

# FILLMORE COUNTY



## Comprehensive Plan 2006

The firm of Southeastern Minnesota Development Corporation would like to thank the following for their contribution to the development of this Comprehensive Plan:

**FILLMORE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEE**

<b>Mike Tuohy</b>	<b>Tom Kopperud</b>
<b>Jan Smaby</b>	<b>Richard Lamon</b>
<b>Duane Bakke</b>	<b>Chuck Amunrud</b>
<b>Sandy Benson</b>	<b>Gerald Peters</b>
<b>Matt Snyder</b>	<b>Jim Struzyk</b>
<b>Julie Vettleson</b>	<b>Mike Souhrada</b>
<b>Brenda Johnson</b>	<b>Greg Turner</b>
<b>Norris Kinneberg</b>	

**COUNTY COMMISIONERS**

**Chuck Amunrud**  
**District 3**

**Duane Bakke**  
**District 4**

**Marc Prestby**  
**District 5**

**Randy Dahl**  
**District 2**

**Stafford Hansen**  
**District 1**

**STAFF**

**Karen Brown**  
**Policy Coordinator**

**Cris Gastner**  
**Business Development Coordinator**

**Cristal Adkins**  
**Office Support Specialist**

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## VISION STATEMENT

Fillmore County contains a wealth of agricultural, natural, cultural, and human resources. The farm lands, bluff lands, valleys, forests, and rivers make up an environment matched by few others. The cities and townships of the County maintain strong identities as well as significant historic tradition. Our citizens' livelihood and our local economy rely on these natural features as a foundation on which to build.

As we strive to protect our environment, rural values, and quality of life, we must also work to balance the needs of all of our citizens. Over the years, our economy has grown from being mainly agriculture-based to include industry, tourism, retail and other service businesses. In the future, we must continue to find ways to expand our economy and increase job opportunities for the people of Fillmore County. We embrace the challenges of planning for the future while standing guard over the values and natural resources that we all hold dear.

The following principles will serve as a guide to decision making in the future:

- A diverse and stable economy that provides economic opportunities for all Fillmore County citizens is the cornerstone for building our County
- Protecting our rural values, heritage, and natural resources
- Fillmore County is committed to supporting agriculture
- Development is planned to occur in and around existing communities
- Quality school systems, recreational and cultural opportunities, effective transportation systems, a variety of housing types, and a safe and healthy environment are essential to a healthy County.

**In order to attain this vision for the future, all of the citizens of Fillmore County must work together to carry this plan forward. Collectively we will always be more powerful than we are individually.**

## PURPOSE OF A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A Comprehensive Plan establishes long-term goals, policies and strategies. The plan examines where we are today, and sets a course for where we want to be in the future. The plan needs to remain flexible enough to allow for revision and continued enhancement.

A county comprehensive plan contains policies, statements, goals and interrelated plans for public and private land and water use, transportation and County facilities. A plan may include recommendations for ordinances and maps to guide future development. A county's main responsibility is to protect the general health, safety and welfare of citizens and residents. The law specifies that when adopted by ordinance, a comprehensive plan "must be the basis for official controls." Official controls include zoning and subdivision regulations and official maps. A comprehensive plan may also provide guidelines for the timing and sequencing of the official controls to ensure planned and orderly development that is consistent with the comprehensive plan.

This document presents the Comprehensive Plan for Fillmore County, Minnesota. The last time the comprehensive planning process was undertaken was in 1994. The plan that follows documents the County Planning Process that was conducted throughout 2004 and 2005. It sets forth the ground work on which Fillmore County can build its future.

# CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

## INTRODUCTION

The Introduction Section presents a summary of the planning process and the basis on which the County's plan was developed.

The Inventory and Analysis Section describes the background information compiled for this plan. This Section is divided into subsections: Land Use, County Facilities, Transportation, a Socio-economic Profile, Housing, Economic Development, and Environmental Analysis. It is this section that provides the footings from which the entire plan is built.

The section on Goals and Policies contains a detailed expression of the County's aspirations for the future. These elements are truly the heart of the Comprehensive Plan. Everything that proceeds them is simply information that was needed to formulate these expressions of what this plan sets out to accomplish. Everything that follows is a description of how the County has chosen to achieve these desired results.

The General Plan Section is divided into four subsections: Land Use Plan, County Facilities, Transportation, and Annexation. Issues and recommendations related to land use, transportation, housing, County facilities, and parks and open space are discussed within this section.

The last section is entitled Implementation. This chapter describes how the County intends to accomplish this plan. It includes a description of the tools available to the County to implement the plan as well specific strategies the County may use to ensure that the plan continues to reflect the aspirations of the county and changing circumstances facing it.

## **WHAT IS COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING?**

At its core, comprehensive planning is a vehicle for democracy in today's society. It is a way to bring the people of a community together to discuss the issues facing that community and together develop a plan that will guide the way for the future. The Minnesota Planning Office describes the comprehensive planning process in the following way in its book "Under Construction: Tools and Techniques for Local Planning"

Comprehensive planning can be defined as deciding where you want to go and how you will get there. This sounds easy enough. Yet planning for economic development, housing, roads, sewers, schools, environmental quality and parks is obviously more complex than planning a family trip, and it requires broad participation from the community. There are seven key steps in developing a comprehensive plan.

A comprehensive plan generally includes background information on the essential cultural, demographic, economic, environmental, historic, physical and social elements of a community, the County's vision, and the collection of goals, policies and strategies that will be used to realize that vision. The policies and background information can be separated into two documents, one that serves as the official plan and the other that is an official document of relevant background material that serves as the basis for all plans, reports and implementation activities. Sometimes strategies also are contained in a separate companion document called an implementation action plan.

## **SEVEN KEY STEPS IN PLANNING**

- 1 Organizing the process and engaging people in the County to participate throughout
- 2 Establishing a shared understanding of the most important issues and asking core questions about economic, environmental and social implications of these issues

- 3 Identifying future needs and desires, and developing the vision; goals, policies and progress indicators that reflect them
- 4 Developing alternative strategies for addressing a County's vision, goals and policies
- 5 Understanding relationships between possible plan strategies, accounting for their long-term costs and benefits, and choosing those that best fit a community
- 6 Selecting plan monitoring indicators, and completing and adopting the plan
- 7 Implementing the plan, tracking progress and changing the plan in future years as needed

Comprehensive planning is as much a process to engage the public in local decisions as it is to create a document for guiding development. The planning process is fundamentally a way for people with different perspectives to articulate the sort of community they would like to live in and leave behind. Planning can also help create a stable, predictable, fair set of policies and ground rules within which development, entrepreneurship and the marketplace can flourish. Above all, it is about making places better.

### **FILLMORE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROCESS**

A citizen Planning Committee was appointed by the County Commissioners to guide the development of the Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of the Planning Committee was to provide the County with consistent and continual feedback on the planning process, and to ensure that the information collected and the ideas proposed appropriately reflect the County's current conditions and future needs. The membership of the Planning Committee contained a cross-section of County interests and was comprised of 15 members, including members of the County Board and Planning Commission.

Participants are found in the Acknowledgement section in the beginning of this plan.

The Planning Process included three main phases. Phase I included an analysis of existing conditions in Fillmore County. Phase II involved identification of the County's needs, challenges and opportunities, and organization of the community participation process. The third phase included the development and review of overall Comprehensive Plan goals, policies, and implementation procedures.

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION/COMMUNITY INPUT**

One of the first official steps in updating the Comprehensive Plan was to organize a series of community meetings conducted in the Spring of 2004. Various people attended these meetings, including Community Officials, Planning Commissioners, business leaders, and interested citizens.

The issues facing the County were identified during the public input process of Phase I. Public meetings were held to present the public with background data, establish an overall County vision, and develop lists of strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities.

The meeting consisted largely of two exercises that were undertaken by all participants. First, participants were asked to think about Fillmore County and its future, and provide their opinions as to what were the major issues that the Comprehensive Planning effort should address. Second, participants were asked to use their own individual knowledge and experience to identify what they believed to be Fillmore County's strengths and weaknesses, and what opportunities and threats they envisioned for the County's future.

Each comment regarding Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats was presented and recorded for the consideration of all attendees. A complete list of all comments can be found in the Appendix Section to this Comprehensive Plan.

A survey was constructed to poll the citizens of Fillmore County to gauge the public sentiment on what the important issues are for the future of Fillmore County. The surveys were distributed inside the Fillmore County Journal, on the County's website, and were also available in the Policy Coordinator's Office at the Courthouse. 833 of the surveys were completed and returned and input from those surveys was included in the formulation

of this plan. A copy of the survey, including the results, is also attached in the appendix section to this document.

## CHAPTER 2 INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

### LAND USE

Fillmore County's central location in relation to larger cities like Rochester and Winona, Minnesota; LaCrosse, Wisconsin; and Decorah Iowa, along with the scenic beauty of the Root River and its tributaries and bluffs make it an attractive place to live. Fillmore County is a predominately agricultural county, but a tourism industry based on the Root River and many other natural and cultural attractions has grown strong in recent years.

Growth and development in Fillmore County will pose many land use challenges. The balance between protection of the natural resources and character of the area and the demands for additional industrial, commercial, and residential opportunities will continue to be the driving force for any and all future planning efforts. As residential, industrial, and commercial development expands, there will be increased pressure on the County to closely examine remaining land for development. Conservation and preservation or, if and where annexation should occur will also become increasingly important.

Current land use analysis shows development patterns and trends that can be used as guides for future land use decisions. It also identifies potential areas for development, and in some cases, the timing of development. A land use analysis also defines areas that should remain unchanged or preserved. Goals and policies set forth by the County's citizens must be used in every future land use decision to ensure the needs of the citizens are being met. The needs-driven goals and policies will serve as a guide for the type, location, and amount of development within the County.

What follows is a breakdown and description of the land uses that make up Fillmore County.

#### Urban and Industrial: 3932.8 Acres / 0.7%

This category includes cities, towns, and villages with place names. Small residential areas without USGS topographic map place names are classified as rural residential developments (see category below). The urban and industrial category also includes commercial, industrial or urban developments that are included within, or are directly associated with, an urban area. Examples include: manufacturing and processing plants, power plants, urban airports, and waste treatment plants.

#### Farmsteads and Rural Residences 9362.6 Acres / 1.7%

Farmsteads - Include the farmhouse and adjoining farmyard areas. Farmsteads also include buildings such as machinery storage areas, grain storage facilities, and corrals and livestock holding and feeding areas directly associated with the farmyard area.

Rural Residences - Are non-urban residences other than farmsteads. Rural residences include the residence, associated structures such as garages and sheds, and the associated landscaped area. This category includes from one to four residences in close proximity, with no distinguishable, intervening, non-residential features.

#### Rural Residential Development Complexes 104.5 Acres / <0.1%

This category includes rural residences, as defined above, in a complex that includes five or more residences in close enough proximity to be mapped as a single unit.

#### Other Rural Developments 561.5 Acres / 0.1%

This category includes commercial and industrial, cultural and recreational, and agricultural developments not directly associated with urban areas.

Commercial and Industrial - Developments include substations, communications facilities, power plants, small private airstrips, junkyards, landfills, storage maintenance yards, businesses, factories, lumber mills, commercial livestock and poultry operations, and grain operations.

Cultural and Recreational - Developments include built-up factories and service areas associated with parks and rest areas, camp grounds, and golf courses. It also includes churches, cemeteries, community halls, and rural schools.

Agriculture - Developments include those agricultural facilities not directly associated with farmsteads. It includes machine storage areas, grain storage areas, barns and corrals, and isolated buildings. It also includes isolated farmsteads that no longer have apparent road access.

#### Cultivated Land 345212.2 Acres / 62.6%

Cultivated land includes those areas under intensive cropping or rotation, including periods when a parcel may be fallow. It represents land planted to forage or cover crop. The units exhibit linear or other patterns associated with current or relatively recent tillage.

#### Transitional Agricultural Lands 106.9 Acres / <0.1%

This category includes areas that show evidence of past tillage but do not now appear to be continuously cropped or in a crop rotation. Parcels in this unit include fields that are idle or abandoned and may or may not have been planted to a cover crop. In addition to displaying some evidence of past tillage, they usually are relatively uniform in vegetation.

#### Grassland 78391.6 Acres / 14.2%

This unit includes grasslands and herbaceous plants. It may contain up to one-third shrubs and/or tree cover. Areas may be small to extensive, and range from regular to very irregular in shape. They are often found between agricultural land and more heavily wooded areas, and along right-of-ways and drainages. These areas may be mowed or grazed, and range in appearance from very smooth to quite mottled

#### Grassland-Shrub-Tree Complex(Deciduous) 938.1 / 0.2%

This classification includes a combination of grass, shrubs, and trees, in which the deciduous tree cover comprises from one-third to two-thirds of the area, and/or the shrub cover comprises more than one-third of the area. This complex is often found adjacent to grassland or forested areas, but may be found alone. These areas are often irregular in shape and vary greatly in extent.

