

CHAPTER FIVE: Issues Identification

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SURVEY

The Yellow Medicine County Comprehensive Plan Task Force decided early on in the planning process to do a countywide comprehensive plan survey in an effort to gather as much input as possible from the public on key issues in the County. Although surveying every household in the County would have been time and cost prohibitive, surveys were sent to every homestead property in the townships and a random sample of 20 percent of the homestead properties in each of the nine cities located in the County. Since most of the County's planning, regulations and controls cover the townships the Task Force felt it was important to survey all of these households. City residents pay county taxes and are affected by many of the land use decisions of the County and other issues addressed in the comprehensive plan. It is important to gather input from both city and township residents to be comprehensive in nature. Some cities have their own comprehensive plans and should be considered in the development of the County Plan.

A total of 2,005 surveys were sent in the mail in March 2005. The surveys were sent with a cover letter explaining the comprehensive planning process and the importance for residents to provide their input. Self-addressed stamped envelopes were also sent with the surveys in an effort to make it easy for households to return their survey.

A total of 774 surveys were returned for a return rate of 38.6 percent. This is a very good return rate for a mail survey and will make the results statistically reliable. The table on the following page shows the number of surveys that were sent to each city and township and the return rate for each of these entities. The survey questions, survey results and a summary of each question follow the table.

Survey Return Rate

Comprehensive Plan Survey Return by City and Township

Cities	# Surveys Sent Out	# Surveys Returned	Return Rate
Canby	115	113	98%
Clarkfield	58	34	59%
Echo	19	19	100%
Granite Falls	130	68	52%
Hanley Falls	17	9	53%
Hazel Run	3	2	67%
Porter	12	11	92%
St. Leo	8	8	100%
Wood Lake	60	41	68%
Townships			
Burton Twp.	61	14	23%
Echo Twp.	68	25	37%
Florida Twp.	53	20	38%
Fortier Twp.	35	12	34%
Friendship Twp.	79	19	24%
Hammer Twp.	79	26	33%
Hazel Run Twp.	73	20	27%
Lisbon Twp.	71	21	30%
Minnesota Falls Twp.	100	26	26%
Norman Twp.	98	24	24%
Normania Twp.	69	26	38%
Omro Twp.	51	10	20%
Oshkosh Twp.	83	21	25%
Posen Twp.	83	27	37%
Sandnes Twp.	70	22	31%
Sioux Agency Twp.	87	24	28%
Stony Run Twp.	157	39	25%
Swede Prairie Twp.	54	15	28%
Tyro Twp.	62	21	34%
Wergeland Twp.	68	26	34%
Wood Lake Twp.	82	31	38%
TOTAL FOR CITIES	422	305	72.3%
TOTAL FOR TWPS.	1,583	469	29.6%
TOTAL ALL	2,005	774	38.6%

Survey Results

NOTE – Survey results are in bold.

GENERAL

1. Which city or township do you reside in?

City: **See the table on previous page.**

Township: **See the table on previous page.**

Question #1 Summary

- The return rate for surveys sent to township households was 29.6 percent.
- The return rate for surveys sent to cities was 72.3 percent.

2. How many people in your house are between the ages of:

0 – 19	491 (23.9%)
20 – 24	68 (3.3%)
25 – 44	365 (17.8%)
45 – 64	696 (33.9%)
65 and over	431 (21.1%)

Total 2052 people (100%)

Question #2 Summary

- The total number of people residing in households that returned the survey or “the total survey population” was 2,052.
- The largest percent of people in the total survey population was the 45 – 64 year old age group (33.9 %).
- The 20-24 year old age group was only 3.3 percent of the total survey population.

3. How many in your house are part of the “Baby Boom Generation” (born between 1946 and 1964)? **743 people**

Question #3 Summary

- The “Baby Boom Generation” (between 41 and 59 years of age) represents 36.2 percent of the total survey population (2,052 people reported in Question #2).

4. How long have you lived in Yellow Medicine County? *(years)*

0 – 5 yrs	57 (7.1%)
6 – 10 yrs	46 (5.7%)
11 – 20 yrs	69 (8.6%)
21 – 30 yrs	83 (10.3%)
31+ yrs	549 (68.3%)

Question #4 Summary

- A large majority (68.3%) of the respondents have lived in Yellow Medicine County more than 30 years.
- The number of respondents who have lived in Yellow Medicine County for less than five years is 7.1 percent.

EMPLOYMENT & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

5. How many people in your household (excluding children and students) are:

Employed full-time	849 (56.1%)
Employed part-time	174 (11.5%)
Unemployed	23 (1.5%)
Retired	373 (22.7%)
Homemaker	94 (6.2%)

Question #5 Summary

- More than half of the respondents (56.1 %) are employed full-time.
- Only 1.5 percent of the respondents identified themselves as unemployed.
- Nearly one-fourth of the respondents are retired.

