



27 Somers

Community Overview

The rural town of Somers has a population of over 10,255 (2020 Census), and covers a land area of 28.3 square miles. Elevation ranges from about 250 feet on the western side of town to over 900 feet in the hills on the eastern side. Somers lies in the Scantic River Watershed. Its major watercourses include the Scantic River and Abbey, Gillette, Gulf, Shady, Thrasher, Watchaug and Wrights Brooks, and Woods Stream. The main transportation routes through Town are north-south state routes 83 and 186, and east-west route 190. Somers hosts the State of Connecticut’s Osborn, Cybulski, and Northern Correctional Facilities. Principal industries are agriculture and diversified industry. The largest employers are the state penitentiaries and Growers Direct, which has over 70 acres of greenhouses in town. Somers is also home to several tobacco farms, a handful of retail establishments, and a large horse farm. Somers also contains Sonny’s Place, an amusement park and concert venue, and portions of the Shenipsit State Forest.

Somers is experiencing growth and development, including a new development on Eleanor Rd, a gas station, greenhouse facilities at Growers Direct Farms, expanding tobacco farming, and an amusement Park that expanded their parking lot by dredging out a swale to retain more water, a floodplain management action. In addition, an old mill site in Somerville is being redeveloped into 80-100 apartment units. The mill was originally partly in the river, but after the mill was removed, the FEMA map was revised. The proposal is for residential units, but the units will be outside the FEMA flood zone because of the map revision and the position of the building relative to the river.

Development/redevelopment is not increasing risk to natural hazards.

Critical Facilities

In Somers critical facilities include the Somers Firehouse, Public Works, Police Station, Kibbe Fuller Community Center, Senior Center, Somers High School, Mabelle B. Avery Middle School, Somers Elementary School, Sewer Plant, Town Hall, Woodcrest Senior Housing, multiple group homes, the Library, Speech Academy, three large State Penitentiaries, Geissler’s Supermarket, three gas stations, and Soapstone Mountain Tower Site.

Table 27-1: Critical Facilities, Somers

Facility	Shelter	Cooling Center	Generator
Firehouse (EOC)			Yes
Public Works			Partial
Police Station			Yes
Kibbe Fuller Community Center (EOC)			Yes
Senior Center		X	Unknown
Somers High School	X		Yes
Mabelle B. Avery Middle School			Minimal
Somers Elementary School			Minimal
Sewer Plant			Yes

Facility	Shelter	Cooling Center	Generator
Town Hall		X	Yes
Woodcrest Senior Housing			Minimal
Group Homes (multiple)			
Library			
Speech Academy			
3 Large State Penitentiaries			Yes
Johnson Memorial Hospital in Stafford			Yes
Geissler's Supermarket			Yes
3 gas stations			
Soapstone Mountain Tower Site			

During extreme heat events, Somers Senior Center and Somers Town Hall can both be opened as public cooling centers. Generators for these facilities may be needed.

The Somers Fire Department is the Town EOC. The Town shelter is the Somers High School.

In the event of an active shooter, the library is the command post.

The three large state penitentiaries, run by the state, have altogether about 3,000 prisoners and 300 staff on duty. They have their own water treatment plant, but Somers Fire and EMS respond to prison needs.

An important State and Federal communications tower is located on the peak of Soapstone Mountain and is considered by the Town to be a major critical facility. The facility is located within a State park, but the road is maintained by the Town. It is not normally cleared in the winter, but is plowed by the Town in cases of emergency.

There is no hospital in Somers, but Johnson Memorial Hospital, just over the border in Stafford, is the primary hospital used by residents, and the Town considers it a critical facility.

Capabilities

Hazard mitigation is incorporated into the Somers Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). The Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) document itself is cited. POCD actions specifically address natural hazards.

No new development or demolition in floodplains has occurred since 2008. A map modernization effort by FEMA is currently underway for Tolland County, but its full extent, and how much of Somers it will cover, is unknown.

The Somers DPW has the capacity to remove tree debris, and contracts out tree trimming and removal. Additionally, the Town has reported a positive relationship with the regional electricity provider, Eversource.

Somers has two primary solar farms, with plans for more; additionally, many Town buildings (including the Police and Fire Departments, the Elementary School, and the Public Works building) have solar panels on their roofs. There is some potential for development of microgrid systems utilizing these power sources.