#### Deciduous Forest 111094.1 Acres / 20.1%

This classification includes areas with at least two-thirds of the total canopy cover composed of predominantly woody deciduous species. It may contain coniferous species but it is dominated by deciduous species. It includes woodlots, shelterbelts, and other planted areas.

#### Water 1281.3 Acres / 0.2%

This category includes permanent water bodies, including lakes (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Lacustrine System 'L'), rivers, reservoirs, stock ponds, and permanent palustrine open water (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service POWH). Intermittently exposed palustrine open water areas (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service POWG, POWJ, POWZ) are included in this open water category when the photo evidence indicates that the area is covered by water the majority of the time.

#### Wetlands 143.4 Acres / <0.1%

This category includes wetlands visible on the photography with an area of at least 2 acres. Wetlands boundaries are delineated from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetland Inventory data. In cases where these boundaries have changed (such as for drained wetlands), the boundaries are determined from the current

photography.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetland Inventory types included in this category are semi-permanent palustrine emergent wetlands (PEMF and PEMY categories) and areas of semi-permanent palustrine open water (POWF) associated with PEMF through PEMY wetlands, as defined in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetland Inventory. These categories represent basins with deep-water emergents (primarily cattail, bulrush, and whitetop) and open water inclusions. Where U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service data are not available, wetland classification will be based on the distribution of visible deep-water emergents and open water inclusions.

Temporary, saturated, seasonal, and intermittently exposed palustrine wetlands will, in most cases, be mapped according to dominant cover type visible on the photography (e.g., open grassland, cultivated, grass-shrub-tree complex, etc.) rather than as wetlands.

Sand Pits, Rock Quarries, and Open Mines 239.2 Acres / 0.1%

This category includes areas stripped of top soil with exposed substrate. Gravel pit areas that have been reclaimed either naturally or artificially are classified as the current cover type.

Bare Rocks 5.3 Acres / <0.1%

This category includes areas of rock outcrops that lack appreciable soil development or vegetative cover.

Exposed Soil 34.7 Acres / <0.1%

This category includes areas lacking appreciable plant cover that are not gravel pits or bare rock.

Unlabeled/unclassified 23.4 Acres / <0.1%

This category includes areas that could not be classified into any of the other categories.

## **COUNTY FACILITIES**

Due to the services provided by Fillmore County to its citizens, the County owns and maintains a number of buildings. The purpose of this section is to inventory the various public buildings of the County, state their location, value, and age while noting any features or recent upgrades. This information was gathered by Maximus in the 2005 Appraisal Report for Fillmore County.

### **[Inventory of County/Government Buildings](#)**

## TRANSPORTATION

To aid in the understanding of Fillmore County's transportation system, the function and basic characteristics of each of the types of roadways found in the County are as follows:

**Arterial Roads** provide direct, relatively high speed service for longer trips and large traffic volumes. Mobility is emphasized, and access is limited. There are three arterial roads in Fillmore County; Highway 52, Highway 63, and Highway 16.

**Collector Streets or Roads** provide a bridge between arterials and local roads. Collector streets/roads link small towns to arterials as well as collect traffic from local roads.

**Local Streets** provide direct access to individual homes and farms.

**Local County Highways:** Highway and bridge reconstruction and maintenance is funded through local tax dollars. To date there has not been an annual allocation for the reconstruction of local County highway and bridges. Salaries and equipment are funded through the annual levy allotment from the County Board of Commissioners. There are about 70 miles of local county highway in Fillmore County.

**County State-Aid Highways (CSAH)** were established by the State Government in 1957. Highway and bridge reconstruction and maintenance is funded through State Aid funds allocated to all 87 counties in Minnesota. These funds are based on number of lane miles, ability to pay (equity based on County taxability), vehicle registration, and money needs (what it would cost to bring all mileage up to modern rural and urban standards). The 2005 allocation totaled \$5.17 M. There are 412 miles of CSAH in Fillmore County.

### Traffic Counts

Highways 52 and 63 provide the main north-south thoroughfares for the County and Highway 16 provide the main east-west thoroughfare. These thoroughfares receive a heavy amount of traffic, and much of this is truck traffic. The table below illustrates the ADT (Average Daily Traffic) for each of these highways. In each case, the traffic count increased as you got closer to each community and decreased in between communities.

**Average Daily Traffic**

<b>Highway 52</b>	<b>3850</b>
<b>Highway 63</b>	<b>3120</b>
<b>Highway 16 (National Scenic Byway)</b>	<b>1600</b>

### Bike and Pedestrian

Fillmore County contains around 60 miles of bike trails that run through many of the most scenic areas. The trails are highlighted by two cornerstone trails; the 42 mile Root River State Trail that runs from Fountain to Houston, and the 18 mile Harmony – Preston Valley State Trail. These two trails are connected, and draw a large number of visitors to Fillmore County each year. These trails are highlighted by each of the communities along each trail. The trails are a tremendous asset to the county.

### Airports

The Fillmore County Airport is located 4 miles west of Preston. The airport includes a lighted 4,000 foot asphalt paved runway, arrival/departure building, seven private hangars, a 4-unit T-hangar, two visual approach slope indicators, lighted guidance signs, a Global Positioning System (GPS) approach, a 36-inch rotating beacon, an Automated Weather Observance System (AWOS), and recently added a parallel taxiway. There is not a Fixed Base Operator on site, and no fuel is available at the airport.

In March of 2003, WSB & Associates, Inc. prepared an Airport Layout Plan for the Fillmore County Airport. This report details requirements and expansion possibilities for the airport facilities.

There is another airport near Rushford. It is owned by the city of Rushford. There is a fixed base operator and fuel available on site.

## **POPULATION, INCOME AND HOUSING**

### **Socio-Economic Profile**

The following is a socio-economic profile for Fillmore County, based on the information collect in the 2000 Census. The profile was produced using the Economic Profile System Community (EPSC). The EPSC was developed in a partnership between the Sonoran Institute and the Bureau of Land Management as a tool to assist public officials and citizens. The Sonoran Institute is a non-profit organization based in Tucson, AZ.

[Socio-Economic Profile](#)

Table 6 shows population, households and persons per household in Fillmore County for the years 1990 and 2000. The population for the County grew by 2%, but the number of households grew by almost 5%. This disparity indicates the continuance of a national trend toward smaller families and household sizes.

**Table 6**  
**Fillmore County**  
**Persons per Household**

	<u><b>1990</b></u>	<u><b>2000</b></u>
Population	20,777	21,122
Total Households	7,822	8,212
Persons per Household	2.65	2.57

School Enrollment Projections

Table 7 shows actual enrollment for 2004 and projected enrollments for each of the school districts within Fillmore County. The 2004 enrollment statistics are from the MN Department of Education Website, and the projections are based on district trends from 2002 – 2004. These forecasts could change due to unforeseen circumstances such as changes in the birth rate, and the location of large employer in the County or the relocation of a large employer from the County.

**Table 7**  
**Fillmore County School Enrollment Projections**

<b>School District</b>	<b>2004 Enrollment</b>	<b>Projected Enrollment 3 Year</b>
<b>Chatfield</b>	<b>878</b>	<b>852</b>
<b>Lanesboro</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>254</b>
<b>Mabel-Canton</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>350</b>
<b>Rushford-Peterson</b>	<b>718</b>	<b>711</b>
<b>Leroy-Ostrander</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>365</b>
<b>Kingsland</b>	<b>945</b>	<b>926</b>
<b>Fillmore Central</b>	<b>741</b>	<b>667</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>4308</b>	<b>4125</b>

Table 10 shows housing values as self reported in the 2000 Census. The table shows that the housing stock in the County remains relatively reasonably priced with almost 82% of the houses valued at less than \$150,000. The largest percentage (12.2%) of homes falls into the category of \$100,000 – \$124,999.

**Table 10**  
**Fillmore County**  
**Housing Values (Self Reported)**

	Owner Occupied	Housing Units
	Data	Percentage
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,641</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Less than \$10,000</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>2.3</b>
<b>\$10,000 - \$14,999</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>1.5</b>
<b>\$15,000 – \$19,999</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>1.2</b>
<b>\$20,000 - \$24,999</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>1.8</b>
<b>\$25,000 - \$29,999</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>1.6</b>
<b>\$30,000 - \$34,999</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>2.2</b>
<b>\$35,000 - \$39,999</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>2.9</b>
<b>\$40,000 - \$49,999</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>6.5</b>
<b>\$50,000 - \$59,999</b>	<b>553</b>	<b>8.3</b>
<b>\$60,000 - \$69,999</b>	<b>582</b>	<b>8.8</b>
<b>\$70,000 - \$79,000</b>	<b>570</b>	<b>8.6</b>
<b>\$80,000 - \$89,000</b>	<b>631</b>	<b>9.5</b>
<b>\$90,000 - \$99,000</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>8.0</b>
<b>\$100,000 - \$124,999</b>	<b>810</b>	<b>12.2</b>
<b>\$125,000 - \$149,999</b>	<b>434</b>	<b>6.5</b>
<b>\$150,000 - \$174,999</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>5.0</b>
<b>\$175,000 - \$199,999</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>3.0</b>
<b>\$200,000 - \$249,999</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>4.2</b>
<b>\$250,000 - \$299,999</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>2.0</b>
<b>\$300,000 - \$399,999</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>2.2</b>
<b>\$400,000 - \$499,999</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>0.8</b>
<b>\$500,000 - \$749,999</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>0.3</b>
<b>\$750,000 - \$999,999</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0.2</b>
<b>\$1,000,000 or more</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>0.4</b>

**Housing Needs**

**Housing Study**

Maxfield Research Inc. was engaged by the Bluff Country Housing and Redevelopment Authority to provide a comprehensive assessment of housing needs for Fillmore County, Minnesota. The following is a summary of that assessment along with some recommendations for addressing those needs.

**Scope of Work**

The scope of this study includes:

- a definition of the five Market Areas for housing in Fillmore County;
- an analysis of the demographics, incomes and employment for each Market Area;

- a brief assessment of current housing market conditions in Fillmore County and its five Market Areas;
- an analysis of the for-sale housing market in Fillmore County;
- an analysis of the rental housing market in Fillmore County;
- an estimate of the demand for housing in each Market Area through 2010;
- identification of planned/proposed housing developments; and
- recommendations of appropriate housing concepts to meet current and future needs of County residents.

The report contains primary and secondary research. Primary research includes interviews with rental property managers/owners, major employers, County staff and other community leaders involved in the housing market in Fillmore County, Minnesota. All of the market data on existing/pending housing developments was collected by Maxfield Research Inc. and is accurate to the best of our knowledge. Secondary data, such as US Census, is credited to the source, and is used as a basis for analysis.

### Fillmore County Summary

Five distinct Market Areas for housing were delineated within Fillmore County.

They are:

Spring Valley Market Area	Chatfield Market Area	Rushford Market Area	Preston – Lanesboro Market Area	Harmony – Mabel Market Area
Spring Valley	Chatfield*	Rushford	Preston	Harmony
Ostrander	Fountain	Peterson	Lanesboro	Canton
Wykoff	Chatfield Twp.	Rushford Village	Whalan	Mabel
Beaver Twp	Fountain Twp.	Arendahl Twp.	Amherst Twp.	Bristol Twp.
Bloomfield Twp.	Jordan Twp.	Norway Twp.	Carimona Twp.	Canton Twp.
Fillmore Twp.	Pilot Mound Twp.		Canolton Twp.	Harmony Twp.
Forestville Twp.			Holt Twp.	Newburg Twp.
Spring Valley Twp			Preston T	Preble Twp
Sumner Twp.				
York Twp.				

\* Includes the Olmsted County portion of the City of Chatfield.

- According to the 2000 U. S. Census, Fillmore County had a population of 21,122. This was an increase of 345 persons (1.7%) from 1990.
- The 2000 U.S. Census also reported that Fillmore County had 8,228 households, an increase of 406 households or 5.2% from 1990.
- Maxfield Research Inc. projects that the County will continue to grow during the 2000s at an even faster rate than during the 1990s, It is projected that the County will add 828 persons (3.9%) and 426 households (5.2%) during the current decade.
- Population growth is expected to eclipse household growth because overall growth in the County will be dominated by younger households with children moving into the County in search of affordable housing within commuting distance of Rochester or Winona. As a result, communities closest to these employment centers are anticipated to experience the greatest amount of this projected growth.

