepin County, MN	10	1.3	18	1.8	38	2.5
St. Paul, MN	92	11.8	134	13.4	110	7.3
Roseville, MN	14	17.9	18	1.8	38	2.5
Remainder of Ramsey County, MN	52	6.6	47	4.7	98	6.5
Fridley, MN	0	0.0	14	1.4	0	0.0
Remainder of Anoka County, MN	0	0.0	5	0.5	2	0.1
Chisago County, MN	4	0.5	0	0.0	9	0.6
Dakota County, MN	4	0.5	20	2.0	37	2.5
Washington County, MN	178	22.8	298	29.9	454	30.3
St. Croix County, WI	302	38.6	330	33.1	543	36.2
Worked elsewhere	30	3.8	50	0.5	118	7.9
Not Reported	48	6.1	--	--	--	--
TOTAL	782	100.0	998	100.0	1,498	100.0

Source: U.S. Census

Hence, it can be seen that the strong employment draw of opportunities in Minnesota continue while St. Croix County continues to provide employment opportunities for its residents as well.

INCOME CHARACTERISTICS

The combined effect of advanced education, increased employment opportunities, and evidence of well paying occupations is also reflected in the earning capability and increasing incomes of Town residents. Table 14 below shows the distribution of incomes among residents of the Town of Somerset, St. Croix County and the State of Wisconsin in 1999. It is evident that the Town of

Somerset has a higher percentage of persons in all income groups above \$25,000 than persons in St. Croix County as a whole, and above \$35,000 as compared to the State of Wisconsin.

TABLE 14
HOUSEHOLD INCOME COMPARISON • 1999
Town of Somerset

<i>Income</i>	<i>Town of Somerset</i>		<i>St. Croix County</i>	<i>Wisconsin</i>
	<i>Households</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Less than \$10,000	16	1.7	4.0	7.1
\$10,000 to \$14,999	24	2.5	4.1	5.8
\$15,000 to \$24,999	45	4.7	8.6	12.7
\$25,000 to \$34,999	95	9.8	9.4	13.2
\$35,000 to \$49,999	206	21.3	17.6	18.1
\$50,000 to \$74,999	241	25.0	24.8	22.7
\$75,000 to \$99,999	159	16.5	16.3	10.9
\$100,000 to \$149,999	135	14.0	11.0	6.4
\$150,000 to \$199,999	25	2.6	2.1	1.5
\$200,000 or more	19	2.0	1.9	1.5

Source: U.S. Census

In 1989, both measures of income, median household and per capita, in the Town of Somerset were greater than that of St. Croix County as a whole, or the State of Wisconsin. During the 1980s, per capita incomes in the Town of Somerset grew much faster than in St. Croix County as a whole, or the state, shown in Table 15.

TABLE 15
INCOME COMPARISON • 1980 and 1990
Town of Somerset

	<i>Median Household Income</i>			<i>Per Capita Income</i>		
	<i>1979</i>	<i>1989</i>	<i>% Change</i>	<i>1979</i>	<i>1989</i>	<i>% Change</i>
Town of Somerset	23,661	42,798	80.9	6,947	16,289	134.5
St. Croix County	19,568	36,716	87.6	7,063	11,291	59.9
State of Wisconsin	20,915	29,442	42.3	7,243	13,276	83.3

Source: U.S. Census

In 1999, both measures of income, median household and per capita, in the Town of Somerset continued to be greater than that of St. Croix County as a whole, or the State of Wisconsin. However, during the 1990s, median household and per capita incomes in St. Croix County as a whole and in the State grew faster than in the Town of Somerset, shown in Table 16.

