

# Mille Lacs County Comprehensive Plan Project Fourth Round of Community Meetings Report



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**Winter 2013**



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As part of the Mille Lacs County Comprehensive Plan Project, a series of three identically formatted community meetings were held in January, 2013 at the following locations and dates across Mille Lacs County:

Thursday, January 10<sup>th</sup>. 7:00 PM at Isle City Hall

Saturday, January 12<sup>th</sup>. 9:00 AM at the Historic Mille Lacs County Courthouse in Milaca

Monday, January 14<sup>th</sup>. 7:00 PM at Princeton City Hall

The agenda and meeting format were identical at these meetings:

- 1) Welcome – all were welcomed to the meetings.
- 2) Introductions – all were introduced; facilitators, staff and participants.
- 3) Background – a presentation was made regarding what a comprehensive plan is, the planned steps for creating a new one of Mille Lacs County, work already completed, work remaining and next steps. Questions were answered as they arose. A copy of this presentation was handed out for participants to take.
- 4) Goals and Objectives – Draft objectives and goals recently completed by the Ad-Hoc Citizen Task Forces on the topics of Intergovernmental Relations, Social Programs / Public Health / Quality of Life, Agriculture / Forestry and Land Use were presented. Participants were provided forms for their comments and opinions on these draft goals and policies. A form will also be available on the county's website for residents to provide their comments on these draft goals and policies. Participants were invited to share any general comments on the draft goals and objectives presented.
- 5) Questions? – Any final questions participants had were answered.

Agendas handed out that included the email address to send to for enrolling in the project's email list-serve for updates on the projects, as well as Mille Lacs County's website with information on this project.

Draft goals and objectives were also posted on the County's website for public review, as well as a place created at the same location to receive any comments and feedback on these items electronically. These draft goals / objectives as well as comment forms were on the website from January 10 – 24, 2013.

This fourth round of Community Meetings were promoted through the media (newspapers, flyers), as well as emails sent to those on the project's email distribution list, cities, chambers, businesses and other stakeholders.

Written and verbal input from the meetings and online questionnaires have been transcribed and are categorized by topic and meeting location, and are as follows:



## Intergovernmental Relations

### Objective:

Improve and work to make better the communications, relations and cooperation between governmental units.

- Continue and enhance open door communications between townships, cities, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe and Mille Lacs County.
  - Consider countywide elected or staff meetings of governmental units
- Improve and enhance use of websites, email, social media, etc.
- Review cooperation between units of government for cost savings.
  - Look for opportunities to “pair and share” services between government units and public / private sectors.

### Isle Meeting Comments:

- Good to try to “pair & share” costs & services to reduce government taxes.
- As twsp official the communication to or from the county is sufficient.
- Improved web and social media is for what goal?
- Cooperation on supplies “i.e. road salt”. Could save twps \$ by bulk buying.
- County should “prioritize” services where cost effective to save \$.
- Good ideas
- Under the first bullet school districts should be added as a governmental unit!
- New 800 radios should help.
- Good idea
- Communication between all is the key to doing it right.
- Let’s eliminate unnecessary road blocks to make our county more friendly and easier to do business in.
- Like it all!
- Zoning web-check what Aitkin Co. offers when zoning regs change involve those that have educated the public.
- Mille Lacs co. should work with a support MN DNR to develop a workable & fair distribution of the walleye harvest between the band and the public for the good of the county.
- Staff meetings of emergency services representatives county wide is a plus.

### Milaca Meeting Comments:

- I don’t like how the main objective is written. It doesn’t sound right. I realize this is for intergovernmental relations, but so many of these positions are elected, it might make sense to include “Citizens/residents” in some of the statements.
- Watch for costs added for personnel needed to administer “pair & Share” offsetting any savings.
- Quality of service. Improve the notice process-most people do not seem aware of meetings happening (perhaps pertains to next objective).



- All well written. Good foundation for future with changing technology and demographic changes. I especially appreciate that “lean” and working together is written down to express the importance of this in a situation of reduced resources, but also allows for governmental agencies to find/improve/brainstorm for other best practices. It communicates to people/businesses outside of our county how we strive for fiscal responsibility and also high quality product/services.

Princeton Meeting Comments:

- Ensure us a governmental but community active groups such as Princeton Area Visionary Committee and Rum River Recreation & Resource Board are kept in the loop.
- What about enhancing communications with other counties, state departments, etc.?
- Pairing of Public and Private sectors will lead to government picking winners and losers. “Public” should be surrounded by a firewall when partnering with private entities when there is any exchange of money, properties or the like. Never give up local control to an “intergovernmental” panel. Met Council in the metro area. This makes the township, city and county representatives impotent.
- In favor of the open communications. To keep up with the newer generations we need to put more resources into websites, email, and social media. We do need to work at the pair and share really close to save the cities and counties money.

Website Comments:

There need to be a review of redundant services offered by city, township, and county services and a future understanding that certain services may be delivered better, faster, cheaper, by one than the other and cost sharing should be considered. For instance there are many cities with fire departments and fire chiefs, could there be one fire chief county wide that oversees five or six fire departments where the resources are located in each city for response? this type of review could show cost sharing for several governments.

Searching for ways to possibly cost share between gov't entities is an excellent idea; however, it will require elected officials to objectively take part in the discussions. Gov't employees will obviously have a conflict, since their job security will be at risk. Gov't entities should we working together for the common good - not competing or passing blame. The County is an extension of the state and should act accordingly, i.e., no finger-pointing.

Never has there been more "closed door" communications in this county. Why? that must be answered prior to the incorporation of the above objective. Trust is a very large issue when developing a solid foundation of which to build the above.

4 General - broad - encompassing -- sounds good!

5 Good



## **Objective:**

Continue to review and when feasible, improve the quality of County services that are provided to residents.

- Continue small town feel with high levels customer service by our employees, staff and elected officials.
- Research opportunities for “lean” government while striving to maintain high quality services at an affordable cost.

## **Isle Meeting Comments:**

- Inform citizens of economical reason why costs are what they are. Some believe it should still be 1970’s way of life.
- Must be cost effective in order to provide the service “bang for the buck”.
- Need to reduce the cost and regulations of government.
- “Privatize” county services (lean)
- Fewer welfare services from the county.
- Like the “lean” aspect and affordable cost.
- Improvement in Onamia police department & presens of PH programs in northern ML needs to happen when thinking out “lean” govt.
- Must continue to adapt to needs expressed by voters and residents both full time and seasonal.
- Less government services, people should do more for themselves.
- We should be doing this already!! If not yes we should start!
- Eliminated un-needed regulations and rules. Let the cities and townships have a larger part in developing our future.
- Government cannot be effectively maintained under lean government not having adequate staff means the job will not get done correct or effectively. Example: less police=more crime.
- It feels like co. employees at this courthouse are mad when residents come in and ask questions. Attitude should change so that they want to assist and serve residents.
- Lean government may get be less regulation=amount of inspection=amount of plan reviews=

## **Milaca Meeting Comments:**

- I don’t think you need “and when feasible” in the first statement.
- Quality of service. Improve the notice process-most people do not seem aware of meetings happening (perhaps pertains to next objective).