- Shifting demographics will play an important role in the County's overall housing needs. Only modest population increases or decreases (less than 1%) are anticipated among the youngest (under 35) and oldest (65 or older) age cohorts between 2000 and 2010, which will mean modest changes in demand for housing that typically appeals to these groups. In contrast, the aging of the baby boom generation will cause the 45 to 64 age group to increase by roughly 1,470 persons or 31%. This will put pressure on the move-up housing market.
- The aging of the baby boom generation into their peak earning years will also translate into a higher median income for the County. Between 2002 and 2007, the median household income for Fillmore County is projected to increase from \$34,698 to \$40,282, an annual increase of 3.2%.
- Although the oldest households (75 or older) will remain concentrated in lower incomes (i.e. incomes below \$25,000), this age cohort is expected to experience annual increases in income of 4.5% between 2002 and 2007.
- Homeownership rates increase as households age until they reach about age 65 when rental housing becomes a more viable option because it allows a maintenance-free lifestyle. Regardless, overall homeownership rates for Fillmore County are very high. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 81% of all Fillmore County households owned their housing.
- Fillmore County has added nearly 1,000 jobs covered by unemployment insurance since 1990, with the biggest gains in the Retail and Services sectors. However, the most recent measures used by the Minnesota Workforce Center have suggested that the County's overall unemployment rate has increased from a low of 3.0% in 1998 to the current 5.0%, the highest rate since 1996.
- There are very few large employers (100 or more employees) in Fillmore County. Therefore, many County residents travel outside of the County for employment. Furthermore, based on interviews with the County's largest employers, only two employers have plans to expand more than 5% of their employee base over the next three years. Moreover, one employer indicated that they are planning significant workforce reductions, but was unable to estimate how many jobs that would be.
- Fillmore County's housing stock is old. Nearly 50% of all residential housing units were built prior to 1940. However, during the 1990s, 827 new residential units were constructed. This represents 9.3% of all residential units in the County.
- According to a review of building permits, there have been roughly 625 new units constructed over the last three years alone. At this pace, the County would see over 2,000 new units constructed by 2010. However, due to the current economic slow down, it is highly unlikely that residential development will continue at this pace.
- The boom in residential construction has contributed to a sharp increase in the average home sale price in Fillmore County. From 1999 to 2001, the average home sale price in Fillmore County went from \$79,814 to \$103,705, a 30% increase in two years. However, the average home sale price in 2002 has been \$97,890, a -5.6% decline from the previous year. Interviews with real estate sales agents throughout the County corroborate this finding. According to everyone interviewed, the slowing economy has affected real estate sales dramatically. Asking prices are being lowered, and the length of time a typical home takes to sell is twice or three times as long as it was a year ago.
- The overall supply of for-sale lots in Fillmore County is limited, especially for entry-level homes. If residential construction were to continue at the current pace, there would only be about a 1/2-year supply of buildable lots. However, the supply varies considerably from Market Area to Market Area as well as from price point to price point.
- Based on overall vacancy rates, the supply of rental housing appears adequate to satisfy household growth. However, this is not necessarily the case. Many of the vacancies reported throughout the

County are because income guidelines established for subsidized housing projects are often too low for many of the households interested in renting. And, because there is a limited supply of market rate product these households could afford, they are forced to go outside the County for housing. Furthermore, some Market Areas are simply lacking rental housing altogether. Although demographic changes and employer growth do not necessarily suggest a surge in demand for general-occupancy rental housing, the lack of this segment adversely impacts a Market Area's ability to attract and retain households.

- Historically, the only housing restricted to seniors in Fillmore County was subsidized projects that offered few, if any, services and required low-incomes (typically below 60% of the County median) for residency. In recent years, more options have become available to seniors. Market rate product spans a continuum from rental townhomes with no services at all to assisted living and memory care housing that has a high degree of support services included in the monthly rent. Despite this recent expansion of product types, some Market Areas remain clearly underserved while others have plenty of supply to meet current and future demand.

Based on our analyses of demographic, economic, and market factors, we have calculated future demand for housing in Fillmore County. Below is a summary table of our projected demand that breaks down for each Market Area and each housing type the number of units we believe will be in demand through 2010. We follow this table with two other summary tables that further break down our recommendations according to target market. We then conclude the Executive Summary with a brief discussion of the critical findings for each Market Area. A detailed discussion of findings and conclusions can be found in the body of the report.

**Summary Table  
Housing Demand  
Fillmore County  
2002 – 2010**

	Spring Market	Valley	Chatfield Market	Rushford Market	Preston – Lanesboro Market	Harmony – Mabel Market	Fillmore County Total
Household Growth	100		134	82	33	77	<b>426</b>
(Plus) Replacement Need	10		5	5	8	8	<b>36</b>
<b>(Equals) Total Demand</b>	<b>110</b>		<b>139</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>462</b>
(Times) % Rental Demand	20%		25%	20%	20%	20%	
<b>(Equals) Total Rental Demand</b>	<b>22</b>		<b>35</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>99</b>
(Times) % Owner Demand	80%		75%	80%	80%	80%	
<b>(Equals) Total Owner</b>	<b>88</b>		<b>104</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>363</b>

<b>Demand</b>						
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Market Rate Senior Housing Demand in 2002\*

Independent No Services	28	18	-12	21	22	<b>77</b>
Independent w/ Services	31	6	15	20	12	<b>84</b>
Assisted Living	32	20	0	-1	6	<b>57</b>
<b>Total Senior Housing Demand</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>218</b>

<b>Grand Totals</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>680</b>
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\* Current year senior demand estimates are presented because of the projected five year decline in senior households among certain Market Areas. Keep in mind that this level of demand will not be able to be absorbed immediately and would likely require, at minimum, five years to be absorbed, provided appropriate product types at appropriate price points are developed.

Source: Maxfield Research Inc.

**Summary Table  
Recommended For-Sale Housing Development  
Fillmore County  
2002 – 2010**

	Spring Valley Market	Chatfield Market	Rushford Market	Preston - Lanesboro Market	Harmony - Mabel Market	Fillmore County
	<b>Units</b>	<b>Units</b>	<b>Units</b>	<b>Units</b>	<b>Units</b>	<b>Units</b>
<i>Single Family</i>						
1 <sup>st</sup> Time Homebuyers	19	25	18	9	32	103
Move-up	31	50	27	9	14	130
Executive	12	8	8	7	8	44
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>276</b>
<i>Multifamily</i>						
1 <sup>st</sup> Time Homebuyers	9	0	6	3	6	22
Empty Nesters	17	21	11	5	8	64
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>86</b>

Source: Maxfield Research Inc.

**Summary Table  
Recommended General-Occupancy Rental Development  
Fillmore County  
2002 – 2010**

Spring Valley Market	Chatfield Market	Rushford Market	Preston - Lanesboro Market	Harmony - Mabel Market	Fillmore County
Units	Units	Units	Units	Units	Units

*High-End*

Apartment	0	0	0	0	0
Townhomes	0	14	0	0	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14</b>

*Moderate*

Apartment	10	7	13	8	9	47
Townhomes	5	7	4	0	0	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>63</b>

*Subsidized*

Apartment	7	0	0	0	8	15
Townhomes	0	7	0	0	0	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>22</b>

Source: Maxfield Research Inc.

**Spring Valley Market Area Summary**

- The Spring Valley Market Area is projected to add 265 persons and 125 households between 2000 and 2010. Most of this growth will be from younger households who work in Rochester and want to live in Fillmore County because the cost of housing is more affordable.
- Unlike other Fillmore County Market Areas, the younger senior population (65 to 74) is projected to grow substantially between 2000 and 2010, adding 90 persons (18.5%). Mean while, the Market Area is also projected to add 45 households (16.1%) age 65 to 74. This will result in increased demand for single-level townhomes as well as independent senior apartments without services.
- There is a severe lack of buildable lots in the Spring Valley Market Area, particularly the City of Spring Valley. There are approximately 12 to 14 for-sale lots available for development in the Market Area, all of which are targeted to the move-up homebuyer. Therefore, local officials should promote efforts to expand the available number of lots for development, especially smaller lots that could be targeted toward the entry-level buyer. Otherwise, if land is not made available, buyers will look outside the Market Area for available lots. Most likely they will look in nearby Grand Meadow, which has available lots for development.
- Because incomes are slightly higher in the Spring Valley Market Area, compared to other Market Areas, lobbying the appropriate agencies to increase the minimum income level for subsidized housing could help fill some of the vacancies at existing projects.
- The Spring Valley Market Area is the only Fillmore County Market Area without market rate senior housing. And, according to our calculations, there is demand for all levels of senior housing. Therefore,

local officials should search for methods to promote the development of senior housing. In smaller communities, the best option is to build a facility that can accommodate multiple levels of care or build something adjacent to an existing facility in which economies of scale can be taken advantage of in order to defray costs associated with providing services and common spaces.

### **Chatfield Market Area Summary**

- The Chatfield Market Area is projected to add 373 persons (8.6%) and 168 households (10.3%) between 2000 and 2010. This is the largest projected growth among the five Market Areas. The expected growth will be fueled almost entirely by young professionals who work in Rochester and are seeking affordable housing options in a smaller school district.
- Household incomes in the Chatfield Market Area are, by far, the highest in the entire County. The median household income in 2002 was \$46,803 compared to \$34,698 for the entire County.
- High incomes along with high demand for housing in the Chatfield Market Area over the last several years have caused housing prices to rise sharply. The average home sale price in 2001 was \$169,990, which was a 55% increase from 1999 when the average sale price was \$109,661. However, given the recent slow down in hiring at the Mayo Clinic and IBM in Rochester, the demand for housing in the Chatfield Market Area has slowed considerably. The average home sale price so far in 2002 has been \$135,838, a -20% decline from the previous year. Regardless of the recent declines, the average home sale price in the Chatfield Market Area is still 39% more than the County-wide average. Furthermore, once the economic situation in Rochester improves and employers begin hiring again, demand for housing in the Chatfield Market Area will undoubtedly increase.
- Two new subdivisions in the southeastern portion of Chatfield, Conway Phase IV and the Fingerson-Donahoe development, have recently opened with lot and home prices targeted to the move-up buyer. Also, there is a planned development, Griffin Estates, scheduled to be gin marketing next spring that will feature over 70 lots priced for the entry-level market. Therefore, if Griffin Estates is able to move forward and begin marketing entry-level lots, it appears as if there would be an adequate supply of buildable lots at each price point in the Market Area for at least the next five years. However, if Griffin Estates is unable to move forward with development plans, then the Chatfield Market Area will have a severe shortage of entry-level for-sale housing.
- The only existing or planned market rate rental housing in the Market Area is located in Fountain. Therefore, we believe there is an opportunity to develop market rate rental housing in the County of Chatfield, especially since more than one employer mentioned that they have plans to expand their workforce and it is often difficult for new employees to find rental housing. We recommend focusing on rental townhomes because this product has been well received by young families.
- There is a 15-unit senior housing project that features independent apartments with a noon meal included in the monthly fee as well as a 15-bed assisted living facility that is a renovation of an old nursing home. Because the units in the assisted living facility are not apartment-style and the environment is institutional, we feel there is opportunity for additional market rate assisted living units. However, we estimate demand for only 20 units, which may not be able to profitably exist in a freestanding structure. Therefore, we suggest either adding assisted living to an existing facility or consider sharing common spaces with a building that would contain independent living units.

### **Rushford Market Area Summary**

- The Rushford Market Area is projected to add 223 persons (6.7%) and 103 households (7.9%) between 2000 and 2010. Much of this growth will come from Winona workers and retirees who are unable to find lots in the Winona area due to the severe shortage of buildable land.

- The Rushford Market Area contains the County's largest employer, TRW Electronics. TRW has indicated that they have plans to reduce their workforce, but it is unclear at this time by how much. If the reduction is significant, this will impact the local housing market. However, spouses who continue to work in the area and the likelihood that many former employees will commute outside the Market Area for new jobs will mitigate the impact on the housing market.
- The real estate market has slowed considerably in the Rushford Market Area. Although the average home sale price has remained steady at roughly \$91,000 from 2001 to 2002, the number of building permits issued has dropped substantially each year since 2000. According to interviews with real estate sales agents, some builders have begun to back out of area subdivisions because of the slow down in residential construction.
- Despite the slow down in residential construction, the Rushford Market Area has a limited supply of affordable residential lots. This is due, in part, to the difficulty Rushford has in the orderly annexation of land from Rushford Village. It is also, however, related to the larger size of most available lots, which start at around 17,000 square feet and larger. Therefore, if local officials could promote even slightly smaller lot sizes, this could help increase the supply of affordable lots in order to meet future demand.
- Due to the fact that there is an existing assisted living facility and an age-restricted rental townhome project that is currently experiencing initial lease-up, we feel there is an adequate supply of market rate senior housing to meet demand over the next five years.