6. If employed, what city does each household member work in or nearest to?

Person 1 _____ (city) Person 2 _____ (city) Person 3 _____ (city)

Canby	220 (21.7%)
Clarkfield	61 (6.0%)
Echo	29 (2.9%)
Granite Falls	166 (16.4%)
Hanley Falls	12 (1.2%)
Hazel Run	2 (0.2%)
Porter	27 (2.7%)
St. Leo	5 (0.5%)
Wood Lake	94 (9.3%)
Dawson	20 (2.0%)
Marshall	111 (10.9%)
Montevideo	67 (6.6%)
Redwood Falls	1 (0.1%)
South Dakota	14 (1.4%)
Other locations	154 (15.2%)
Anoka	1
Appleton	2
Belview	4
Clara City	1
Cottonwood	66
Dawson	5
Eagan	1
Hendricks	1
Ivanhoe	6
Madison	4

Maynard	4
Minneota	17
Morris	1
Morton	1
Murdock	1
New Ulm	1
Olivia	1
Redwood Falls	11
Renville	6
Sacred Heart	1
Spicer	1
Statewide	11
St. Paul	1
Taunton	1
Wabasso	1
Watson	1
Willmar	3
Work at home/farmer	29 (2.9%)

Question #6 Summary

- Of those responding to the survey 63.8 percent worked within Yellow Medicine County.
- The three most common locations for employment for respondents **within** Yellow Medicine County are Canby (21.7 %), Granite Falls (16.4%) and Wood Lake (9.3%).
- Of the 27 total locations identified as locations of employment **outside** the county the cities of Marshall (10.9%), Montevideo (6.6%), and Cottonwood (6.5%) ranked as the top three.
- Nearly three percent of the respondents indicated they work at home or farm.

7. If employed, indicate how many people in your household work:

Within 2 miles of your home	285 (27.4%)
Within 2 – 10 miles of your home	354 (34.1%)
Within 11 – 25 miles of your home	265 (25.5%)
More than 25 miles from your home	135 (13.0%)

Question #7 Summary

- Of those employed in Yellow Medicine County 34.1 percent work within 2-10 miles of their home and 27.4 percent within two miles.
- Thirteen percent of those employed in Yellow Medicine County work more than 25 miles from their home.

8. What is the primary occupation for each full-time employed person in your household?
(Check all that apply. If more than one person in your household has the same occupation, indicate how many next to that occupation.)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture 284 (23.8%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Education 83 (7.0%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Finance 46 (3.9%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Medical/health 119 (10.0%)

- Government service **58 (4.9%)**
- Retail sales **52 (4.4%)**
- Management **60 (5.0%)**
- Personal services (barber, waitress, etc.) **30 (2.5%)**
- Utilities/communications **18 (1.5%)**
- Computer/technology **28 (2.3%)**
- Transport/trucking/move materials **62 (5.2%)**
- Trades (such as a plumber) **56 (4.7%)**
- Other (specify)_____ **89 (7.5%)**
- Clerical **65 (5.4%)**
- Construction **64 (5.4%)**
- Manufacturing **79 (6.6%)**

Question #8 Summary

- The top three occupations for full-time employment in Yellow Medicine County amongst the respondents included agriculture (23.8%) followed by medical/health (10%) and education (7%).

9. If you are employed full-time, are you satisfied with your current job?

- Yes **417 (51.3%)**
- No **41 (5.0%)**
- Somewhat **76 (9.3%)**
- No Opinion **22 (2.7%)**
- Not employed full-time **183 (22.5%)**

Question #9 Summary

- More than half (51.3%) full-time employed respondents in Yellow Medicine County are satisfied with their current job.
- Only five percent of the full-time employed respondents are not satisfied with their jobs.
- A large portion (22.5%) of respondents are not employed full-time.

10. What is your approximate gross household income before taxes?

- \$0 – 10,000 **15 (1.8%)**
- \$10,001 – 20,000 **50 (6.2%)**
- \$20,001 – 30,000 **79 (9.7%)**
- \$30,001 – 40,000 **88 (10.8%)**
- \$40,001 – 50,000 **89 (10.9%)**
- \$50,001 – 60,000 **66 (8.1%)**
- \$60,001 – 75,000 **58 (7.1%)**
- \$75,001 – 100,000 **79 (9.7%)**
- \$100,000+ **41 (5.0%)**

Question #10 Summary

- The largest percent of respondents have gross household incomes between \$40,001 – 50,000 (10.9%) followed closely by 10.8 percent between \$30,001 – 40,000.
- Only five percent of the respondents have gross incomes over \$100,000.
- Almost two percent of respondents reported their incomes at less than \$10,000.