Somers participates with Tolland County Mutual Aid (TN), which includes 25 agencies and covers both fire and EMS services.

The Town has a robust GIS system to assist with planning, and has a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT).

Since the 2019 HMP, the following actions have been incorporated as capabilities:

- Include in permitting requirements a review of potential impacts, based on the FMS, of proposed development and town projects.
- Educate residents on personal disaster safety and supply kits, through the Town website and social media.
- Participate in EMI courses or the seminars and annual conference held by the Connecticut Association of Flood Managers.
- Expand emergency communication and notification methods to a variety of media, including radio, television, social media, the Town's low-power FM transmitter (WDJW), and the Town Website.

Capabilities to address natural hazards and the losses that they have caused, have increased since the last plan has been adopted in 2019.

Challenges

Challenges Overview

One of the primary concerns for Somers officials revolves around tree damage and power outages, particularly the risk of power grid failure resulting from downed wires caused by tree debris during storms. Town staff is urging the trimming of dead trees, advocating for more extensive tree trimming efforts by Eversource, and seeking increased funding within the town for tree removal. While a comprehensive forestry plan is not deemed necessary by town staff, they would prefer to secure funding from FEMA or the state for tree removal. Currently, the town allocates \$50,000 annually but has been spending \$90,000 per year for these purposes. The town does not own its own equipment but collaborates with a local contractor. The town reported a small tornado over the past five years that cause tree damage as well.

Flooding is a significant concern for the Town of Somers. Town staff report flooding on Battle Street to be a concern. In addition, during the aftermath of Ida, Watchaug Road was washed out, but it was subsequently repaired with the replacement of culverts. However, Watchaug Road has a private airstrip that continues to flood often. Town staff reported that the Turnpike Road also received flood-related improvements a few years ago. Furthermore, Durkee Road, which experiences continuous flooding due to the presence of the Scantic River, has been addressed by the town. Despite the limited number of houses on this road, the town has lowered, paved it and reinforced its edges and banks. When Durkee Road is inundated, the town temporarily closes it to traffic until the water subsides. Additionally, Gulf Road faced issues near the Connecticut Water Company tank due to an undersized culvert under the access road, leading to a washout caused by debris accumulation. In addition, Gulf Stream erodes Golf Rd. and as a result, there are some residential houses that have severe erosion. Some houses have only 15-20 ft remaining (laterally) before their back yards start to erode.

Town staff mentioned that they recently had a frost that wiped out the fruit growers' crops. Town officials are concerned that this issue will continue to increase in coming years.

Town staff mentioned Woodcrest which is an a privately owned-apartment complex that has vulnerable populations, as they tend to be more elderly. They have a generator but it does not supply power to the whole facility.

Hazard Losses

The economic losses faced by the community from natural hazards can be estimated by reviewing historic loss figures. Loss estimates are summarized below.

Average Annualized Losses

Average Annualized Loss (AAL) estimates are summarized below. Average Annualized Loss (AAL) figures are useful tools for comparison of the risks faced from different hazards with different likelihoods of occurring in a given time period. AAL estimates were prepared for each natural hazard which may impact Somers. National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) data, from the last 20 years, was categorized by hazard and averaged based on the proportion of population within each town in the CROCG Region. National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) losses were calculated based on the 50 year span of the program. FEMA Public Assistance (PA) data from the past 11 years was categorized based on hazard and used to compute AAL. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) from the past 10 years was calculated to get AAL. Expected Annual Loss data from the National Risk Index (NRI) was downloaded and categorized to get AAL for the below hazards. Dam failure data was taken from the 2019-2024 CROCG Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) plan since no new dam failures have occurred in the past five years. The 2019 HMP Dam failures were sourced from the 2014 Connecticut Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan Update, with dam failure data supplemented by the National Performance of Dams Program and the Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection.