## **Princeton Meeting Comments**

- There is some great potential resource sharing opportunities that would save money. In the Princeton area some of those opportunities cross the county border into, especially Sherburne co.
- Research opps for reducing dependency on gov’t. Make it more difficult to get on and stay on gov’t assistance.
- When looking into cost saving measures we also need to be trying to keep our money local and work with the local companies to lower their prices to get the jobs.



### Website Comments:

Improve on tecknology for alowing county residents to register to receive text email messages from county government through information push tecknology.

We certainly need information easier to access. Also include information about those running for public office positions by giving them a space to tell us about themselves or answer questions in on an interactive site.

Everything should be open for review, e.g., hours of operations. How convenient is it for the general public to get to the County campus Mon - Fri, between 8 & 4:30?

We have not had "small town" Govt since changing the idea of a coordinator to an administrator in this county. This is a contradiction regarding this committee's objectives. We must accept that, this, "moving forward" does not allow the adforementioned concern nor does it have that "small town" feel to it anymore. Incorporating the idea of LEAN does not answer issue of why, where LEAN was first used that it is no longer incorporated there?

Not 100% comfortable with "small town feel" -- what does that mean. Small town to me means being stifled. Old ideals, not wanting to change and keep up with the times.

Objective 2. Delete "when feasible". Quality is a reasonable objective to keep without excuse. -high levels of customer service achieved via training, performance reviews, and a focus on service. Next Objective. Good, except, do not use 'etc'--say what's meant. Include list of elected officials and what districts they represent..

### **Objective:**

Improve citizen education about County government and encourage participation in all levels of County decision making.

- Make information available online, clear and concise, updated in a timely manner, through electronic communications, etc. for residents.
  - Make access to information for citizens convenient and less tedious to find and access.
  - Continue to make information available through traditional, non electronic ways (newspapers, bulletin boards, community meetings, etc)
  - Continue communications between townships, cities, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe and county residents with websites, email, etc.
- Representational membership of county on appointed boards, committees, etc. should include a good cross section including geographical, background, public / private sector, multigenerational, etc of County residents
- Take advantage of new communications technology to update and inform the public of meetings, emergencies, etc.



### Isle Meeting Comments:

- Use bullets and underlining/highlighting to “pop” vital info to people as they don’t like to read paragraphs.
- A county newsletter? Monthly? Quarterly? Needs to be in all formats, make sure the surveys are only submitted once per person/party.
- The public will only come to controversial mtgs.
- Having all info online only makes sense.
- Most view the county as the enemy...
- Good
- There are to be more outreach to ML communities for county decisions.
- If boards are representational these members are committed to making the best decisions for all residents-that often involves change and not necessarily looking through the lens of “not raising taxes”.
- These communities need more investment from residents in order to thrive.
- Add school districts for citizens education they are the focal point of the community.
- If we are going to do more with less “lean” government, there need to be measures in place to evaluate work that is being done by employers/elected officials. This information then needs to be presented to the public @ well-broadcast meetings.
- You should see that online information doesn’t get used a lot! Your survey returns show that. I realize it is a lot cheaper unfortunately a lot of us taxpayers don’t see that unfortunately I’m one of the major tax payers here but I doubt that I’ll look at your website probably several other users of a lot of the programs are the ones that don’t work to pay taxes.
- We are moving in the right direction. Let’s keep it going. Let’s talk to our neighbors.
- Need to make information available both electronic and nontraditional-may elderly do not navigate the internet. The elderly are the majority of the stable tax payable population.
- Update the website so it is easier to navigate.
- Make info more complete on the zoning web check Aitkin Co. site. Check other co. websites-Mille Lacs is way behind. Communications are poor-turf wars between depts.
- Make website name available and known at sites around the county such as newspapers public places, businesses.
- Encourage participation from citizens on levels of needed regulation.

### Milaca Meeting Comments:

- Mille Lacs County does a good job of this already. I hate to see us expend more energy trying to get more citizens involved. They either will or they won’t.
- Improve. Expand by adding audio and recording of meetings on website.
- A County is cradle to death, not just working adults. We have very brilliant older adults and young people, we should harvest their knowledge.

### Princeton Meeting Comments:

- Is this education the same type of education that our children are receiving from our public schools system? That is not education, that is indoctrination, and I really do not believe that does anyone any good accept those pushing an agenda.
- Perhaps an active participation in the County Fair, municipality business expos, etc. is another way of reaching the public.



- 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> bullet point seem very similar. Maybe make its own bullet point as online vs. traditional means are 2 separate things.
- Post up to date County budget including weekly updates of expenses and income. Post up to date regulatory changes. Specify any incursion into private property rights. Post any and all agreements between government bodies and other public/and private entities and grants, etc.
- We need to spend more resources and keep up with social media.

Website Comments:

NO COMMENTS RECEIVED.

Intergovernmental Relations General Comments:

Princeton:

- Never give up local control to intergovernmental panel/council, i.e. met council

Milaca:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Obj. doesn't sound right in construction/wording
- Remove "make"
- Add citizens to communication bullets
- Add "ombudsman"



## Social Programs, Public Health, and Quality of Life

### Objective:

Work with stakeholders including schools, local units of government, businesses, residents and elected officials to create a culture that supports all levels of education

- Work with stakeholders including schools, local governments, businesses, residents and elected officials to encourage technical and college campus sites in the County
- Promote cooperation between all education related stakeholders, including community education, to use best practices and technology to further opportunities for all residents.
- Support early childhood education and early intervention programs and opportunities to help make residents aware of their availability.

### Isle Meeting Comments:

- All Good
- Do we really need to be all inclusive and accommodating to everyone? The 1:1 with students is very costly, especially if the students & families are not supportive and willing to help themselves.
- All seem like good ideas.
- I see none of this..ever from the county.
- Good
- More investment needs to be made in K-12 education in ML V's focusing the limited means on tech/college campus here.
- Increase broadband coverage to all areas.
- Support private sector businesses in the areas of call tower locations, fiber optic installations.
- How will funding be acquired for technical college campus?
- Early childhood education & intervention programs already exist. What more could be done to support the residents of the availability?
- Encourage parents to be involved in their children's education.
- Develop programs of interest to parents to further their participation with their children's education.
- Agree with all points
- May want to promote parent education to support child's education.
- Sounds great.

### Milaca Meeting Comments:

- Bullet #1 is wordy.
- Education
- State WIB

### Princeton Meeting Comments:

- This is a great objective, especially as more manufacturing businesses are having issues with workforce needs. Seeing the need for high schools to emphasize trades again and introduce students into this work (often are good paying jobs).



- Please define stakeholders!
- Define stakeholder- My definition is a “stakeholder” has something at risk not just an interest in something someone else has.

Website Comments:

No more public education, private and charter or home schooling only. No support for any part of Agenda 21.

Let's also help support those who homeschool their children, if desired. Help provide awareness of available opportunities for field trips, community education art classes, homeschool discounts (such as those from Powder Ridge), DNR classes, etc.

The State already has more technical and college campus sites than it can support. Technology could deliver needed skill and knowledge to current workers. Invest in our current work force before fun and games. Keep in mind that any expansion has to be paid for by someone at a time when the towns, counties ,state and federal governments are BROKE>

Does the focus of government entitties to keep families together at all costs truly promote a positive outcome? Being a parent is a privilege, not a right. Stop enabling!!! Assisting residents in continuing negative and sometimes self-destructive behaviors only serves to promote the "need" for government assistance. We need to revert to being a safety net, not a way of life.