#### **Preston-Lanesboro Market Area Summary**

- The Preston-Lanesboro Market Area is expected to lose -99 persons (-25%) yet add 41 households (26%) between 2000 and 2010. This is because the predominant growth in the Preston-Lanesboro Market Area is anticipated to be fueled by empty-nesters and recent retirees who are attracted to the Market Area's scenic quality and tourism-based economy. Because these households typically do not have children, this results in population loss despite household gains. Regardless, the Market Area's household growth, which is a better indicator of housing demand than population growth, is still projected to be the smallest of the five Market Areas.
- The Preston-Lanesboro Market Area has the County's highest percentage of seasonal or second homes (51% compared to the next highest at 30%), which tend to be occupied by older households with higher relative incomes. Although these households contribute to the local economy, their ability to pay more for housing can result in sharp increases in the price of housing. However, they are not considered permanent residents of the Market Area. Therefore, the Preston-Lanesboro Market Area has a 2002 median income of only \$32,804, which is 6% below the County median of \$34,698.
- According to interviews with the real estate sales agents familiar with the Preston-Lanesboro Market Area, the impact of the slowing economy has had a direct impact on the sale price of homes. Due to the decline in the stock market, the demand for second homes has also declined. As a result, since 1999 the average home sale price in the Market Area has only risen 4%, while the entire County has experienced a 23% increase.
- Although demand for entry-level housing is not strong in the Preston-Lanesboro Market Area, because most of the household growth is driven by older households seeking move-up housing, there is almost a complete lack of affordable lots available for development. However, because of the hilly terrain throughout the Market Area, it is very difficult to find land adjacent to existing public infrastructure, which could be inexpensively developed. Local officials will need to assess how important it is to subsidize lot development in order to attract younger households. However, subsidizing development costs comes with the risk that existing households may shoulder an unfair level of taxes that are not recouped in a timely manner because demand for housing is not strong enough to offset subsidies. Larger lot development that is clustered around group septic systems is an alternative development

pattern that may keep lot prices somewhat affordable. However, protection against ground water contamination would probably require the lots to be of a size that would preclude them from being affordable.

- The Preston-Lanesboro Market Area contains the most units of market rate rental housing in the County. Furthermore, there are plans to add additional market rate units to the existing Old School Apartments in Preston. Therefore, based on projected household growth, we feel these pending units will satisfy demand for rental housing into the near future, especially since most of the projected growth for the Market Area will be older households.
- We do not recommend that any additional assisted living be built in the Preston-Lanesboro Market Area. However, there may be opportunity to develop independent housing with and without services. Ideally, any new units should be built adjacent to the existing assisted living facility or nursing home in order to keep costs down by sharing services and common spaces.

### **Harmony-Mabel Market Area Summary**

- The Harmony-Mabel Market Area is projected to add 245 persons (5.5%) and 96 households (5 between 2000 and 2010,
- The Market Area has the County's highest percentage of homeownership at 83%. This is because there is a limited supply of rental housing in the Market Area, especially in the City of Harmony.
- In 2000, nearly 19% of the Market Area's households were age 75 or older, the highest in the County. This partially explains why the median income in 2002 was \$29,415, nearly 18% below the County median of \$34,698, by far, the lowest of the five Market Areas.
- The average home sale price in the Harmony-Mabel Market Area has increased 39% since 1999, the largest increase in the County. However, the average home sale price so far in 2002 has been \$84,230, well below the County average of \$97, 890.
- There are about 20 to 25 available lots for development in the Harmony-Mabel Market Area, all of which are targeted toward the move-up buyer. In order to accommodate future house hold growth, in light of the fact that this is the part of Fillmore County with the lowest in comes, more effort should be made in providing affordable lots for development. Luckily, the supply of buildable land is not an issue in either Harmony or Mabel. However, local officials shouldn't jump at subsidizing development either because there probably won't be enough demand to offset the cost of the any subsidies in a timely manner. Therefore, other possibilities should be considered, such as smaller lot sizes or manufactured housing (provided there are appropriate standards) that can keep the price of housing more affordable.
- There is a severe shortage of rental housing in Harmony. We recommend that rental housing be constructed in Harmony in order to provide a critical segment of housing that is needed for households that are unable to afford homeownership or for other reasons prefer renting. In Mabel, a 6-unit market rate apartment building opened last year and has been very successful. The monthly rent is only \$415 for a two-bedroom unit. Although this has likely caused some vacancies in the subsidized project in Mabel, it clearly demonstrates that there is demand for a rental product not being offered.
- Our calculations indicate that there is demand for additional senior housing in the Market Area. However, we believe that any new senior housing should be located in Mabel and not Harmony because there is an existing facility in Harmony. We note, though, that any development should proceed with caution because the success of the existing facility is related to the fact that there are limited options for senior housing in surrounding communities, and, if more communities build senior housing, to some degree, they will begin cannibalizing each other's market.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

The economic health of a County is an important component to a healthy and thriving County. A strong commercial and industrial base provides jobs to County residents, contributes to a County's tax base, and can be a source of psychological strength to a community. This can best be explained when one compares a downtown area consisting of boarded up buildings with one that has a thriving business sector. The community with the vacant or boarded up buildings appears listless and drab while the strong downtown community is lively, busy and thriving.

Agriculture is still the driving force behind much of the economy in Fillmore County, hence there is a concerted effort for value added agriculture economic development. Agriculture is not the only driving force in the economy as sectors like retail, manufacturing, and tourism have also made strong pushes.

Many of the communities in Fillmore County have developed industrial parks to attract businesses. A number of communities are also taking advantage of programs set up by the State Government to promote development in rural parts of Minnesota. One such program utilized in Fillmore County is the JOBZ program. This program is designed to offer tax incentives to companies to locate in areas designated as JOBZ subzones.

Tax Increment Financing and Tax Abatement are other business subsidies that the County can use to encourage development. There is an application process through the County for any subsidy and projects are granted subsidies based on set criteria. The projects chosen would not happen without the subsidies.

One other program developed by the County to help the business community grow is a revolving loan program. This program is designed to offer low interest loans to businesses within the county to assist with start-up or expansion costs.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS**

There are many pieces that come together to make up the wonderful natural beauty of Fillmore County. This section describes some of the environmentally sensitive areas within the County that need to be protected and preserved in order to maintain the quality of life in the area. The environment in Fillmore County does not only upgrade the health of its citizens, but also attracts many visitors to the County. These visitors have a dramatic positive effect on the economic condition of Fillmore County and its citizens. Working to preserve our environment not only impacts our health, but also directly impacts economic development. The following is a description of the more sensitive environmental areas.

### **Wetlands**

Wetlands have generally been regarded as obstacles to development rather than opportunities. Only recently have public attitudes changed and brought the destruction of these productive areas to an end. Most wetlands are valuable for storing essential surface waters and stabilizing surface waters to alleviate the danger of droughts and floods and support wildlife habitat areas. They also serve as the primary method of recharging aquifers to insure a continued supply of water to serve an area's needs. Wetlands also serve to cleanse and purify the water by removing nutrients and other contaminants in storm water runoff.

There are approximately 13,500 acres of wetlands in Fillmore County according to the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI). About half of these acres are classified as riverine or seasonally flooded basins or flats, and about half are classified as inland marshes or meadows. In 1998, wetland areas in the South Branch Root River Watershed Project area were inventoried to identify adjoining land uses and the potential for preservation or restoration.

### Regulations

Wetland regulations are dependent upon what the land owner intends to do with the wetland. Three different regulatory bodies have jurisdiction over wetlands: the Army Corp of Engineers, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and local governments. Below is a brief overview of each organizations regulations:

**DNR Jurisdiction:**

Under Minnesota Statutes Chapter 103G, Department of Natural Resources conservation officers and other peace officers are the enforcing authorities for wetlands regulated under the State's public waters law and the Wetland Conservation Act. The Commissioner of Natural Resources, DNR Conservation Officers, and other peace officers enforcing the WCA may issue cease and desist orders and restoration and replacement orders. Restoration orders issued under the public waters law are subject to the rules and procedures of the Administrative Procedures Act (Minnesota Statutes Chapter 14) and are subject to judicial review.

**Local Jurisdiction:**

Some local government units have adopted wetlands ordinances prior to and since passage of the Wetland Conservation Act. Also, under recent amendments to the WCA, a Local Government Unit (LGU) can adopt a BWSR-approved local wetland management plan. LGUs may assume enforcement responsibilities but DNR Conservation Officers retain full enforcement authority for WCA jurisdictional matters. Components of local ordinances more restrictive than the WCA must be enforced through local ordinances.

**Federal Jurisdiction:**

Three federal agencies may exercise enforcement authority for federal regulations. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency can use any of the following options: cease & desist order from the District Engineer; voluntary restoration; after-the-fact permit; fines; and the assistance of U.S. Attorney to enforce restoration. The USDA Farm Service Agency can withhold program benefits when a participant in a federal farm program is in noncompliance with the wetland requirements of the program.

**Shorelands**

The shoreland district is defined as including lands 300 feet landward from the ordinary high water level. Fillmore County adopted the DNR Shoreland Ordinance in 1993 which has special requirements for development within the shoreland district along DNR protected waters. Land use protections in shoreland areas reduce adverse impacts on those surface waters.

**Floodplains**

Floodplains also determine land use around a body of water. The DNR administered Floodplain Management Program is intended to minimize the threat to life and property resulting from flooding. This program restricts development in floodplains by preventing structures from being built at too low an elevation in areas that have a high risk of flooding. It also controls encroachment so that the floodplain's capacity to hold water will not be reduced, causing flooding to property located structures.

Fillmore County has included a section within its zoning ordinance regarding Floodplain Districts to maintain eligibility in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). As part of this program, "Specialized Flood Hazard Areas" (SFHA) are identified and permits must be required for any developments within these areas. In exchange for being a member of NFIP and adopting floodplain management standards, the federal government makes flood insurance available for all buildings within the County.

**Physical Features**

Fillmore County has a unique combination of physical features ranging from upland areas, which are prime agricultural areas, to a variety of eroded stream valleys, which provide a significant topo-graphic relief and significant recreational opportunities within the County.

Fillmore County's landscape is characterized by its karst topography. Karst is defined by Monroe (1970) as "a terrain generally underlain by limestone, in which the topography is chiefly formed by the dissolving of rock and which is commonly characterized by channeling, closed depressions, subterraneous drainage and caves."

Sinkholes, blind valleys, caves, springs and disappearing streams are karst features that are all found in Fillmore County. Over 6,000 sinkholes have been mapped as part of the county's geologic atlas project, and there may be as many as 10,000 or more.

Fillmore County Geomorphic Regions - A geomorphic region is a physiographic area defined by topographic relief and soil parent material. Each class of this variable refers to a distinct geomorphic region. Fillmore County has four (4) distinct geomorphic regions.

These are:

- The Mississippi Valley Outwash Area
- The Kenyon/Taopi Plain silty, undulating area
- The Harmony/Plain View Uplands that is silty, and gently rolling
- The Red Wing-LaCrescent Uplands with associated steep slopes.

### **Elevation**

Elevations in Fillmore County range from a low of 700 ft. above sea level near Rushford in the northeastern portion of the county to a high of nearly 1400 ft. above sea level in the western areas of the county. The most significant changes in elevation occur along the Root River between Preston and Rushford. In several locations along the Root River, there are extremely steep slopes that present significant development problems for both residential development and agricultural uses. These areas are primarily heavily forested and inaccessible by road.

### **Vegetation**

Vegetation in the Fillmore County area consisted primarily of three types; 1) hardwood forests – which is broken down into the categories of upland deciduous forests and river bottom forests, 2) brushland – which is broken into the three categories of brush prairie, oak openings and barrens, and Aspen oak land, and 3) Grassland – which is divided into the two categories of prairie and wet prairie, marshes, and sloughs. A great deal of the original vegetation, however, has been cleared away to make way for agriculture and rural development or for urban areas.

## CHAPTER 3 GOALS AND POLICIES

### GOALS AND POLICIES

Goals and Policies are a detailed expression of a County's aspirations for the future and can be considered the heart of the Comprehensive Plan. The **Goals** and **Policies** appear toward the beginning of the Comprehensive Plan to provide the framework for the various roles and responsibilities of the County in implementing and achieving these aspirations.

The Goals and Policies spell out various roles and responsibilities for the County. To better understand the County's role for each Goal and Policy, a number of key terms are defined below with the County's corresponding responsibility.

### **DEFINITIONS: (Pertaining only to this document)**

Goal: A general statement of County aspirations and desired objectives that indicates a broad social, economic, or physical state of conditions that the County officially agrees to strive to achieve in a variety of ways, such as through the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

Policy: An officially adopted course or method of action intended to be followed to implement the County Goals.

Create: Bring about the desired goal, usually with County staff involved at all levels from planning to implementation. May involve County financial assistance.

Continue: Follow past and present procedures to maintain desired goal, usually with County staff involved at all levels from planning to implementation.

Encourage: Foster the desired goal through County policies. Could involve County financial assistance.

Enhance: Improve current goal to a desired state through the use of policies and County staff at all levels of planning. This could include financial support.

Identify: Catalog and confirm resource or desired item(s) through the use of County staff and actions.

Implement: Actions to guide the accomplishment of Plan recommendations.

Maintain: Keep in good condition the desired state of affairs through the use of County policies and staff. Financial assistance could be provided if needed.

Prevent: Stop described event through the use of appropriate County policies, staff actions, and finances, if needed.

Promote: Advance the desired state through the use of County policies and staff activity at all levels of planning. This may include financial support.

Protect: Guard against a deterioration of the desired state through the use of County policies, staff, and, if needed, financial assistance.

Provide: Take the lead role in supplying the needed staff, and possibly financial support to achieve the desired goal. The County is typically involved in all aspects from planning to implementation to maintenance.

Strengthen: Improve and reinforce the desired goal through the use of County policies, staff, and, if necessary, financial assistance.