Table 27-2: Average Annualized Losses, Somers

Hazard	Source	Average Annualized Losses (AAL)
Hurricanes/Tropical storms	NCEI	\$26,353.59
	NRI	\$662,792.03
	FEMA PA	\$5,483.85
Tornados/High Winds	NCEI	\$9,866.30
	NRI	\$107,746.19
Winter Storms	NCEI	\$7,815.88
	NRI	\$54,556.86
	FEMA PA	\$8,543.09
Flood	NCEI	\$7,988.15
	NRI	\$57,946.63
	NFIP	\$4,868.25
Drought	NRI	\$282,011.12
	USDA	\$108,533.53
Extreme Heat	NRI	\$2,158.18
Wildfire	NRI	\$3,688.38
Earthquakes	NRI	\$20,090.95

Hazard	Source	Average Annualized Losses (AAL)
Dam Failure	HMP	\$703.00

Losses Summary

A review of the above loss estimates demonstrates that the Town of Somers has experienced significant expenses as a result of natural hazards, and is at risk for additional losses if some of the less-frequent events were to occur. These actual and potential losses justify hazard mitigation actions to reduce losses in the future.

Mitigation Strategies and Actions

This HMCAP includes new goal statements that are aligned with *Resilient Connecticut* and the efforts of the GC3. The five new goals developed for this HMCAP were developed with cooperation from CIRCA in the *Resilient Connecticut* planning process, and are:

- Ensure that critical facilities are resilient, with special attention to shelters and cooling centers.
- Address risks associated with extreme heat events, especially as they interact with other hazards.
- Reduce flood and erosion risks by reducing vulnerabilities and consequences, even as climate change increases frequency and severity of floods.
- Reduce losses from other hazards.
- Invest in resilient corridors to ensure that people and services are accessible during floods and that development along corridors is resilient over the long term.

The previous goals of the 2019 HMP have been replaced and incorporated into these five new goals in accordance with the explanation in the Multijurisdictional document.

Noted Hazard Mitigation Needs

Over the course of Plan development, multiple hazard mitigation needs were noted.

- Providing back-up power to critical facilities such as Public Works Building and Library.
- A tree management plan should be considered for the town of Somers to deal with dead/dying trees and resulting power outages during storm events.
- Install additional dry hydrants as needed.
- Conduct a design and implement drainage on Battle St.
- Conduct an assessment of vulnerable populations within town and ensure that the town has the resources and capacity to shelter if needed.
- Additional fire hydrants are needed and planned for Mountain Road and other areas of town.

Status of Previous Mitigation Strategies and Actions

The Town of Somers reviewed the mitigation actions proposed in the 2019 HMP and determined the status of each. That information is included in the table below.

Table 27-3: Status of Previous Mitigation Strategies and Actions, Somers

No.	Action	Notes	Status
1	Enter the Sustainable CT program through Registration and review actions that can be undertaken to pursue Certification. Make progress with the actions related to hazard mitigation.	Town staff believe the town at one point was interested and/or involved in SCT but haven't updated their application in a while. Open space and agriculture are about half of the town and more important to focus on. CIRCA can check on and Somers is not part of SCT.	Complete/ Retire
2	Install one additional needed dry hydrant.	Town staff said hydrants were installed or will be installed King Road and Watchaug Rd. Revise to say add additional fire hydrants.	Carry Forward with Revisions
3	Acquire generators for Town Hall, Public Works, and Senior Center.	Town staff said that generators are located at town hall and the senior center. Public works has one but it won't run the entire building. Library does not have one. Could revise to include generators for Public Works and the library. Schools could also use the generators. In the event of an active shooter, the library is the command post.	Carry Forward with Revisions
4	Hire a consultant to assist with implementation of the Somers Floodplain Management Study by prioritizing culvert improvements and obtaining necessary permits.	Town of Somers will look into this because they are not sure where this study is referring to. Could be on Maple Street where there was a study by Milone and MacBroom. There is a bridge repair that will come out of the study. Town staff will need to check on this but likely revise to say complete the project.	Carry Forward with Revisions
5	Improve drainage system on Battle Street.	Town staff believe that this was not completed and may still be needed. Part of a study was done a few years back, but the drainage system improvement hasn't been completed. Change the language to say "Conduct a design and implement". Town staff will check on the status of this.	Carry Forward with Revisions
6	Conduct outreach to local small businesses with the aim of preventing the accidental release and pollution from chemicals stored and used at their facilities during or following natural hazard events.	Attendees do not believe many businesses are in areas of risk, but they said that there is always a chance of chemical release potential at the sewer treatment plant, and therefore the sewer plant is what needs to be focused on rather than small businesses. This can be dropped.	No Longer Needed/Retire
7	Include in permitting requirements a review of potential impacts, based on the FMS, of proposed development and town projects.	Town staff are already doing this. Looking at wetland impacts, zoning, impervious surfaces. Different town disciplines review applications that come in.	Capability/ Retire

