

Mille Lacs County Comprehensive Plan Project Initial Round of Community Meetings Report



Winter 2012

MILLE LACS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMUNITY MEETINGS REPORT WINTER 2012



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As part of the Mille Lacs County Comprehensive Plan Project, a series of nine identically formatted community meetings were held during January, February & March, 2012 at the following locations and dates across Mille Lacs County:

Princeton: Thursday, January 19th - 7:00 pm @ Princeton City Hall
Pease: Tuesday, February 7th – 7:00 pm @ Pease City Hall
Milaca: Thursday February 9th – 7:00 pm @ Milaca City Hall
Foreston: Thursday, February 16th – 7:00 pm @ Foreston City Hall
Mille Lacs County: Saturday, February 18th – 10:00 am at Mille Lacs Courthouse
Wahkon: Thursday, February 23rd – 7:00 pm at Wahkon City Hall
Onamia: Thursday, March 1st – 7:00 pm @ Onamia City Hall
Isle: Tuesday, March 6th – 7:00 pm @ Isle City Hall
MLB Office: Tuesday, March 20th – 7:00 pm @ MLB Gov. Office (rescheduled from Feb. 28th due to weather)

The agenda and meeting format were identical at these meetings:

- 1) Welcome – all were welcomed to the meetings.
- 2) Introductions – all were introduced; facilitators, staff and participants.
- 3) Background – a presentation was made regarding what a comprehensive plan is, and the planned steps for creating a new one of Mille Lacs County. Questions were answered as they arose. A copy of this presentation was handed out for participants to take.
- 4) Review of Demographics and Statistics – a presentation was made of the County’s demographics and statistics. Questions were answered as they arose. A copy of this presentation was handed out for participants to take, as well as a more in depth presentation on this topic prepared by staff from the MN Department of Employment & Economic Development.
- 5) Visioning – several questions were asked to participants in an effort to garner input on a variety of topics. Participants were asked to write their answers on provided slips of paper. The facilitator also asked everyone to comment verbally – comments were written down and both written and verbal comments are included in this report.

Questions asked of participants include:

- Why do you live in Mille Lacs County?
 - If you could change one thing about Mille Lacs County, what would it be?
 - If you could keep one thing the same about Mille Lacs County, what would it be?
 - And a SWOT Analysis was undertaken for the following topics:
 - o Environment & Energy
 - o Public Safety
 - o Natural Resources
 - o Economic Development / Operating a Business in Mille Lacs County
- 6) Next Steps – the next steps of the project were outlined and participants were asked to volunteer to serve on topic area ad-hoc task forces, attend future meetings, sign up for email updates, and bookmark the Comprehensive Plan section of the County website.
 - 7) Questions? – any final questions participants had were answered.

Agendas handed out also included a list of all dates, times and locations of the initial round of community meetings being held as part of the Mille Lacs County Comprehensive Plan Project. Also on



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

This initial round of Community Meetings were promoted through the media (newspapers, flyers), as well as emails sent to cities and businesses to forward on to stakeholders. Citizen participation was good overall. Attendance varied from near forty participants to as low as two.

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



Princeton Community Meeting

If you could change one thing in Mille Lacs County, what would it be?

Economics – industry expand
Leadership in local areas
Stop selling all our land along Mille Lacs to the Reservation
Family community center with indoor water park
Movie Theater in Princeton
Employment Opportunities
Youth activity
Improve outdoor recreational opportunities like bike trails

Pease Community Meeting

If you could change one thing in Mille Lacs County, what would it be?

Keep expenses down at the county courthouse – time to stop remodeling
Less regulation from government
More business
Better roads
Less casino gambling
Less government
Have less influence from casino gambling
Employment opportunities
More businesses
More industry or business to raise tax base
Lower taxes
Lose some of the regulations, land use!
Lower taxes – fees
Lower taxes
Lower permit fees
The price of land
Smaller government
Less government control
Better education for all ages of children and not cut programs
More industry – work

Milaca Community Meeting

If you could change one thing in Mille Lacs County, what would it be?

More equitable distribution of state funds to counties
Have more property rights less intrusive government
Remove the rocks down by the river
Get rid of strip joint in Bock
Lower property taxes



Get rid of Fat Jacks
Equal tax with state on school system
Fishing regulation on Lake Mille Lacs
Business atmosphere
Improved park and trail systems
Business atmosphere
Improved park and trail systems
School funding
More community involvement in local businesses and school system and community in general
Keep local business thriving
Reduce influence from regional government
Increase awareness of how our liberty is being eroded by government
Less taxes
More jobs
Reduce regional government control
High taxes
Improved neighborhood roads
Less tax
Less tax
Improve our weather warning system
Get more businesses in town
Lower property taxes
Community resources
Lower property taxes
Taxes, less regulations
Less restrictive rules and regulations

Foreston Community Meeting

If you could change one thing in Mille Lacs County, what would it be?

It would be good to know and have more input with our county representative
Less government control
Lower taxes
That non-elected officials and elected officials can determine land use
More jobs that pay a living wage
Lower property taxes
Relax regulations on land and ownership business
Less regulations and permits
Less regulations, larger minimum lot size
Environment should be taken care of, but property rights triumph
Lower taxes, encouragement of quality private industry to support tax base and lower private individual tax burden
Less government intrusion
Less government restrictions
Less government influence



Less taxes
Less public sector (more private sector)
1 house 40 acres
Reduce regulation – environmental
Land forfeited for tax delinquency should not e given to state
Lower taxes
Relax regulations
Taxes are too high
Building regulations are too strict
Less government control
Reduce taxes
Relax regulations
Add good manufacturing jobs
More jobs
Lower taxes
5 county commissioners
Less property regulations
Less taxes
Smaller government
Don't spend tax money on bike trails, make bicycle riders pay for repairing the soo line trail with registration fees
Keep taxes in order
Less regulations
Less people on welfare roll
Less population
Less government
Less regulations
Less government
Les taxes and regulations
Less government
Lower taxes and regulations
No agenda 21
I would like to see this county to set an example for the rest of the nation for a smaller conservative government similar to the way are fore fathers designed it, thank you for asking
To be left alone as far as property rights go. No more regulations. We don't need more government!
They are robbing us blind and will continue to do so if left unchecked. The more land they steal for trails or buffer zones the more taxes we have to pay. No to Agenda 21!
Better roads to attract businesses
Improve tax base
Less governmental involvement in personal property
No on Agenda 21
Less government control of everything, more private control of personal property
Moving in trailers or homes on every small space available (corn fields, etc)
Attract businesses
More jobs
Less poverty



Less taxes
More county public amenities – bike trails, river access, recreation areas (Frisbee golf, picnic etc.)
Maintain the clean water
Open space and quiet I moved here for
More regulation, too many loud parties, too much noise, mud runners, too many snowmobiles, noise and lights shine on my house. The noise levels of mud runners, parties, wheelers and snowmobiles are ruining the natural swamp/wetland next to me.
Lower taxes
Less regulation
Less county debt load
Less costly
Real estate taxes
Keep freedom as is
No federal intrusion

Mille Lacs County Historic Courthouse Meeting

If you could change one thing in Mille Lacs County, what would it be?

Less taxes and less government interference
Lower taxes on farm land, less regulations on land use, less government
Lower ag taxes on open land
Lower taxes on property
Lower taxes
Lower property taxes
Lower taxes
Reduce taxes and government oversight
The large amount of money that is going to be used to remodel the courthouse in an economic slump like this. It should be stopped.
Equal rights for fishing on Mille Lacs Lake
See increase in smaller farms
Increased educational opportunities for adults
Lower property taxes
Reduce taxes, government
No more encroachment of the government on private property
Equal rights for fishing on Mille Lacs Lake
Lower taxes
Governing bodies (township, city and county) who are responsive to residents needs and concerns. Experiences, trained and cable of decision making within their areas. Ability to work with other governing bodies.
Fewer governmental mandates on property owners and farmers. Property rights are critical.
Lower the taxes.
Increase tax base – need more business and industry
Equal rights on Mille Lacs Lake
Less township, county and state government involvement and restrictions
Greater tourism opportunities and facilities



Improved local employment opportunities
Property taxes (make them reasonable and not ridiculously exorbitant)
Lower taxes
Smaller government

Wahkon Community Meeting

If you could change one thing in Mille Lacs County, what would it be?

Back off zoning restrictions on farms and rural housing
I would like to see common sense “real life”, regulations and zoning and to see regulations consistently and clearly communicated in a friendly, competent manner
Less intrusive zoning regulations
More employment opportunities in agriculture and forestry and tourism
I would have the county take over trash disposal. Tax us. Have drop off points like they do in Montana.
Now people are rewarded for littering.
Zoning reform, ag use relaxed
Menacing zoning laws

Onamia Community Meeting

If you could change one thing in Mille Lacs County, what would it be?

Roads
Water quality
Less welfare
Four lane highway through county
Zoning rules in how prohibitive they are and costs
More economic development in the northern part of the county
Better local farm, family farm economy
Environmental protection
More regulation of land use
Simpler zoning and other laws more understandable to the general public and published! and Fees!
The county government needs to be more “development” friendly. It is very difficult to build or develop in the county.