Sounds like we are in Vegas with the idea of "Stakeholders" does this mean the larger the "Player" the more they will have to say or gamble with? Remembering the human factor and incorporating this within a technology world we must rememeber we deal with hard working and sometimes not so priviledged layman that do not have access to this "technology"! "Best practices" also must be understood that although it sounds nice and pretty this concept refers to the idea that due to we have nothing better at this time and that data supports this right now, it necessarily is not a long term solution.

Sounds good!

Good.

**Objective:**

Encourage and support accessible and affordable senior related programs and activities

- Support eldercare, senior housing and related programs
- Encourage senior service stakeholders to coordinate programs and make people aware of resources.

Isle Meeting Comments:

- Support senior dining options
- Not a priority for me.



- Encourage public transportation to be available to people in all areas of the county.
- These programs should be available in every community.
- Senior housing is the next “big” program that will need to be encouraged. Assisted living is the next most needed in each community.
- Let’s use the knowledge of our seniors with their experience to help improve these programs. As we know we have many seniors in the county.
- Once again, communication is the key.
- Sounds good
- Ensure a tax structure that helps seniors stay in their homes.
- Use of technology to monitor and support seniors and maximize program.
- Is there any way to involve seniors in community events (A senior’s tent at Isle days, volunteer opportunities in schools, etc.)?
- More investment is needed for safer forms of non-motorized transportation in ML Communities for us by seniors.
- Good.
- Support senior housing developments
- Take good care of the seniors.
- We can’t sustain entitlement programs expanding faster than the workforce can support.
- Can’t keep raising taxes for programs.

Milaca Meeting Comments:

NONE RECEIVED

Princeton Meeting Comments:

- Again a problem with stakeholders who would senior service stakeholders be? The owners of nursing homes, their children, what?
- Encourage seniors to work with local churches and other charity organizations in favor of government as the main source of programs. Volunteers do not come with salaries, and other benefit such as tax payer funded pensions and healthcare for health.

Website Comments:

Seniors need to be supported by their families. Not me or the community.

Engage retired citizens to be involved, they have time to share and would be happy to serve with a simple reimbursement for travel time and meals provided.

Again who is going to pay the bill? Lets prioritize our needs before we start on our wants.

Establish programs to keep seniors active and relevant.

I get it, support more family unity? From the county? Oh and then there is the word of "stakeholders" again. Should read non profit list of programs and how do we free up the layman to spend more time and to encourage the family unity issue. Already happening it is called CHURCH.

Good!



Recommend add: Provide links to/information about resources to assist seniors and their caregivers to find the help they need.

### **Objective:**

Support programs and activities related to improving employment and training opportunities for all residents.

- Support economic development and jobs training programs, both in the County and within the region.
- Encourage government, schools, community education programs, and businesses to partner and identify skills in order to develop programs to meet the needs identified.
  - Utilize technology and infrastructure for training
  - Work with stakeholders to identify needs and programs to meet those needs

### **Isle Meeting Comments:**

- Very important, with variety of skills required businesses need to impart their needs and not assume they are known to educators.
- To have economic development and job creation we need less regulation and taxing of the business community.
- North end of the county is “tourism” period. Should have programs to train in customer service.
- South end is more industry and the training should be what the businesses need. Ask them.
- How?
- There are many vacant buildings in Onamia- They need to be torn down or renovated.
- This should be a large priority for City Council & County economic development.
- How can we attract more business to the area? There are plenty of buildings in ML available for business but it seems no business for the buildings.
- Job shadowing for our teens.
- Collaboration with GED programs.
- Good ideas, but be mindful of the cost.
- We cannot afford higher taxes!
- Training to encourage technology is a must within this region as it is not meeting many state mandates. Example is the No child left behind act. Just drags the students along to the next class. Need more programs to encourage schools to educate the students.
- Make job training available in all communities so people don’t have to travel to Milaca.
- Job training and economic development are strongly tied together. To diversify the local economy this is needed.
- Would be nice to attract high end light industry to the county.
- Support existing businesses also when programs become available for employment opportunities.

### **Milaca Meeting Comments:**

- Include support for business opportunities as well as employment, reaching out to encourage large businesses to locate in Mille Lacs County, as well as support small business endeavors.



- Work with workforce investment boards as they already are doing the second bullet. Also ensure that local schools and elected officials attend the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday workforce meeting in Braham. Then also, ensure that this information is communicated back to stakeholders for them to make decisions.

Princeton Meeting Comments:

- It's good to recognize that the county influence doesn't end at its borders.
- Same comment I had for object 1: This is a great objective, especially as more manufacturing businesses are having issues with workforce needs. Seeing the need for high schools to emphasize trades again and introduce students into this work (often are good paying jobs).
- There are too many "job training" programs-Gov't already in place and we pay for them. – Elementary schools, Junior and Senior High Schools, Intranet self-studies. No need for any more! Job training programs yield little results with a lot of money spent.
- We need to use more resources for our economic development and jobs training programs and make them more easily accessible for business owners and unemployed workers. Communicate with both large and small business to help create programs.

Website Comments:

Reduce taxes and regulations will increase job opportunity.

in school activities and after school activities are good for the communit, young people need to have their time committed to something productive

This is good economic development Have schools contact business and industry directly for program development rather than sit in an office and pontificate about what is needed.

Keeping children in homes where education is not valued and morals are not taught will result in the County retaining it's low graduation and high crime rates.

It is a delicate balance regarding the above without losing the hard working and most of those that do not ever have time nor come in contact with a comprehensive plan. Sometimes what looks good on paper is just that and only that.

Not sure if this is a place to include this -- but how can we create an environment to attract new businesses and broaden job opportunities.

Good.

**Objective:**

Encourage collaboration between stakeholders to support healthy communities in order to increase accessibility and awareness.

- Encourage access to associated resources such as fitness, healthy food, and other activities to create healthy communities, and help to promote their availability.



- Encourage and promote mental health, alcohol / chemical health programs with relevant stakeholders.
- Encourage stakeholders to support parenting activities and programs
- Encourage stakeholders to develop teen based programs and activities.

Isle meeting Comments:

- Encourage county health programs by exploring grant opportunities.
- These are all good objectives- shows nothing toward healthy lifestyles and reduced dependency on health care and social programs.
- Teens will be the greatest challenge of the next generation. Drug & alcohol program for rehabilitation are much needed.
- Parenting and social services to help parents deal with uncontrollable children.
- Best dealt with in the individual communities.
- Health care provider engagement
- Support of fire and ambulance services.
- Accessibility to what? Aren't we all stakeholders in the health of our community? How can we provide incentives to people who are making full use of physical fitness, healthy food & other activities! Can we give "county discounts" Being healthy needs to be the best option in as many ways as possible? Maybe charge for weight of garbage and provide recycling for free or minimal charge.
- Much more investment needs to be made in non-motorized transportation as a means for promoting active living. This would involve more sidewalks, larger paved shoulders, marked bike lanes.
- Onamia needs a better grocery store. Healthy food is more expensive & of lower quality.
- More access to healthy food & less access for unhealthy fast food. Milaca does not need Mc. Donald's it's not a change toward healthier ML communities/residents.
- Good
- I think other than mental health issues the county will be over-reacting on these subjects. Smaller government is better. Government doesn't need to tell me to eat right & exercise.
- Teen pregnancy and drug use needs more attention.
- We really need to address youth activities in rural areas. There is not much to do if your child is not involved in sports or in academics.

