

## **A healthy natural environment, public safety, transportation, leisure, and support services contribute to strong community life.**

The COMPASS NOW Report identified these key community issues:

- Transportation
- Food Availability
- Childcare

An emerging issue in the region is:

- Senior Housing

### **Community Highlights**

- 92% of survey respondents rated their community as a good or excellent place to live. 90% rated the air quality as good or excellent and 76% rated the quality of the drinking water as good or excellent.
- Respondents rated the Great Rivers Region highly on several aspects of public safety; however, property crime, violent crime, and sexual assault rates are highest in La Crosse County and are similar to state averages.
- Reports point to a need for public transportation that crosses county borders particularly for the elderly and people with lower income. 55% of survey respondents rated the availability and accessibility of public transportation in their community as either fair or poor.
- Monroe and Vernon counties have large areas of their counties that are considered “food deserts”, areas where at least a third of the population has limited access to healthy food.
- Childcare is a costly expense for working families. Wisconsin and Minnesota rank in the top 10 most expensive states for childcare. On average, the annual cost of licensed child care for an infant in Wisconsin is \$10,520 and \$13,650 in Minnesota.
- Focus group participants expressed concern for the elderly with regard to their transportation needs, support services and lack of suitable housing.



# community