TABLE 16
INCOME COMPARISON • 1990 and 2000
Town of Somerset

	<i>Median Household Income</i>			<i>Per Capita Income</i>		
	<i>1989</i>	<i>1999</i>	<i>% Change</i>	<i>1989</i>	<i>1999</i>	<i>% Change</i>
Town of Somerset	42,798	62,063	45.0	16,289	25,605	57.2
St. Croix County	36,716	54,930	49.6	11,291	23,937	112.0
State of Wisconsin	29,442	43,791	47.1	13,276	21,271	60.2

Source: U.S. Census

In any event, the above figures show the relative affluence of the Town of Somerset. One other important indicator that also shows what another segment of society faces is the poverty rate. As expected, the poverty rate in the Town of Somerset is low, as seen in Table 17. However, there

are changes in who is experiencing poverty that should be a cause for some concern as the Town of Somerset moves toward the future. Although the numbers of these people may be low in Somerset it does not diminish the consequences that some Somerset residents are facing.

TABLE 17			
POVERTY LEVELS • 1989 and 1999			
Town of Somerset			
	Percent Below Poverty Level		Number Below Poverty Level
	1989	1999	1999
All persons	2.5	2.9	79
Related children under 18	1.8	5.0	39
Persons 18 years and older	2.9	2.1	40
Persons 65 years and older	3.0	1.4	3
All families	1.1	3.1	24
With related children under 18	1.3	5.6	22
With related children under 5	1.8	9.4	13
Female householder, no husband present	5.4	29.0	20
With related children under 18	6.7	47.6	20
With related children under 5	0.1	64.7	11

Source: U.S. Census

Between 1989 and 1999 there have been increases in the poverty rate for children under 18 and dramatic increases in the poverty rate among single female householders and particularly their young children.

POPULATION FORECAST

The purpose for identifying and reviewing the historical demographic information is to gain an understanding of the type and intensity of growth and development that has occurred in the Town of Somerset. This information is then used in establishing a trend of future growth and development that may occur, and, subsequently, provide the town with an approximate future benchmark for which they can expect to plan. This estimate of future growth is valuable information for the Town to use in establishing management techniques in order to provide for orderly growth and development.

Population projections or forecasts have long been used in planning to assess development prospects created by population growth. Small area population forecasts can be used to evaluate potential residential development and economic conditions, and the level of demand for public services. Businesses, schools and government frequently use these forecasts to determine the future needs or design of public facilities.

Population projections are based on historical trends of population growth that are extended into the future. They are based on the assumption that the historical trends, and the factors behind them, will continue to some point in time. It is certain that not all of those factors will have the same influence on population change throughout the entire forecast period. It is also true that the closer the projection year is to the base year, the more likely the population for that projection will be close to the true population. Hence, the margin of error in population forecasts increases the farther out in time they are from the present.

Small area population projections also have limitations. Forecasts of large area populations are more reliable. For example, projections developed at the county level can be used to distribute the county population forecasts proportionally into the individual community projections. This "backing into" community projections from countywide forecasts is often done because the smaller the area for which a projection is produced, the greater the possibility for error.

Population forecasts are, at best, guides and must be used with consideration of their limitations. However, intimate knowledge of local conditions can help build the assumptions into population projections to make them more valid.

Generally, population growth trends do not remain constant from decade to decade. The factors that influence population change are dynamic and are often subject to the effect of larger trends from outside an area's control. The forecasting of population change requires that certain assumptions be made regarding the conditions prevailing during the forecast period. Therefore, it is important to identify the assumptions inherent in the projection. The following factors and assumptions were incorporated into the population projections developed for the Town of Somerset Comprehensive Plan.

In-migration will continue to be significant for population growth in Somerset. Many factors are involved in the personal and business decisions that result in migration into Somerset. This migration is probably due to the numerous aesthetically appealing natural, rural and recreational areas of the Town, the availability of land for residential development, the proximity to the Twin Cities Metropolitan area, and the increasingly mobile population due to highway infrastructure improvements.

Numerous interrelated factors affect in-migration and the rate of population change. These interrelated factors include the local, regional and national economies, lifestyle preferences, the physical and cultural setting of the Town, infrastructure improvements, regulation and taxation.