No.	Action	Notes	Status
8	Educate residents on personal disaster safety and supply kits, through the Town website and social media.	Town staff said the Town aCERT team does this.	Capability/ Retire
9	Establish an ordinance requiring generators for new special needs housing developments.	Town does not have an ordinance that they are aware of. Town will work with group homes case by case to discuss if they need stand by power, and would advise group homes to get one if prudent. The town staff doesn't see any group homes moving in and this is no longer needed.	No Longer Needed/R etire
10	Coordinate with NEMO and CROG to share resources and gain technical support for hazard mitigation actions involving stormwater management and public outreach, which have parallel benefits related to MS4 stormwater permit compliance.	Town staff said they are a part of MS4 and are active with MS4 compliance and reporting. They need funding and not technical assistance. No longer needed. CIRCA staff suggested we put in actions about projects that the Town of Somers can get money for.	No longer needed/ Complete
11	Make information about available assistance for property acquisition or relocation available at Town Hall and on the Town website.	Town staff said the CERT team does not do this, but they also do not believe it is a needed action at this time. Can take this off.	No Longer Needed/R etire
12	Participate in EMI courses or the seminars and annual conference held by the Connecticut Association of Flood Managers.	Town staff participants in FEMA, Department of Homeland Security trainings and courses.	Capability/ Retire
13	Conduct an outreach campaign informing residents of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and encouraging public participation.	Complete.	Complete/ Retire
14	Expand emergency communication and notification methods to a variety of media, including radio, television, social media, and the Town Website.	Town staff said they have their own Everbridge subscription, update the website continuously, and are active with social media updates. This is a capacity and can be removed	Capability/ Remove
15	Designate a secondary shelter (most likely the Senior Center, if sufficient backup generators are installed)	No Longer Needed. See critical facilities below.	No Longer needed/R etire
16	Work with CT DEEP to improve the Camp Road dam.	Town staff said this is In Progress. They had the dam inspected 2.5 years ago. Working with Fuss and O'Neill for a design. Change to "Implementation of design"	Carry Forward with Revisions
17	Complete an analysis of costs and benefits of joining the FEMA Community Rating System.	Very few flood insurance policies are active in Somers, that this can be removed.	No Longer Needed/R emove

No.	Action	Notes	Status
18	<p>Coordinate with CT SHPO to conduct historic resource surveys, focusing on areas within natural hazard risk zones (such as flood or wildfire hazard zones and areas near steep slopes), to support identification of vulnerable historic properties and preparation of resiliency plans across the state. This action leverages existing resources and best practices for protection of historic and cultural resources through an ongoing statewide initiative by CT SHPO.</p>	<p>The town does not have a historic district but have a few historic buildings which aren't in flood zones. The town doesn't feel like there are other parts of the town need to be surveyed for historic buildings. CIRCA can check to see if historic buildings are on the National Register/SHPO layer. None of the buildings in Somerville are likely historic buildings since they have been under renovations in the past.</p> <p>CIRCA staff suggested that "Use SHPO GIS point data and overlay with FEMA Flood Zones to see risk areas".</p>	<p>Carry Forward with Revisions</p>

Active Mitigation Strategies and Actions

The Town proposed to initiate several new mitigation actions for the upcoming five years. Additionally, a number of actions from the previous planning period are being carried forward or replaced with revised actions. These are listed below.

Each of the following actions has been prioritized based on FEMA guidelines, listed from highest to lowest priority, and numbered.

