

# SAREN



*shaping our future*

## **Economic Development Plan**

Village of Siren, Wisconsin

DRAFT

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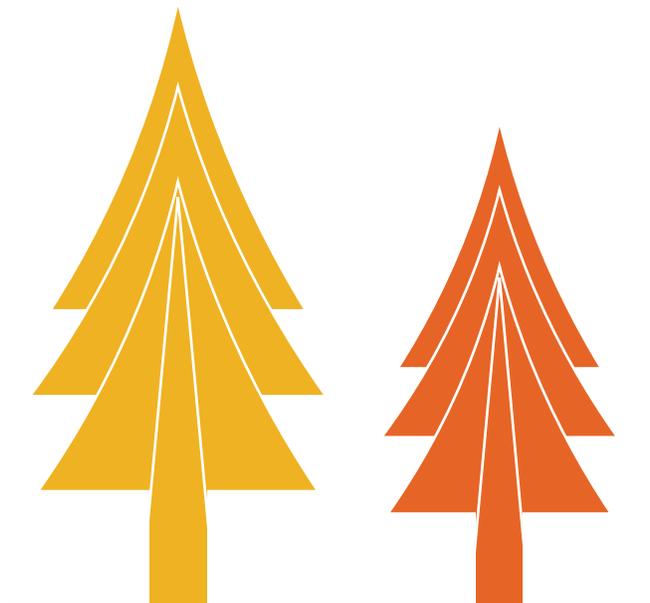
## Town of Meenon

## Siren Area Community

For their participation, ideas and care for the future of the Siren area.

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# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

# OVERVIEW

The Siren Economic Development Plan was developed with feedback from community members and structured to provide guidance for the next 20 years. The planning process resulted in Goals, Initiatives, and Actions organized around three topic areas: Identity, Housing and Employment.

## Methodology:

Civic 4 implemented the C4 method of planning which includes four phases that result in a community driven plan for the future.

## LEARN

Phase 1 was dedicated to learning about the Village and its past planning practices. It was important to understand what the community had prioritized in the past to ensure the public engagement phase began with a relevant conversation. The outcome of the LEARN Phase was a Current Plan Analysis which highlights the goals and objectives of all current plans and provides a conversation approach for Phase 2. The Current Plan Analysis is available as Appendix A.

## ENGAGE

The consultant team hosted an on-line survey and five (5) public engagement events including a public forum and four pop up booths at local community events. Over 170 people provided feedback through one of the channels with 150 responses to the on-line survey and approximately 22 people in attendance at the public forum. Aside from the survey data there was a considerable number of thoughtful comments and ideas collected via comment cards at the public events. The result of the ENGAGE phase was a public engagement report and preliminary goal concepts that would provide direction for plan development. The Public Engagement Report is available as Appendix A.

## PLAN

Following the collection of all public engagement feedback, Civic 4 prepared the draft Economic Development Plan. The draft is open to the public for a 30-day public comment period during which the community is able to review and submit comments back to the consultant team. At the conclusion of the public comment period the final draft is prepared and presented to the Siren Economic Development Advisory Committee for recommendation to the Village Board for approval.

## CHANGE

The last phase of the methodology involves the community. At the conclusion of the planning process and approval of the final Economic Development plan, the recommendations put in place should be set in motion. It is important that the community and officials take ownership and accountability of the plan to ensure the initiatives and actions are implemented.

# FOCUS AREAS

The public engagement process generated great ideas, concepts and visions for the future of the Siren Area. Topics spanning winter recreation, housing, sustainable employment opportunities and others were brought up in conversation as well as in the online survey. Based on the feedback received, several focus areas emerged that will guide the outcome of the Economic Development Plan.

Specific goals are provided under each focus area. These goals are a direct result of feedback received throughout the engagement phase.

## IDENTITY

The community is looking to create a strong identity for the Siren area. With development happening along the Highway 35 corridor, the Village's main street has become somewhat of an afterthought. The main street corridor holds a lot of history and potential as the community looks to embrace the small town character that surrounds them.

### Goal:

Create an identity that stands out among Wisconsin's northwest region communities.

## EMPLOYMENT

One of the most critical aspects of a strong economy is employment. The Siren area faces multiple challenges when it comes to employment, the biggest being a lack of a larger, skilled workforce and sustainable wage jobs which stems from the seasonality of the community and its proximity to larger metropolitan areas like Duluth/Superior and the Twin Cities.

### Goal:

Create a hub for trade, employment and entrepreneurship.

## HOUSING

Housing has been a topic of conversation in the Siren area for many years. Feedback that was received shed light on the housing challenges facing current residents and the lack of housing that is available for potential new families to the area.

### Goal:

Become a leader in rural housing initiatives.