Isle Community Meeting

Visioning Process

If you could change one thing in Mille Lacs County, what would it be?

More shopping close to Isle
More places to work
More employment opportunities
Lower the taxes
The excessive and intrusive regulations (particularly zoning)
I would like to work closer than an hour from home
Right now I work the other side of Brainerd 1 hour and 15 min to work



Less crime
Increase industrial base for more jobs
Better education facilities, more options
Better control of crime and reducing it

Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Community Meeting

If you could change one thing in Mille Lacs County, what would it be?

More active - proactive inclusion of all folks in County
Working together



Princeton Community Meeting

If you could keep one thing the same in Mille Lacs County, what would it be?

Recreation – Mille Lacs Lake
Try keep small town
Small town feel. Closeness of community
Natural resources
Controlled growth and development
Rural character
Try to maintain its recreational destination character
Small town feeling

Pease Community Meeting

If you could keep one thing the same in Mille Lacs County, what would it be?

Keep recreational opportunities
Keep smaller town and area atmosphere
Keep it looking rural
Milaca size of school and placement
Small town and farms fresh air
The way that most of the people get treated no matter of income or race
Taxes
Recreational activities – freedom of land use
Freedom of property usage
The water
Family values
Freedom values
Not to annexed by city of Princeton for city sewer, water etc.
Keep it a small town all American rural community
Small town atmosphere

Milaca Community Meeting

If you could keep one thing the same in Mille Lacs County, what would it be?

Small town
Rural character
Small government
The population remain same
Slow steady growth of Mille Lacs County
Don't over regulate us more than we already are
Keep us under regulated
Keep it under regulated
Prevent more school cuts
Keep school from losing students



Small town atmosphere
Park systems
Don't change what we have now
Small town limited involvement in regional government
Small town
I like it the way it is
Lower tax
Lower taxes
Recreation
Small town, quiet
Small town
Maintain or reduce rules and regs
Keep the small town center opposed to spread of business
Keep government off my back by not annexing me into Princeton

Foreston Community Meeting

If you could keep one thing the same in Mille Lacs County, what would it be?

The right to bear arms
The quality of life that has been ours to enjoy. I feel safe here! I don't want to see that go away.
Right to bear arms
Freedom of religion
Population
Country living
Right to bear arms
One house – 40 acres
Public land not to decrease
No property tax increase
Privacy
Small community feel
Open and unfettered access to my own land (the same for other property owners)
Small town atmosphere/country – rural community
I like the friendliness of
Country feel
Lots of good people
Good churches
Good country living
Keep neighborhood and land opportunity free/available so the next generation has the same opportunities to own land/fish and hunt/farm/grow food
Personal freedom
The friendliness of people
Small town living – country living – support farm land
Not sure what we actually have. Many things have encroached that are hidden.
Keep freedom of no federal government or United Nations intrusion
Keep freedom of religion and right to bear arms



Like our farm and freedom
No more changes, keep as it is
Freedom that we have always had in the past and keep my freedom of religion
I like the 40 acre rule for Mille Lacs County (Greenbush Twp) 1 house per 40 acres
No more regulations on what we already have.
Small town living
Almost everything
Keep freedom of personal choice and private property
Private property stay private property
5 acre minim lot size rural
Rural "country feel"
Slower paced
Neighbors, trusting friends, people willing to help people
Good school system
Homestead agriculture property tax levels (lower than normal)
Keeping agricultural/family farms especially local food production
The high quality of life
Small businesses dominating
I like where I live. It's the neighborhood that has developed around me "has changed my lifestyle"
Right to bear arms
The ability to organize, speak and vote

Mille Lacs County Historic Courthouse County Community Meeting

If you could keep one thing the same in Mille Lacs County, what would it be?

Go back to better property freedom
Property rights
Property ownership by the people/citizens
Property rights
Plenty of land that hasn't been broken up into developments
Overall good social services programs and staff
Not to develop on the Rum River
Property rights
Property rights
Keep the EPA out of the county
Property rights
Privacy
Less regulation
Rural living within driving distance of metro areas
Great transportation line
Property rights
The rights of the property owners to keep their land and the government to not steal it away for their own personal use
Maintain rural environment/atmosphere and sense of community
Keep/protect natural resources and recreation opportunities



Freedoms

Wahkon Community Meeting

If you could keep one thing the same in Mille Lacs County, what would it be?

I'd like to see the population density stay about the same, so a person feels they have space to breath, live and work without others piling on top of them

Population density, no increase

The movement toward small farms and locally grown food, crops, farmers markets and we need to support these people. They are the future.

The open spaces and forests and farms

Keep population down

Keep population down, farmers markets, agriculture support and less restricts on feed lots etc.

Hunting and fishing so far

Onamia Community Meeting

If you could keep one thing the same in Mille Lacs County, what would it be?

Less regulations

Lower taxes

Natural beauty – forests, lakes and rivers

Good neighbors – look out for each other, it has been dwindling

Friendly businesses – Better Senior friendly atmosphere because of increase in this population

More cooperation between county and cities

Low population density in rural areas

Roads cooperation among government entities

Open farm land, forest and fishing

The high level of expertise in health care shown by the Mille Lacs County Health System

Isle Community Meeting

If you could keep one thing the same in Mille Lacs County, what would it be?

Lower taxes

More jobs

More businesses

Keep the lake clean for people

Nice friendly people

Not like the big city

To be treated the name as my Native Americans

The walleye

Tourism and Mille Lacs Lake

Small town community feel with less regulations



Rural feel

The stewardship and cultivation of nature (wide open space, lakes, marshland, etc.)

Not more crowded. Keep our open spaces.

Recreation opportunities

Keep our open spaces

Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Community Meeting

If you could keep one thing the same in Mille Lacs County, what would it be?

Lake Mille Lacs – clean, regional asset

Natural Areas

Clean Lake (Mille Lacs)



Princeton Community Meeting

Why do you live here?

Own business and home, semi retired

My job and like location for quick access to the Twin Cities and still not so far to get into Northern MN.

Actually live in Sherburne County

Born here, love it

Between the best of two places

Moved here for wife's job and settled in

Like the community and the school (Princeton) for raising kids

It is a location ½ way between the Cities (arts) and outdoors (lakes and woods)

Social economic reasons. I also took into account the school system in which my children would attend

Pease Community Meeting

Why do you live here?

Born here – decent location

Do not like the metro or any populated area

Lots of space, low cost of living

Lots of nature

Moved from Chicago in 1994

I live in Mille Lacs County to live a distance from the city but close enough for convenience. The taxes are also good here compared to surrounding city counties.

Work

Home

Raised here

Family roots

I like it here – lakes, trees

I was born here

Born here

Liked the area in early 1980's and liked it even better once I got to know a lot about the area. My kids (family) don't like the idea of moving.

Education

Did not like yuppies, liked small school

I like green vegetation

Originally from here, employed here and wanted to raise a family here

I bought a farm here for better farm land, a smaller town and school

Love living in the country

Born and raised here

Milaca Community Meeting

Why do you live here?

I don't but my township in Sherburne county is about to get a comp plan. I came to learn about comp plans. I will get annexed into Princeton someday.



Family and business here
Small town
Great place to raise a family
My wife was born here
No mass transit
Freedom to live as I want to
Minimal Government
Married a county resident
Country living
Small town, raise a family
Job opportunity
Opportunity to own a small family business
Small town for kids to grow up
Space
Born and raised here, later built business on family land
Small town
Moved here in 1985 from Nashville, a girl moved me here. I decided to say because of my son, plus I like very small towns.
Move here for job and liked small town life
Small town
Born here
I was born here 77 years ago
Retired and moved here
Retired
Have more room or land
Retirement
River lot, reasonable price
Our hometown
Small town
Born here, family and friends
Retired and built home where grew up
My livelihood – farm

Foreston Community Meeting

Why do you live here?

I moved up here because I wanted a place in the country. I didn't want close neighbors. I wanted peace and quiet. The neighborhood grew up around me. Now my neighborhood become "interesting".
Because I was born here. How much of our land are you planning on taking
Born here, parents lived here, children live here, grand children live here, had a job here for 30 years
My dad bought a farm in Foreston in 1965, he always wanted a farm. He lived here and St. Paul ½ and ½ - returned here in 1977 – died the same day. My 2 brothers were here – I was living in St. Paul with my mom yet – shed didn't want to move up here after my dad died. I cared for here when she died I moved up here – she split the farm between me and my brothers. Love the country.
Fresh air, freedom and space to hunt, fish, farm.