Milaca Meeting Comments:

NO COMMENTS RECEIVED

Princeton Meeting Comments:

- Define this better (bullet 3).
- What about encouraging support and development of elderly services? Wait that's in the 2<sup>nd</sup> objective ☺
- Teen based programs such as working, farming and volunteering will yield better results.
- I agree with above.



Website Comments:

Promote the expansion of locally grown farmers markets - and identify venues wherein there is adjoining indoor space for inclement weather days.

Keep government out of the community and these things will grow naturally.

Promote locally grown foods. The term "healthy food," is rather vague and so is the determination of healthy communities. We do not all have the same idea of how to attain good health. Just because a government agency or the AMA or ADA say something does not mean that it is flawless. They have been wrong many times in the past. Lobotomies were still the practice about 58 years ago. Bloodletting killed George Washington. The Italians have recently determined that vaccines cause autism.

These all sound great but again who pays for this.

"Healthy communities" to me means a community where children are not reproducing, yet instead of teaching objective birth-control methods, area schools allow religious members of the community to come in and push only an abstinence-only education. Based on our teen-pregnancy rates, this approach doesn't seem to be working.

"Encourage" how about "initiates" there is a must to LEAD by example, however, many of the county level employees do not live in the county of which they work so how invested will they be? The largest Dept.'s have the most resources and must take this active effort to LEAD and being will to "rub elbows" with people they do not live with which again leads to the question of how trusting one is to these "initiators".

Sounds good!

2nd bullet: ...'alcohol/chemical dependency prevention and treatment programs rather than 'health'.  
Add: Increase awareness of sexual and domestic abuse and resources for prevention and treatment.  
Add: Increase awareness of farm safety and health issues for both adults and children with resources for prevention.

**Objective:**

Work with partners to encourage and support improved/increased communication infrastructure and accessibility.

- Encourage further development of Internet, phone and broadband for personal, education and business use.
  - Work with partners, and explore grant opportunities for further development of these communication systems.
- Use both new and traditional media to spread information quickly and efficiently.

Isle Meeting Comments:

- Not everyone will have a computer, knowledge of computers or a desire to ever have a computer.
- This seems to be market driven.



- This area can't afford the infrastructure to make it "tech-savvy" Foolish
- If you live in the woods w/no internet that is a personal choice. You can get it if you want it: DSL, Cable, Satellite
- Good.
- A huge focus needs to be placed on healthy living..as a member of this community and I much prefer to see our energy spent in making the healthy lifestyle more vibrant. If we increase the overall health of community members, we will see dramatic improvements in other areas like volunteerism.
- Must!!
- Quick response to schools by all services
- Collaborative notification programs for emergencies.
- I think we have this already. Most kids can't shut off their phones, Ipads, other equip, long enough to talk with a person or do some work the way it is.
- Ok
- Agree with all. There are many grant opportunities; it just takes the resources to acquire them.
- Must increase access to broadband (intranet) to be economically competitive in the rural area.

Milaca Meeting Comments:

- Provide classes to seniors to help in the use of new technology.

Princeton Meeting Comments:

- An electronic posting that people can enroll in and automatically receive county updates like commercial businesses do like Kohl's with a regular sales ad.
- Be very wary of government grants. Nothing is for free. Our school district went for a "grant" and now are told that they have to eat and what they can't eat. Let's figure out how to get things done without that grant money. If we don't have the money we will just have to wait until we do. I do not want any more federal regulations reigning down on us because we "owe them".
- Grant money usually comes with strings relieving our elected officials of their decision making ability.
- Need to use social media more often and get the people to join social media to make that happen.

Website Comments:

Keep government out of the community and these things will grow naturally.

Let us acknowledge the idea of broadband and the community of which we are bring in is very adverse and many can not afford the current prices of this.

Placing too much policy on this alienates many people and thus causes distrust.

Sounds good!

Especially increased accessibility for seniors.



## Objective:

Promote the regional library system and encourage its use.

- Encourage ongoing local community support of the library system

## Isle Meeting Comments:

- With the internet and access to electronic documents what is the future of the traditional library? Will libraries as we know them today exist 50 years from now?
- Possibly extended hours of local libraries
- Library systems will need to expand to update systems to have more computer access units available to the public.
- YES it is a great resource
- More open collaboration with school library resources and technology.
- Why don't we just make our libraries all electronic so any community person can download what they want off the increased broadband internet service?
- Not aware of library use.
- I don't know if this is on the rise or decline
- Bucking the trend makes no sense either way.
- Could they somehow work with the schools to help eliminate overlap of resources?

## Milaca Meeting Comments:

NO COMMENTS RECEIVED

## Princeton Meeting Comments:

- Libraries are evolving don't spend a fortune on the system just to keep people employed.

## Website Comments:

Consider public/private partnerships E.g. coffee shop with wi fi to increase visibility and viability.

Librarys are no longer needed in each community.

continue to invest in internet access and most folks in the future will access it

Are area libraries under-utilized?

advertisements of what the public library offers and that this resource is open to public is great but where is the time to utilize this resource?

Sounds good!

Add: Encourage the support of community libraries. Although they may be linked into the regional library system, small community libraries provide additional services that deserve our support. Also, see nothing from this task force re the support of the local arts, cultural heritage, and history of the county-- all important to quality of life.



Social/Public Health/Quality of Life General Comments:

Princeton:

- Public/private partnership not in plan at all; taxpayers have greatest input, not business that are not elected.

Milaca:

- Add summary/format for Objectives: “Education,” “Seniors”
- 3<sup>rd</sup> bullet – Employment & Training: Workforce Investment Board already exists – need better communication, attend existing meetings
- 4<sup>th</sup> bullet – Better at communicating what’s available
- Employment – refer to economic development



## Agriculture / Forestry

### Objective:

Maintain and encourage the efficiency, viability, and productivity of the county's agricultural areas for current and future generations.

- Encourage cities and townships to ensure the viability of agriculture in their town, through zoning, education, and other farm related programs.
- Encourage uses such as agribusiness/agri-tourism, which retain the agricultural productivity of the land while allowing for nontraditional farming practices
- Encourage development of a local/regional food system with the infrastructure needed to economically sustain, as well as encourage, small farms of the county through direct marketing of grains, fruits, nuts, vegetables, eggs, meats, and dairy

### Isle Meeting Comments:

- Definitely
- We use to do this, but allow the property owner to still use their land as they see fit as a private property owner.
- Is this a large economy for the county?
- I see most farmers as part-time.
- Many survive or benefit from subsidies.
- I see the loggers up on the North end of the County, but very few “farms”.
- I would like to know what % of worth the farmers have for the County? Just land taxes?
- Good! More farmers markets.
- Increase local products to grocery stores.
- Any type of economic support @ farmers markets?
- Public land used for public food to feed our poor/schools/hospitals/elderly? Makes jobs.
- Vineyards
- Ok
- Response to bullet #1: Needs to economically be viable and sustainable.
- All are good points.
- Check with cities on zoning issues about agriculture.