Support: Supply, if applicable and approved, the needed staff support, policies, and financial assistance at all levels to achieve the desired goal.

Sustain: Uphold the desired state through County policies and staff action to achieve the desired goal. This could include financial support.

Work: Cooperate and act in a manner through the use of County staff, actions, and policies to create the desired goal.

## **LAND USE**

Growth and development in Fillmore County will pose many land use challenges. The balance between protection of the natural resources and character of the area and the demands for additional industrial, commercial, and residential opportunities will continue to be the driving force for any and all future planning efforts. As residential, industrial, and commercial development expands, there will be increased pressure on the County to closely examine remaining land for development. Conservation and preservation or, if and where annexation should occur, will also become increasingly important.

### **LAND USE GOALS:**

- Actively support and promote the unique physical qualities, character, and heritage of Fillmore County
- Establish and maintain a strong cooperative working relationship with the cities and townships regarding land use issues within Fillmore County.
- Promote an adequate system of both active recreation space (active recreation is that which require intensive development and often involves cooperative or team activity, including playgrounds and ball fields) and passive recreation space (passive recreation is that which emphasizes the open-space aspect of a park and which involves a low level of development, including picnic areas and trails) to meet the County's existing and future needs.
- Enforce landscape and screening requirements within the zoning code to mitigate the adverse effects along the edges between incompatible land uses.
- The County should work cooperatively with its communities and the State of Minnesota to prepare and implement a plan for trails that would expand the non-motorized trail system throughout Fillmore County.
- The County should work with cities and other stakeholders to support plans to improve the viability of downtown areas.
- Encourage a level of maintenance and promote the restoration of historically significant buildings and sites in the County and encourage Cities to do the same.
- Support communication between township, city, and County to accomplish orderly growth of residential areas.
- Work with Cities to maintain and enforce non-residential development performance standards, including but not limited to, lot sizes, traffic patterns, and setbacks within and adjacent to residential areas to promote land use efficiency.
- Identify and protect natural and cultural assets including environmentally sensitive areas, historic districts, and cultural artifacts.

### **LAND USE POLICIES:**

- Review and amend the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance as necessary to ensure its usefulness as a practical guide for current and future development. The Comprehensive Plan should be reviewed bi-annually and updated as needed by the Planning Commission with assistance, as needed, by a community volunteer committee.
- Protect scenic values by adopting and enforcing ordinances that regulate signage and billboards, the screening of utility facilities, the screening of junkyards, and the buffering of other unsightly land uses and practices.
- Approach making land use decisions with caution, by taking into account the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan

- Adopt compatibility requirements for growth and extension of infrastructure.
- Protect the natural integrity of the river ecosystem, including important floodplain habitat, flood flow capacity and water quality.
- Provide for and encourage citizen participation at all levels of the planning and development review processes.
- Continue to guide residential growth adjacent to existing communities, in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan, so that new development can be effectively served by public facilities and the character and quality of the County’s existing communities can be maintained and enhanced.
- Review all non-municipal commercial and industrial development site plans.
- Promote adequate land and zoning for industrial development to promote continuing economic development throughout the County.
- Continue to promote the bike trail system in the County.

## **HOUSING**

As Fillmore County grows, housing is going to become an increasing issue. The current housing stock in Fillmore County is fairly old with around 50% of the houses being built prior to 1950. This fact along with the age of our citizens and pursuit of growth in the County makes residential growth on all levels extremely important.

### **HOUSING GOALS:**

- Maintain the County’s rural character and heritage.
- Encourage a broad mix of residential housing options.
- Promote affordable housing stock to meet county needs and increase available workforce.
- Provide assisted living opportunities for individuals who are unable to live independently.
- Support maintenance and rehabilitation of the existing housing stock.
- Consider opportunities for cluster subdivisions to preserve open space.
- Encourage new housing
- Maintain a high quality living environment in residential neighborhoods.
- Promote multi-generational and mixed income neighborhoods.

### **HOUSING POLICIES:**

- Encourage the dispersion of housing types and values throughout the County.
- Promote fair housing.
- Encourage the use of Federal, State, local, and other financial resources to promote affordable housing.
- Encourage investment in older homes, and encourage the use of Federal, State, local, and other financial resources for rehabilitation of these homes.
- Continue to promote a balance in the County’s housing stock in order to ensure a variety of housing types to serve all stages of the market life cycle.
- Allow the integration of varying types and sizes of housing units within the County when appropriate buffering and compatibility issues have been addressed.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

The County strives to maintain a safe and effective transportation system for its citizens and businesses. In the citizen survey that was sent out, a high percentage of respondents noted both better road surfaces and better road maintenance as the biggest needs for the transportation system in the County.

### **TRANSPORTATION GOALS:**

- Maintain a transportation system that meets the local and regional needs of local County residents, industries and visitors, as required by statute.

- Establish adequate and consistent funding for the maintenance and reconstruction of highways under the jurisdiction of the County Highway Department.
- Establish adequate and consistent funding for the maintenance and reconstruction of bridges under the jurisdiction of the County Highway Department.
- Develop a Transportation Plan that will address the County's needs for an adequate, safe and efficient highway system well into the future.

#### **TRANSPORTATION POLICIES:**

- Maintain consistency in use of existing policies approved by the Board of Commissioners.
- Continue cooperation with internal County agencies in the coordination of our departments, as it relates to uses of the local County highway system.
- Continue cooperation with local Cities and Townships in the coordination of operations on their roadway/street systems with the local County highways.
- Continue cooperation with neighboring Counties and the Minnesota Department of Transportation in the coordination of operations on their highways systems and the local County highways.
- Support State legislation that promotes rules and regulations that adequately fund a reasonable and safe highway network.
- Continue support and coordination with establishing and maintaining the local and regional bikeway system.

#### **COUNTY FACILITIES**

Due to the services provided by Fillmore County to its citizens, the County owns and maintains a number of buildings. The following goals and policies are to be used by the County when making decisions regarding these and any additional County-owned buildings.

#### **COUNTY FACILITIES GOALS:**

- Provide the services and facilities required to protect and maintain the health, safety, and welfare of Fillmore County's citizens, visitors, and employees.
- Develop County facilities that encourage and promote opportunities for interaction and communication between citizens of all ages, cultural heritages, and income.

#### **COUNTY FACILITIES POLICIES:**

- Provide maximum cooperation and assistance to other governmental agencies in planning and developing facilities to provide a high level of service and to avoid duplication of services or facilities.
- Make public expenditures according to a Capital Improvement Program.
- All County facilities should be developed to the same high aesthetic standards required for the development of private property and should be subject to review by the Planning Commission and County Board.

#### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

The number-one issue overwhelmingly brought forth by the citizens in the survey was the issue of employment and economic issues. 40% of respondents list these issues as the County's top priority.

#### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS:**

- Maintain and continue development of a strong, diversified, and balanced economic base and create a favorable climate for economic development and ongoing business activities.
- Work to retain existing businesses, and assist them, when possible, in any expansion efforts.

- Strengthen the relationship between County Government and local government on economic development issues and topics.
- Encourage preservation and enhancement, as feasible, of the distinctive features of communities that are historic, scenic or in other ways attractive to Fillmore County residents and visitors.
- Foster a strong work force and work ethic among Fillmore County residents and maintain a good labor supply.
- Encourage development that brings jobs and industry to the County.
- Strengthen the relationship between County Government and County Businesses.

#### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICIES:**

- Promote and encourage quality commercial and industrial development in the County and its Cities.
- Actively promote development and redevelopment within the County, including financial incentives, with particular emphasis on attracting and supporting businesses that provide livable-wage jobs.
- Participate in the state legislative process on economic development and business issues.
- Communicate with all business sectors often through surveys and forums to prevent job loss and to measure business climate for issues
- Support programs to offer appropriate training and support necessary to maintain a qualified and capable labor supply.
- Facilitate County-wide economic development efforts.
- Encourage development in areas that can provide adequate infrastructure.
- Continue involvement in local, state, and national incentive programs for economic development.
- Support contiguous development.
- Research and explore additional opportunities for expansion and retainage in all areas of economic development.
- Encourage business sector to develop opportunities for local graduates to grow the human capital of the County.
- Provide necessary public infrastructure and utilities.
- Develop and employ strategies to attract companies and individuals that will provide and perform knowledge-based businesses and employment opportunities.

#### **RECREATION**

##### **RECREATION GOALS:**

- Maintain and improve diverse park and recreational facilities to meet the needs of all County residents and visitors.
- Identify the recreational needs of the County and secure funding sources and other opportunities to meet those needs.
- Ensure that current and future park and recreational facilities meet safety standards for playground equipment, chemical usage, and other health or safety hazards.

##### **RECREATION POLICIES:**

- Maintain recreational facilities in the County and develop and maintain a Parks Master Plan to guide the establishment of recreational programs for all County residents.
- Promote passive parks and recreational facilities to meet the needs of elderly community residents, persons with disabilities, and support the incorporation of cultural elements within the total park and recreation program.
- Utilize the park ordinance.
- Work to eliminate or mitigate conflicting land use adjacent to existing parks and playgrounds.

- Provide access to streams and rivers and public recreation areas. Maintain or restore natural vegetation in these areas and design footpaths to minimize erosion.
- Protect natural resource based recreation areas within the County.
- Promote and encourage the acquisition and management of public lands in the Fillmore County area. Identify and protect important natural resource features such as floodplain areas, blufflands and other sensitive lands to include passive open space with low impact trail systems in these areas.
- In public and recreational areas, chemicals should be used sparingly, following the guidelines established by the Department of Agriculture for exposure to people.
- Identify the recreational facility needs of youth, and work to provide and maintain such facilities.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

The Environmental Protection section of goals and policies is particularly important because of the large number of citizens that listed it as their main priority and concern on the Comprehensive Plan Citizen Surveys. It was second only to employment and the economy in their ranking of priorities. The scenic beauty and natural resources of Fillmore County make it a wonderful place to live and an attractive destination for visitors. Protection of these resources is crucial to the future of Fillmore County.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION GOALS:**

- Identify important natural resource features in order to protect, conserve, and enhance those resources within Fillmore County to maintain the long-term benefit to the County and the environment.
- Storm water runoff should be appropriately managed, in accordance with local, state, and federal requirements.
- Work with the MPCA to identify and notify businesses with the potential for pollution of either air or water.
- Encourage and promote vegetative buffers along the rivers, wetlands and streams. Utilize native plant species whenever feasible.
- Encourage and promote land uses in shoreland and floodplain areas that protect water quality and reduce damages due to flooding.
- Protect and restore wetlands in Fillmore County.
- Work with the Townships and Cities to develop strategies for sustainable use of agricultural lands.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION POLICIES:**

- Continue to implement and administer Federal, State, and Local programs to preserve, maintain and restore natural ecological systems including rivers, shoreland, floodplain areas, aquifers, drainage areas, and wetlands with federal and state assistance when available.
- Continue to work with and support the Fillmore County Soil and Water Conservation District Office to monitor and maintain environmental protection practices.
- Work with the DNR and other agencies to inventory natural areas and prioritize areas for protection, acquisition or other management options.
- Coordinate opportunities to preserve natural areas with County, State, regional, Federal, and private programs.
- Strictly control development in floodplain areas.
- Continue to encourage and assist businesses, organizations, and citizens in their efforts to beautify and otherwise enhance the environment.
- Promote wetland preservation and restoration programs, such as Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM), Wetland Preservation Areas, and the Wetland Reserve Program.
- Pursue all reasonable opportunities to reduce and control noise and air pollution.
- Encourage reforestation standards that require reforestation of areas cleared by development.

- Discourage development on soils that are unsuitable for development and require erosion control for activities with the potential for excessive soil erosion.
- Prevent soil erosion from construction sites for the protection of aquatic habitat and improved water quality by requiring Best Management Practices.
- Work to ensure that the public health is protected by requiring that all sewage systems conform to State requirements.
- Carefully regulate the quarrying of resources such as sand, dirt, and gravel to mitigate potential environmental and visual impacts such as dust, noise, and erosion on neighboring properties.
- Encourage accessible and affordable public and private recycling programs.
- Enforce the Shoreland Ordinance, including stormwater management and erosion control provisions through the Planning and Zoning Office, and inform the public about how additional precautions in the shoreland district protect water quality.
- Protect ground water resources to assure a safe and plentiful supply of water for drinking and other uses.
- Encourage the use of sustainable manufacturing practices.
- Prioritize business and industry recruitment activities to attract and maintain those businesses that employ environmentally sound practices.
- Encourage residential, commercial and public development to incorporate energy saving techniques, renewable energy sources, and water conservation measures.
- Encourage the use of native vegetation on private and public lands where appropriate.
- Support economic development within the flood fringe areas, subject to flood way and flood fringe ordinances of the municipalities and the County.
- Prevent contamination of sinkholes and waterways from dumping or from improper or pollutant drainage.
- Develop a clean-up program for sinkholes and waterways which have been misused.