Affordable land, freedom to own land and raise a family don't want to see regulation
My husband I moved here in 1960 because he bought a milk route, started farming and our family of 11
on the farm. Wonderful school system in Milaca. Love it here.
"Small town living" Very worried about private property rights
School, home, church
Because it was a farm area that our ancestors chose to farm because it was like Sweden and available,
have property here
I like the country living, privacy, every one would wave to you
I was born and raised here. I do enjoy the area and what it offers. Close to Minneapolis yet far enough
away to enjoy the country. Very good place to live!
Grew up in Kanabec County, worked in St. Cloud at time, closer commute, stay close to family
I and my wife work in Mille Lacs County
When we moved here in '94 we got more house for our money. It also got us farther away from the
cities so our kids could grow up in a smaller community. Stayed because like our community.
Hopefully lessening federal government involvement
I was born here
I moved here for the private school and more acreage with no covenants
Job
Job, country living, less regulations
Good place to raise kids
Born here, moved back here to buy farm in 1974
I like living on the farm
Born and raised in Mille Lacs County, family here
Born and raised here
Family is here
Quiet country living
Freedom! Independence, property, privacy and kids
We started living in this county because it was a good place to raise kids, people are very friendly also
close for hunting and fishing. Lots of opportunity for other kinds of employment and still close enough
to county for work.
My husband and I farm here. My youngest daughter goes to school in Princeton. I like the town, I like
the people. I love the peace and quiet of the country.
Seclusion, privacy not so crowded an area as the cities and St. Cloud. Rural, personal space.
I like the freedom of living in a sparsely populated area. Country living and raising kids in good rural
area.
Organic farming
Family nearby
More space/land for personal recreational use, not a lot of people
I grew up here and raised my family here and like it here
The rural idyll
Access to fresh air, land and recreation
Proximity to St. Cloud, Metro, Duluth
Access to affordable, wooded, quality land
Quiet, space



Mille Lacs County Historic Courthouse Community Meeting

Why do you live here?

We farm so we have to be here. Not many farms in Minneapolis.

I love our privacy. We are into target shooting practicing and just walk out our door and shoot. We love our guns, our land, our liberty and freedom. Good people.

Rural livings is best

Privacy is great

Neighbors are good

I like to have the privacy of being in the county and the good neighbors that we have

I like the people here

I live in Princeton twsp because I taught at PHS and my late husband was raised in Princeton and we wanted to live in a rural area. We loved our freedom from regulation that prohibited us from enjoying rural.

Employed here

Rural environment

Freedom

Privacy

Right to own

Great area

Right to bear arms

I originally moved here because there was little inference by local government regarding use of property. I.E. I did not have to have building inspector for anything other than electric and sewer. Taxes used to be minimal.

Because my family is here

Land here was less expensive when I built my home in the 90's

Housing prices – Ramsey vs. Princeton

Lower taxes

Personal privacy

Looking for a less populated area to retire

Own land – privacy

Wide open spaces – quiet less traffic

Love the rural area – woods, lakes, rivers, large lots

Close to Twin Cities for entertainment, etc.

Less regulation in rural areas

Close to colleges

Smaller school districts

Family

Very pretty

Economic potential

Centralized location – not too far or too close to twin cities metro area

Nice land – beauty

Centralized location – not too far or too close to Twin Cites metro area

Nice land – beauty

It is where I ended up and I like it better than some of the surrounding counties

Private property freedoms



Country living better
Country people better

Wahkon Community Meeting

Why do you live here?

Born and raised here – now I work here also, love rural living
I live here because I was born here (Onamia). I went to school in Isle and after college I was able to find a great job in Isle
Move to wife's home place
Moved here from Philadelphia, PA in 1976 with family for better life when I was 13
Home to my wife and myself, we like the area
I grew up in MN. I left and it took 15 years to get back. When I was offered a low paying job, I jumped. I like the seasons. I like the snow and the green grass.
Family
Born here and returned after 20 year army career
My husband and his family are here and I moved to be with him and on the family farm
I was born here and raised on my parents and grandparents farm

Onamia Community Meeting

Why do you live here?

Rural area, acreage, affordable when purchased
Purchased a business and a home
We always have and always will
A good place to live – schools, hospital, neighbors
Bought land because it was cheap
Liked it and stayed
Born here and love it guess I'll die here
Business
Born here
Family here
Moved into Mille Lacs County to work in 1970, retired here in 2005, no reason to move as we like it here
I like it here

Isle Community Meeting

Why do you live here?

Married here, husband from here, would not live anywhere else
I love the lake and I'm close to retirement
I'm retired here and my husband was from Isle
Nature abounds
Slower moving environment



Got a house cheap
Small town and the lake, fishing and retired
Married into the area
Because I married a man who lived here and this is home
I live on the farm my grandfather homesteaded
Born here, took over family farm
Born here
I moved here in 2006 to start a resort business with significant other
Start a business
I like the lake (Mille Lacs)
Wanted to move out of the Twin Cities and buy a resort – Mille Lacs Lake – Isle won

Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Community Meeting

Why do you live here?

Work here, not live here
Job Opportunity



Princeton Community Meeting

Economic Development/Operating a Business in Mille Lacs County Strengths/Opportunities

Mechanical

Central location – two major highways 95 and 169

Major trunk highways and county roads

Community services – hospitals, etc.

Big businesses

Qualified workforce, skilled labor

No congestion with traffic

Available workforce

Good transportation corridors

Low labor costs

Real estate prices low

Incentives

Traffic

More jobs

Weaknesses/Threats

Organized effort with larger businesses

Economics as of 2012 – at low point

Many small businesses gone

Taxes

Foreclosures

Meth labs/drugs

High taxes that would thwart economic development

Lack of available land

Funding for schools has hurt education, which keeps some people from moving here, forcing commuter employees

Education

Work force

Property taxes

Jobs – need more

Pease Community Meeting

Economic Development/Operating a Business in Mille Lacs County Strengths/Opportunities

Good main roads

Should be able to attract more

Prime locations

Road system would support

Plenty of land

Main hwys 10 ton routes

Over taxed



4 big Hwys for business travel

Travel

None

Prices of land

Opportunities for location

Opportunities for farms

Opportunities for new business

Location

Good highway visibility

Brings jobs

A lot of opportunity

Expansion

Weaknesses/Threats

Need better wages in private sector

To much regulation

Taxes

Why have we lost some?

More industrial parks

Use more T.I.E. money to get companies to come

Not enough businesses that hire younger people

Taxes

Insurance

Regulations/permits

Too many permits

Taxes

Too many permits/fees

Too much regulation on farming

Too much taxes

Too many permits needed

Too much regulation

More jobs

Running people out

Regulation for small family business tax break

Zoning Reg and farms

Permits

Not sure if Walmart will be good for Princeton

Need easier on and off from 169

Need to research businesses/social responsibility

Taxes

Too much regs

Taxes

Not enough promoting businesses



Milaca Community Meeting

Economic Development/Operating a Business in Mille Lacs County Strengths/Opportunities

Business take time to help
Good small business to providing services to the county
Industrial parks and tax incentives
Location to metro
People
Communication
Loyal customers typically stay loyal
Small town customer care trumps most comparable big city stores
Opportunity – Part of a community/volunteerism
Location of major highways through Milaca
Transportation of product in and out
None that I am aware of
The people who patronize local businesses
Have no knowledge in this area
Business out of the home escape regulation
Industrial Park, Milaca
Open spaces, land
Small town help
Labor force
Small town (area)
Large workforce
Tourism
Work force/personnel
Schools
Faith community
Working through the permitting process – good staff
Letting more businesses in town
Lower small business taxes

Weaknesses/Threats

Low income
No county economic development commission
Regional shopping centers
Industry growth is in metro area
Only one grocery store
Lost clothing store, not replaces
Taxes and regulations
Banking firms
Communication from help groups
Property tax structure
Big box companies
Trained staff – limited choices



Losing customers to bigger towns, lack of shopping opportunities for local people
Labor Force – sometimes difficult to get skilled labor
Taxes reduce capital investment
Taxes and required permitting
Availability of high speed communication/internet
Property taxes for downtown businesses
High taxes – statewide problem
Government regulations
Business out of the home escape regulation
Businesses get too many tax breaks
Apparent lack of outreach for growth
Seemingly lack of financial support, but I don't know for sure
Too many restrictions
Taxing the business too much
Better hours for businesses
Minimal Industry
Lower Pay
Need more incentives for business
Small town
Not enough different types of business
Property tax
Taxes
Too far from metropolitan area
Low pay scale
Could use more manufacturing jobs
Local lending institution out of touch with reality in ag
Check for breaks

Foreston Community Meeting

Economic Development/Operating a Business in Mille Lacs County Strengths/Opportunities

Can't think of any good, one look at taxes discourages coming here
It's good to keep farms and businesses in our county
Traffic pattern
Quality of life
Available work force
Good area to run a small business
Good public safety
Fairly good economic area
Works well for my business
Available labor force
Access to highways
Room to expand
Centralized Minnesota



Already have tax base for assisting starting businesses
Good opportunities or location for business, but be careful of what kind of business
Good labor base for construction/labor trade business
Reduce or abolish corporate income taxes as they get passed to consumers
Encourage private sector growth
Good highways (traffic flow)
Free market
Public/Private Partnerships/GSE's
Small businesses strong and loyal – Koch's
Traffic ease – 169/23/95
Work in the county for a business so don't have to travel far
Affordable rural and urban land and historic downtowns
Quality of life – business owners want to live here
Tourism and local farmstead agriculture equal potential
Arts and crafts producers
Small businesses
Large work force available
Can shop locally if desired
Highways
Too many regulations to have any strengths
Opportunities less every year
Good hardworking people
Is just fine
Can keep property values and tax values the same so are taxes don't keep growing.
A larger store coming into Princeton will bring in a lot more jobs
We have some strong businesses in Princeton
We are close to Milaca, Cambridge, Zimmerman, St. Cloud
Too much regulation
Customers are loyal, want to shop local
Don't know
Haven't lived in area long enough to formulate an opinion