Table 27-4: Active Mitigation Strategies and Actions, Somers

Number	Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Actions	Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Goal	Type of Action	Responsible Department	Approx. Cost Range	Potential Funding Sources	Timeframe	Priority	Hazard(s)	EJ?	PERSIST Score	STAPLEE Score	PERSIST x STAPLEE =
SO1	Acquire generators for Public Works, Elementary school, middle school and Library.	Ensure that critical facilities are resilient, with special attention to shelters and cooling centers.	Preparedness & Emergency Response	Emergency Management	\$100,000 - \$500,000	FEMA HMA; STEAP	07/2024 - 06/2025	High	All Hazards	No	19	5	95
SO2	Ensure that transportation and transit options are available to bring people to cooling centers.	Address risks associated with extreme heat events, especially as they interact with other hazards.	Preparedness & Emergency Response	Emergency Management	\$10,000 - \$50,000	Transit; IJJA BBFP	07/2024 - 06/2026	High	Extreme Heat	No	19	3	57
SO3	Complete the design phase and bridge repair on Maple Street based on the study conducted by Milone and MacBroom.	Invest in resilient corridors to ensure that people and services are accessible during floods and that development along corridors is resilient over the long term.	Structural Project	Public Works	>\$1M	LOTICIP; IJJA AOP, BIP; STEAP	07/2024 - 06/2026	High	Riverine and Pluvial Floods	No	19	4	76
SO4	Conduct a design and Implement a drainage system on Battle Street.	Reduce flood and erosion risks by reducing vulnerabilities and consequences, even as climate change increases frequency and severity of floods.	Structural Project	Public Works	\$50,000 - \$100,000	DCRF; FEMA HMA; Municipal CIP Budget	07/2025 - 06/2027	Medium	Riverine and Pluvial Floods	No	18	6	108
SO5	Initiate a comprehensive assessment and action plan	Reduce flood and erosion risks by reducing	Prevention	Public Works	\$10,000 - \$50,000	DCRF; FEMA HMA;	07/2026 - 06/2027	Medium	Riverine and Pluvial Floods	No	18	6	108

Number	Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Actions	Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Goal	Type of Action	Responsible Department	Approx. Cost Range	Potential Funding Sources	Timeframe	Priority	Hazard(s)	EJ?	PERISTS Score	STAPLEE Score	PERISTS x STAPLEE =
	for addressing flooding issues on Battle Street	vulnerabilities and consequences, even as climate change increases frequency and severity of floods.				Municipal Operating Budget							
SO6	Implement design and repairs to Hurds Lake Dam.	Reduce flood and erosion risks by reducing vulnerabilities and consequences, even as climate change increases frequency and severity of floods.	Structural Project	Public Works	>\$1M	FEMA HMA; Municipal CIP Budget	07/2024 - 06/2026	High	Dam Failure	No	19	4	76
SO7	Allocate additional funding in the municipal budget for tree management activities.	Reduce losses from other hazards.	Natural Resources Protection	Planning	\$0-\$10,000	Municipal Operating Budget	01/2026 - 12/2026	Medium	Hurricanes and Tropical Storms/Tornadoes and High Winds/Severe Winter Storms	No	18	7	126
SO8	Install additional dry hydrants as needed including Mountain Road.	Reduce losses from other hazards.	Preparedness & Emergency Response	Fire Department	\$0-\$10,000	Municipal Operating Budget	07/2024 - 06/2025	High	Wildfires	No	18	7	126
SO9	Ensure that options are available to help property owners make their water supply wells resilient to droughts, floods, and loss of capacity	More than one goal.	Water & Wastewater Utility Projects	Planning	\$0-\$10,000	DWSRF; FEMA HMA; STEAP	07/2025 - 06/2026	High	Riverine and Pluvial Floods/Drought	No	19	10	190
SO10	Expand public water systems to areas served by private wells when needed to address drought impacts and provide fire protection	Reduce losses from other hazards.	Water & Wastewater Utility Projects	Fire Department	>\$1M	DWSRF; FEMA HMA; STEAP	07/2026 - 06/2028	High	Drought/Wildfire	No	19	8	152
SO11	Conduct a town wide assessment of stream crossings to identify vulnerabilities and develop	Reduce flood and erosion risks by reducing vulnerabilities and consequences, even as	Structural Project	Public Works	\$10,000 - \$50,000	DCRF; Municipal CIP Budget	07/2025 - 06/2027	Medium	Riverine and Pluvial Floods	No	18	6	108