## **WATER**

The goals of the Fillmore County Local Water Management Plan are water quality goals that align with those in other local, regional, state, and federal plans to meet water quality standards for both surface water and ground water. Actions within each priority concern are aimed at achieving the water quality goals taking into account the availability of funding and other resources that can be reasonably expected over the next ten years. More details of these goals and policies can be found in the Fillmore County Comprehensive Water Plan.

### **WATER QUALITY GOALS:**

- Reduce fecal coliform bacteria levels in streams and ground water to meet the drinking water standard.
- Reduce turbidity in surface waters.
- Reduce nitrate concentrations in ground water and streams.
- Reduce concentrations of pesticides in streams and ground water to meet water quality standards.

### **WATER QUALITY POLICIES:**

- Promote agricultural and development practices that control and prevent soil erosion and runoff.
- Encourage pollution prevention measures that protect private and public drinking water supplies and monitor drinking water quality through County-wide groundwater testing programs.
- Increase the number of septic systems in compliance with MN Rules Chapter 7080 by utilizing the Fillmore County's Individual Sewage Treatment System Pilot Program to inventory and upgrade all ISTS that are defined as imminent threats to public health.
- Educate the public about the karst topography of Fillmore County and encourage land use practices that reduce the susceptibility of ground water to contamination because of karst.
- Promote pesticide and fertilizer practices that maximize cropping efficiencies and reduce the impacts to water resources.

- Promote livestock production practices that prevent contamination of water due to manure consistent with State laws and policies such as, adequate buffer areas around feedlots, practices that keep water from running through or off a feedlot, well placed fencing, and production methods that keep perennial vegetation on the land.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION**

### **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION GOALS:**

- Encourage availability of state of the art technology.
- Provide access to services through shared technology.

### **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION POLICIES**

- Support infrastructure needs for emergency services throughout the County.
- Play an active role in designing and locating telecommunications infrastructure.
- Support electronic commerce by developing the appropriate infrastructure.
- Support the creation of high-technology remote work centers.
- Work with employers to establish policies that will allow more people to telecommunicate.
- Promote affordable and equal technology access to all.
- Maximize value of bandwidth by sharing with others.
- Develop partnerships among business, governments, and schools to share technology costs, equipment and training.

## **ENERGY**

### **ENERGY GOALS:**

- Make the County's energy system reliable, affordable, efficient and diverse.
- Reduce the effects of the County's energy system on the environment.

### **ENERGY POLICIES:**

- Make energy policy an element of economic development, environmental protection, community design and building design.
- Encourage developers to adopt voluntary energy efficiency standards.
- Encourage businesses and residents shift to energy efficient lighting, heating, cooling and water saving technologies.
- Make energy efficiency and renewable energy key factors in the evaluation of any public expenditure or development proposal.
- Establish efficiency requirements and renewable energy set-asides in energy service contracts. Favor tapping local renewable energy sources.
- Adopt energy-saving and energy-generating policies to save the County financial resources.
- Invest in energy efficiency and energy-producing improvements to County buildings.
- Support, where approved and financially feasible, opportunities to switch to renewable energy systems, like wind or direct solar, or to purchase green power to improve air quality.
- Encourage telecommuting.
- Make the commitment to researching the conversion to alternative fuels.
- Integrate energy initiatives, like the planting of trees to keep buildings and streets cooler in summer, with other community initiatives, like beautification.
- Adopt criteria and procedures for the systematic evaluation of utility corridors consistent with the comprehensive plan.

## **AGRICULTURE**

The following set of goals is aimed specifically at the protection, preservation, and support of agriculture land uses and operations in Fillmore County. Since agriculture is one of the principle land uses and economic base of Fillmore County, it must receive support in the adoption of policies and plans for the county's future.

### **AGRICULTURE GOALS:**

- Protect and preserve productive land in the agriculture district and encourage development of non-farm dwellings only on less productive land adjacent to existing incorporated and unincorporated communities.
- Protect the economic viability of agriculture within Fillmore County and recognize the importance of a strong livestock industry.
- Prevent the development and mismanagement of prime agricultural lands, and encourage sustainable agricultural practices.
- Encourage sound agricultural management practices which protect groundwater and surface water from contamination by working with agricultural operations and implementing the "Fillmore County Comprehensive Water Management Plan"

### **AGRICULTURE POLICIES:**

- Recognize and support agriculture as the centerpiece of a diverse economy in Fillmore County.
- Non-farm development will be restricted on productive farm land.
- Commercial and industrial uses not related to or incompatible with agricultural operations will be restricted in the Ag District.
- An extensive level of urban services may not be provided by county or township governments. Service levels in rural areas will be primarily aimed at satisfying the needs of agriculturally related activities.
- Structures of all types should be required to meet safe setback requirements at intersections and along all right-of-ways.
- Incompatible uses such as junk yards, dump grounds, abandoned equipment, and the like will be carefully controlled.
- The county will work with individual landowners and various agencies to develop new policies for better farm practices to reduce erosion and groundwater contamination by farming operations.
- All new well construction and well abandonment should be regulated in a method to reduce potential contamination
- Work with area farmers in developing policies concerning feedlots to control pollution hazards.
- Develop controls and enforcement procedures that are beneficial to both the area farmers and county government.
- Support marketing of the County's agricultural products.
- Develop infrastructure to support the movement of agricultural products.
- Encourage economic development opportunities based on creating or expanding value-added processing of agricultural products.
- Foster economic development to retain and attract businesses important to agriculture.
- Utilize a science-based approach to odor related issues in determining the setback distances between livestock facilities and rural residences.
- Support livestock production, especially in a manner which keeps land in perennial vegetation, such as hay and pasture.

## **HISTORY AND CULTURE**

It is the intent of the plan to provide for greater support and encouragement in preserving historical and cultural aspects of Fillmore County. In doing so, the county will promote expectations for County planning and preservation. The history and culture of Fillmore County is vital to the tourism industry as well as community development within the County. This history and cultural heritage is the foundation on which the strong sense of community throughout Fillmore County is built.

### **HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL GOALS:**

- Maintain the historic character of the County's cities while encouraging their development as commercial and cultural centers.
- Increase awareness of the social and economic value of historic preservation.
- Encourage the arts in community development plans throughout the county.

### **HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL POLICIES:**

- Promote the cultural heritage and recognizes the importance of century old farm homesteads.
- Preserve older and historic structures, landscapes and features in order to provide a sense of identity.
- Revitalize, maintain and allow for limited expansion of the older commercial core.
- Encourage the collection of artifacts at archaeological sites during excavation for new construction and consider alternative development patterns if necessary.
- Seek funding and cooperation from the private and nonprofit sectors that includes education and outreach measures.
- Publicize the success of preservation efforts and encourage similar actions.

## **PUBLIC EDUCATION**

The children of Fillmore County are the County's future. A strong and vibrant network of schools is necessary to provide them the skills to bring the County forward. The school systems in Fillmore County have an impact on a number of the other sections within this plan, so support of our school systems is a vital component of this plan. In the citizen survey, schools received the highest number of rankings in the top five priorities facing Fillmore County.

### **PUBLIC EDUCATION GOALS:**

- Maintain strong public school systems for the County.
- Encourage the development of programs to keep children in school.
- Partner with school districts to promote public health and safety issues.

### **PUBLIC EDUCATION POLICIES:**

- Develop partnerships between school districts and businesses to offer the County's highschool graduates additional employment opportunities.
- Seek funding from the private and nonprofit sectors to further promote anti-drug education.
- Maintain strong advocacy at the State level for additional education financing.

## **TOURISM**

### **TOURISM GOALS:**

- Increase tourism dollars throughout the County.
- Work to Promote Fillmore County's tourism options.
- Continue to increase the number of recreational opportunities available to both residents and visitors.

### **TOURISM POLICIES:**

- Continue to promote County-wide tourism options through advertising outlets available to the County.
- Encourage tourism-based businesses throughout the County.
- Seek additional funding for the expansion of County's walking, biking, and equine trails.
- Work to maintain the amount of public fishing and hunting areas available.
- Encourage the development of additional lodging options for visitors to the County.
- Recognize the economic impact of the tourism industry in Fillmore County.
- Promote the Highway 16 designation as a National Scenic Byway.

# CHAPTER 4 GENERAL LAND USE PLAN

## LAND USE

Development in Fillmore County has followed a prescribed process to ensure thoughtful integration of natural beauty with physical development. To guide land use and development, the County prepared its first comprehensive plan many years ago. The Plan was updated most recently in 1994. The County has used its' past Land Use Plans to develop recommendations in areas of land use, supportive infrastructure, and development review. This 2005 Plan is specific enough to guide many day-to-day development decisions and provides the policies, standards, and principles that serve as the basis for updating the zoning ordinance and other development controls that the County enforces.

In order to identify land for inclusion for and exclusion from development, the County applied the values and goals identified during the planning process. The classification of land is a process based on a set of criteria determined by input from the citizenry throughout the planning process. Generally, no single criteria can determine the classification of an area. A combination of thresholds must be met in order for an area to be determined as developable.

## GENERAL LAND USE PLAN

Land use refers to how land is currently utilized and how it should be used in the future. Population and economic trends help to predict future needs for various land uses. Fillmore County guides land use to ensure that the land resources of the County are used to appropriately protect productive agricultural lands, encourage economic development, promote a variety of housing developments, preserve natural and historic resources, and accommodate transportation routes and public facilities in order to protect and promote the quality of life.

The land use sections of this plan consist of a description of existing land uses, goals and policies indicating the County's preferred development pattern for growth, and planning policies to guide the patterns and location of land use within the County. The future land use policies and map is used to determine the location of appropriate places to live, conduct business, and recreate. Elected and appointed officials, such as Board of Commissioners, Planning and Zoning Commission, and Township Officials, use the future land use policies and map when making decisions regarding land division, zoning and development review.

The challenge of this plan is to maintain and enhance the characteristics of the traditional county found in Fillmore County while attempting to extend those characteristics to new and developing areas. This plan also recognizes that times have changed since the County first developed and that modern land uses will continue to play a major role in its landscape. However, by promoting and extending the physical elements that make Fillmore County unique, new development can be successfully and sensitively incorporated into its further growth. By doing so, Fillmore County will continue to function as a traditional, yet modern, county. That is the purpose and challenge of this Comprehensive Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan provides a general framework for growth and development in Fillmore County over the next 10 to 15 years. It establishes long-term targets for key components of the County, consistent with the County's goals and objectives. The Plan is specific enough to guide day-to-day development decisions and provides the policies, standards and principles that serve as the basis for updating the zoning ordinance and other development controls that are enforceable under the County's powers.

The Plan provides specific recommendations with regard to land use but yet is flexible enough to allow modification and continued refinement. The Plan illustrates general policy recommendations, but should always be taken in concert with the written goals and policies.

## **RELATIONSHIP TO ZONING**

The future land use designations work jointly with zoning designations to further the County's land use planning goals. The Land Use Plan densities and classifications are a general guide, while the zoning standards govern actual development practice. There are some differences between zoning classifications and the land use plan. The County will continue to bring the zoning map into conformance with the Land Use Plan as future projects are reviewed.

### **Land Use Maps**

The Fillmore County Comprehensive Plan is adopted by ordinance as the future land designations of the County. The map depicts the desired general pattern for the location, distribution, and intensity of land uses over the next years. This map is used to guide future development to the most suitable areas of the County in conjunction with the associated policies and text in the Zoning Ordinance. All development decisions must be consistent with provisions of the plan and the effective Zoning Ordinance. Even though the maps depict desirable areas for development throughout the County, many areas will not be developed as they will not meet the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. These maps should not be misconstrued as permissible areas to develop within the County but merely as a reference point based on the acceptability of a tract of land that complies with the Zoning Ordinance.

In addition to these maps, the County Zoning Office also maintains the more detailed zoning map, which depicts permitted land uses on a parcel specific basis.

### **[Maps](#)**

## CHAPTER 5 IMPLEMENTATION

The planning process in Fillmore County is not over. Formal adoption of the Comprehensive Plan establishes the goals for the direction of the County, including both policy objectives and achievement strategies. One should view the formal adoption of the Comprehensive Plan as the beginning of a journey, not the end. Without continuing advancement to implement and update the Plan, County efforts up to this point will have little lasting impact into the future.

There are several critical requirements for effective implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. First, Fillmore County should continue to evaluate and amend its regulatory measures, such as the zoning ordinance, which can enforce the Plan's policies and recommendations. Second, the County should utilize project scheduling devices, such as the Comprehensive Water and Capital Improvements Program, allowing implementation of the most important public improvements on a priority-based system, while staying within budgetary guidelines. Third, County officials must ensure that the citizens of Fillmore County continue to be actively involved in this and future planning projects to ensure their needs and concerns are being met by these plans. Finally, the Comprehensive Plan needs to be monitored and assessed. These assessments will allow for changes to be made that address changing conditions of society. Each of these requirements is briefly discussed below.

### DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCES

Zoning Ordinance: Zoning is the primary regulatory tool used by governmental units to implement planning policies. It consists of the Official Zoning Map and the supporting ordinance text. The purpose of the Fillmore County Zoning Ordinance is; 1) To protect the public health, safety, comfort, convenience and general welfare, 2) To protect and preserve agricultural land, 3) Promote orderly development of the residential, commercial, industrial, recreational and public areas, 4) Conserve the natural and scenic beauty and attractiveness of the County, 5) Conserve the natural resources in the County, 6) Provide for the compatibility of different land uses and the most appropriate use of land throughout the County, 7) Conserve the value of properties, and 8) Protect the environment. The Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map are amended from time to time to reflect new policies adopted by the County. The County should review its existing Zoning Ordinance and Map for inconsistencies with the adopted Comprehensive Plan Update, and create a schedule for amending the zoning documents to reconcile divergences.

An important first step is to compare the current zoning map with the adopted Land Use Map and reconcile discrepancies. There may be valid reasons why the two documents are not identical, but these reasons should be clear.

The second step is to review, update and refine the zoning ordinance to implement and enforce the guidelines of the updated Comprehensive Plan.

Subdivision Ordinance: This ordinance is enacted for the purpose of safeguarding the best interest of Fillmore County, the homeowner, the developer, the township, and local municipalities within the county; encouraging well planned subdivisions by the establishment of design and construction criteria; to improve land records by establishing standards for surveys and plats; and protecting the environmentally sensitive areas of the county. It is the intent of this ordinance to regulate subdivisions within Fillmore County in accordance with the authority and policies as declared in Minnesota Statutes Chapter 394 and Chapter 505.

Feedlot Ordinance: The purpose of this Ordinance may be summarized by the statement "All producers of domestic animals in Fillmore County shall take all prudent measures possible to keep animal manures from entering waters of the state as defined by MN Rule. Chapter. 7020". This Ordinance is established to provide guidance to producers of domestic animals as to what practices are acceptable and those that are not acceptable.

This Ordinance also provides penalties for producers that practice manure handling procedures that encourage the runoff of manure into the waters of the state.

Parks Ordinance: The purpose of this Ordinance is to provide rules and regulations for the use of and conduct in the parks of the County.

### **Capital Improvement Program**

Another potential tool for implementation is the Capital Improvement Program, which establishes schedules and priorities within a five-year period. The County first prepares a list of all public improvements that will be required in the next five years, including transportation and County facilities projects. Then all projects are reviewed, priorities are assigned, cost estimates prepared, and potential funding sources identified.

Fillmore County's financial resources will always be limited and there will always be competition for County resources. The Capital Improvement Program allows the County to provide the most critical public improvements, yet stay within budget constraints. Many of the recommendations of this Comprehensive Plan can be articulated in a Capital Improvements Program. Through this CEP, the recommendations can be prioritized, budgeted and programmed into the County's decision making process. The discussion of County Facilities in the Inventory and Analysis section of this Plan will be helpful in determining capital priorities.

### **Community Involvement and Communication**

Fillmore County benefits from an active citizenship, involved and aware of issues and concerns throughout the County. The County should continue to encourage opportunities for citizen participation at all levels of the planning and development processes through appointed citizen commissions and boards, and attendance and participation at public meetings. The County should continue to disseminate information through the County's website (the web address is [www.co.fillmore.mn.us](http://www.co.fillmore.mn.us)), brochures, and press release distribution to area newspapers.

This Comprehensive Planning effort has begun to establish a healthy dialogue among local residents concerning the future of the County. Wide publicity has been given to this Comprehensive Plan with a number of citizens involved in the planning discussions. This Plan will affect everyone in the County, and everyone should have the opportunity to contribute to planning decisions.

### **Review and Revision**

The Comprehensive Plan is not a static document. The planning process must be continuous. The Plan should be monitored and updated when necessary. If public attitudes change or new issues arise that are beyond the scope of the current Plan, the document should be reviewed and updated. From time to time, certain changes to the Plan document will be required. The Planning Commission and County Board should carefully review proposed changes and their implications and actively seek citizen comment on such proposals. If changes are found to be appropriate, they should be formally added to the Plan by legal amendment. Also, the entire Comprehensive Plan should be reviewed and modified to ensure that it continues to be an up-to-date expression of County goals and intentions.

## **IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

Future Redevelopment: The County should encourage the use of planned unit developments as a zoning and planning tool in the review of future large-scale developments. As required by state law, the County should order the preparation of environmental reviews for development proposals that meet such thresholds. The environmental review should be considered as part of the PUD processes and in requests for comprehensive plan amendments regarding these projects.

Residential Needs: The County should encourage the development of a mix of residential housing types and ensure an affordable and diverse housing stock to meet a wide-range of community needs and to support the available workforce. The County should work with developers to investigate Federal, State, local, and other financial resources in order to obtain funds and other incentives that would assist in promoting and maintaining

a diverse housing stock. The County should continue to guide residential growth in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan so that new development can be effectively served by public facilities and the character and quality of the County's existing neighborhoods can be maintained and enhanced.

Comprehensive Planning: The County should review and amend the Comprehensive Plan as necessary, but at a minimum every two years, to ensure its usefulness as a practical guide for current and future development. The Planning Commission should lead the review and update process with assistance, as needed, by a community volunteer committee.

Development Ordinances: The County will continue to bring the zoning map into conformance with the Land Use Plan as future projects are reviewed. To support the orderly growth of Fillmore County, the County should reevaluate, maintain and enforce development performance standards to promote land use efficiency, quality development, and attractive neighborhoods. The County should consider adopting screening and buffering requirements within the zoning code to mitigate the adverse effects along the edges between incompatible land uses.

Comprehensive Transportation Plan: The County should prepare a Transportation plan that details the current conditions of the transportation system and outlines the goals and policies for the future. This plan would also outline criteria for prioritizing projects and expenditures, and define a system to provide adequate and consistent funding for these projects.

Annexation: The County should establish a policy of Orderly Annexation to contain development adjacent to existing communities. This will maintain development that can be serviced by existing utilities and infrastructure.

## **Summary Statement**

**The goals, policies, and suggestions contained in the Comprehensive Plan are not intended to be “all of” or “the only” answers to the County’s needs. This Plan is a reviewable document, and is intended as a starting point to make Fillmore County a better place to live, work, and do business.**

**Appendix A**  
**AGGREGATE COMMENTS**

**Strengths**

Strong Work Ethic  
Rural Economy  
Christian Values, people value one another, rural setting, one stop light!  
Rural Community  
Bluffs, Creeks, Rivers, Scenic Beauty  
Fishing  
Rural Character  
Close Communities  
4H  
Bluffs  
Tourism - businesses and bike trail  
Natural resources – water, roads  
Strong work ethic  
Strong business community in Spring Valley  
Housing pressure in different parts of County  
Quality of elderly service care  
Workers/Labor force, good work ethic  
Clean air  
Quality of life and air  
Recreational opportunities  
Location to Metro Area  
Agriculture  
Availability of healthcare  
Natural beauty of area  
Small schools (good teacher/student ratio)  
Quality of natural resources  
Diversity  
Preserving rural community  
Available workforce  
Safety – personal (no need to lock up/used to be)  
Proximity to good health care  
Strong communities  
Good leadership  
Low crime rate  
Great work ethic, strong work ethic  
Small town feel/atmosphere  
Excellent for raising children  
Health of land (so far)  
Abundant wildlife  
Water quality  
Natural resources – natural beauty of land, pristine beauty  
Friendliness of people, Midwest friendly  
Good basic education  
Quality education  
Good school – good roads  
Excellent recreational activities

Strong work ethic  
Rural economy  
Christian values, people value one another  
Rural setting, one stoplight  
Rural community  
Bluffs, creeks, rivers, scenic beauty, bike trails, beauty of area, unique, karst, fishing, Trails  
Rural character  
Close communities – get to know people  
Bike Trails  
Natural resources (bluff, peaceful)  
Root River  
Snowmobile  
Bluffs  
People (friendly)  
Education system  
Ethanol plant  
Bank – Associated  
Strong economy – jobs for kids  
Fish hatchery  
State park  
State forestland  
Farming  
Eagle Bluff Environmental Center  
B & B's  
Down home environment  
Low crime rate  
Hunting  
Buffalo Bill Days  
Theater – Arts  
Small populations  
Wal-Mart  
Cheese  
Lions Club  
4-H  
Not crowded  
Active churches  
Hunting  
Parks  
Trout streams  
Law Enforcement  
Recreational activities  
Leadership  
Historical sites  
Friendly people  
Ag base  
Topography  
Work ethic  
Head Start program  
SEMCAC

Farmland, livestock  
Clean air, good air quality  
Nice mix of people  
A lot of small communities  
Tourism  
Rural atmosphere  
Good access to Broadband technology  
Good alternative living choices, housing  
Strong healthcare resources (regional), including emergency and ambulance  
Public safety  
Abundant wildlife  
Small schools, good schools  
Quality of life  
Local foods, organic choices  
Reasonably close to Rochester  
Natural beauty  
Natural resources  
The arts  
Excellent communities  
Strong culture, strong roots, Amish, ethnic Norwegian, heritage of County  
Good parks, State and Municipal  
Trout fishing  
Strong social fabric, extended families, neighbors, volunteerism  
Farmer's elevator, nursing home, businesses in general  
Trails  
Rural community – friendly community, small town feel  
TCE – power source, employment  
Scenic area, hunting, fishing, parks, Root River  
Tourism  
Nanotechnology  
Library – new, update  
Building Ag land development (split)  
History/Heritage  
Churches – located to Winona, LaCrosse, larger towns  
People – nice  
Small community  
Private Business – no big corps.  
Job availability for teenagers  
Environment – Forestville State Park  
Bike trails  
Education  
Commuting to Rochester  
Old people – spend money in Spring Valley

### **Weaknesses**

Weather Dependent Tourism  
Need more investment towards roads  
Restaurants – Fast Food  
Low Population  
Losing youth to Twin Cities Metro Area

Low Tax Base  
Low Income  
Hard to vote in progressive change due to low income  
Improve school systems & Facilities  
Not enough activities for teens  
Not enough jobs  
Better Planning at County Level  
More business development  
Cliques between towns.  
Bluffs  
Economic communities far away from Regional Economic Center in Rochester  
Transportation system, bad roads  
Housing pressure in different parts of County  
Lower population growth  
Telecommunication infrastructure  
Fostering growth of young generations in business  
Who to call for starting a business  
Inconsistence between County and Townships  
Too many un-elected people making too many decisions for property owners  
Distance to healthcare  
Jobs/Lack of employment opportunities/Lack of jobs  
Zoning restrictions are too restrictive  
Poor zoning  
Retaining youth  
Zoning consistency  
Poor conservation practices  
Zoning – affects lead to lack of jobs, which leads to youth leaving  
State restrictions affect businesses which causes the business to leave the state  
No help for farmers with history of no-till  
Resistance to change  
Aging population  
A bit of complacency  
Low economic base  
Non-ethnically diverse  
Poor County  
Reliance of Ag on farm subsidies  
Lack of cooperation/communication between various school districts  
Slow – resistant to change  
Outward migration of youth  
Poor roads/bridges  
Rising elderly population  
Educational infrastructure  
Underemployment  
Weather dependent tourism  
Need more money put towards roads  
Better job of making sure county is clean (pick up trash)  
Lower population  
Losing youth to Twin Cities/Metro  
Low tax base, low income  
Hard to vote in progressive changes due to low income

Cliques between towns  
Improve school, systems & facilities, better planning at County level  
Not enough activities for teens (boring)  
Not enough jobs  
More elderly age of population  
Small population  
Lower income  
More girls and boys  
No franchises  
More recreation, pools, rec center  
Flooding  
More families  
Parking in summer  
Seasonal homeowners  
Grocery store  
Wal-Mart  
Law enforcement  
Lack of law enforcement on west side of county (Ostrander)  
Roads  
Job opportunities, not enough  
Bridges  
Aging church population  
Lack of entertainment  
Social services, not enough  
No young farmers starting up  
Engineering consulting fees  
Public transportation  
Lack of funding  
Access to higher education  
Shortage of small/light industries  
Water and river pollution  
School system, how to fund, declining funds from State and Federal  
Lack of contour farming  
Effect of major crops on soil and water  
Aging population, disproportionate  
Low paying jobs, \$15.00 plus benefits  
Geology, karst region, groundwater pollution  
Lack of diversity  
Lack of uniform building code  
Lack of good roads in some areas  
Resistance to change  
Gambling  
No mass transit  
Fewer farms, declining and fewer farmers  
Up percentage of 2<sup>nd</sup> home ownership  
High property tax rate, burden  
Local pride gets in way of cooperation  
Environmental protection, runoff from farms, inconsistent regulation, runoff from cities  
Loss of trees  
Shortage of alternative energy sources

Lack of local medical care  
Job development  
Certain cropping/pasture practices  
Aging housing stock  
“Not in my backyard” mentality  
Access to affordable healthcare, cost, reason for youth flight  
Shrinking school population