# COMMUNITY PROFILE

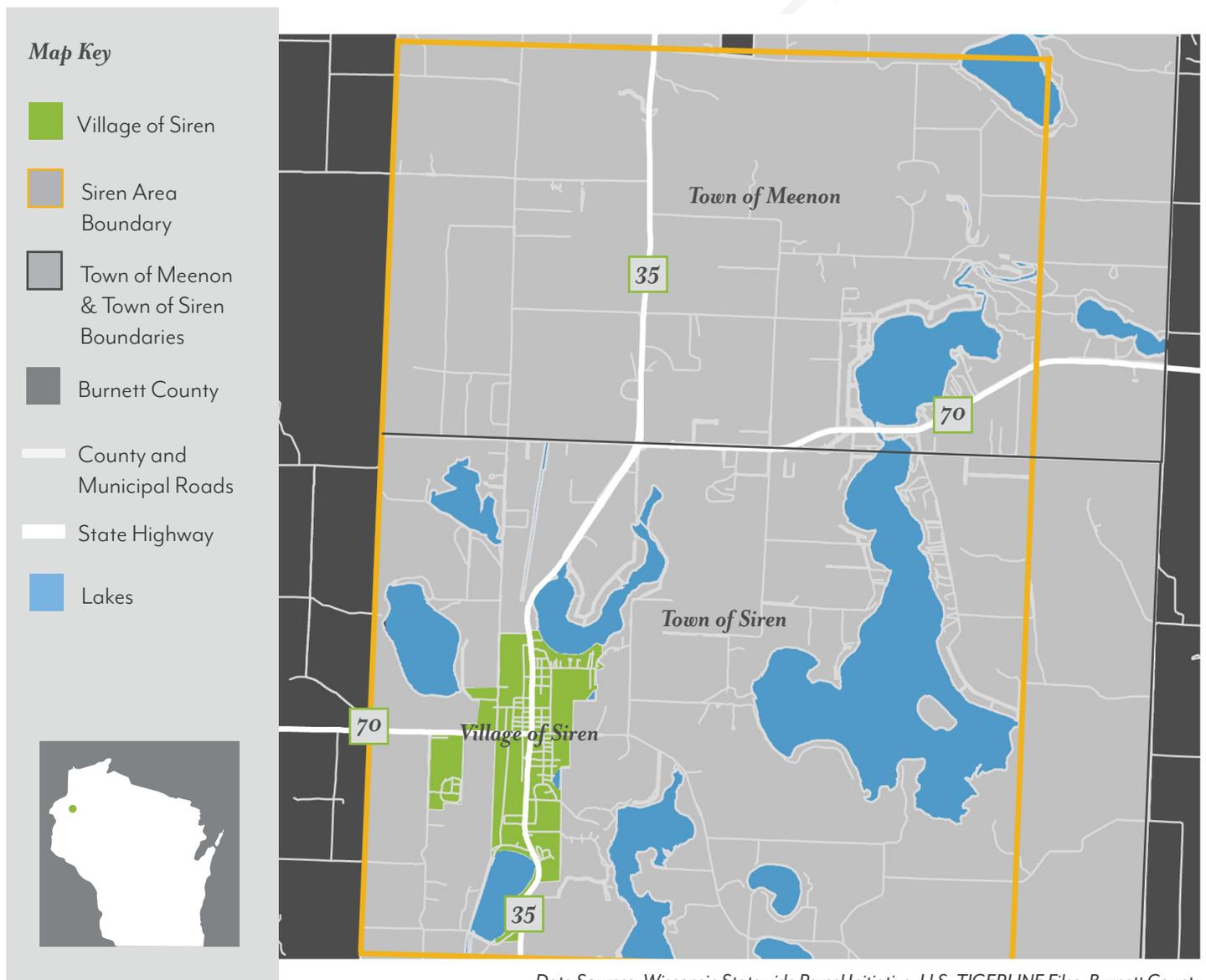
# ACCESS

## SIREN AREA

The Village of Siren, Wisconsin and its surrounding area which includes the Town of Siren and the Town of Meenon, are located within Burnett County, in the Northwest region of the state. The communities are situated approximately 95 miles northeast of the Twin Cities, 75 miles south of the Duluth/Superior Metro area and 35 miles north of St. Croix Falls.

Two State Highways, 70 and 35, meet in downtown Siren and provide great access for people coming from all different directions. The area's unique location between three metro areas combined with its abundance of lakes, outdoor recreation and small town character makes it ideal for many people seeking a second home or a quiet place to retire.

*Siren Area: As it relates to this Economic Development Plan, the Siren area consists of the Village of Siren, the southern region of the Town of Meenon, south of Bass Lake Road and the western region of the Town of Siren, west of Walberg Road. However, any data compiled from the U.S. Census and included in this report represents the entire communities of Meenon and Siren.*

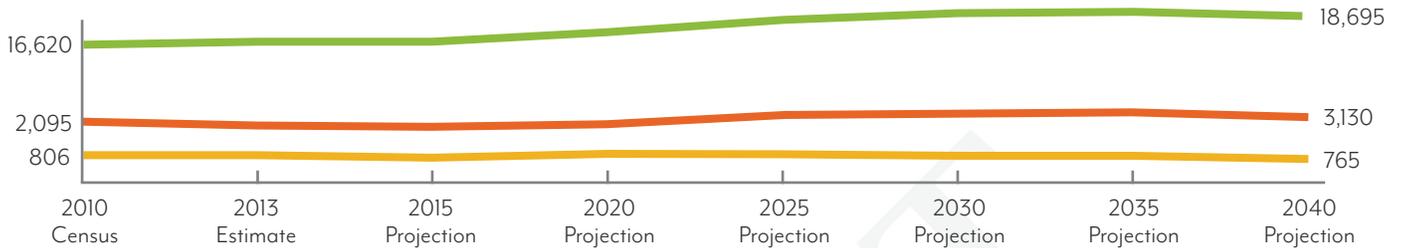


# DEMOGRAPHICS

## POPULATION

The Siren area has seen relatively stagnant population growth in recent years. This trend is also prevalent county wide. The following table shows population projections for Burnett County, the Village of Siren and the Siren area which includes the Village of Siren, Town of Siren and Town of Meenon

- Burnett County
- Siren Area
- Village of Siren

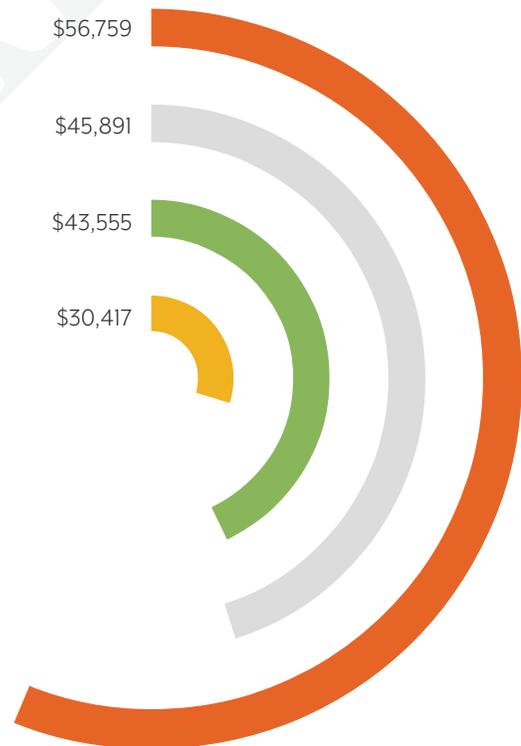


State of Wisconsin, Department of Administration, Population Projections, 2010-2040

## INCOME

Median household incomes among the Burnett County communities are relatively low compared to the rest of the state. The following graphic displays median household incomes compared between the State of Wisconsin, Burnett County, Siren area and the Village of Siren.

- State of Wisconsin
- Burnett County
- Siren Area
- Village of Siren



Low and moderate incomes are based on the area medians. The following income levels define low and moderate for the Siren area:

Income Level	Siren Area
Low (50% of area median)	< \$21,777
Moderate (50-80% of area median)	\$21,777 - \$34,844

U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder, Income & Earnings, Geographies: State of Wisconsin; Burnett County; Siren Area (Village of Siren, Town of Siren, Town of Meenon); and the Village of Siren, 2017 estimates

# EMPLOYMENT

## EMPLOYMENT

When trying to understand the employment landscape in an area it is best to determine the concentration of jobs and their respective industries to see if there are any trends. To do this a Location Quotient is calculated.