11. Is there a need for economic growth in Yellow Medicine County?

- Yes **668 (82.8%)**
- No **10 (1.2%)**
- Maybe **84 (10.3%)**
- No Opinion **46 (5.7%)**

Question #11 Summary

- An overwhelming 82.9 percent of the respondents felt there was a need for economic growth in Yellow Medicine County and an additional 10.3 percent said maybe.

12. Should Yellow Medicine County financially support economic development activities?

- Yes **468 (58.2%)** No **55 (6.8%)** Maybe **212 (26.4%)**
 No Opinion **69 (8.6%)**

Question #12 Summary

- A large percent (58.2%) of the respondents indicated Yellow Medicine County should financially support economic development activities while 26.4 percent said maybe.

13. Should Yellow Medicine County use tourism as an economic development tool?

- Yes **316 (39.3%)** No **136 (16.9%)** Maybe **265 (32.9%)**
 No Opinion **80 (10.9%)**

Question #13 Summary

- A large percent of respondents felt tourism should be used as an economic tool by Yellow Medicine County (39.3%) while another 32.9 percent said maybe.

14. What percentage of your total shopping do you do in Yellow Medicine County?

- 25% or less **339 (42.2%)** 26-50% **188 (23.4%)**
 51-75% **156 (19.4%)** 76-100% **121 (15.0%)**

Question #14 Summary

- The percent of respondents that shop 25 percent or less in Yellow Medicine County was 42.7 percent; 15 percent shopped 76-100 percent in the County.

15. What are the most common obstacles any member of your household encounters when seeking employment? (*Check no more than three choices.*)

- Lack of professional jobs **84 (7.2%)**
 Lack of jobs matching education level **91 (7.8%)**
 Lack of jobs matching experience **81 (6.9%)**
 Need to travel a long distance to find adequate work/pay **213 (18.2%)**
 Pay not adequate for cost-of-living **222 (18.9%)**
 Poor health benefits offered with jobs **122 (10.4%)**
 Poor retirement benefits offered with jobs **52 (4.4%)**
 Lack of employment opportunities in general **198 (16.9%)**
 Wages do not match education/experience **85 (7.3%)**
 Other _____ **24 (2.0%)**

Question #15 Summary

- The three most common obstacles with employment in Yellow Medicine County were inadequate pay for cost of living (18.9%), needing to travel long distances for adequate pay/work (18.2%) and a lack of employment opportunities in general (16.9%).

16. Which types of employment opportunities would you most like to see more of in Yellow Medicine County? (Check no more than three choices.)

- Education **96 (5.4%)**
- Commercial/retail **272 (15.2%)**
- Health/medical **112 (6.3%)**
- Traditional agriculture **222 (12.4%)**
- Renewable energy/value-added agriculture **294 (16.4%)**
- Other _____ **21 (1.2%)**
- Manufacturing **523 (29.2%)**
- High technology **213 (11.9%)**
- Government **37 (2.6%)**

Question #16 Summary

- Employment opportunities respondents wanted to see more of in Yellow Medicine County are manufacturing (29.2%) and renewable energy/value-added agriculture (16.4%).

HOUSING

17. Approximately how old is your home? _____ (Years old)

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 0 – 5 yrs. 37 (4.5%) | 51 – 60 yrs. 60 (7.4%) |
| 6 – 10 yrs. 30 (3.8%) | 61 – 70 yrs. 40 (4.9%) |
| 11 – 20 yrs. 32 (3.9%) | 71 – 80 yrs. 98 (12.1%) |
| 21 – 30 yrs. 126 (15.5%) | 81 – 90 yrs. 59 (7.2%) |
| 31 – 40 yrs. 71 (8.7%) | 91 – 100 yrs. 115 (14.1%) |
| 41 – 50 yrs. 72 (8.8%) | 100+ yrs. 74 (9.1%) |

Question #17 Summary

- The range of homes ages 21-30 years old had the highest response (15.5%) on the survey.
- Nearly one-third (30.5%) of the houses surveyed are over 81 years old.

18. How long have you lived in your current home? _____ (Years)

- 0 – 5 yrs. **137 (17.0%)**
- 6 – 10 yrs. **111 (13.8%)**
- 11 – 20 yrs. **159 (19.8%)**
- 21 – 30 yrs. **161 (20.0%)**
- 31+ **236 (29.4%)**

Question #18 Summary

- The majority of the respondents (29.4%) have lived in their homes over 31 years compared to 17 percent who have lived in their homes less than five years.

19. Do you feel permitting one non-farm dwelling for every 40 acres adequately meets the County’s rural housing needs?

- Yes **273 (35.0%)**
- No **135 (17.3%)**
- Maybe **138 (17.7%)**
- No Opinion **233 (30.0%)**

Question #19 Summary

- Thirty-five percent of the respondents felt the current one non-farm dwelling for every 40 acres in Yellow Medicine County was adequate; however, 30 percent had no opinion.