Weaknesses/Threats

High taxes
High priced gas/fuel
Lack of business promotion
Need to be proactive
Property taxes too high
Regulations that hinder business freedom and growth
Property taxes
Proximity to jobs
Changing population
No infrastructure, sewer and water
Zoning issues
County ambition to attract new businesses
Regulation on expanding existing business



Work force
Taxes to high
Regulations
Taxes to high
Public sector growth
Public sector befits less than private sector (inequality)
Property taxes for business
Regulations
Poor labor base for technical business – be specific about who you attract. We need industry but it has to fit values and culture of the county and community
Regulation and taxation on private business and business properties
Increase of public employees/regulation
Have to travel out of county for major purchases
Taxes
Poverty in area
Vacant buildings
Not enough jobs in the county to keep you people here
Need more business competition – 1 grocery store not affordable
Giving tax dollars to relocate especially from one part of the county to another
Aging population
Dependence on other counties for employment, retail entertainment
Walmart
Cheap products undermining small local businesses
Very high property taxes
Low wages
Taxes are high
Public sector growth and benefits to high
Seems as though government has endorses Agenda 21. Now they are trying to “sell” it to the unwashed
Low tax base
Cut off some government employees, it would lower our debt
There are not enough jobs for people that want them
Taxes are too high
Property tax to high
Tough to get started and government regulations
Business taxed/permitted/regulated to much
Don't know
Lack of high speed internet
Threat of redevelopment boondoggle – lose zoning control for 12 years
Property taxes
Don't want cooperate business



Mille Lacs County Historic Courthouse Community Meeting

Economic Development/Operating a Business in Mille Lacs County Strengths/Opportunities

There are quite a few jobs here
Small businesses and farms
Have the state sell the farmable land back to the framers. That would end the state deficit and more taxes would be paid for future use of the state wisely
Lots of expansion potential for operating a business
Farming, but to much regulation
Small business, but to much regulation
Lots of room to grow
I would like to see increase in price for farmer at the ground level – not the corporate
Keep alternative fuels, E85 and bio diesel
Farming
Roads – good access
Room to build
Hwy cooridor systems 169, 23, 95 both for business development, community and tourism
Highways and roads
Farming
Farming
Small businesses
Small businesses
Local foods businesses
Organic farming
Many resources to work with
Industrial Parks in Princeton and Milaca - jobs
Ag land – farming
Workforce
Good workforce
Central location
Jobz program? Success?
Walmart is coming in – more jobs
Small farms – better to keep them small
Water
Sun
Summer, winter

Weaknesses/Threats

Too much regulation and taxes
We need more opportunities for the young people
Not to lose any farming rights unless they are polluting the water
Don't over regulate new and existing businesses
Don't over regulate business
DNR and EPA
Less Government



Gaming monopoly but no taxes on reservation
No government money to back alternative fuels, E85 and bio diesel
Lack of industries
Taxes
Too much government oversight, regulations over property
Internet and cell phone access poor in some areas
Internet/technology accessibility/cost
Tourism opportunities—no camping/ bike trails to invite visitors to spend money and enjoy what we have
Economy
Too many governmental regulations
Protectionism by city fathers, uptown retailers
Economy
Less people in trades
Regulations
EPA
Income taxes – unconstitutional
Federal Government
Government regulation on food
So many permits and licenses required, don't want to bother
Private sector shouldn't have to compete with government to purchase land
Need to locate business and industry to keep in this county
High property taxes
Less government, fewer regulations
Education of population – trade skills – attract business
Taxes
Regulation
Farmer's market regulations
MPCA paperwork
D.C.
Taxes

Wahkon Community Meeting

Economic Development/Operating a Business in Mille Lacs County

Strengths/Opportunities

I am self employed
We had a Mille Lacs Community Economic Development Group – but doesn't seem active
Tourism
Mille Lacs Lake – crown jewel
Tourism info
Good work force
Good work ethics
Good economic base



Weaknesses/Threats

Conditional use permit fees to high
Property taxes stifles farming and other business
Common sense, realistic regulations that cultivate businesses and not stifle them with rules meant only to increase county coffers (permits, signs, etc.)
City and county officials interested in keeping and enticing businesses that make sense for the area
Unrealistic regulations and fees
Fishing slots
Financing opportunities
Amenities
Restrictions – commercial status
Let some big businesses in like Menards, Wal-Mart, Home Depot
Big need for economic growth in our metro areas growth = jobs
Too many regulations to bring in new business

Onamia Community Meeting

Economic Development/Operating a Business in Mille Lacs County

Strengths/Opportunities

Lots of people to work
169 Highway
Hwy. 169 Traffic
Support of locals
Ability to get into business
Opportunities if businesses want to locate in Mille Lacs county we should sure like to help them
Pride of our population
Skilled business owners
Local foods
Recreation-water-non-fishing
Government is very business friendly
Indian tribe
Room for new businesses to operate
Infrastructure – buildings
Cost of living

Weaknesses/Threats

Poor wages
Not enough jobs
Crime
Crime – Shoplifting
Frustration with County Attorneys to ?
Taxes
Lack of money to pursue higher levels of economic development
Taxes for small businesses
No/little micro financing resources at reasonable interest rates



Conditional use permits excessively high
Hard for small farmers to compete
Gas prices
Poverty – lack of capital
Low education
Aging population
Not a lot of helpful info for small businesses
Not a lot of loan opportunities to keep it viable (at least for 5 years)
High Taxes (property) and overhead
Red tape
Regulations
Proximity to metro
Property taxes
Qualified workers
Lack of funding to start business
People do not shop local

Isle Community Meeting

Economic Development/Operating a Business in Mille Lacs County Strengths/Opportunities

Room to grow
Employment
Tourism like Walmart
Haven't lived here long enough to formulate an opinion
Tourism
Events
Land use/lakes
Draw of tourism to the area
Area
Large pool of labor available
Mille Lacs Lake, nature
There are plenty of employees available
Good work force/people that are good workers
Availability of employees
Tourists

Weaknesses/Threats

Taxes
High cost of living
Crime
Drugs
Aging population/transportation
Tax rates on the lake for small business
Other activities for tourists vs other areas



Treaty harvest and regs on the lake
Treaty harvest
Taxes for small business
Nothing for kids to do
Excessive regulations and fees
Lack of business opportunities/incentives
Lots of hoops to jump through
Hard to start business
More incentives to start
Taxes
Regulations

Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Community Meeting

Economic Development/Operating a Business in Mille Lacs County Strengths/Opportunities

County Residents
Working in County
Build on existing assets

Weaknesses/Threats

Weakness – Diversification,
zoning,
competition – st. cloud, twin cities



Princeton Community Meeting

Transportation in Mille Lacs County Strengths/Opportunities

169 is a central corridor between Mille Lacs and Minneapolis
Also, Hwy. 95 running between St. Cloud and Wisconsin border
Round about in District 3
Maintained highways and collector streets
Timber Trails
Circle
Thru based corridor 169
Bus, light rail
Business loop
169 corridor is a big plus
Move more people in
Senior bussing
School transfers

Weaknesses/Threats

Closest transportation hub is Elk River
No transportation to St. Cloud
Bridges over Rum River
Bus service
Gas prices
Aging infrastructure, road cost/revenue
Lack of friendly corridors for people to bike to work (wider shoulders)
No organized to metro area
Expand bussing to Twin Cities at Elk River

Pease Community Meeting

Transportation in Mille Lacs County Strengths/Opportunities

Better roads
Roads
Good roads
Lots of bike, hiking, recreational trails
Timber Trails
Generally decent roads Good main hwy
Not much traffic
Highways always being worked on for better travel
Buses to transport local residents to and from town, drs, etc
Roundabout in Princeton
Good 4 lane highway



Roundabout
Better roads
Plowing plans
Opportunity Hwys 169 and 23, 95
Roundabouts
Good recreational trail
Can get anywhere
Cutting grooves in Highway 95
Round about worked out better than though
Transit system

Weaknesses/Threats

Light stop signs
Cost of fuel
Need to improve roads
Bypass hurts Milaca
Projects are rushed/change orders
Townships clean right of way for snow
Rail tracks removal
More businesses on 10 ton roads
Some snow removal needs to be attended to in larger cities faster than they do
Greyhound
Finish 169 north from Onamia 4 lanes
Poor road maintenance (gravel roads)
Hwy 23 needs to be 4 lane west of Milaca
Roads could use better maintenance
Fail maintain roads
Budget loss
Poor road
Poor maintenance
Poor road maintenance in spots
Plowing snow vs. Sherburne and state
Painting of lines
Snow removal at times
Roads
Transit system out of county

Milaca Community Meeting

Transportation in Mille Lacs County

Strengths/Opportunities

Timberland Trails for vets
School bus service is good
Good roads
Generally good roads and bridges
Road/highway maintenance