The population forecast for the Town of Somerset was developed using a part of the methodology that is used by the Wisconsin Department of Administration, Demographic Services Center. The population projections were derived from the 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000 census population trends as well as the January 1, 2003 population estimate from the Wisconsin Department of Administration, Demographic Services Center adjusted to April 1, 2003. The forecast was developed using the following methodology. It produces a trend line that emphasizes change that is more recent over more remote trends.

AVERAGE POPULATION CHANGE:

$$G = (((P_{03} - P_{70}) / 33) + ((P_{03} - P_{80}) / 23) + ((P_{03} - P_{90}) / 13) + ((P_{03} - P_{00}) / 3)) / 4$$

where: *P* is population;

G is average annual numerical population change; and

70, 80, 90, 00 represent the Census year population and *03* the adjusted DOA estimate.

The population forecast was then calculated by multiplying *G* times the number of years from the base year (2000) to the forecasted year, and adding that to the base year population.

POPULATION FORECAST:

$$P_{2005} = P_{03} + (2 \times G)$$

$$P_{2010} = P_{03} + (7 \times G);$$

$$P_{2015} = P_{03} + (12 \times G)$$

$$P_{2020} = P_{03} + (17 \times G)$$

$$P_{2025} = P_{03} + (22 \times G)$$

$$P_{2028} = P_{03} + (25 \times G)$$

These calculations produce a small area forecast that are limited because they are developed with local data and are not "backed into" from large area forecasts. The Department of Administration, Demographic Services Center will produce forecasts for the State by Minor Civil Division, available in 2003. Those forecasts should be reviewed and compared to those for the plan to evaluate any significant discrepancies.

2003	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2028
2,986	3,134	3,504	3,875	4,246	4,617	4,839

Source: Adjusted WiDOA estimate, and West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission 2003

	1990 <i>Census</i>	2000 <i>Census</i>	2005 <i>Projection</i>	2010 <i>Projection</i>	2015 <i>Projection</i>	2020 <i>Projection</i>
Somerset Comprehensive Plan						
Population	1,975	2,644	3,134	3,504	3,875	4,246
Population Change (No.)		669	490	370	371	371
Population Change (%)		33.9	18.5	11.8	10.6	9.6
Wisconsin DOA • 1993						
Population	1,975	2,303	2,404	2,484	2,560	n/a
Population Change (No.)		136	101	80	76	n/a
Population Change (%)		6.3	4.4	3.3	3.1	n/a

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration, June 1993
West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, 2003

This projection shows a likely population growth for the Town of Somerset between the years 2000 and 2025 of 1973 people, about a 75 percent increase or about 3 percent a year. This is fast growth for a rural, suburban area.

The value of updated population projections can be seen when comparing them with the projections produced by the Department of Administration, Demographic Services in 1993. The State determined that Somerset would grow 5 times less than it did between 1990 and 2000. In the periods past the year 2000 the State determined that Somerset would gain population at a paltry .7 percent a year when it is already growing at around 3.5 percent a year. In light of the Department of Administration, Demographic Services 2003 population estimate for Somerset of 2,957, it is certain that Somerset will continue to grow at a fast pace. The population forecast for the Town of Somerset Comprehensive Plan reflects fast-paced future growth for the Town.

HOUSEHOLD FORECAST

A household forecast is used to help develop housing and land use forecasts. The household forecast provides what household size is likely to be based on a set of assumptions. These assumptions include:

1. Household size has decreased in Somerset over the past 30 years

2. Household size has decreased in most metro/suburban areas over the past 30 years.
3. Household size will continue to decrease in metro/suburban areas over the next 25 years.
4. Household size in some large urban areas is presently 1.85 persons per household.
5. Household size in metro/suburban areas will approach the present size of large urban households.
6. The Town of Somerset will continue to see decreasing household size at about the rate that it has decreased in the past 30 years.

The 2000 Census for the Town Somerset suggests that household size decreased by about one and one-half persons between 1970 and 2000. To produce a household forecast, a trendline from 1970, 1980, 1990 and 2000 Censuses was created that weights more recent change more than more remote trends.