The following table represents the location quotients for each industry as defined by the U.S. census. The local government area encompasses the Village of Siren, Town of Siren and Town of Meenon. The benchmark region is the State of Wisconsin. This means that location quotient outcome is a representation of the industry concentration in the Siren area as compared to the State of Wisconsin.

**Location Quotient:** A simple ratio used to determine the concentration or dominance of a particular industry in a region (i.e. Local Government area) in comparison to a larger reference or benchmark region (i.e. State or Nation).

*Location quotients with a value above 1.5 represent a concentration of that industry in the area.*

Industry	WI State Employment Ratio	Siren Area Employment Ratio	Location Quotient
Construction	5.46%	10.35%	1.89
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services*	8.65%	14.26%	1.65
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	4.35%	6.60%	1.52
Public administration	3.47%	4.48%	1.29
Other services, except public administration	4.12%	4.88%	1.19
Manufacturing	18.37%	18.01%	0.98
Retail Trade*	11.27%	10.67%	0.95
Education services, and health care and social assistance	23.20%	19.88%	0.86
Information	1.64%	1.30%	0.80
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	6.05%	3.42%	0.57
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting*, and mining	2.40%	1.22%	0.51
Wholesale Trade	2.70%	1.46%	0.54
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	8.28%	3.50%	0.42

*U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder, Employment, Industry, Geographies: State of Wisconsin; Siren Area (Village of Siren, Town of Siren, Town of Meenon), 2017 estimates*

Based on the results of the location quotient, the Siren area has industries concentrated in construction, tourism related business and utilities. This means that these industries are the most prevalent and also could be good target industries to grow and seek out when looking for new businesses to become established in the area. However, it is also important to consider the overall growth of each industry both statewide and nationally.

*\*Industries reflect those that can be associated with tourism.*

# HOUSING

The housing makeup of the Siren area\* includes single-family homes, rental homes, apartment buildings, senior housing, vacation rentals and second homes among others. Because of the seasonality of the area, home prices can vary greatly. The following charts provide guidance and insight into the breakdown of owner-occupied housing, rental housing and home prices.

\*Data provided is a sum of the Town of Meenon, Town of Siren and Village of Siren

## TOTAL HOUSING UNITS



U.S. Census Bureau, Selected Economic Characteristics, Siren Area, 2017 estimates

U.S. Census Bureau, Selected Economic Characteristics, Siren Area, 2013 estimates (2017 estimates are not available for type of vacancy unit)

## SEASONAL HOMEOWNERSHIP

Vacant unit calculations are comprised of units for sale, units that are rented but not occupied, un-occupied units, and those that are for seasonal or recreational use. Roughly **88%\*** of all vacant units in the Siren area are considered for “seasonal, recreational or occasional use”. This helps to show the number of second homeowners in the area as well as homes that may be used for rentals with companies like Air Bnb and VRBO.

## RENTAL HOUSING

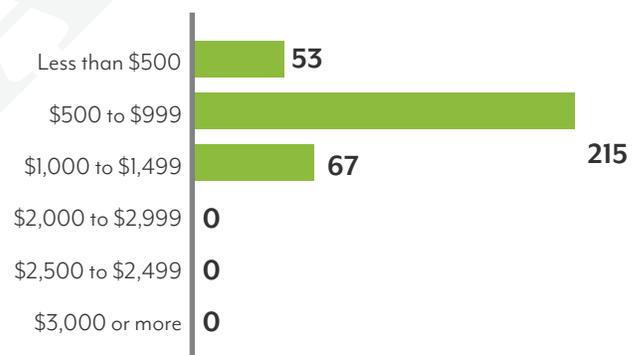
The Siren area’s rental housing makes up 26% of total housing units. These units range in rental costs from less than \$500 to \$1,499. Census data does not show any rental unit that is priced higher than \$1,499. The majority of units are priced between \$500 and \$999.

Rental cost as a percentage of income shows how much people are spending on their housing costs. A nationwide standard is to contribute no more than 30% of your income to housing costs. In the Siren area over 150 renters are spending more than 35% of their income on their housing costs.

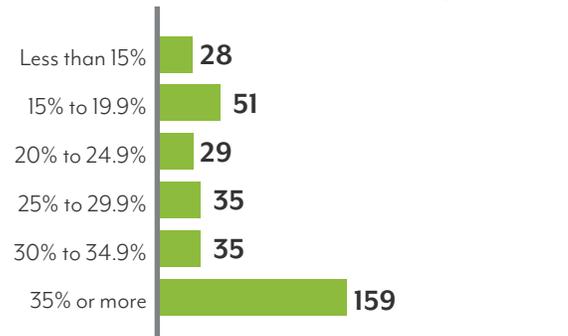
Looking back at the median income for the Siren area, a median household income of \$43,555 would spend approximately \$13,000 annually on housing costs which is just over \$1,000/month. This does not take into account household size which can have an impact on the number of bedrooms desired in a housing unit.

Over 50% of the area’s renters spending more than 30% of their income on housing costs is an indication that housing affordability does not meet the needs of a majority of those looking for rental properties.

### Rental Costs (total units)



### Rental Cost as Percentage of Income\*\*



U.S. Census Bureau, Selected Economic Characteristics, Siren Area, 2017 estimates

\*The vacancy characteristics that included the type of vacant units were only available in the 2013 estimate format. The 88% does not align exactly to the 2017 estimates represented above but does provide the general idea of how many seasonal and recreational homes are in the area.

\*\*Cost as a percentage of income representing the total number of units where the occupant is spending the associated percentage of their income on the rental cost.

# **ACTION PLAN**

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This economic development plan provides specific actions the community can undertake to work towards each goal. However, new projects or programs may become available over the next 10 to 20 years. The following guiding principles were created from the outcomes of this economic development plan and provide the community with flexibility to introduce future projects or programs as the opportunity or need arises. By continuously checking in with these guiding principles, the community can ensure the pursuit of all projects or programs aligns with the overall outcomes of this economic development plan.

## UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN, THE SIREN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE WILL STRIVE TO:

- Create a compelling community story
- Reduce barriers to obtaining and maintaining employment
- Support trade education and employment throughout the community
- Provide support and resources to help grow and enhance the business community
- Ensure both current and future residents have access to quality housing
- Preserve and enhance natural resources, parkland and recreation opportunities with an emphasis on youth and families
- Pursue infrastructure and facilities that enhance the community's art and culture capacity for residents and visitors
- Incorporate health and well-being into future community and development projects

# SUMMARY OF GOALS AND INITIATIVES

## IDENTITY

### Goal:

Create an identity that stands out among Wisconsin's northwest region communities.