Public transit – bus service
Snowplowing is very responsive
Highways are clean
Milaca's location 2 major highway lends itself to getting products in and out easily
As a poor county, seniors can become homebound with no public transportation
We have an airport
Major highways
Low cost of manpower, vehicles
Snowmobile trails
Access to area
Good roads system state, county and city
Access to airports
Senior transportation
Roads are in good conditions
Senior transportation
Roads
Senior bus
Major highways all direction
Airport
An opportunity fee growth is to tar every gravel road
Local road authorities do a good job with funds available for maintaining roads
Fairly easy to get around
I would like to see the Milaca airport stay
Road maintenance
Airport/future
Crossroads 23/169
Clean roads snowplowing
Verify good snow removal
City Roads good
State roads good
Timber Trail Transit
Adequate roads
Good airport facilities

Weaknesses/Threats

Lack of inexpensive public transportation in rural areas
Roads are expensive
High gas prices
No bus service
Not big enough airport
No complaints
Air service
Better snow removal method downtown
Major US Highways need to be maintained
Money wasted on Timber Trails Service
Biggest threat – regionalism – forcing mass transit on outlying counties



Road maintenance – too much cost
Cost of infrastructure improvements
None
Speed on 23
What happened to greyhound bus
Running red lights and talking on phones
Poor neighbored roads
Lack of train travel
Need 4 lanes on 23
Not good advertised public transportation
Lack of grant money to help on major rebuild projects
Need better roads
Lower gas prices
Tax
Repair on 23 thru Milaca/State Hwy
County roads lack maintenance and replacement
Poor condition on country roads
Funds for more maintenance of roads

Foreston Community Meeting

Transportation in Mille Lacs County

Strengths/Opportunities

Major Highways 169, 23, 95 and 27
State aid roads in county
Easy to change to industries
State highways
Good road system
Opportunity would be some upgrades to existing roads
Good roads and highways
Close to large cities
Roundabout
Tar roads ok
169/23/95
Three major highways 169/23/95 Personal commute
Major county roads are fairly well kept
No light rail
County does a good job maintaining roads
I like the way we keep up our roads
169/95/23
Hwy. 169, 95 and 23
Roads are good
Some really good roads
Roads o.k.



Roads are well maintained
Good snow removal winter of 2010-2011
Hwy. 23 to four lane
Current road signs and cautions
County 11 @ 169. Wonderful traffic signs
Access major corridor 169 north and south
Public transportation/seniors
Grating and snow removal good
Put in culverts
Smooth, paved county roads
Highway 169
Soo line bike trail
County Roads well maintained
Good access to highway
Flashing light or stop light on 13 and 12 on 169 north of Princeton
Roads are fine
Hard working population
Roads to the north are good
Hunting and fishing
We have no traffic to speak of
169 is a good road
The roundabout is great
Ability to personally commute to work via 23, 169, 95
Nice job keeping roads clean and maintained
Roads are fine
Good roads
Easy access to shopping and schools
Good roads, good maintenance
Clean air
Friendly people
Good roads
Extensive roadways, need maintenance
Public transportation to towns
Easy access to other areas
Easy access north, south, east and west
Hwy. 169 and 23 roads maintained well
Winter weather may need more sand/salt
No roundabouts
Roads
Cars
Anything that doesn't "lose" money
Roundabout
No problems
No complaints
Most roads are good



Weaknesses/Threats

Not enough invested in infrastructure
Loss of state aid to roads
Over population
Gravel county roads
Secondary paved county roads decaying
Potential age issues with roads and bridges
Some gravel roads need more grading to stay smooth
No railway for shipping
Condition of 169 and 23
Timber Trails riders becoming dependent
Bike trails – who benefits
Most county roads
Threat light rail poor investment/return = high taxes
Too many poorly maintained gravel roads
Poor roads at times certain areas
Too much speed on Hwys
Speed laws not enforced
Public transit, buses and light rail= threats
Bright white warning board, hows it useful
Bike trails and rail not needed
Cty 11 @ 169, also cause for lazy drivers inattentive
Reservation/tribal laws and regulations
169/ CR 11 dangerous
Lighting at 23/15
speed laws
More traffic/better intersection DQ/Holiday intersection dangerous
Roads need fixing
Lack of bicycle connectivity
Commute traffic during rush hour especially Princeton/Milaca
Less walkable cities than aging population needs
Transit to St. Cloud, Minneapolis
Holiday traffic/Friday on 169
Township roads/gravel
Don't raise speed limit
Train younger drivers better
Enforce speed laws
Township roads are poor and need to be looked at
Our dirt road is the worst in our county, the UPS guy said so
Agenda 21 is a very real threat
Age of bridges
Please don't pave gravel. Be responsible, drive appropriately. Paving costs way out weigh convenience
Buffer zones for mass transit or additional road access
Eminent domain of private property to add transit system
Environmental concerns might dictate additional land absorption away from private citizens
Use existing sate land for environmental trails



None, leave it alone along as you don't incorporate any more buffer zones or trails or light rail
High property taxes
Plans for land use
Restrictions
No light rail transportation
No bus transportation
Don't know if it fits under this category – more sheriffs' deputies
Rail, trails and bike paths – all money pits
Keep up road maintenance
No complaints

Mille Lacs County Historic Courthouse Community Meeting

Transportation in Mille Lacs County

Strengths/Opportunities

Black top roads are good
Have many highway roads in the county
Main black top roads and highways are pretty good
Can get to anywhere easily that I need to get to
We are close to the Twin cities and St. Cloud
Roads are very good and well planned out (roundabout in Princeton)
Mid state location
2 major highways thru Milaca
Roads
Accessibility
No light rail
Good roads
Roads
Widen Hwy 95
169, 95, 27, 23 (nearby 65-10-25)
County roads
Township roads
Roads are good
Good electric system
Good road system
Plenty of roads
Good roads, major highways
Great roads
Diagonal Hwy 23
Hwy corridor systems (169, 23, 95)
Centrally located
Roads
Lack of public transportation – good – many needs filled by private charities
Roads are fine
Good roads



Great grid layout of roads

Weaknesses/Threats

Gravel roads more upkeep
Many secondary roads need grading more regularly, some are in sad shape
The idea of light rail
Infrastructure
Bridges need of repairs
Some township gravel roads are poorly maintained. We live on the bumpiest road in MN
Priority of maintenance
Plowing and sanding
Light rail – boondoggle
Maintenance of all the above – priority
Over use
Over loads
Communications
Poor condition of some roads
Safety issues
Some of the roads in Bock are terrible
Not enough stoplights
Entry point at hospital
Maintenance of roads
Better winter maintenance of roads
Light rail
Hwy 23 needs 4 lanes
Lack of cheap public transportation
No more roundabouts
Blacktop roads in “some” areas need attn

Wahkon Community Meeting

Transportation in Mille Lacs County

Strengths/Opportunities

No of cars/traffic through Mille Lacs = business opportunity
Community buses
Opportunity for car pooling
Quite a few ATV/snowmobile trails
Major Hwy for tourists – Hwy 169
Cross country skiing, parks
Plowing in winter on Cty Rd not too bad
I would like to see some walking trails
Good highway/road system in place
Ample scenic roads for tourism

Weaknesses/Threats



Road and R/W repairs
Poor road conditions
Vulnerable to city funding, limited availability
How to motivate, coordinate
Tourist traffic
Hardly any public/mass transport
County and township road maintenance = cost
Road system encourages travel by car
Some poor roads
More four wheeler trails, so we don't have to drive on roads
Better public understanding on what it takes to maintain our transportation routes
No much for hire or public transportation

Onamia Community Meeting

Transportation in Mille Lacs County Strengths/Opportunities

Highway 169 main
Grants from State of Minnesota
Bike trail (also needs improvements)
Good road/highway system
Relatively quick access to airport/train
Good roads
Major highway
Bike trail
Walkable cities (some)
Good main highway
Good county highway system
Major highway corridor
Trails
Four lane Highway
Overall a good system of roads
Adequate number of businesses to support the transportation industry
We need bus service
County has done a good job for veterans
After a storm the county is right on the job
169 and Hwy. 95 (state highways) 95 and 23
Airports (Princeton)

Weaknesses/Threats

Public transportation almost non existent in the north end of county, only for very low income people on public assistance or insurance companies, only volunteers or only vets
High prices gas and diesel
No or little local public transportation



Car dependent/gas prices
Little public transportation
High gas and diesel prices
Little supportive infrastructure for alternative transportation
Public transit not available/insufficient
Gas prices
Gas prices
Need more transportation (public)
Bike trail needs to be improved and maintained
169 bad shape
County roads sometimes neglected

Isle Community Meeting

Transportation in Mille Lacs County Strengths/Opportunities

Better roads on most of the highways
Shuttle to other towns, airports, hospitals
St. Cloud is growing
Faster commute
Expand airport
Maybe we should have a car ferry across the lake, saves gas, provides employment, draws tourists
Have shuttles
Need more transportation for seniors
Some to start a taxi service in town
Decent ATV trails, it would be nice to see more
Access to highway
Overall – good
Best maintained highway system
Best highway system in the state
Good public transit for small population base (city of Isle)
Overall good highway and bridges conditions
We've got decent roads
Main artery highways
Major Highway 169
Possible corridor along Highway 169 to help bring more money for commercial into county
Continue to improve public transportation

Weaknesses/Threats

Taxes go up
Aging/old material
Re-doing gravel roads
No taxi service in Isle
No bus service in Isle



Lack of public transportation

Taxi service would be nice, even a bus or shuttle

Expand local airport – utilize what we have in Isle

Lack of major inlet that are easily traveled

Airport in Isle – could possibly be improved to help bring visitors in

Taxi – sober cab

Roads conditions on certain stretches of the county (Hwy 23 near Ogilvie Raceway)

Cty Rd 27 southbound from the school – seems in worse shape since work than before. Is there a check and balance or oversight at the county level for redress in the county construction projects are of poor quality?