20. Should Yellow Medicine County provide housing rehabilitation programs, ownership assistance and other housing related activities?

- Yes **254 (32.3%)** No **188 (23.9%)** Maybe **231 (29.4%)**
 No Opinion **113 (14.4%)**

Question #20 Summary

- The largest percent of respondents (32.3%) felt Yellow Medicine County should assist in housing activities and another 29.4 percent said maybe.

21. Which type of new housing is most needed in Yellow Medicine County.

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Single-family housing | 327 (47.2%) |
| Townhouse development | 44 (6.3%) |
| Rental housing | 71 (10.3%) |
| Senior housing | 217 (31.4%) |
| Other: _____ | 33 (4.8%) |

Question #21 Summary

- The type of housing respondents felt is the most needed in Yellow Medicine County is single-family housing (47.2%) followed by senior housing (31.4%).

TRANSPORTATION

22. Do you feel that the transportation system in Yellow Medicine County today is adequate?

- Yes **376 (47.2%)** No **109 (13.6%)** Somewhat **233 (29.3%)**
 No Opinion **79 (9.9%)**

Question #22 Summary

- Most of the respondents (47.7%) felt the Yellow Medicine County transportation system was adequate while 13.6 percent felt it was not adequate.

23. If you believe the transportation network is inadequate, what is needed? (*Check all that apply.*)

- | | |
|--|--------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> More roads | 6 (.6%) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Better road surfaces | 254 (29.6%) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior transportation options | 121 (14.1%) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Better road maintenance | 187 (21.8%) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wider roads | 99 (11.5%) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | 28 (3.4%) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation system is adequate | 163 (19.0%) |

Question #23 Summary

- The transportation network item respondents felt was needed most in Yellow Medicine County is better road surfaces (29.6%) followed by road maintenance (21.8%).

24. Do you feel there are hazardous or problematic intersections or roads that need more traffic signals, signs or redesign?

- Yes **152 (19.6%)** No **253 (32.6%)** Maybe **170 (21.9%)**
 No Opinion **201 (25.9%)**

Question #24 Summary

- Only 19.6 percent of the respondents felt there are hazardous or problematic intersections or roads in Yellow Medicine County that need attention.

AGRICULTURE

25. Indicate what best describes your source of total household income. (*Check one choice.*)

- 100% of income from agriculture activities **70 (8.8%)**
 75-99% of income from agriculture activities **119 (14.9%)**
 50-74% of income from agriculture activities **137 (17.2%)**
 25-49% of income from agriculture activities **99 (12.4%)**
 Less than 25% of income from agriculture **117 (14.7%)**
 No income comes from agriculture activities **254 (31.9%)**

Question #25 Summary

- Nearly one-third (31.9%) of the respondents do not have incomes from agriculture activities.
- Respondents that describe their income as 100 percent from agriculture activities was 8.8 percent of the total returned surveys.

26. If 50 percent or more of your household income is generated by agricultural activities, check all those activities that apply.

- Raise hay/grain/vegetables (crop farming) **164 (39.2%)**
 Raise livestock **12 (2.9%)**
 Organic/alternative farming practices **2 (0.5%)**
 Less than 50% of income from agriculture **125 (29.9%)**
 Hay & Livestock **88 (21.1%)**
 Hay/Livestock/Organic **4 (1.0%)**
 Rent **15 (3.6%)**
 Hay & less than 50% of income from ag **4 (0.2%)**
 Livestock & less than 50% of income from ag **1 (0.2%)**
 Other ag interests **2 (0.5%)**
 Crops and rental **1 (0.2%)**

Question #26 Summary

- Crop farming represents 39.2 percent of the respondents who have incomes that are 50 percent from agriculture in Yellow Medicine County.

27. How many employed people in your household are: (*Provide total number for each.*)

Employed full-time in agriculture activities	250	(22.2%)
Employed part-time in agriculture activities	209	(18.6%)
Not employed in agriculture activities	665	(59.2%)

Question #27 Summary

- A majority of the respondents (59.2%) are not employed in agriculture activities in Yellow Medicine County; 22.2 percent are employed full-time in agriculture.

28. Do you feel that Yellow Medicine County’s current feedlot regulations are:

<input type="checkbox"/> Too restrictive	111	(14.1%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Not restrictive enough	222	(28.2%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Just fine the way they are now	195	(24.8%)
<input type="checkbox"/> No opinion/not sure	258	(32.8%)

Question #28 Summary

- Nearly one-third (32.8%) of the respondents had no opinion on the feedlot regulations in Yellow Medicine County and 28.2 percent felt they are not restrictive enough.