### Initiatives:

- Transform Main Street into a community destination**
- Be recognized as an active four-season community for residents and visitors**
- Continue to grow and invest in arts and culture**

## EMPLOYMENT

### Goal:

Create a hub for trade, employment and entrepreneurship.

### Initiatives:

- Cultivate and support entrepreneurial business**
- Create and promote an attractive environment for potential industry or new local businesses**
- Improve coordination of career coaching and training/education planning, including exposure to community leadership roles**

## HOUSING

### Goal:

Become a leader in rural housing initiatives.

### Initiatives:

- Pursue development of housing on Siren area properties**
- Adopt a Housing Policy that encourages the development of housing**

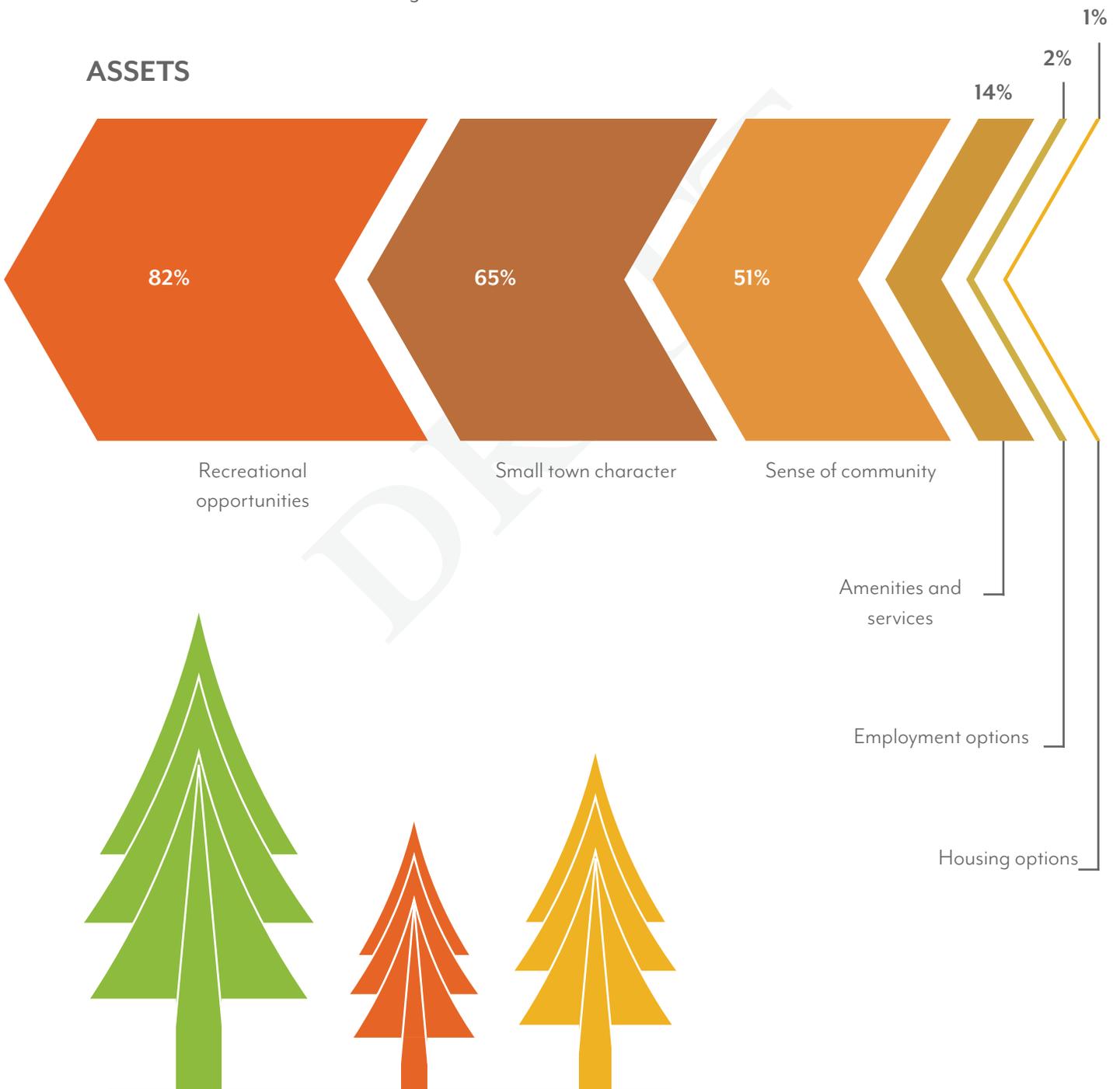
# IDENTITY



# OVERVIEW

**GOAL:** Create an identity that stands out among Wisconsin's northwest region communities

**DATA:** Data shows that there is a strong sense of community with over 51% of survey respondents seeing the community atmosphere as an asset and over 60% that feel the small town character is an asset. However, attracting and retaining young people is a challenge and while housing and employment plays a large part in where people choose to settle down, establishing a strong identity for the Siren area can help people see the overall benefits from living in the area.



# INITIATIVES & ACTIONS

## **Initiative:** Transform Main Street into a community destination

During the engagement phase of the planning process, a workshop was held with Main Street property owners. The outcome of the workshop was a vision statement and ideas for helping to revitalize the corridor. The specific actions and aims for Main Street are guided by these outcomes.

### **Main Street Vision Statement**

**Main Street is a place where people can gather, shop, dine and enjoy the small town character of the area.**

### **Five-Year**

- Action:** Launch a Main Street Public Art program and seek artists that are interested in creating public art that can be displayed along Main Street. Identify a theme for the program and auction the art pieces off at the end of each year to create a continuous fund for future installations.
- Action:** Work with vacant building owners to decorate vacant storefronts for various holidays. This will help to increase the visual interest of the corridor and provide prospective tenants with ideas for how they may be able to utilize the spaces.
- Action:** Partner with a vacant building owner to open their building space to local crafters and artisans certain times during the month or year. These 'pop-up types shops not only provide a great way for locals to sell their products but also provides property owners free marketing of their vacant spaces.
- Action:** Use the Siren Area Chamber of Commerce as a platform to recognize businesses that make a positive impact on the downtown corridor through building rehabilitation, new construction and enhancing their streetscape.
- Action:** Pursue the purchase of additional planters and benches that will help create a welcoming atmosphere and a place that people can gather.
- Action:** Install creative bicycle racks at intersections or along sidewalks to support a creative aesthetic, provide functionality and create a connection to the Gandy Dancer.
- Action:** Consider pursuing temporary place-making programs like Better Block in a Box. Utilize these kinds of programs during summer weekends or on high visitor traffic days.
- Action:** Re-stripe parking stalls along Main Street to measure no more than 16 feet in length.