### **Opportunities**

Winter Tourism  
In-home businesses  
Clustered Housing  
Enhance Tourism  
Keep small businesses going  
Enhance and expand Historic Bluff Country  
Go smoke free in county  
Economic niches in communities  
Chatfield growth  
Fast food places  
Growth of small manufacturing  
Service industry, elderly component  
Healthcare industry  
Job opportunities, technology  
Tourism  
Hunting and fishing  
Renewable resources  
Community minded  
Agriculture  
Individualized education/Attention  
Organic farming  
Small business – retail/services – fixing bikes, etc.  
Community minded – neighborly, more people involved  
Affordable housing  
Opportunity for more forage crops  
Technology – good infrastructure  
Stable Economy  
Good recreational Facilities  
Ag-related niche markets  
Reasonable cost of living  
Close proximity to good jobs  
Artistic communities  
Expand local forestry/agriculture base  
Small and secure schools  
Expand business – tax incentives, good employees  
Horse country for tourism  
Easy to get involved  
Technology – good jobs  
Tourism/Recreation  
Land available for development  
Restaurants, fast food

In-home businesses  
Clustered housing  
Enhance tourism  
Business development (more)  
Economic niches in communities  
Amusement park, theme park  
Keep small business going  
Enhance, expand Historic Bluff Country's activities  
Go smoke free in county  
Stable Economy  
Good recreational Facilities  
Ag-related niche markets  
Reasonable cost of living  
Close proximity to good jobs  
Artistic communities  
Expand local forestry/agriculture base  
Small and secure schools  
Expand business – tax incentives, good employees  
Horse country for tourism  
Easy to get involved  
Technology – good jobs  
Tourism/Recreation  
Land available for development  
Restaurants, fast food  
In-home businesses  
Clustered housing  
Enhance tourism  
Business development (more)  
Economic niches in communities  
Amusement park, theme park  
Keep small business going  
Enhance, expand Historic Bluff Country's activities  
Go smoke free in county  
Limited  
Community education  
Wind power  
Recreation trails  
Ethanol  
We need a lake  
Expansion of historical sites  
Senior citizen involvement  
County farmland  
County farmland for park  
Lots of corn, eat the corn, plastics, corn maze  
Local food system  
Industrial expansion, present industrial expansion  
Technology, internet based, home based  
Tourism  
Clean environment  
Entertainment, rural entertainment park

Charitable gaming, more gambling  
Small town atmosphere with big city opportunities  
Regional cooperation and collaboration, schools  
Increase in creative class membership in County  
Climate for entrepreneurship  
Globalization  
Alternative energy  
Value added agriculture  
Restoration of historic architecture  
Increasing access to information  
Distance learning  
Expand golf course  
Fitness Center  
Ski hill Mount Rushford  
Entertainment – movies, theaters  
Updated library  
More jobs  
Development in right places (Ag land, not Bluff land)  
Expanded education opportunities  
Assisted living  
New Business - grow more  
New homes  
Rochester growth  
Combine schools – weakness in driving for some  
Movie Theater  
Small town feel – draws people  
More recreational land – state land  
Hunting land/management areas/pheasant hunting  
Land is opportunity

### **Threats**

Losing our rural character  
Unclustered housing development  
Losing hunting rights  
Pollution  
Clean Water  
Light pollution  
Losing Ag and small business  
Losing rural emergency services  
Losing participants in civic organizations  
Law enforcement  
Safety  
Social Services: customer service, mandated by State, personnel issues  
Lack of entertainment: kid involvement, strict adult entertainment  
Hotel  
Highway 30  
More jobs for school kids  
Nothing for kids- entertainment  
Better schools (Rushford)  
More restaurants

Fast food chain (split)  
Mall  
Development (split)  
Restrictions on building (split)  
Tanning  
Dependent on weather as in relates to tourism  
Fitness Center – gym  
Indoor pool  
Nothing to do  
Old school buildings  
Enrollment down  
Township roads – bad, potholes, rough  
Pollution – pesticides  
Meth  
Bored teenagers  
Crime  
Bedroom Community  
Shopping on Rochester  
More elective – less every year  
Old people – referendum  
Lack of diversity – people staying in Spring Valley not knowing what’s out there  
Communication  
Apathy  
Government  
Public meetings  
Public decides what landowners can do with land  
Overregulated  
Mandates from State  
Influx of outsiders  
State restrictions on businesses  
Small lots in woodlands  
Lack of funding – City, County and Township  
Tire burning plant  
Declining enrollment  
Elderly population  
Roads and bridges  
Schools – funding and enrollment  
Large livestock confinement  
Corporate farming/Absentee owners  
Meth/Drugs  
Loss of small business, outsourcing  
Outside investors  
Loss of students for schools  
Woodland lots - affect hunting and fishing  
Elderly population – don’t buy as much, need more services  
Permitting restrictions and zoning on business and personal  
Too much government  
Loss of local business – competition from external business  
Deteriorating roads/bridges  
Declining enrollment in schools

Location – no McDonald's or Menards  
Brain drain  
Loss of State Funding  
Loss of Fed/State money for infrastructure  
Low income – housing for elderly  
Low income housing for First Time Buyers  
Large low-income population  
Undesirable industry – impact on Ag/Tourism  
Aging population  
Decreasing livestock numbers  
Loss of Ag subsidies  
Resistance to change  
Loss of population – students  
Pollution  
Clean water  
Losing our rural character  
Unclustered housing development  
Losing hunting rights  
Losing farms  
Tire Burning  
Light pollution at night (protect dark sky)  
Losing Ag, small businesses  
Losing rural emergency services (ambulance, fire, etc.)  
Losing participation in civic organizations.  
Tire plant (pollution)  
Fertilizers  
Erosion of Root  
Karst region  
Limestone  
Declining population  
Lack of jobs  
Weather (no snow)  
West Nile  
Chronic Wasting Disease  
Mad Cow Disease  
Terrorism  
Rec. Center  
Water park (splash pool)  
Expansion of theater  
Downtown building space  
Cheese factory  
High tech industry  
Loss of family farms – children do not take them over  
Rural subdivisions  
Trespassing – hunters  
Lack of community involvement  
Tourism  
Loss of ag land  
Aging population  
Waste treatment

Declining Enrollment  
Land use  
Termites  
Property taxes  
Drugs  
Poverty level  
Ag land used for pretty yards  
Meth  
Ag land lost to tourism  
Land use: rural subdivisions  
Property taxes: rising  
City people moving into the country and affecting farmer's way of life  
In migration of affluent retirees  
Asian Lady beetles and too many whitetail deer  
Level of individual health  
Policies favoring expansion of large-scale farms  
Township regulations in conflict  
Loosened enforcement of air and water quality regulations  
Youth flight  
Unfunded mandates from State/Federal  
Retiring farmers  
Lack of assertiveness, humble, lack of self-confidence  
People who are not aware of their potential  
Rising oil prices  
Special interest groups that affect farming  
Rising criminal activity, drugs, Meth  
Land prices  
Concentration of land ownership  
People coming from big cities and buying up land  
Globalization  
Lack of diversity  
Reduced State and Federal aid  
National agriculture policies  
Urban sprawl, subdivision in rural area, from Rochester decrease of ag land, which is an asset  
Terrorists  
Bid business – large employers  
Weather – flooding  
Pollution  
Deer  
Loss of jobs  
Interstate – high traffic highway  
Wal-Mart  
Housing for elderly  
School consolidation  
Older people gone  
Crime – larger we get better  
Rochester – growth  
People leaving for Rochester  
School conditions – students going elsewhere  
Boredom – turn to crime; loss of people

Not enough opportunities

Drugs

Farmers losing farms – selling off big farms; corporations owning country;  
small farmers selling to bigger farmers

Weather – snowmobile

Taking away trout stream

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**Appendix B  
Citizens Survey**

**Section I – Learning About You**

**Please Complete Survey by May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2005**

1. Are you a resident of Fillmore County  
833 Yes \_\_\_No 7-Blank
2. How many months do you live in Fillmore County each year?
3. Please rank the following general issues in the order you feel they should have priority throughout the Fillmore County planning process. 1=Greatest priority, 5=Least priority.

52 Housing needs  
337 Employment and other economic issues  
142 Infrastructure (roads, telecommunications, electricity, sewer and water)  
197 Environmental quality and natural resource issues  
159 Land use

**Section II – Housing Issues**

4. Please indicate the township **or** city in which you reside.  
Township \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_
5. Do you feel the county needs to be more proactive in guiding the location of future housing development?  
487 Yes 177 No 167 Not sure 9-Blank

Please explain if necessary:

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6. Do you feel it is important to preserve open space (examples recreational, agricultural, woodlands), by regulating developments?  
681 Yes 93 No 52 Not Sure 14-Blank

Please explain if necessary:

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7. Do you feel that county zoning ordinances and regulations of land use should concentrate more in township areas or city areas, or equally in both?  
217 Township 93 City 504 Equally in both 26-Blank

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### Section III – Economic Development

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8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement:  
There is a need for economic growth in Fillmore County?

336 Strongly Agree 345 Agree 97 Neutral 37 Disagree 13 Strongly Disagree 12-Blank

9. Do you feel Fillmore County should promote economic growth?  
654 Yes 72 No 94 Not sure 20-Blank

10. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree that the following types of development will be beneficial to Fillmore County:

**a. Tourism**

288 Strongly Agree 341 Agree 133 Neutral 36 Disagree 29 Strongly Disagree 13-Blank

**b. Industry**

203 Strongly Agree 315 Agree 178 Neutral 76 Disagree 51 Strongly Disagree 17-Bk

**c. Light Industry**

303 Strongly Agree 423 Agree 70 Neutral 19 Disagree 9 Strongly Disagree 16-Blank

**d. Commercial/Retail/Service**

264 Strongly Agree 405 Agree 122 Neutral 17 Disagree 8 Strongly Disagree 24-Blank

**e. Hi-Tech**

237 Strongly Agree 304 Agree 227 Neutral 30 Disagree 22 Strongly Disagree 20-Blank

**f. Agriculture/Forestry**

371 Strongly Agree 340 Agree 97 Neutral 14 Disagree 5 Strongly Disagree 13-Blank

11. Where, if anywhere, are you in favor of expanding/developing commercial/retail or light industrial?  
(Multiple answers possible).

466 Continue development as it relates to existing zoning and land use  
263 Develop additional new areas outside existing zoning and land use plan  
59 Against any expansion/development  
124 No opinion/not sure

### Section IV – Transportation

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12. Do you feel that the transportation system/roads in your community are adequate today?  
361 Yes 402 No 55 Not sure 22-Blank

13. If you believe the transportation network is inadequate, what is needed? (Multiple answers possible).

13 More roads 137 Wider roads  
438 Better road surfaces 342 Better maintenance  
97 Senior Mobility 89 Transit

\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

14. Do you feel there are hazardous or problematic intersections or roads that you feel need more traffic signals or signs in your area? 307 Yes 300 No 196 Not sure 37-Blank

If so, please specify:

\_\_\_\_\_

15. Do you feel the current road network provides for urban growth in Fillmore County?  
394 Yes 152 No 251 Not sure 43-Blank

16. Are there any concerns you have regarding transportation in Fillmore County?

\_\_\_\_\_

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**Section V – Environmental Issues**

17. Please rank the importance of the following environmental issues as they relate to Fillmore County.  
Check top three (3) priorities

- |                      |                                 |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| 168 City development | 393 Fertilizer/Pesticide Runoff |
| 330 Soil Erosion     | 248 Animal feedlots             |
| 79 Forestry/logging  | 168 Waste/septic issues         |
| 135 Industry         | 254 Air quality/pollution       |
| 150 Habitat Loss     | 444 Water Quality               |
| 11 Other: _____      |                                 |

18. Are there any other concerns you have regarding environmental impacts of current or future land uses in Fillmore County?

\_\_\_\_\_

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**Section VI – General Land Use**

19. What is your opinion on the current land-use laws in Fillmore County?

- |                            |                           |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 161 Too restrictive        | 147 Just fine             |
| 217 Not restrictive enough | 272 No opinion / not sure |

20. Please indicate where you feel ordinances are most needed in Fillmore County?

1=most needed 5=least needed (Please rank all items below)

- |                                |                              |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 149 Public nuisance            | 364 Environmental protection |
| 259 Incoming industrial plants | 130 Housing Construction     |
| 32 Other: _____                |                              |

21. Please rank the order of importance of the following areas in which Fillmore County should consider in its comprehensive planning process. Please rank top 5 priorities.

- 25 City/County Parks

- 33 Recreational Trails
- 36 Hunting/Fishing Areas
- 2 Campgrounds
- 0 Sports Fields
- 130 Small Businesses
- 29 Open Space
- 51 Sewer/Water Infrastructure
- 117 Traditional Agriculture
- 29 Intensive Agriculture
- 6 State Parks
- 100 Highways/Roads
- 24 Housing
- 27 Wildlife conservation
- 176 Schools
- 30 Light Industry
- 17 Heavy Industry
- 3 Transit
- 12 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

22. Please describe how you would like to see Fillmore County 10 years from now:

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23. Please list any additional comments or concerns you would like to address:

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Thank you for your time and feedback!