29. Should land use policies and regulations protect prime agricultural land from new development?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes 322 (47.8%)	<input type="checkbox"/> No 128 (19.0%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Maybe 159 (23.6%)
<input type="checkbox"/> No Opinion 64 (9.5%)		

Question #29 Summary

- Nearly one-half (47.8%) of the respondents felt prime agricultural land should be protected in Yellow Medicine County.

NATURAL RESOURCES & RECREATION

30. Please select the most important environmental and natural resource issues in Yellow Medicine County. (*Check no more than three choices.*)

<input type="checkbox"/> Soil erosion	264	(13.8%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Flooding	189	(9.9%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Fertilizer/pesticide runoff	258	(13.5%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Septic issues	90	(4.7%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Drainage	117	(6.1%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Gravel mining	18	(.9%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	19	(.9%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Surface water quality	160	(8.4%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Wildlife habitat loss	197	(10.3%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Animal feedlot runoff	241	(12.6%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Groundwater quality	361	(18.9%)

Question #30 Summary

- Respondents identified groundwater quality as the most important environmental issue for Yellow Medicine County (18.9%) followed by soil erosion (13.8%) and fertilizer/pesticide run off (13.5%).

31. Do you feel the water ditching system in Yellow Medicine County is adequate?

- Yes **360 (45.3%)** No **97 (12.2%)** Maybe **147 (18.5%)**
 No Opinion **191 (24.0%)**

Question #31 Summary

- The majority of the respondents (45.3%) felt Yellow Medicine County's water ditching system was adequate while 24 percent had no opinion.

32. Do you feel that the increased value of land for recreational use (hunting, fishing, cabins, camping, ATV, etc.) will lead to the sale of farmland for these types of uses?

- Yes **376 (47.2%)** No **118 (14.8%)** Maybe **248 (31.1%)**
 No Opinion **55 (6.9%)**

Question #32 Summary

- Nearly one-half (47.2%) of the respondents felt the increased value of land for recreational uses would lead to farmland being sold for these uses in Yellow Medicine County.

33. Do you feel there are an adequate number of parks in the County?

- Yes **545 (68.0%)** No **115 (14.2%)** Maybe **88 (11.0%)**
 No Opinion **54 (6.7%)**

Question #33 Summary

- Sixty-eight percent of the respondents to the survey felt there are an adequate number of parks in Yellow Medicine County.

34. Do you feel there are adequate recreational trails available in Yellow Medicine County?

- Yes **385 (47.8%)** No **220 (27.4%)** Maybe **97 (12.1%)**
 No Opinion **103 (12.8%)**

Question #34 Summary

- Nearly one-half (47.8%) of the respondents felt there are adequate recreational trails in Yellow Medicine County compared to 27.4 percent that felt there are not adequate recreational trails in the County.

35. Should the County provide a bounty for trapping/hunting coyotes?

- Yes **481 (59.6%)** No **117 (14.5%)** Maybe **126 (15.6%)**
 No Opinion **83 (10.3%)**

Question #35 Summary

- A majority of the respondents (59.6%) felt that Yellow Medicine County should provide a bounty on coyote trapping/hunting.

GENERAL LAND USE

36. Which type of new development is most needed in Yellow Medicine County?

- Retail/Commercial **195 (24.1%)**
- Industrial 374 (46.2%)**
- Recreational **63 (7.9%)**
- Residential **90 (11.1%)**
- Other: _____ **19 (2.3%)**
- Check box if development should not be encouraged. **68 (8.4%)**

Question #36 Summary

- Industrial development ranked as the highest type of new development (46.2%) most needed in Yellow Medicine County followed by retail/commercial development (24.1%).

37. What is your opinion on the current land use laws in Yellow Medicine County?

- Too restrictive **109 (13.8%)**
- Not restrictive enough **85 (10.7%)**
- Just fine the way they are now **227 (28.7%)**
- No opinion/not sure **371 (46.8%)**

Question #37 Summary

- Most respondents to the survey (46.8%) had no opinion on current land use laws in Yellow Medicine County and 28.7 percent felt the laws are just fine.

38. Please indicate which land use issues you feel most need County ordinance regulations.

(Check no more than three choices.)

		Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/> Public nuisances	325 (44.3%)	409 (55.7%)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Floodplain development	187 (25.5%)	547 (74.5%)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Animal feedlots	380 (51.8%)	354 (48.2%)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Gravel mining/hauling	53 (7.2%)	681 (92.8%)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental protection	283 (38.6%)	451 (61.4%)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Farmland preservation	346 (47.1%)	388 (52.9%)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Manufactured housing	68 (9.3%)	685 (90.7%)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	12 (1.6%)	720 (98.4%)	

Question #38 Summary

- The top three land use issues that respondents felt ordinance regulations in Yellow Medicine County were most needed for were animal feedlots (51.8%), farmland preservation (47.1%) and public nuisances (44.3%).