### **Ten-Year**

- Action:** Consider construction of a permanent median down the center of Main Street or other temporary/permanent infrastructure additions to attract people. Design the median with trees and attractive landscaping. This type of infrastructure can help with traffic calming, aesthetic, and provide pedestrians with an oasis as they are crossing the street.

### **Twenty-Year Measures**

- Aim:** All vacant storefronts are full and operating local businesses or spaces that the community can utilize to promote Main Street as a gathering place.
- Aim:** All vacant lots have been or are in the process of being developed into facilities or buildings that promote the vision of Main Street.
- Aim:** People gather and engage with each other along the Main Street corridor, utilizing new design features that accommodate pedestrians.

**Instant Impact Project: Tactical Urbanism:** With re-striped parking stalls that are no more than 16 feet in length, place planters and cones down the middle of the Main Street corridor to create a temporary median. Invite the public to come and see the installation, use the crosswalks and enjoy a slower pace along the Main Street corridor. Observe the impact of the installation by collecting feedback from users.



**Total Available Right-of-Way: approximately 100 feet (including sidewalk)**

Minimum standards include providing at least a 10 foot driving lane and at least a 12 foot parking stall. A median can be tested along Main Street should the width of the median allow for the minimum standards to be met.

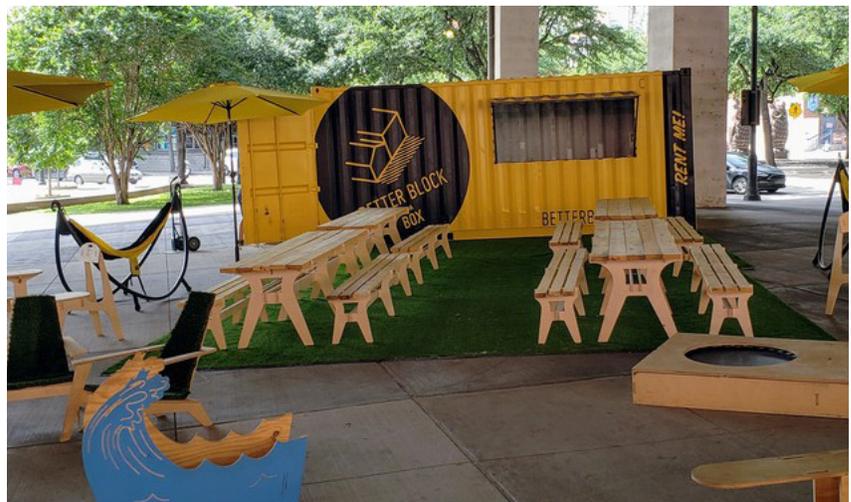
Minimum Standard Resources & Guidance:

[Federal Highway Administration Lane Width Standards](#)

[Federal Highway Administration Design and Safety of Pedestrian Facilities](#)

**Instant Impact Project:**

**Better Block in a Box:** Better Block in a Box is a program run by the Better Block organization. They send a community a shipping container filled with everything needed to create a place for people to be and interact. From seating, lighting and shade to the actual shipping container that can be used as a pop up shop or similar, the program aims to make placemaking easy. Using Better Block in a Box at events like Fourth of July, the Siren area can create an interesting place for people to gather.



Better Block: [betterblock.com](http://betterblock.com)

# INITIATIVES & ACTIONS

## **Initiative:** Be recognized as an active four-season community for residents and visitors

Recreation was the top response when people were asked what are the Siren area's assets. The area provides year-round recreation but a majority of visitors travel to the area during the summer months to engage in warm weather recreation activities. Increasing and improving recreation opportunities is a key driver for helping attract more residents to live year-round and visitors to see the area as a year-round destination.

### **Five-Year**

**Action:** Partner with the Department of Tourism to conduct their Destination Assessment. These assessments can help to understand how to increase impact on visitor spending in the area.

**Action:** Plan a winter festival to draw activity to the area in the off-season. Host events like an ice sculpting contest, ice fishing, and music.

**Action:** Help the Community Gardening group conduct/expand a Gardening 101 at the Siren School to encourage a younger demographic to become involved in the garden.

**Action:** Create a Recreation Committee that brings together organizations like the Friends of the Gandy Dancer, local Snowmobile clubs and other recreation stakeholders to talk openly about all ways in which the area can improve their recreation options.

### **Ten-Year**

**Action:** Construct a community center with an emphasis on providing opportunities for youth to gather and engage outside of school and home.

**Action:** Conduct an inventory assessment of all recreation opportunities provided within the Village and pursue the development of a Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan that will make the community eligible for State and Federal parks and recreation grants.

**Action:** Use the recreation inventory to help connect various recreation users with spaces that are underutilized. An example would be the Siren Senior Center which is a space available for rent that can accommodate various activities.

**Action:** Encourage all future road construction projects to include pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.

**Action:** Seek at least one additional year-round indoor entertainment/recreational destination/attraction for residents and visitors.

### **Twenty-Year Measures**

**Aim:** Increase in number of young families living in the community year-round.

**Aim:** Winter tourism has increased and visitors are spending more time in the area during the shoulder seasons.

**Aim:** Traditional seasonal businesses are able to extend hours and maintain hours into the shoulder seasons (November - April).

## Initiative: Continue to grow and invest in arts and culture

Organizations like Burnett Area Arts Group and Northwest Passage are examples of how the arts culture has grown and established itself throughout the area. There is great opportunity for Siren to capitalize on this and build even more of an arts and culture capacity in the future for the local community and visitors to the area.

### Five-Year

- Action:** Host a mural competition for Siren High School students, Northwest Passage and other young adults to submit ideas for the design of a mural. Partner with a business and local artist to have the winning mural created on the side of a building.
- Action:** Use Village Hall and other public spaces as an exhibition space. Allow students or local artists to submit artwork to be displayed at Village Hall. Display work from students at Northwest Passage to help create a connection between the Village and not only the organization but the new artist space at the Northwest Passage location.
- Action:** Partner with the owner of a vacant lot on Main Street and host music or other cultural activities during the summer in the open space. Decorate the lot with lights, flower pots and benches to create a welcoming atmosphere for visitors.
- Action:** Pursue becoming a more environmentally friendly community.