Number	Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Actions	Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Goal	Type of Action	Responsible Department	Approx. Cost Range	Potential Funding Sources	Timeframe	Priority	Hazard(s)	EI?	PERISTS Score	STAPLEE Score	PERISTS x STAPLEE =
	a priority list for maintenance and upsizing.	climate change increases frequency and severity of floods.											
SO12	Work with the Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation (CIRCA) to develop an appropriate scope of work to address flooding and extreme heat concerns in Resilient Opportunity Areas (ROARs).	More than one goal.	More than one type	Public Works	\$0-\$10,000	CIRCA	07/2024 - 06/2027	Medium	Riverine and Pluvial Floods/Extreme Heat	No	18	5	90
SO13	Review the Connecticut Cultural Resource Information System (ConnCRIS) to identify and understand historic and archaeological resources in areas of hazard risks found here: https://conncris.ct.gov .	Reduce flood and erosion risks by reducing vulnerabilities and consequences, even as climate change increases frequency and severity of floods.	Property Protection	Planning	\$0-\$10,000	SHPO; Municipal Operating Budget	01/2026 - 12/2026	Medium	Wildfires/Tornadoes and High Winds/Riverine and Pluvial Floods	No	18	9	162
SO14	Update town website to include hazard mitigation and emergency preparedness tips for town residents, including sections corresponding to each hazard considered in this Plan Update.	More than one goal.	Education and Awareness	Emergency Management	\$0-\$10,000	Municipal Operating Budget	01/2025 - 12/2025	Medium	All Hazards	No	17	7	119