MISCELLANEOUS

39. Which of the following issues are the most important to Yellow Medicine County’s future?

(Check no more than three choices.)

	Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/> Retain a rural character	274 (34.6%)	519 (65.4%)

<input type="checkbox"/> Preserve its history	112 (14.1%)	681 (85.9%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Have a variety of housing types	64 (8.1%)	729 (91.9%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Market the county's assets	158 (19.9%)	635 (80.1%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Protect the natural environment	246 (31.0%)	548 (69.0%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Grow in population	244 (30.8%)	549 (69.2%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Attract new business and industry	559 (70.4%)	235 (29.6%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Manage the location of new development	96 (12.1%)	696 (87.9%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Attract high paying jobs	301 (38.0%)	492 (62.0%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Provide/enhance recreational opportunities	97 (12.1%)	695 (87.9%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	14 (1.8%)	777 (98.2%)

Question #39 Summary

- The top three issues identified by respondents as the most important to Yellow Medicine County's future were attracting new business and industry (70.4%), attracting high paying jobs (38%) and retaining a rural character (34.6%).
- Having a variety of housing types ranked as the lowest issue (8%) for Yellow Medicine County's future.

40. Would you like to see Yellow Medicine County's population:

<input type="checkbox"/> Grow a lot	288 (35.8%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Grow a little bit	403 (50.1%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Stay the same as it is now	63 (7.8%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Decline	7 (0.9%)
<input type="checkbox"/> No Opinion	43 (5.3%)

Question #40 Summary

- Half of the respondents (50.1%) would like to see Yellow Medicine County grow "a little bit" and 35.8 percent want it to grow "a lot".

41. Which of the following are the most important reasons you choose to live in Yellow Medicine County? (Check no more than three choices.)

<input type="checkbox"/> Rural character	Yes – 385 (48.5%)	No – 409 (51.5%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Geographic location	Yes – 105 (13.2%)	No – 689 (86.8%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Close to family members	Yes – 407 (51.3%)	No – 387 (48.7%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Cost of housing	Yes – 69 (8.7%)	No – 725 (91.3%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Schools	Yes – 113 (14.2%)	No – 681 (85.8%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Safe atmosphere	Yes – 273 (34.4%)	No – 521 (65.6%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor activities	Yes – 98 (12.3%)	No – 696 (87.7%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Social opportunities	Yes – 11 (1.4%)	No – 783 (98.6%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Quality of life	Yes – 439 (55.3%)	No – 695 (44.7%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Employment opportunities	Yes – 99 (12.5%)	No – 695 (87.5%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	Yes – 48 (6.0%)	No – 745 (94.0%)

Question #41 Summary

- Respondents ranked the following reasons as the top three for living in Yellow Medicine County: quality of life (55.3%), being close to family (51.3%) and rural character (48.5%).

42. Would you support an increase in your property taxes to fund: *(Check one for each topic.)*

Improved roads

Yes **211 (27.2%)** No **271 (34.9%)** Maybe **254 (32.7%)** No Opinion **41 (5.3%)**

Economic development activities

Yes **177 (23.0%)** No **256 (33.3%)** Maybe **270 (35.2%)** No Opinion **65 (8.5%)**

Housing development activities

Yes **42 (5.6%)** No **449 (59.5%)** Maybe **184 (24.4%)** No Opinion **80 (10.6%)**

Tourism

Yes **81 (10.6%)** No **424 (55.4%)** Maybe **193 (25.2%)** No Opinion **67 (8.8%)**

Parks/recreation

Yes **115 (15.0%)** No **394 (51.5%)** Maybe **186 (24.3%)** No Opinion **70 (9.2%)**

Public safety

Yes **239 (31.6%)** No **240 (31.7%)** Maybe **228 (29.9%)** No Opinion **51 (6.7%)**

Other: _____

Yes **34 (24.3%)** No **64 (45.7%)** Maybe **15 (10.7%)** No Opinion **27 (19.3%)**

Question #42 Summary

- In general, respondents were not interested in increasing their property taxes; however, public safety was the most likely if you combine the yes responses at 31.6 percent and the maybe responses at 29.9 percent – roads and economic development would rank as the next two.

43. If ‘yes’ or ‘maybe’ was answered to any option in question #42, how much more would you be willing to pay in property taxes each year?

\$0	215 (34.9%)
\$1-50	139 (22.6%)
\$51-100	95 (15.5%)
\$101-150	7 (1.2%)
\$151-200	25 (4.1%)
\$201+	50 (8.1%)
1%	12 (1.9%)
2%	7 (1.1%)
5-10%	21 (3.4%)
other	44 (7.2%)

Question #43 Summary

- The highest response was from those not willing to pay anything in extra taxes (34.9%). Nearly 23 percent were willing to pay \$1-50 extra and 15.5 percent were willing to pay \$51-100 extra.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Four public meetings were held in March and April 2005 to gather input on key planning issues for a new Yellow Medicine County Comprehensive Plan. The Upper Minnesota Valley Regional Development Commission (UMVRDC) was contracted by the County to facilitate the planning process and conduct the public meetings.