### Ten-Year

- Action:** Develop an internship program for high school students or college students to assist with festival coordination and implementation.
- Action:** Launch a “Siren Tree” (or similar) art project where artists from all over Wisconsin design and paint a large ceramic tree that gets displayed throughout the Village. Auction the trees at the end of the summer season as a fundraiser for future art installations.

### Twenty-Year Measures

- Aim:** The number of local artists in the Siren area has grown.
- Aim:** Visitors travel to Siren to take part in the arts culture.
- Aim:** The Siren area is recognized as an environmentally conscious community.

**Instant Impact Project:** Invite local artists to design and paint artistic crosswalks along Main Street. These can be temporary in nature but can instantly turn a neutral area into a creative one.



# EMPLOYMENT

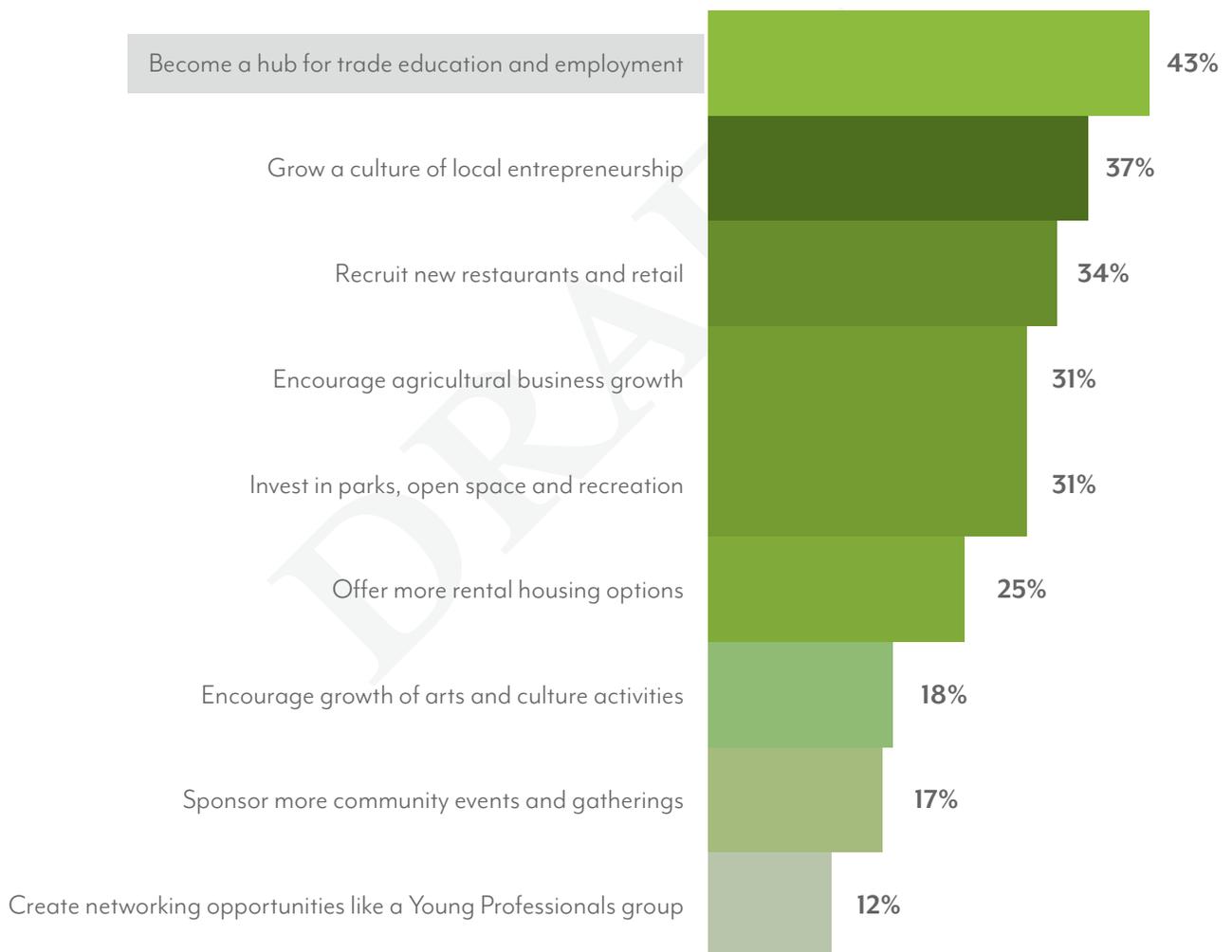


# OVERVIEW

**GOAL:** Create a hub for trade, employment and entrepreneurship

**DATA:** Survey respondents and interviewees feel that there is a great opportunity for the Siren area to become a hub for trade and employment. This is in direct correlation with the concept of attracting and retaining young people in the community. Without the right kinds of jobs and opportunities young people may look elsewhere when deciding to settle into a community.

## Ways to attract and retain young people:



# INITIATIVES & ACTIONS

## **Initiative: Cultivate and support entrepreneurial business**

The Siren area has seen many local entrepreneurial businesses begin and grow within the community. In addition, with the Northwest Regional Planning Commission business incubator located just outside the Village limits, entrepreneurs from outside of the area are able to find space and resources to enhance their business ventures. The community is well positioned to continue to see growth in entrepreneurial business.

### **Five-Year**

**Action:** Develop a resource document that explains the benefits of operating a storefront business along Main Street or the 35 corridor and use it to encourage businesses from the NWRPC business incubator to expand or relocate as their business allows.

**Action:** Launch an Entrepreneur and Business Owner networking group. Utilize members of the community to share their success stories and advice with a younger generation of business owners. A mentorship program or networking group could be created through the committee or through the Chamber of Commerce.

**Action:** Partner with a vacant building owner to open their building space to local crafters and artisans certain times during the month or year. These 'pop-up' types shops not only provide a great way for locals to sell their products but also provides property owners free marketing of their vacant spaces.

**Action:** Establish a seasonal Small Business Saturday that encourages people to shop local during the shoulder seasons (November - April). Ask businesses to provide discounts on these days or incentives for shopping.

### **Ten-Year**

**Action:** With the County, establish an entrepreneurial grant program that can help provide funds for people that are looking to start businesses in the community.

**Action:** Pursue adoption of a policy that requires the Village Board to actively use a lens of "entrepreneur support" when choosing to create or loosen regulations on businesses.

### **Twenty-Year Measures**

**Aim:** Business collaboration and total community involvement in social, educational and business growth has increased.

**Aim:** At least one retail storefront business has moved from the NWRPC Business Incubator to a location on Main Street.