Figure 27-1: CIRCA Environmental Justice Rank and Critical Facilities, Somers

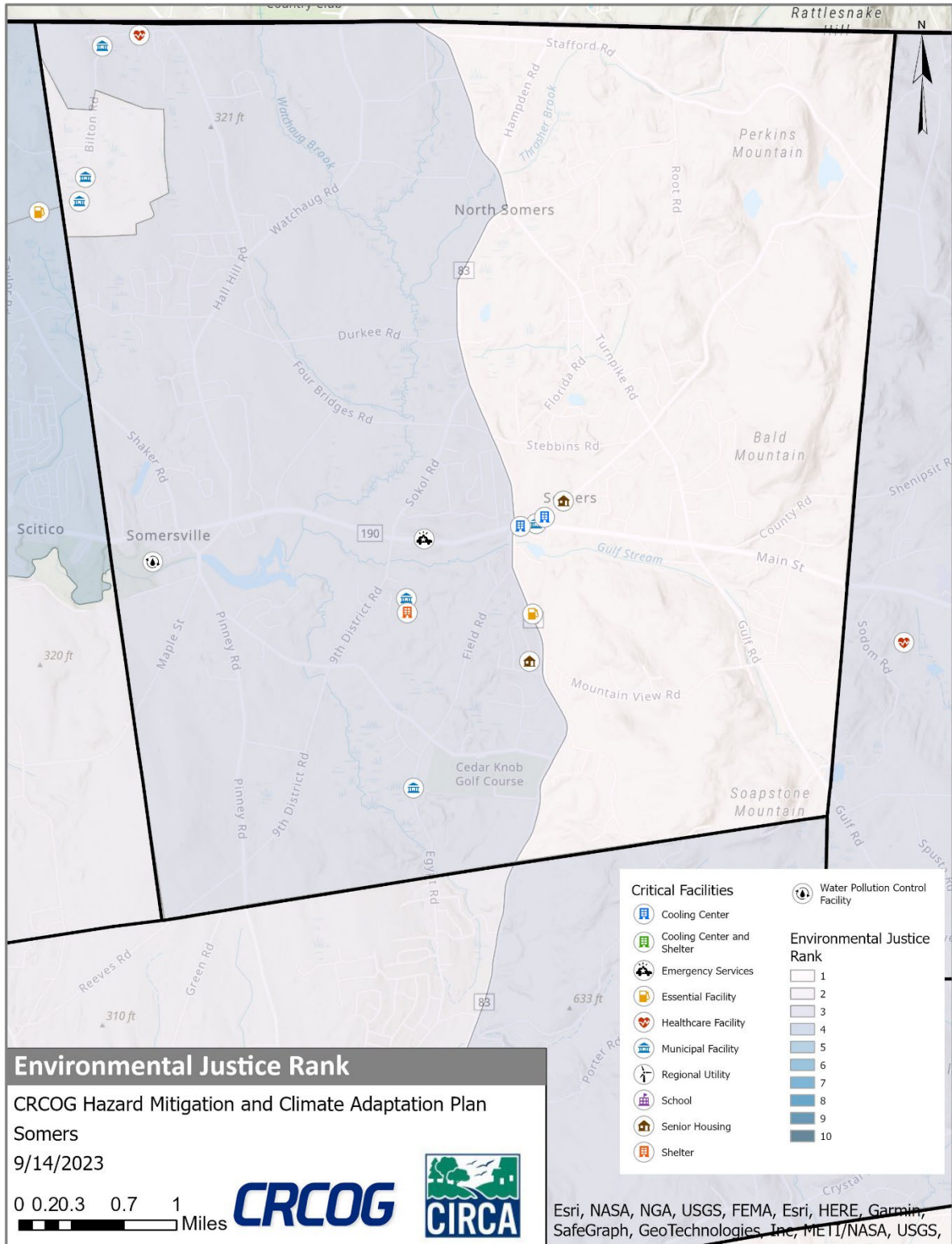


Figure 27-2: FEMA Flood Zones and Critical Facilities, Somers