The meetings were held at 7:00 p.m. on the following dates and locations:

- March 31 Granite Falls Senior Center, 155 West 7th Avenue
- April 7 Clarkfield Municipal Building, 904 10th Avenue
- April 13 Wood Lake Community Center, 88 2nd Avenue West
- April 14 Canby Community Center, 110 Oscar Avenue North

Broad input was critical to the planning process. The following is a list of individuals and agencies that were sent notice of these public meetings:

Yellow Medicine County Comprehensive Plan Task Force
Yellow Medicine County Board of Commissioners
Yellow Medicine County City Council Members (Canby, Clarkfield, Echo, Granite Falls,
Hanley Falls, Hazel Run, Porter, St. Leo, Wood Lake)
Upper Sioux Tribal Council Members
Granite Falls Economic Development Director
Yellow Medicine County School District Superintendents
Minnesota Department of Transportation
Yellow Medicine County Emergency Manager
U.S. Corps of Engineer
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Watershed Boards
 Lac qui Parle/Yellow Medicine Watershed Project
 YM River Watershed District
 Hawk Creek Watershed Project
 Redwood Cottonwood River Control Area
Board of Water and Soil Resources

Residents of Yellow Medicine County were also encouraged to attend one of the four public meetings. A public notice inviting the public to attend was run in the newspapers in Montevideo, Granite Falls, Canby and Marshall.

At the public meetings open dialogues were held on the key topic areas: agriculture, housing, economic development, natural resources/parks/recreation, county services and transportation. All comments and issues were collected and recorded by the facilitator. The compiled results of all four meetings are provided on the following pages. The comments from the public meetings were used by the Comprehensive Plan Task Force in developing the Plan's goals, objectives and strategies.

Granite Falls Meeting

Agriculture

- Shouldn't be required to own 40 acres to have a feedlot
- Non-farm residents' needs/wants should be considered with feedlot regulations
- Blend ag land use and housing needs with zoning ordinances
- Loss of productive ag land to RIM, CRP CRE, recreation land
- Change zoning from purely ag-based to address other issues

County Services

- County EDA needed
- County tourism needed

Economic Development

- Stop "Brain Drain"
- Business development incentives
- Hire county-wide economic development staff
- Regional approach to economic development
- Work to grow existing businesses

Housing

- Retired farmers move to town
- Hobby farms vs. farms
- Plan for subdivisions
- No one to fill rural houses
- Allow housing in natural areas with planning to protect resources
- Change zoning from 1 per 40 to other zoning to accommodate housing needs
- Septic issues a concern

Natural Resources/Parks/Recreation

- Loss of wetlands and drainage causing flooding
- Use tourism as economic development; provide financial support for tourism
- Tourism – preserve Indian history
- Promote attractions we have now
- Work with casino/Upper Sioux
- Gravel mining – need ordinances
- Hunting land – increasing land values
- More trail development
- Quality of life - investment

Transportation

- Public transit — keep and improve service
- Access to cities
- Meet senior needs
- Access management
- Better roads to accommodate economic development

Clarkfield Meeting

Agriculture

- Feedlots — do GIS mapping for buffers
- 40 acre farms — no longer relevant
- Setbacks should be at least one mile
- Build within the set back if desired
- No feedlots in watershed areas for water pollution
- Don't use manure on fields
- Conditional use permit should not go with site if sold
- Local ownership
- Current agriculture practices in the intensively farmed (row crops) regions are the #1 cause of water pollution and habitat destruction which reduces outdoor recreation and tourism activity potential. Need farm programs that pay farmers to protect the environment and supply other societal benefits rather than more bushels of corn and beans. This would increase outdoor recreation and tourism dependent on abundant fish and wildlife and other activities like canoeing, swimming, camping and birding.
- Recent agriculture trends are the direct cause of our negative demographics. An improved quality of life factors which is necessary to attract new people will bring people.

Business – Economic Development

- County staff
- County needs to be proactive — lead — progressive
- Support natural resources/outdoor recreation habitat
- Tourism as economic development
- Preserve Stone Ridge Park
- The best opportunity for creating new economic activity in YMC lies in improving quality of life factors associated with improving outdoor recreation/tourism through diversifying farms (incentive payments), restoring water quality, and increasing/restoring wildlife habitat.