# INITIATIVES & ACTIONS

## **Initiative:** Create and promote an attractive environment for potential industry or new local businesses

The Siren area has seen growth in their industrial park and is currently working to expand development opportunities at the property. In addition, the Village and its surrounding area have excellent access to broadband, increasing remote work opportunities as well as access for larger companies. Lastly, the Village is pursuing development of new housing options that are expected to provide quality homes for young families or individuals looking to move to the Siren area. All of these things can be attributed to an attractive environment for potential business. It will be important that Siren leverage these assets and market themselves as a great place to live and do business.

### Five-Year

- Action:** Use existing channels to share ‘small wins’ in the business community such as the newly broken ground on Gary’s Rude Cafe’s new lot or a 20-year look at how the community has bounced back from the 2001 tornado. Use the newsletter to share the Siren story with the local community.
- Action:** Conduct marketing efforts that promote the quality of life in the Siren area. Use marketing to externally share the Siren story.
- Action:** Add a page to the VisitSiren.com website, titled Live & Work, or similar. Include information about life in Siren including, but not limited to: Education; Housing; Employment; Recreation; Access etc.
- Action:** Host open houses at the shovel ready industrial park site. Reach out to industries with a high location quotient including, but not limited to, construction, transportation and warehousing and invite them to learn more about the property.
- Action:** Apply to become a Wisconsin Telecommuter Forward Community which shows your commitment to promoting telecommuting options. This is supported by the strong efforts of local broadband companies that have worked diligently to provide better broadband service in the Siren area.

### Ten-Year

- Action:** Consider pursuing business incentives such as property tax breaks, micro-loans, or discounts on permits and fees for new businesses to establish themselves within the Siren area.
- Action:** Use the Siren Chamber of Commerce as a platform to recognize businesses that have been a long-standing member of the community and have grown their employment over the years.

### Twenty-Year Measures

- Aim:** The shovel-ready industrial park site has been developed.
- Aim:** There has been an increase in the number of sustainable wage jobs provided throughout the Siren area.

## Living Wages

The Department of Urban Studies and Planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology created a living wage calculator that can help areas better understand the various costs associated with different household types and what wage level is needed to remain above the poverty level. The following table shows a selection of the different households types and their wage calculations for Burnett County. The numbers are based on a single worker and costs include things like transportation, child care, food, etc:

	1 Adult, 0 Children	1 Adult, 1 Child	2 Adults, 1 Child	2 Adults, 2 Children
Living Wage	\$10.75	\$23.66	\$20.89	\$25.83
Poverty Wage	\$5.84	\$7.91	\$9.99	\$12.07

These wages are estimates based on varying factors. More household types and all costs taken into account can be found here: [Living Wage Calculator](#). Information on the development of the calculation can be found here: [Wage Calculator User Guide](#)

# INITIATIVES & ACTIONS

**Initiative:** Improve coordination of career coaching and training/education planning, including exposure to community leadership roles.

Education and training are a key component of creating a workforce that is attractive to new or existing business. There are many existing continuing education and trade training opportunities currently available in the Siren area. The challenge exists in informing the public what opportunities exist and supporting them in their pursuit of education or training.

## Five-Year

**Action:** Develop events/programs to advise local young people of local career possibilities. Facilitate school visits to local businesses so students can better understand their local career opportunities and are introduced to the idea of opening their own business. Examples include Career Cruising and Youth Apprenticeship programs available through the Siren School District.

**Action:** Encourage local public and nonprofits to invite young people to serve on their boards. Help to create student advisory positions or similar.

**Action:** Develop a database that provides links to all education and career training opportunities available in the Siren area. Help connect different organizations providing training and educational courses. Answer the question, if someone went online and searched “education and training in the Siren, Wisconsin area” what do you want them to find? Link to a potential Live & Work site on the VisitSiren.com website.

## Ten-Year

**Action:** Work with the County to explore the feasibility of bringing the Transitional Jobs program, through Northwest Wisconsin CEP to Burnett County.

[Transitional Jobs Program Information](#)

**Action:** Encourage and support the growth of continuing education resources like Softec and Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College.

## Twenty-Year Measures

**Aim:** The Siren area is known for excellence in trade education and employment.

**Aim:** Students in the Siren area are actively pursuing trade opportunities and employers are able to find qualified employees in the area.