Recommend putting in a passing lane at the intersection of 47 and Cty. Rd 27

Lack of funding to maintain roads

Lack of funding for transportation services

169 gets bottle necked and dangerous one the freeway ends south of Onamia, needs to addressed

Continue to maintain gravel roads and keep good repair

Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Community Meeting

Transportation in Mille Lacs County

Strengths/Opportunities

Snow Plowing, visitors, on inter regional corridor, partnerships between agencies

Weaknesses/Threats

169 – lake issues, No public transit, safety along #169 – high fatality rate, lack of transportation funding, new federal legislation



Princeton Community Meeting

Public Safety in Mille Lacs County

Strengths/Opportunities

Volunteers – very strong
Police, county interest
Sheriff and police chief seem easy to approach
Several fire sub stations to assist
Respected police department local and county
Good court system
Drug task force
Hospitals and health services
Great staff members
Good roads (design)
Airlift
Police, fire, hospital
Good police, fire, rescue, hospital, etc.

Weaknesses/Threats

Rural area, need more
Fire with DNR
More community oriented policing is needed
Decon Center with no regional safety building
Cost to maintain
Long distances (rural)
Enforcement – speeding
Drugs – some
Safer places for biking and walking
More of an issue as roads are more traveled and in some cases more poorly maintained
Coordination with reservation for services

Pease Community Meeting

Public Safety in Mille Lacs County

Strengths/Opportunities

All good
Police and fire depts. Ok
Great police/fire dept
Overall solid police/fire organizations
Good drug arrest record
Fire departments do a good job
911 System
Ambulance staff always on duty
Fire department



Good fire department
Good police/sheriffs
Good police force
D.A.R.E. Program (anti drug)
Less laws
Good help
Too much money
Low serious crime
Quick response time in township
Friendly, helpful cops, sheriffs
Good crime rate (1000)
Initiative to fight gangs
Good 911
Good fire
Good sheriff
911
Signage
Fire department
Sherriff's department

Weaknesses/Threats

Drug problem and alcohol in youth
Gangs on reservation – poor judicial results
Gangs, crime in the casino area
Quit building/remodeling/re-purposing etc
Not enough task force around the reservation area for amount of population
Medical
Drugs
Need better response to small towns
No complaints
Dog warden/animal control
Need better response time
Response times
Substation and fire rescue
More deputies
Sherriff's department

Milaca Community Meeting

Public Safety in Mille Lacs County

Strengths/Opportunities

Adequate all public systems are in good order
Police and sheriff
Emergency departments
County road and city road maintenance



Good judicial system
Fire dept cooperation
Police Department
No experience good or bad
Visible
Has done a good job while working within limited budgets
Visibility
Fire department – operates on volunteer basis
No complaints
Plowing roads
Police are professional and courteous
Fire departments, EMS
Sheriff Department adequate
Fire dept
Court system
Fire dept volunteers
Very professional
Good staff
Good judicial system
Good law enforcement
Excellent road crews at county level
Good fire service from Milaca
Improve roads
Improve roads
Good police work and sheriff
Good fire response
Respectful police officers (Milaca)
Helpful staff police Milaca

Weaknesses/Threats

Lack of funds for services
Increase crime
Calls to EMT
Fire dept
How they talk call for cops
Under funded roads by state
Increase in juveniles downtown more patrolling
Thin not enough to cover county at one time
Difficult to keep up with training (fire department/EMT)
Crime
Not real good enforcement of residential road plowing – pushing snow across roads
Sheriff's office not responsive, rumors of corruption
County attorneys office too political
Nothing for juveniles to do
Don't solve crimes good enough
Emergency plan is unknown



Animal abuse and neglect goes undetected
Police response times
Hazardous buildings
Cost of court system
North end of county problems/tribe issues
Maintain dirt roads better
Sheriffs department spread to thin at times
Patrol neighborhood for crime
Lack of snow removal in township
Less revenue for adequate staff, officers
Unable to attract less staff

Foreston Community Meeting

Public Safety in Mille Lacs County

Strengths/Opportunities

Sheriff's department
Jail new
Good 911 system
Good follow up after initial call
Promote gun rights, permit to carry
Police and fire good
Good area to live
Quality of police and fire department
Good local health care
Good volunteer fire departments
Good mutual aid between departments
Doing well
Good fire department alarm system
Police Department above average Milaca and Princeton
Right to keep and bear arms
Volunteer fire departments very good
Gun rights
Police are in good order
Police help is available if needed
Right and ability to bear arms
Good neighbors protect better than centralized police force, police force is adequate
Tougher deterrents and sentences for DWI, drug offenders, sex offenders
Good law enforcement
Encourage gun ownership
Good fire departments
Adequate law enforcement
Hospital and clinics within easy access
Good sheriff department
Need more sheriff deputies for amount of traffic, especially 169



Promote 2nd Amendment rights
Encourage self defense, concealed carry
Citizens backing up sheriff
Do a good job
No complaints
Plenty good, don't spend any more
Very good
Is great
Very good
Feel safe, no need to lock doors
Good police department right in town
Feel safe
Cops present
Don't lock doors/safe
Good overall level of public safety
Close to high grade medical facilities in St. Cloud
Have had no reason to call a cop
Good honest officers
Fast response after calls
Good police visibility near school in Milaca

Weaknesses/Threats

Age of equipment at Public Works
Main county garage
Deputies not on duty
Deputies on County roads, not 169
No more restrictions on right to bear arms
Increase in people willing to break the law
Less self control, lawlessness by citizens
Relationship between tribal department and Mille Lacs County
Attracting new members to them/keeping members
Crime
Sherriff position should not be elected
Need better trained deputies (psychologically)
Courts tied up with reservation connected crimes and jail used for reservation crime inmates
unbalanced use of taxes
Elimination of right to own guns/bear arms
Need more officers on duty
Drug and alcohol test police officers
Bullying – unseen by schools unless the bullied person is gay or lesbian
Sheriffs department hard to get response
County attorney overly political
Native American Reservation crime
To much government
Sheriffs may not know their rights to fight against unconstitutional laws
People who trespass on other property (not good stewards of our land)



Increased federal/state law enforcement
Time pressures and stress prohibit neighborly bonding
Entirely too much Section 8 housing encores additional crimes
Drugs/meth
Over reach by law enforcement
Gun ban
Private property restrictions
Government micro management of food, education, private property
Disconnect between sheriff and citizens
No complaints
Is the county going to help DNR this summer violate our rights with road blocks (mussels, weeds, milfoil)
None
Don't get roads to big people, just drive faster
Traffic control on Fridays/Sundays, especially holidays on 169
Reservation always having problems
Drugs/abuse
Large county area – distances to travel
Gangs
Reservation
Drug abuse
Vandalism on farm fences
Violence in north end of county
Diapers on docks
In general, police have too many Catch 22 laws (speeding and impeding traffic example)
Police response time to a violent domestic disturbance took an hour after removal of injured person from situation. Perp could have left in the interim

Mille Lacs County Historic Courthouse Community Meeting

Public Safety in Mille Lacs County

Strengths/Opportunities

Police are good and work and help you
Fire fighters
Roads – blacktop one good, easy access
It is adequate
Police and fire do a good job
Police and paramedics are fine, protection seems good in our area
Cops patrolling Hwy. 169
Feel safe in Milaca area
Sherriff's response is really excellent (patrols)
Meth houses in our area have just about been shut down – makes for a safer feeling
Relatively safe communities
Emergency (EMT) services – people
Opportunities for kids to be/experience outdoors and rural environment. We need to plan to stimulate those opportunities



Jail facility
Fire and EMT service
Self control
Neighbor to neighbor
Pretty good
Good sheriffs department
Good police force
Sheriff's dept
Usually problems are easily handled without the police even being called
Plenty of cops
Rights protected by law enforcement

Weaknesses/Threats

They need to patrol on more of the roads in our county
Have traffic lights on rural roads intersection 169 on holiday weekends
Crack down on the meth labs
Worried about government shutting down churches and maybe police enforcing it
It would be good to have stop lights at a few intersections on 169 on weekends and rush hour
Maybe patrol on state highways more
Usage of expanded jail?
Drugs
Worry that bad economic ties can cause criminal expansion
Too many laws – creates lawbreakers, fosters disrespect
Reservation
Kids losing those opportunities to be outside, active, involved in the community itself
Do we need so many officers? Cost –benefit
Indian reservation
Highways
Booze
High crime on reservation
Drug abuse – alcohol
Texting and cell phones when driving
Reservation/high crime
23 – the way people drive – passing
Drugs/alcohol problems
Protection of victims (personal information handed over to the offender)
High crime on the reservation
Court system is over loaded
Too many laws so causes more people to be breaking laws
NDAA signed by Obama 12/31/11