### Milaca Meeting Comments:

- Also wine??
- Ensuring the future

### Princeton Meeting comments:

- Incorporate schools?
- Just a note that the 1<sup>st</sup> bullet objective is right out of the UN's Agenda 21 Document. I am a farmer and I don't believe we need any education or encouragement or any rules, or zoning, or any government interference. We know what we are doing and are better stewards of that land than any government official would be. Our livelihood depends on it.



- Please read about Agenda 21 the main objective statement is almost word for word. Zoning is the key to a viable, prosperous and free society. It can also be the chink in the armor of our property rights.
- Concerns with numerous units of government around the county shutting down producers/marketers of fresh foods. Focus on plan should be to encourage these activities, not over regulate/restrict them.

Website Comments:

Properly readjust property taxation to realign greater taxation on suburban style subdivisions and residential properties and less on ag land and tree farms – (this is how you maintain the stated objectives above).

Keep government out of the community and these things will grow and flourish naturally.

These last two goals are contrary to each other. I totally disagree with the encouragement of agribusiness!! That is the opposite of what we should be doing. We want to have more farmers, not less. Agribusiness uses more chemicals, has poorer stewardship practices and do not have the personal connection to their land. A small homestead with diversity is more ecologically responsible. There is a cycle between animals and plants. Huge fields of mono crops are more susceptible to disease. Small farms help to maintain different species of plants, and prevent the extinction of varieties.

Careful farmers or exempt from certain things for a reason!

This again makes me nervous -- are we hanging onto something that cannot sustain the community? Are we trying to hang onto the way it was and not move and grow into our future?

**Objective:**

Concentrate development in growth centers in order to preserve farm and forest land, other conservation lands, and open spaces

- Consider greater use of transfer of development rights to preserve farm and forest land, other conservation lands, and open spaces
- Encourage cluster development to preserve farm and forest land for production preserving these economic engines for future generations.
- Partner with nonprofits and other agencies in educating about farm transition programs, etc.

Isle Meeting Comments

- Need to not obstruct private property owner's right to use their land as they desire if it is not a life, health or major environment impact. It is my property.
- Government should stop buying land they can't afford to maintain.
- To buy land to conserve it is done way to much-develop it, tax it.
- Stay out of private land ownership.
- Use the resources.
- Need to encourage more young people to stay here and farm.



- ML County does not seem in danger of over developing...small farms can exist close to town or out in the country.
- The DNR and the State have many programs in place now.
- Any consideration to raising the minimum parcel size for residential use? Will eliminate cutting small parcels out of larger parcels thus promoting more efficient agricultural land use. Cluster developments promote this idea.
- Sounds great.
- With population growth every time you build on AG land you limit the ability to feed people.

Milaca Meeting Comments:

- Could use
- Development

Princeton Meeting Comments:

- Growth centers and open spaces-again language from the Un's Agenda 21. What is this transfer of development rights mean exactly? Is this cluster development the same as growth centers? Farm transition programs? What do we need a program for? We plan on transitioning it to our kids.
- Development rights deeded to some non-profits can lead to extreme land use restrictions. Cluster development corporate/state ran farms. Ever think about partnering with citizens or land owners about farm transition programs? Where is the family farm in this scenario? Consider the lesser use of development rights in the hands of government and public private partnerships.
- Low tax yield due to recent shifts decreasing assessed values of residential properties our businesses have seen huge tax increases despite Govt budgets not changing much!

Website Comments:

Develop tools with non-profits like the MN Land Trust to permently protect high enviromental quality lands via conservation easements, with an eye toward protecting or enhancing ecological connectivity. Encourage clustering, and 'open space' design for those collar areas around existing cities that desire residential areas. Institute '2 per 40' maximum land use in the Wild and Scenic areas of the Rum River and all ag areas.

Keep government out of the community and these things will grow and flourish nautrally.

Encourage the concentration of development and usage in growth centers. NO This sounds like we are going to try to increase urban living. Urban living is not the best setting for raising a family. It makes it difficult to have an independent lifestyle should hard economic times prevail. When one has a woodlot, and animal and garden space, they can provide a large amount of their needs to exist. The rural lifestyle provides chores for young people. I often see "town" kids, bored and roaming around in packs. In the rural setting the young people have productive tasks that are a great asset to the family as a whole. They feel valuable. During the Great Depression, the farmers fared better. I have read of city ordinances and associations that prevent urban gardening, clotheslines, the raising of chickens, heating with wood, collecting rainwater, etc. All of these are barriers to independence by creating dependence on energy sources and community based services.



To encourage is fine to require is a very different thing. The recent history on county regs is to make a lot of requirements.

Please be concerned with the quality and availability of our water supply.

What is the idea of preserving? Hmmm finding it hard with the family farms being foreclosed on with little or no help from local and all the cuts at the state level....striving to become a larger "stakeholder" seems to be the answer from the objectives prior to this?

I agree and disagree. Again I am getting the feeling that we want to hang on to the way it has always been mentality. Farming is great and wonderful and that is my background, and right now farm prices are high and things are good. BUT it is also important to move and grow and change with the times. Maybe preserving farms isn't in the best interest. Has this been explored?

'etc' delete

### **Objective:**

Promote educational opportunities for residents and private land owners about forestry management practices

- Encourage and support private forestry businesses by providing information related to this industry
- Promote and encourage private forest inventory / management plans
- Promote sustainable forestry programs that exist within the county such as seedling trees, etc.
- Update, user friendly, and streamline County website via links to information on topic
  - Make related books, best practice recommendations, articles, website links, etc available on the County website

### **Isle Meeting Comments:**

- Would like printed format available as well.
- Encourage and support but do not dictate.
- Total waste of time and money.
- Plenty of wood to cut, it grows back fine.
- The market has gone away for now. It will be decades before we see a big demand for lumber from this area.
- All good.
- How do we keep deer from eating the seedling trees? I know! A county-wide deer-tag lottery for Kathio State Park (sarcasm). I would like to see some public land hunter free to encourage outdoor activities.
- Why not solicit the larger corporations that buy wood products for future wood products etc. I.E. Tree Farms.
- Forest management plans must be put in place. If they take forest they should be required to replace the forest areas as they harvest. They leave the forest area a disaster.



- Current, little or no education about forest management would be most valuable to large forest land owners. The common person doesn't care and those that do manage timber lands need appropriate education.
- A tree farm is not a bad idea for the area. Could be an economic opportunity.

Milaca Meeting Comments:

- Re-write bullet 4
- Education

Princeton Meeting comments:

- Communication with regional, state & federal forest, wildlife refuges, etc. Should be considered when agricultural to some extent, but certainly forestry issues are discussed.
- Consider addressing Emerald Ash Borer? Becoming a concern as its been discovered in Twin Cities & being we have the 169 corridor. Encourage collaboration with DNR, SWCD, MN Dept of Ag. Support community tree plantings.
- Again is this education or indoctrination?
- Whose definition of "sustainable"? Be the promoters of "sustainability" believe that any forestry or agriculture is an affront to their beliefs. Again please read up on Agenda 21 and its spawn "sustainable development".