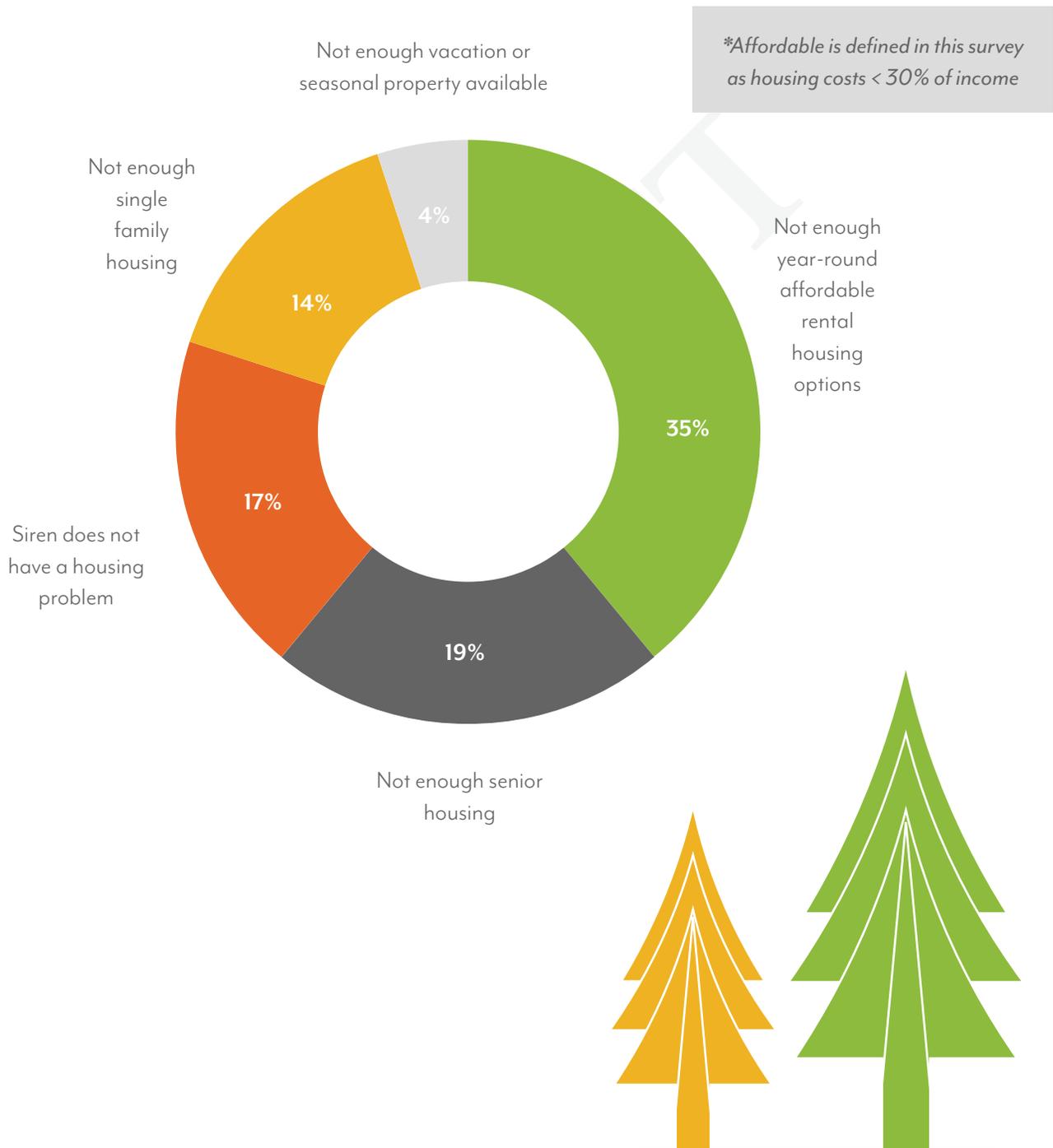
# HOUSING



# OVERVIEW

**GOAL:** Become a leader in rural housing initiatives.

**DATA:** Survey respondents and interviewees feel that there is a great opportunity for the Siren area to become a hub for trade and employment. This is in direct correlation with the concept of attracting and retaining young people in the community. Without the right kinds of jobs and opportunities young people may look elsewhere when deciding to settle into a community.



# INITIATIVES & ACTIONS

## Initiative: Pursue development of housing on Siren area properties.

In 2019, the Village of Siren purchased a roughly 60 acre parcel adjacent to the south end of the Village off of Tewalt Road. The purchase was earmarked for market-rate homes for current and future residents. At this time, the Village is determining how to move forward with development.

## Tewalt Property Recommendations

### Housing Mix

The Tewalt property is approximately 60 acres. There is a need for both single family and rental properties that are available to current and future residents. The nature of the Tewalt area is more residential, located about 1 mile south of the Village's main commercial district. It is recommended that development be consistent with a low-density residential development but include rental options. Recommended housing types include:



Single-Family (2-3 bed) Duplex (1-2 bed) Townhouse (1-3 bed)

These housing type recommendations are not limitations, they are based on the perceived need and nature of the parcel area. Further study in terms of how many units are needed could be pursued to have a clearer idea of the layout for the parcel.

### Actions

The following actions are recommended to help the development of the property:

- Meet with the County to identify any County resources available for development of housing or assistance with seeking developers
- Create a marketing packet for the property that includes what the Village is looking for in terms of development
- Seek housing partnerships with neighboring communities like Webster and Grantsburg. By combining efforts the incentive and return for a developer to come and build 100+ units throughout neighboring communities is greater than building one or two apartment complexes in a single community.
- Assist as necessary with any housing study being conducted throughout Burnett County or pursue an independent housing study. Utilize the information provided in a final report as a part of a marketing packet.

### Housing Price

The Village should pursue a more in depth housing study to further determine appropriate housing costs for area residents. The following information is provided as initial guidance:

\$43,555 **Area Median Income (AMI)**

\$13,066 **30% of Income**

\$1,088 **Monthly Rental/Mortgage Limit**

Any new housing developed should strive to meet the needs of those making close to the Area Median Income through price or by providing financial assistance through various state or federal programs. Other lifestyle expenses and household size must also be considered in home and rental price.

### Survey Data

Survey data did not provide statistically significant results to make an accurate determination on appropriate housing costs. The following information is provided as initial guidance in determining what housing prices the community should strive to develop within:

Household Size	Affordable Rent	Affordable Home Price
1 person	\$825	Not conclusive
2 people	\$835	Price < \$150,000
3 people	\$965	Price < \$150,000
4 people	\$1,055	Price < \$150,000
5 people	\$1,235	\$175,000 - \$200,000

The results indicate what each household size (that responded to the survey) is able to spend on housing as it relates to their income. With only 150 responses this is not a complete picture of the community needs but can provide some initial perspective and a starting point in identifying what kinds of prices are needed to ensure adequate housing supply.

# INITIATIVES & ACTIONS

## **Initiative:** Adopt a Housing Policy that encourages the development of housing

The adoption of a housing policy can be a significant step forward in helping address housing challenges within a community. A housing policy does not necessarily have an instant impact or a tangible result. Instead, a well written policy can help local officials and community members make decisions and provides guidance to residents, future developers and others when looking to construct, rehabilitate or maintain various type of housing. A policy is also an opportunity for a local government to show the community that they are prioritizing these needs.

The policy recommendation provided below is constructed for the Village of Siren but can be adopted by other communities as necessary.

### **Housing Policy Recommendation**

#### **It is the policy of the Village of Siren to:**

- 1.1) Encourage the construction and preservation of quality rental housing through land use/zoning policy, financial and technical assistance.
- 1.2) Make every reasonable effort to prevent the loss of market-rate rental housing.
- 1.3) Remove barriers to the production of moderately-priced rental housing, including non-subsidized housing.
- 1.4) Explore flexibility in housing types and residential uses in single-family neighborhoods.
- 1.5) Provide support so that older adults can age in place or age in their community.
- 1.6) Provide support so that individuals with disabilities can live in their community.
- 1.7) Fully enforce all codes related to building structure, occupancy and maintenance to ensure safety of rental units.
- 1.8) Work to integrate housing policies into future plans, economic development strategies and other area planning efforts.
- 1.9) Consider housing needs and goals when planning for major capital investments throughout the community.

*An example of how a policy like this could influence decisions is in the recent Village purchase of the Tewalt Road property in an effort to provide land for quality housing. The purchase is essentially encouraging the construction of housing through financial assistance.*

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following resources are provided at the federal and state level for economic and community development work:

## **Wisconsin Economic Development Authority Grant Programs**

[Main Street and Connect Communities](#)

[Idle Sites Redevelopment Program](#)

[Capacity Building Program](#)

[Entrepreneurship Support Program](#)

## **US Department of Agriculture Rural Development Programs**

[Business Programs](#)

[Telecom Programs](#)

DRAFT

# SAREN

*shaping our future*

Prepared by Civic 4, LLC