TABLE 20				
HISTORICAL HOUSEHOLD SIZE • 1970 to 2000				
Town of Somerset				
	1970	1980	1990	2000
Population	1,185	1,833	1,975	2,644
Persons per HH	4.36	3.33	2.96	2.85

Source: U.S. Census

TABLE 21							
HOUSEHOLD FORECAST • 2000 to 2020							
Town of Somerset							
	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2028
Population	2,644	3,134	3,504	3,875	4,246	4,617	4,839
Persons per HH	2.85	2.70	2.56	2.42	2.28	2.14	2.05

Source: U.S. Census 2000, and West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission 2003

The household size projection predicts that the Town of Somerset will have significantly smaller sized households in the future. This will result in an increasing demand for housing units as the population grows.

EMPLOYMENT FORECAST

The requirements for a Comprehensive Plan found in the law includes the development of employment projections. The State of Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) has prepared employment projections for the West Central Workforce Development Area of Barron, Chippewa, Clark, Dunn Eau Claire, Pepin, Pierce, Polk and St. Croix Counties. Being large-area forecasts they are more accurate than any small-area forecast developed without the benefit of large-area data. However, they do not provide small-area information for the Town of Somerset. The DWD employment projections are included in the Appendix.

To create an employment projection for the Town of Somerset, a trend line from 1980, 1990 and 2000 Census Employment by Industry data, by industry percentage of total employment, was developed to produce average rates of change for each industry. The average rates of change for each category were then applied to the 2000 Census percent of total employment for that category to arrive at a projected percentage of total employment for each category. Historically, on average, about 55% of the Town of Somerset population are in the work force. The projected industry percentage of total employment was then applied to 55% of the projected population

figures for 2010 and 2020 to arrive at employment projections by industry for Town of Somerset residents.

TABLE 22
EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS BY INDUSTRY • 2010 and 2020
Town of Somerset Residents

	<i>2000 Census Number</i>	<i>2010 Number</i>	<i>2020 Number</i>
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting and mining	61	64	70
Construction	172	347	380
Manufacturing	467	608	666
Wholesale trade	7	6	7
Retail Trade	120	128	140
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	66	68	75
Information	27	77	84
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing	56	85	93
Professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management services	129	134	147
Educational, health and social services	263	410	449
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	72	113	124
Other services, except public administration	55	19	21
Public administration	45	72	79
TOTAL	1540	2131	2335

Source: U.S. Census, WCWRPC

These projections are limited by the assumptions that went into them. They are based on historical trends that are assumed to continue into the future. Few can foresee changes in national, regional and local economies that may leave such assumptions dated. Hence, these forecast data are based on the best available information and a presumption that the factors that have influenced employment of Town of Somerset residents will be similar in the future.

CONCLUSION

Achieving Somerset's desired future form, function and character requires consistent dedication to a public decision making process supported by the following comprehensive plan elements concerning the community's land use pattern, visual appearance and community facilities and services.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES GOALS AND POLICIES

Goal 1

To anticipate and understand demographic and developmental trends that affect the Town of Somerset.

Policy 1.1

To confer yearly with St. Croix County Planning and Zoning Departments regarding demographic and developmental trends in the Town of Somerset.

Policy 1.2

To examine and discuss demographic and developmental trends at the proposed yearly joint meeting of the Planning Commission and the Town Board.

Policy 1.3

To include in the Annual Town Meeting a “State of the Town” presentation by the Planning Commission regarding demographic and developmental trends in the Town of Somerset.

Policy 1.4

To include in the annual tax statement mailing a brief summary of the “State of the Town” presentation.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES IMPLEMENTATION

1. Update background information within one year after decennial Census is available. Evaluate the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey information for its appropriate application in updating background information.
2. Codify existing Town ordinances within 18 months of approval of the Comprehensive Plan.
3. Once existing ordinances are codified, codify new ordinances within three months after passage by the Town Board.
4. Examine and update the Comprehensive Plan at least every 10 years, but not more often than every 5 years from the date of original approval.
5. Establish a yearly noticed joint meeting of the Planning Commission and Town Board to address current issues of the Town.