Website Comments:

Actively promote the Sustainable Forestry Initiative Act (SFIA) program by matching the (miniscule) state per acre payment. Provide a modest tax credit for landowners who create or expand under the American Tree Farm system (which also creates jobs).

Keep government out of the community and these things will grow and flourish naturally.

Include the small forestry business in these plans.

Not taxing people out of their land is important, VERY important, this is a direct contradiction to the idea of more stipulations and more programs mean more money for the education? Care must be placed in this area also.

Okay

**Objective:**

Balance development of land with open space conservation.

- Balance environmental concerns with regulations
- Encourage the control and management of invasive species within these industries.
- Streamline the permitting process to make agriculture and forestry development user friendly, efficient and consistent.
- Keep agriculture and forestry industries viable for future generations



#### Isle Meeting Comments:

- With less regulations.
- Comment for bullet point #2: Stupid
- Streamline permits? How about eliminate.
- Invasive talk is foolish. We are all invasive.
- Total waste of money to slow the inevitable.
- Loggers will take care of the trees.
- Address “open space” only in tight developments.
- Less regulation - less government.
- All good.
- Comment for bullet point #2: Yes
- Comment for bullet point #4: For sure.
- Don’t put too many controls on how we can use our land.
- Control of invasive species to our lakes & streams is vital to balance & containment of our lakes, etc.
- Forestry is not as important clean, unpolluted lakes, streams and creeks!!
- Make agriculture & forestry priority over development.
- All invasive species need to be controlled!
- Private land owner will decide how they choose to balance open space with conservation. Usually the less desirable land is left undeveloped.

#### Milaca Meeting Comments:

- Yes
- Should be part of objective #1?

#### Princeton Meeting Comments:

- Ensuring specie control really depends on all citizens buying into it.
- Balancing sounds like someone other than the property owner will be deciding what will be done or can be done with the owner’s property. Really vague and leaves a lot of room to do bad things to us.
- Balance environmental concerns with common sense regulations.
- Mille Lacs County has a serious problem w/property tax base. We should encourage private ownership and development above all else.

#### Website Comments:

Eliminate costly suburban sprawl and institute ‘2 per 40’ acre minimum home site densities (it is called sub-urban for a reason). Provide a modest tax credit for landowners who create or expand under the American Tree Farm system (which also creates jobs). Properly readjust property taxation to realign greater taxation on suburban style subdivisions and residential properties and less on ag land and tree farms – (this is how you maintain the stated objectives above).

This is Adgenda 21, no to all of it. Keep government out of the community and these things will grow and flourish nautrally.

We should not be interfering in the sales of private lands or how the landowner decides to divide their parcels to market.



The level and number of permits in this county has become a huge problem. With many questions regarding the above being answered differently. Confusing to say the least.

Okay objective -- it just seems like we keep hanging onto what was and not looking to the future to make our county and communities thrive.

### **Objective:**

Recognize agriculture and forestry as part of the county's business community.

- Include a focus on the agriculture and forestry industries within the county's economic development work plan.
  - Encourage value added industries that use locally grown inputs such as biomass, ethanol, etc.
  - Encourage renewable energy businesses based on locally grown bio inputs
  - Support and encourage livestock production
  - Create a one-stop clearinghouse that can walk applicants through the development process
    - Coordinate with available agriculture and forestry programs to assist with education, and development of these businesses
  - Encourage the growth of agriculture and forestry

### **Isle Meeting Comments:**

- How much is this generating for the county?
- Stay out of the bio-fuel market, it costs everyone more money.
- Encourage the business by leaving them alone.
- Comment by bullet #2: Dumb.
- Good
- Less corn & more investment on energy alt like wind & solar power.
- That is sustainable and not conventional (comment based on bullet #4).
- Lots of cash crop corn...BAD
- Must be clean and sustainable (bullet #4).
- Small scale but multiple (last bullet).
- Investing in corn mass production is shown to be counter-productive. Lets encourage our public transportation development to decrease our county's over-all need for gasoline.
- Reduce costs of permits for ag-buildings.
- Comment to last bullet point: You can by leaving them alone and not restricting so much.
- Less government might cost a little less & we wouldn't pay so much tax.
- Programs like Minnesota Grown already exist-why waste \$ on programs that are in place & exist?
- Define development process.
- Tied to traditional agriculture.
- All good points
- Need to keep agriculture viable to sustain the local economy.
- Tied to technological with the biomass and ethanol.
- Balance growth of AG-Forestry with environmental concerns.
- Explore tax incentives for AG-Forest businesses.



Milaca Meeting Comments:

- Good idea.
- Ag & Forest Industry

Princeton Meeting comments:

- Be careful with livestock productions growth and what it can mean-especially with regards to “factory” farms agricultural effects on water and waterways need to be carefully balanced.
- Stop any development of biomass & ethanol within this county if it is subsidized. There is no evidence of these programs saving money, or having a positive effect on our lives. Encourage all people in business without sending tax payer or government money to them. Renewable resources are of best a pipe dream.
- \$7.00 corn is proving these 2 points to be mutually exclusive & E85 is as much if not more expensive than gas now days & rising.

Website Comments:

Actively promote the Sustainable Forestry Initiative Act (SFIA) program by matching the (miniscule) state per acre payment. Provide a modest tax credit for landowners who create or expand under the American Tree Farm system (which also creates jobs). Encourage 'start-up' small ag producers (veggies, poultry, row crops etc.) with one-time property tax credits. (Get creative here for a change, and really support the objectives above - do something please.) Recognize that renewable energy especially wind and solar may be a part of making a rural operation viable – that is a diversity of energy and income sources may be necessary to cling on in this relentless property taxing county. Thanks

This is Agenda 21, no to all of it. Keep government out of the community and these things will grow and flourish naturally.

As an ending statement The county needs to do planning but it needs to be done in a realistic financial way.

A large part and maintains the family unit if we do not urbanize this county and make all of the farmers "big businesses" for their survival. A difficult task.

Okay

Ag & Forestry General Comments:

Princeton:

- Nix transfer of development rights
- Better define “encourage”
- Don’t limit tax base – broaden/improve tax base, not reduce it
- No sustainable forestry – better definition or whose definition of sustainable?

Milaca:

- Last Obj. – “development” – what does this mean?
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Obj. – Add “make” to update/user friendly



## Land Use

### Objective:

Work with local stakeholders to review current land use controls and update County Zoning ordinances and codes to minimize regulatory impact on County residents and businesses.