Wahkon Community Meeting

Public Safety in Mille Lacs County

Strengths/Opportunities

Law enforcement seems to do a good job overall
I feel reasonably safe most of the time
County sheriff/Wahkon
Hovercraft rescue
Good response time
Well trained responders – additional paramedics north
Pretty good

Weaknesses/Threats

Doing more to get drugs and dealers
Criminals
Courting and cultivating good candidates for police and enticing them to be employed here
Enforce regulations on golf carts, lawn mowers, etc in towns and on the public roads
Golf carts and ATV's on roads
Crosswalks
Soo Line – police enforcement (sheriff, DNR)
Golf carts, side by side UTV's
Big disparity between north and south
Gang activity on the reservation
Drug and ETOH problems throughout
Revolving door at jail

Onamia Community Meeting

Public Safety in Mille Lacs County

Strengths/Opportunities

Ambulance
Hospital
Law Enforcement
Good response times police, fire, rescue
Visibility of police is good
Good health care
Active sheriff's department
Good access to health care including ambulance service
Overall condition of most roads (major) is adequate
Good law enforcement
Our rural roads are improving every year
Health care
Law enforcement agencies
Low crime rates in much of county
Churches/non profits



Health care
Cooperation/communication between law enforcement agencies
Technology contributes to better safety
Health care system
Good health care
Good fire departments
Good law enforcement

Weaknesses/Threats

Drunk drivers
Threats
Killings, drugs
North-south training of First Responders – EMTS (north or paramedics (south))
Domestic abuse
Drugs
Gangs
Crime in general
Gangs, drugs
Declining financial support of health care by county, state and federal governments
Budget constraints for law enforcement (high costs)
Court system lets them off
Our law enforcements hands are tied
Drugs are out of control
Drugs and alcohol
High costs of high crime rates
Racism
Public transportation
Gangs
Drugs/alcohol
Public transpiration for all ages
Vulnerable adults and kids need more work, “warnings”, education and protection
Drug operations/meth labs
Budget restraints

Isle Community Meeting

Public Safety in Mille Lacs County

Strengths/Opportunities

More law enforcement
Health care
Good equipment and manpower
Clinic in town
Overall doing a good job
Good police dept, fire and 911 response around Isle



Air transport for trauma
Police and fire in Isle
Sheriffs Dept
Hospital and medical services
Police, fire, country fire, ambulance, court, water rescue etc
I haven't had to us the services much, which speaks well of the law enforcement
Fire department response promptly it seems
Law enforcement working well with each other
Cities, county and reservation

Weaknesses/Threats

Taxes may go higher
Speeders
Corruption
Getting to drug scenes too late
Drugs being made on lake and DNR can't do anything or enter fish houses
Lack of good health care facility i.e. trauma
Increasing crime – Native Mob
Water rescue
Able to enforce
Crime in NW Mille Lacs County
No enforcement of laws on lawn mowers, golf carts, ATVS, etc.
Better health care
No enforcement of laws regarding riding golf carts and 4 wheelers on roadways
Traffic laws not enforced
We don't seem to get ahead on crime perhaps sentencing isn't strong enough to send the message loud and clear and the band perhaps needs to step up to the plate as far as covering court costs to lessen some financial burden for non band members

Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Community Meeting

Public Safety

Strengths/Opportunities

Partnerships

Weaknesses/Threats

Gangs
Drugs
Lack of Cooperation



Princeton Community Meeting

Natural Resources in Mille Lacs County Strengths/Opportunities

Route to Mille Lacs
Snowmobile trails
Proximity to Sherburne Refuge
Bike trails and parks and potential for more
Mille Lacs Lake
Parks and trails
Conservation (land)
Diverse (ag/forestry) biomass production
Mille Lacs Lake
Trails (four wheel, snowmobile)
Hunting
Lakes accessible
Bait shops available, sporting shops
Green space (wildlife management etc.)
Mille Lacs Lake
Mille Lacs Wildlife Refuge

Weaknesses/Threats

Fishing peers
Rum River access
Mosquitoes
Farms might be too intense use of land
Run off
Water quality
Habitat
Ag oriented, etc.
Mining – explore
Non degradation – run off into our waters inclusive with brooks and streams
More recreational activities along rivers with parking
Land sales to Reservation
Distance between southern and northern Mille Lacs County concerning recreation

Pease Community Meeting

Natural Resources in Mille Lacs County Strengths/Opportunities

Recreation
Hunting and fishing
Good farmland in central part
Recreation
Habitat/nature



Country living
Good farm land
Wide variety
Brings other people into the county
Attractive to new homeowners
Good wildlife management areas
Low crime – serious crime
Sand and gravel
Better care of trails
Keep most fishing laws current
Beauty
Good hunting
Good hunting
Lots of public land for recreation
Hunting
ATV trail use
None
Law enforcement
Hunting and fishing
Farms
Hunting
Fishing/launches
Tourism
Land
Water Forest

Weaknesses/Threats

Losing tax base around Mille Lacs
Government regulation – fishing slots
Too many houses, one after another in community
Too much regulations
Tax impact
Snow removal west of town – Princeton
Too many closed businesses in Princeton
Fishing regs
Lack of garbage pickup
Not change hunting regulations
No wolf hunting
Forest fires
Slots on Mille Lacs
No public ATV/dirt bike tracks
Land use regulations
Multi use of DNR trails
Such as ATV only – not dirt bikes
Too many land use regulations
Too much money



Regulation
Land use permits
Farm land laws
Road use

Fish regulations vs. Indian
Deforestation
Land use laws
Mining

Milaca Community Meeting

Natural Resources in Mille Lacs County

Strengths/Opportunities

Rum River/lakes
Park systems
Recreation
Parks
More development in Rec Park/Community center
Lakes, rivers
Wildlife
Hunting
Gateland to the north – we can capitalize on “through traffic”
River River – fishing, canoeing, tubing
Milaca’s hiking/biking trails
Mille Lacs Lake
Disc Golf
18 hole golf course
Develop them
Create jobs
Lakes and rivers
Parks and trails
Camping
Recreation – fishing, hunting, snowmobile trails
Room for a garden
Good outdoor sporting activities
Lakes, snowmobile trails
Parks
Camping
Hunting
Fishing
Rum River
Mille Lacs Lake
Availability of land for parks
Rivers and tributaries and lake



Great fishing, hiking trails, riding and skiing
Water
Wildlife
Parks
Sled trails
Fish opportunities
Bike trails by Milaca
Parks
Trails
Rum River
Good local NRCS – SWCD office staff
Good access to public water of the county and wildlife management area
Rivers and lakes
Parks
X Country
Rivers Rum winds for ever

Weaknesses/Threats

DNR control
Vandalism in parks
Budget cuts may hamper maintenance
Lack of green space
Connect to trails
Government regulations
Pollution of waters
Farm runoff
Land development
Ageing septic
Threats from environmentalists, big government types
Dividing the populace over environmental extremism
Executive order 13575 “rural councils”
Agenda 21
Regulations driven by economic decisions rather than science
Growth in county
Potential threat of buffer zones and land management
Do not have shooting range near Milaca
Better planning when changing land level and building
High water level
Government intervention regulation on wetlands
Too much DNR land ownership
RV parking access
Too much land regulations
Too much regulations on wolves and beavers
Too much land regulations
Too much regulations on wolves and beavers
Beaver problems



Soo line trail
Public land should be on 247
Lower licenses fish, hunting for seniors
The power of the DNR
DNR regulations on rivers and lakes
Encroachment of wild animals
Improper planning of recreation park in Milaca
Less regulation on Mille Lacs Lake fish
Better management on permits for usage

Foreston Community Meeting

Natural Resources in Mille Lacs County

Strengths/Opportunities

To hunt, fish and recreate without government regulations fees
Good soil (not rocks though)
Rivers – Rum and North Branch of Rum
Rivers, Fishing and Hunting
Number of lakes and forests
Good wildlife
Freedom to hunt and fish
Lots of open land, woods and water
Tap into more natural resource exploration for energy
Clean Water
Beautiful woodland
Clean water Rum River
Lake Mille Lacs
Parks and public land
Lakes, rivers, hunting and fishing
Very good farm land
Sandy soils excellent for construction
Natural resources we have a beautiful country with the Rum River and lakes. It is good for tourism
Fishing and hunting
Farms
Rural
Hunting land
Good lakes
Wonderful variety of things to enjoy
Draws people from other areas of state, nation and world
Wonderful lakes for fishing
Rum River
Need better access areas
Lakes
Rivers
State and city parks



Maintain and manage public land
Fire control
Easy to contact
Adequate gravel deposits for several more years
Forests
Rum River
Lakes and rivers in close proximity
Landowners partnering with snowmobile clubs
Use and or develop any natural resources that can create jobs without destroying the environment
Hunting and fishing
Keep the hunting laws
Enforce licenses to population of prey
Do not change anything
Lots of accessible open space
Lots of lakes to fish
Lots of places to hunt on over land
Many aquifers
Much good habitat for wildlife
Opportunities to put land in programs to benefit wildlife
Good water
Lots of places to fish and boat
Wildlife, hunting land – options available
Mille Lacs
State Parks
Good water
State Parks (Kathio and Hennepin)
Rum River
Mixed woods, wetlands, prairies and agriculture
Maintain open/natural space
Westland's/woodlands