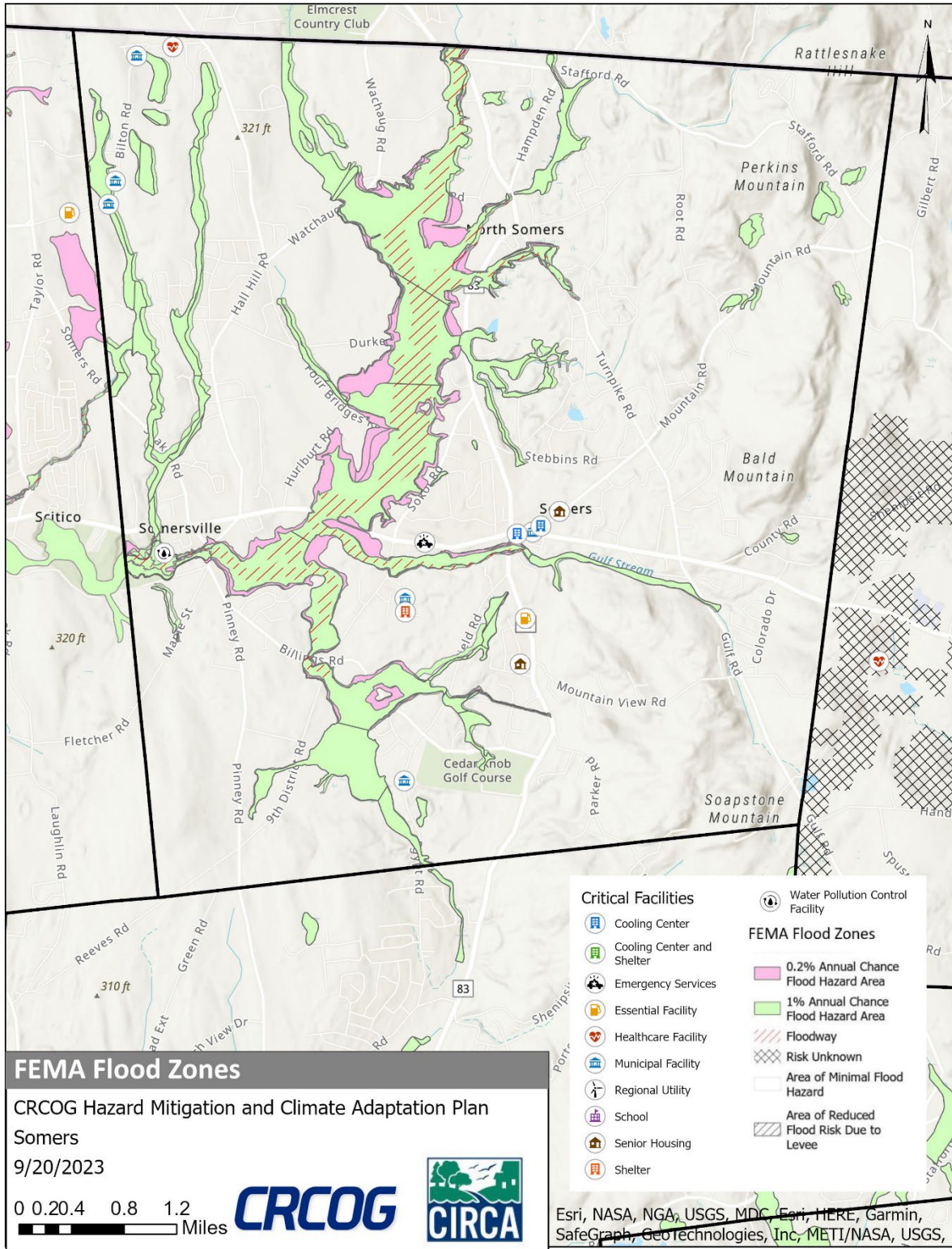


Figure 27-3: CIRCA Flood CCVI and Critical Facilities, Somers

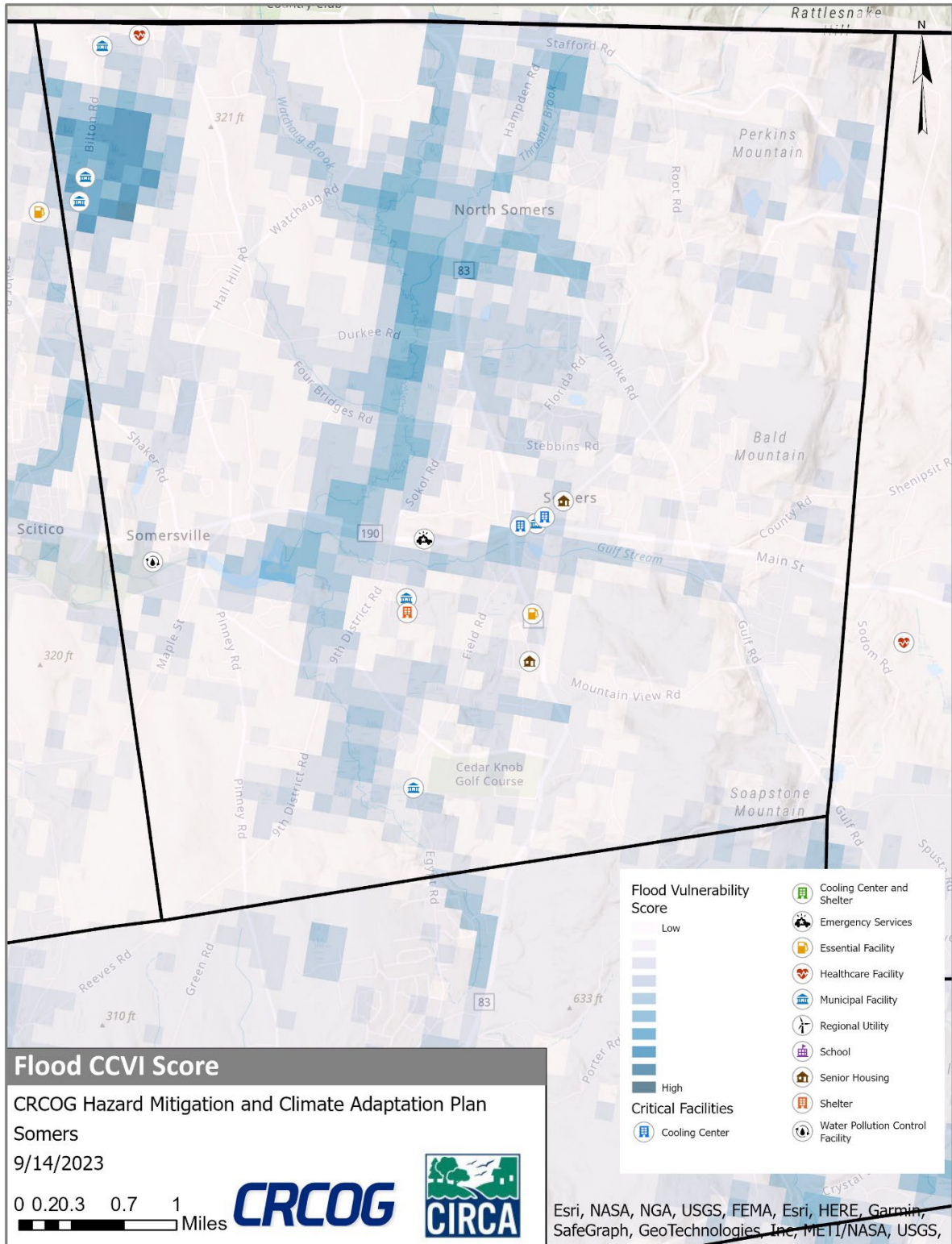


Figure 27-5: CIRCA Heat CCVI and Critical Facilities, Somers