- Work to lessen regulations on land use by increasing allowable uses.
- Gather input from all local stakeholders about needed changes and impacts in as many ways as economically feasible with the resources available
- Request feedback from residents and businesses related to impacts due to proposed changes to land use controls (website, mailings, open house meetings, etc)
- Make it easier and simpler for the end user to understand rules and regulations
  - Update, make user friendly, and streamline County website via links to information on topic
- Review land use controls in conjunction with required State and Federal rules and regulations

### Isle Meeting Comments:

- Protect the lake/environment but also be competitive with other counties.
- Need to balance between economic impact and common sense regulations. Be careful if there is not an impact on life, health & environment-major impact. No need to be more strict than the federal govt. The land owner should be able to use their property as they see fit. We need to be competitive with surrounding counties.
- This is the death of progress!! This is the biggest mistake the county ever did, expanding the zoning duties & regulations including the minn building code. I have spent thousands on permits, business & personal. I have never gained one thing from the county. Over-regulated, over-charging, over-restricting, under-enforcing. Go Away!
- Regulations fix demolishing/rebuilding new homes need to be relaxed. No more leaving up a wall relax set- backs etc. I'm speaking about lake shore property in particular.
- Have regulations that exist continue to protect the irreplaceable elements of our county: lakes, timber, streams. Regulation is important in maintaining health for the soil/water.
- Absolutely.
- We have to many regs surrounding counties are eating our lunch. Aitkin & Kenabec want people to live there.
- Lets make our rules more in line with Kanebec & Aitkin Counties, Excessive rules in Mille Lacs are un-necessary and keep our growth and development held back.
- We need less zoning regulations. Zoning office needs to be user friendly not a create a job program for zoning people. We don't have to go above & beyond the law on regulations (wet lands).
- This is an important item to address & update it to the times. Make it less restrictive.
- Good point: well needed. Need to be careful not to be un restrictive as neighboring property may be harmed . Control isn't necessary bad when existing uses and enjoyment is protected.
- Sounds great

### Milaca Meeting Comments:

- Controls, ordinances & codes.



### Princeton Meeting Comments:

- As much as possible its easiest when local restructures mirror state and federal easier to regulate and understand.
- General comment: Consider separating out and addressing each specific land use and objectives (ex: industrial, commercial, residential and open space/parks).

### Website Comments:

'Work to lessen regulations on land use controls' - for wind turbines and other farm, residential or commercial renewable energy projects. 'Review land use controls in conjunction with required State and Federal rules and regulations' especially and specifically tillage too close to streams and the Rum River.

Sediment and turbidity after rain events is becoming much worse. (There are clear violations all over) And relative to the above; consider programs like 'ditch blocks in county and township roads to slow run off (a very low cost, low tech tool to improve water quality).

Keep government out of the community and these things will grow and flourish naturally.

Emphasis on increasing allowable uses. All levels of government should have minimal involvement regarding land use of private property. Let's not assume that property owners are incompetent and ignorant. When I was growing up, a group organized and required that everyone in the area of my parent's farm, turn the meandering creek into straight drainage ditches. Dad was forced to finance this action on his 90 acres against his will. It later came to light that the swamps dried up and floods occurred downstream.

when people study the Mille Lacs land use and permitting process they are not inclined to invest and build here, those that are here either repair without a permit due to cost or don't initiate the needed repair which makes all property values decrease as existing home sales are not selling as it's not desirable to live or relocate here.

To minimize the regulatory land use ordinances would be the biggest help to business and industrial expansion in the county that could be done. STOP passing ordinances that can not be enforced. Check out the Constitution on equal protection under the law. The county has many ordinances on their books that are only enforced when someone complains. If it is needed to protect us as citizens then it should be enforced every where and on every one. If the county can't afford the staff to do the enforcement then take it off the books.

Please think about our environment when reviewing these regulations. Remember: if you can do anything you want with your land, so can your neighbor!

Huge task!

This makes me nervous -- in some respects our County has a "trashy" look because of all the homes that were put in willy-nilly. I realize that occurred when there was not controls in place. I mean look at how nice Benton County looks and then compare to our County. I feel it is important to have a balance of both, and yet preserve our integrity.

'etc' overuse. Say what you mean.



## Objective:

Encourage the concentration of development and usage in growth centers in order to preserve farm, forest, conservation and open land.

- Encourage the use of different types of zoning, such as transfer of development rights and proximity controls
  - Encourage preservation of farm and forest land for production, in order to maintain its economic viability.
    - Partner with non-profits and other agencies in educating residents about available farm transition programs in order to encourage the next generation of farmers.
  - Collaborate with local stakeholders to recommend changes to regulatory controls.
  - Encourage development of compatible uses in proximity with regards to type of pollution generated such as noise, odors, emissions, solid waste, etc

## Isle Meeting Comments:

- People should be able to use their land as they see fit if it doesn't have a dramatic impact to the neighbor or environment. Resorts/fish houses are very important to the area economy. Encourage it!
- Stop the preservation trend, it makes no sense. Less rules. Less regulations will encourage business's like farms it's a business.
- All good
- Growth centers should allow easy transfer to a different land use designation.
- An example of poor regs is having only 25% of area in a dead storage fishhouse lot to be covered by fishhouse reg. Water can in filterate 100% of the land!! Whereas in down town they can have 100% impervise coverage. This totally unfair to some of the resorts in Mille Lacs County. We need about 10% of the regs here already. Make the co. more user friendly to businesses & residents.
- Less regulation is better than more.
- Make people aware when building in farming areas there might be odors and noise in that area.
- Pollution control sill will need to be in place. Keep grandfather rights.
- Tied to promoting agriculture and preserving farm land increase parcel size for residential use.
- Great

## Milaca Meeting Comments:

NO COMMENTS RECEIVED

## Princeton Meeting Comments:

- Step lightly with "transfer" of development rights. What the heck is a "farm transition"
- What exactly is meant by encourage? Will a property owner be threatened, austriized by the community, will the police be called? Is this transfer of development rights going to be arbitrarily made at the count level or does property owner have any rights?
- Should the growth centers be identified?



Website Comments:

Consider property tax credits for small family farms that are producing (not just renting tillable land to others)

This is Agenda 21, no to all of it. Keep government out of the community and these things will grow and flourish naturally.

No. Emphatic NO. We should permit homesteading on small parcels to increase the independence of the populace. I do not want the "nice" areas to be owned by government entities where they decide who can use them. The populace should not be herded like sheep into a corral, where they will be forced to depend on others to deliver sustenance.

The entire aspect of land use must take in to account that the north and south parts of the county are very different. this applies to the last several objectives.

Farming and tourism separate the two and they needs are very different.

How does this work into mineral mining objective?

Okay

**Objective:**

Consider aggregate and mining deposit locations when developing zoning regulations

- Work with local stakeholders to review and develop best practices regarding gravel, aggregate and mineral deposits

Isle Meeting Comments:

- It is a need in everyone's life. Do not over regulate it or over tax it. That only increases the cost of construction and development.
- Other than "too" much noise, gravel pits are needed. They come & go, needed for transportation, Gotta put'em where the resource is. Duh.
- Good
- Encourage use of our resources easier and more profitable.
- You have to mine where the resources are. The businesses have to be able to harvest them.
- Aggregate sources are limited and should be used. Efficiency. Those who live near gravel deposits should expect mining activity. To be economically viable we need to exploit these resources. Cheap local gravel is an economic benefit for the county.

Milaca Meeting Comments:

NO COMMENTS RECEIVED

Princeton Meeting Comments:

- Remember if you want a driveway or reliable county infrastructure gravel must be mined and crushed. There will be some noise and dust. Don't demonize these operations because they



don't fit in your idea of paradise. i.e. don't complain about the local race track when you bought land next to it.

- Don't forget what needs to happen when a pit or mine is done.
- What if the powers that be decide the best practice is not to mine at all? Could happen that is what our president is doing with oil in our country.

Website Comments:

Enact mining Ordinance provisions that protect residents and townships from the expected 'frac sand mining' requests.

Keep government out of the community and these things will grow and flourish naturally.