Weaknesses/Threats

DNR stopping boats to be inspected
Wash stations
Over regulation of lakes and shores
Cost to boat owners more fees and regs
Light rail
Threat to farmers property rights due to buffer zones to rivers, lakes and streams
Rocks
People need to recognize Buckthorn
To restrict access because of environmentalism
Annexation or buffering of private land for additional public owned parks, trails, etc.
Misuse and lack of use of existing state and county when expanding public resources
Fed and State over regulation of natural resources, let citizens vote of local control of natural resources
Possibly to much development
State and federal overreach on resources



Cap and trade on emissions
Government market manipulation
Wildlands project
Less park land in my town
Restrictions on fishing
Restricting use of lakes and rivers
Restrictions on farm land
Water use regulations attempt through “clean water” bills
Regulations
Over reaching DNR onto private lands
Definition of what a body of water is
Need local control
Personal rights being taken
Manage, but don't over manage
Not to much regional government control
Management of Mille Lacs Lake (DNR)
No county parks
Changing rules and regulations
Timber wolves
Many sewer systems draining into road ditches
Many people burning plastics in trash barrels
DNR overreach
Noxious weeds, hogweed in Milo Township near township hall
Government regulations and permitting
The desire to make to many rules and over regulate
Do not let deer population get to high
People are disrespectful and occasionally dump trash illegally
Need more buckthorn control
Keep people from ruining wetlands
Too much good water on my farm
Buckthorn control
Reservation/tribal rights/rules
Not enough enforcements
Prevent contamination
Higher density, suburban style development
Removing land from CRP – less natural areas, more fertilizer runoff
Water/fish quality in Rum River



Mille Lacs County Historic Courthouse County Community Meeting

Natural Resources in Mille Lacs County

Strengths/Opportunities

Great water
Lake Mille Lacs – greatest
Rum River
Farm land
Good water
Good soil
Good water
Fertile soil
Clean air
Plenty of water
Sunshine
Fertility
Lakes
Rivers
Hunting
Lakes
Forests
Fishing and hunting
Many lakes
Fishing/hunting
Rum river corridor
Mille Lacs Lake
Public land (WMA, state forest, state parks)
Timber
Lakes
Farmland
Logging
Granite
Hunting
Lakes
Hunting/fishing
Clean water
Farm land
Keep a strong farm foundation
Not worry about, limit DNR control
Variety of land types – various uses
Water, including Mille Lacs
Lakes big and small
Fishing – good for the resorts
Water sports
Great lakes
Fishing is good



Hunting rights
Lakes and rivers are nice for fishing
Open space
Hunting, fishing, recreation
Clean air
Accessibility to lakes and hunting
City park

Weaknesses/Threats

Better access to public land needed
Private property rights keep getting less and less
DNR – Federal government, tribal issues like netting and jurisdictions
New five year plan
River needs cleaning
Keep farm land
Fishing rights are non-equal
Developments
Government regulation – too much
Threat of invasive species – Asian carp, milfoil
Tree pests – Emerald Ash Borer
United Nations land issues
EPA
Army Corp of Engineers
Feds
EPA
Fishing restrictions
Less intrusion
EPA
Executive order #13575 “rural council” 25
Cabinet agencies
ICLEI – UN Agenda 21
Wildlands project – UN Agenda 21
Unplanned development
Surface/groundwater pollution
Wildlife corridor interruption from unplanned development could decrease or hunting opportunities
Rules and regs
Discriminatory policies regarding usage
Federal alphabet soup gang FDA, USDA, EPA
Rules/regs
Discrimination regarding usage
EPA Environmental Protection Agency
Government intervention
ICLEI
Lack of lakes and rivers
Lack of timber
Keep government control out of farming and private land owners



Land owner restrictions are overbearing
Roads
Too much government
Less DNR
Less federal government
Less intrusion of DNR and EPA
To maybe lose our hunting and fishing rights
Government not make anymore restrictions on land use
The government interference – too many regulations
The UN dictating to US at the local level what to do with our property
“Green Space” “Buffer Zones” “Green Movement” just nice fluffy words for Agenda 21 which if for taking our property
Treaty rights (plus gambling monopoly) as they effect resources and opportunities to sportsman

Wahkon Community Meeting

Natural Resources in Mille Lacs County

Strengths/Opportunities

Father Hennepin/Kathio
Lake
Like Snake River, county campground
Mille Lacs good shape, well managed
River clean
A lot of wonderful opportunities to enjoy natural resources
Good start on access to wildlife
Farms, woods, hunting, outdoor hobbies, waterways
State forests, swamps/marshlands
Many undeveloped areas
State parks
Other county trails
Public landings
Wetlands, fields, forests
Rum River, streams and tributaries
Mille Lacs Lake

Weaknesses/Threats

More trails
County park – maybe Blossom Run
More fairness on fishing rights on Mille Lacs
We need to keep a good walleye fishery
Need more help and knowledge for controlling invasive species
Regulating hobbyists realistically and well so they don't tear up the land hunting, etc
Better balance between protecting state and citizen interest
Housing development
Road chemicals



Soo line trail controls
Fishing slot
Piped snowmobiles
DNR trespass
Invasive species – buckthorn, noxious weeds, zebra mussels
Urban lawns – storm water run off. Lack of water infiltration

Onamia Community Meeting

Natural Resources in Mille Lacs County

Strengths/Opportunities

Parks
Resorts
Scenic waterways
Forests – opportunity for multi story cropping, bio fuels
Ag land – small farms able to feed our communities
Lakes, river, streams, wetlands – water quality, recreation
Natural beauty of rivers and lakes
Acres of wooded areas
Natural beauty of area
Lots of lakes, relatively clean rivers
Great state parks (2) in county
Good work force
Woods
Our health system
School system
Carbon Credits
Healthy air/soil/water
Recreational opportunities
Lakes
Hunting land
Lake Mille Lacs
State park
Public Land (WLMA and other DNR managed land)
Good views – natural beauty – tourists
Not densely populated in rural areas
Wildlife and lakes

Weaknesses/Threats

Invasive species
Gangs
Drugs
Invasive species
Small plots are portioned out of ag land and urban lawns threaten water quality
Single septic systems



Individual wells
Slot limits
Lake pollution Invasive species
Netting of Mille Lacs fishing and other treaty issues
Invasive species – milfoil, H2O fleas, zebra mussels
High taxes
Rules and regulations
Bedroom community
Land use
Unregulated development
Insufficient wastewater treatment
Unregulated agriculture
Public land – no property tax income
Over hunting
Invasive species
Lake and water quality
Fires in our swamps and trees when its dry
Need good roads (all over)
Gangs and drugs

Isle Community Meeting

Natural Resources in Mille Lacs County

Strengths/Opportunities

Have work force for businesses or industry and have a major highway running through it
Keep the lake shores clean
Good job at keeping the trail up
Lakes
Parks, trails
Wildlife, need to encourage photography, mushroom and edible asparagus and hunting
Albino deer
Beautiful trees
Lots of lakes
Good fishing
Fishing
Trails
Lake – trails
Wood – timber
Hunting
Mille Lacs Lake
State parks, public hunting
Fishing for walleye, Muskie, small mouth
The lakes offering all water activities in addition to fishing, boating, wind surfing, swimming and ice fishing
Nature and wildlife



Parks – state and county
Our lake
Trails
Our farm land
Wildlife management areas
Parks
Like where go work so people stay here
More stores needed
Mille Lacs Lake
Trails – walking, fishing, snowmobile 4 wheelers
Public hunting areas
Mille Lacs Lake
Land
Nature
Hunting, fishing etc.
Tourism related to nature
Fantastic lakes
Great parks
White deer
We have the lake with many opportunities
Lots of state land for hunting
Soo Line Trails, snowmobiling, 4 wheeling, biking and walking
Nice parks

Weaknesses/Threats

Long way to bring in raw materials from metro areas which would increase costs
Netting of the fish, keep the shores clean
Drug making on lake and in parks
Loss of walleye
Pollution/fishing regulations
Netting of fish
I want to be treated the same as the tribe
Over fishing
Regulations from DNR
Lack of children activities (lake isn't very swim friendly, community center with pool maybe)
More trails to bike, hike, x-c ski
General lake threats – zebra mussels, etc., treaty harvest
Not harvesting some resources – wind energy?
Improve Soo Line bike trail – in tough shape
Treaty harvest of lake and hunting
Invasive – keep people aware and educate
do we need roadside stops –no
Help out family farm
Needed more things for people to do with the lake
Fishing regulations – netting
Need proper enforcement of reasonable regulations to protect and nurture natural resources.



Need to encourage alternative opportunities to protect and nurture natural resources
Help out farming/agriculture more
Reasonable regulations on fishing to attract even more fisherman
DNR should pay more in Pilt for their property and should not acquire more land without giving up some
(no net gain) they have enough through clean water legacy money

Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Community Meeting

Natural Resources

Strengths/Opportunities

Mille Lacs Lake
Fishery Mille Lacs
Lake Mille Lacs
Parks
Wetlands

Weaknesses/Threats

Wetlands
Sanitary Sewer Issues
Protection of Lake