County Services

- Snowplows go out only after a storm, not during storm

Housing

- No one to fill rural houses
- “Aging” homes/housing
- Inactive county HRA
- 40 acre requirements — should be less (5 acre demand)
- Program for down payments

Natural Resources/Parks/Recreation

- Don't need tax dollars necessarily — just positive attitude
- Restrict ditching
- Increase tourism as economic development
- County-wide comprehensive natural resource study

- Fish and wildlife habitat destruction as a result of current and past agriculture practices (degraded water quality in rivers, lakes and wetland; wetland draining; crop mono-cultures) have degraded the quality of life for County residents.
- Habitat destruction (winter cover) has kept our pheasant (our only desirable game bird) population down and opportunity exists to winterize our birds and stabilize our population and increase recreation/tourism. Money and expertise is available (Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, DNR, USFWS, Federal Farm Programs) to pay farmers to voluntarily participate in these programs to restore degraded water quality, and to create and restore wildlife habitat while the farmer maintains an even higher quality of life.
- Improve habitat for pheasant and waterfowl. Support a habitat creation, restoration and improvement program. Adopt a pheasant-winterizing program. Money and expertise is available in organizations and programs such as Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, DNR, Fish and Wildlife Service, Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCMR), federal farm programs (CRP, CREP, WRP, GRP, WHIP, etc.), etc. Improve habitat as a means to generate economic activity in the form of improved recreational activities in wildlife, fishing and tourism. Setting aside key 20-acre areas could vastly increase the habitat. To sustain viable wildlife populations requires the availability of undisturbed grasslands. Need available year-round adequate food/cover areas.

Transportation

- Public transit — increase
- County maintenance of some city roads

Wood Lake Meeting

Agriculture

- Change 40-acre livestock limit
- Limit fertilizer use for grain farmers
- Attract youth to farming
- Financial help to young farmers
- Permit issues (easier to get permit if starting a new rather than an existing operation); easier to get help; programs to help new – not expansion
- Offset — County is one mile and two miles for city limits
- Setbacks — less than one-half mile; above issues related to young folks being able to start
- Consumer awareness — who is the responsible party (with permit?)
- Transportation board representation may not be agriculture people
- Grain farm issues more of issue in future
- Enhance County programs and value-added programs; education
- Consider people — there are offensive issues
- Placement is important

County Services

- Use relationship with County

Economic Development

- Aging population — housing funding incentives to help offset cost
- Aging population that can't afford cost — county will need to help with healthcare
- Help subsidize wages — can't do much at \$8 or \$12 per hour
- Not many high paying jobs; can't attract people to live here
- Safety issues — selling point; low crime; watch for trend
- Tax breaks incentives to draw business
- County EDA

Housing

- Defined areas for non-agriculture housing (clustering)
- No shortage of housing
- Aging of housing
- Shortage of high end housing
- High cost of new housing
- Trend to build high end housing in rural setting
- Assisted living options — need more

Natural Resources/Parks/Recreation

- ATV regulations changed – don't encourage use
- Need mutual respect and balance; multi-use of resources (e.g., don't over regulate)
- “No net loss” DNR land
- Water usage and quality fairness
- Research some limits and awareness of what is there

Transportation

- Need for 10-ton roads
- Roads to get things in and out
- Restrictions
- Eight-ton weight restrictions on gravel roads — should be ten-ton
- Hwy. 23 4-lane — focus on
- Spring posting — maybe reduce speed and increase load limit; maybe lower speed limit would encourage folks to use main roads.
- Railroad expansion

Canby Meeting

Agriculture

- Preserve pastureland and prime agriculture land — same level (same classification)
- Lower animal units for confinements; numbers need to be high to make it cost effective
- Setbacks looking more at technology (monitoring & cost to facility)
- State regulations
- Jobs related to agriculture
- Preference to unit in place now – have weight
- Consumer awareness
- Feedlots — consideration for all parties; compromise; find equitable solutions
- Losing farms — need more opportunities for young farmers or part-time jobs
- Water for drinking and streams — large confinements eventually may pollute our wells; it will eventually soak into our groundwater

County Services

- EMT calls — duplication of addresses with neighboring counties & South Dakota
- Bigger picture
- Utility corridor lines

Economic Development/Business

- Elements to track jobs – enhancements
- Improve infrastructure
- “Program” to assist for rural areas
- Maintain
- Foreign competition — in agriculture, too — now more global
- Education plays a role
- Private investors
- Need good jobs; find knowledgeable people in community, if possible, to develop ideas
- Advertise in metro areas about easy access we have in rural areas vs. traffic congestion in large cities

Housing

- Lack of affordable housing
- Aging housing
- Programs to assist with affordable housing
- “Senior” housing — should we encourage?
- Low values
- Consider cost per foot

Natural Resources/Parks/Recreation

- Tourism (increase it)
- Trend is campers — campgrounds; funds for them and mosquito control
- Gravel
- Wind power

Transportation

- Maintaining roads
- Start with legislature (need representation)
- Roads or railroad
- Problem all relates to population
- Aging infrastructure — maintenance is issue
- Lack of public transit