Be very careful with this more holes mean more garbage dumps:)

Very, very, very important -- this is a diminishing resource!!!!

**Objective:**

Educate residents, land owners, and businesses about land use regulatory controls within Mille Lacs County.

- Provide up-to-date zoning information to residents as soon as it is available

Isle Meeting Comments:

- Make it user friendly & not something someone has to read in its entirety to find out how to build a shed for example
- Da!! Common Sense
- Less regulation will eliminate this.
- Good
- Minimize and reduce oversight.
- Get it all on-line as soon as possible. Also talk to your neighbor.
- Yes
- Good idea- most people don't understand zoning, zoning restrictions or the reasons for zoning restrictions. Education is important. People need to understand the pros and cons related to zoning and associated restrictions.
- Centralize information for residents use in early stage planning.

Milaca Meeting Comments:

Should be part of objective #1?

Princeton Meeting Comments:

- Should be done now.
- Find out where the American Planning Association gets its zoning and other info from. Hint- Agenda 21.



Website Comments:

Keep government out of the community and these things will grow and flourish naturally. No Agenda 21 and we should have as little land use regulatory controls as possible.

Education would be very helpful. Also, please be consistent with applications of rules. Allowing "exceptions" without objective criteria sets a bad precedent.

NEW regulations that are considered to "best practices"?  
Needed!

**Objective:**

Work towards mitigating pollution and nuisance problems related to solid waste

- Encourage responsible hazardous and solid waste disposal and recycling options

Isle Meeting Comments:

- Currently we are far behind "cities" as they can recycle much more than what MLC currently allows.
- We need more recycling drop off points. More than Sat AM 2 times a month. Multiple days a week and for more items year round.
- Is this a real problem? Most don't dump in the ditch. County already recycles (another waste of \$).
- Good
- Mandate recycling. Charge more for garbage based on weight & use funding to provide recycling services to all MC residents for no charge. More litter clean-up via community services. There is litter everywhere!
- Be involved to take notice of violations. We have rules in place now to deal with this.
- Yes
- Not aware of pollution and nuisance problems related to solid waste. Would like to see all enforcements of solid waste in burning laws. Would like to see an expanded county wide recycling program.

Milaca Meeting Comments:

NO COMMENTS RECEIVED

Princeton Meeting Comments:

- We need mandate responsible hazardous and solid waste disposal and recycling.
- Encourage may be too weak when it goes to responsible hazardous and solid waste disposal.

Website Comments:

Keep government out of the community and these things will grow and flourish naturally.

I suggest the Pine County model for recycling. They have sheds that are freely open to the public where recyclables are deposited. There is no staffing present (and no expense to pay them) for drop off. I often take mine there and usually find that people are responsible when utilizing this service.

This would be a new and welcome approach.



Are we a rural or urban county?

Overdue! Good objective!

### **Objective:**

Consider water quality and quantity when making land use decisions.

- County should continue to work with our existing partners and potential new partners (State, DNR, Soil & Water organizations, neighboring local units of government, etc.) with regards to water quality and volume issues.
- Consider County Local Water Management Plan when making related decisions.

### **Isle Meeting Comments:**

- Our area has lots of swamps, unlike some parts of the state. Do we really need to protect all of it making it a sacred cow? This hinders growth and adds costs to development.
- We have clean water it's a fact. This has been way "over-regulated" by the feds&state. No more extra rules. Knee jerk old regs cost us millions to billions. The county put our twsp through a mitigation process that cost us over 30k to satisfy a wetland violation. If the county would have cooperated with us, we could have fixit it for 8K. Govt fine to govt entity 14K. Total scan from state/feds/county.
- Lake level more-more monitoring and improved regulations.
- Water quality in city of Onamia needs improvement, have had numerous issues since moving here.
- Locate a recycling center in each township not just in town. Biannual hazardous collection in all parts of the county.
- Rules are in place now.
- Yes
- These are good points. Most people don't understand water quality or how the activities affect water quality. Add an education component why water is important etc.
- Encourage comments from local well and septic people.

### **Milaca Meeting Comments:**

NO COMMENTS RECEIVED

### **Princeton Meeting Comments:**

- The city of Princeton got screwed from this our old perfectly functional waste water plant was deemed to not be adequate for the water results desired for Lake Pepin & Southern MN Rec activities so residents saw a 180% sewer increase to benefit water skiers in SE MN. BE CAREFUL!! Also Mpls dumped more water in one water main spill that Princeton is permitted to use in 5 years.



Website Comments:

Survey and assess (the sometimes archaic )storm water and ditch systems that directly discharge into the Rum River – especially in or near cities, as run off rates and attendant turbidity is an increasingly notable problem. Develop plans for addressing deficient systems within the respective city and county’s general fund budget and capital improvement plans.

Keep government out of the community and these things will grow and flourish naturally.

I suggest research into the use of fluoride in the municipal water supplies. Many cities are discontinuing this practice as it is medication administration with no monitoring of dosage. There are real health concerns and citizens should have the right to refuse as they do with other drugs. When medical professionals give meds, they are to follow rules. They are to have the right patient, the right drug, the right time, the right dosage and the patient has the right to refuse. We also need to look at the use of farm chemicals and disposal of pharmaceuticals, which are finding their way into the water supplies. Mille Lacs Health System, in Onamia, destroys medications by flushing into to the city septic system.

Encourage and care about our water - instead of criticizing the agencies who do.

Affordability and responsibility regarding the quality of water is very important in the consideration above.

Important!

Bullet 1. Delete 'etc'. Change 'Soil & Water organizations' to Soil & Water Conservation Districts. Add 'Watershed Management Groups" in parenthesis.

**Objective:**

Educate land owners and visitors regarding the control of domestic and exotic animals for public safety and nuisance.

- Provide link to current animal control information
- Partner with organizations regarding stray animals

Isle Meeting Comments:

- Wahkon must contract w/MCAHS “Morrison County” to take our strays as we aren’t allowed to utilize county site due to district reasons. I was told the animal shelter wasn’t allowed to extend their service area or their \_\_\_ would/could be revoked. We shouldn’t have to go outside our own county.
- Not the counties job. Private non-profit can do this. No-collar, no-tags, euthanize.
- Good.
- County laws deal with most of this.
- Yes, but what if someone buys exotic animals on their agricultural land?
- Not a big concern-both points.



Milaca Meeting Comments:  
NO COMMENTS RECEIVED

Princeton Meeting Comments:

- And also need penalties reviewed for those who do not abide by them.
- There is a definite tie in with invasive plants that weren't considered invasive just a few years ago and starting to be problems that hinder waters. Encourage local natives animal and plant use whenever it's possible/practical.

Website Comments:

Remind residents that there are non-profits that offer free or reduced cost spay and neuter services (including farm visits).

Keep government out of the community and these things will grow and flourish naturally.

Consider objective 13 comment

Necessary.

Add stronger language re promoting awareness of animal control ordinances.

Land Use General Comments:

Princeton:

- Stakeholders – public private partnership, erosion of citizen rights
- Obj. 1/Obj. 2 – conflict with each other
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Obj. – What are “growth centers?” Why conservation land? Why open land?
- Always stand on side of private property owner when government is trying to take property
- Careful with partnerships – DNR, etc.

