

# St. Croix County Comprehensive Planning Public Opinion Survey Report, 2008

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## **Executive Summary**

In September, 2008, the Survey Research Center (SRC) at the University of Wisconsin – River Falls mailed surveys to 1,146 County residences. The initial mailing was followed by reminder postcards and a second mailing to non-respondents. The overall response rate was 44 percent (500 completed questionnaires). The results provided in this report are expected to be accurate to within plus or minus 4.4 percent with 95 percent confidence. Statistical tests do not indicate that “non-response bias” is a problem in this sample. However, the demographic profile of the sample contains fewer women, renters and young people than would be expected. The SRC notes differences of opinion of different demographic groups throughout the report and, in one instance, adjusts the results to reflect more accurately the opinions of all St. Croix County residents.

St. Croix residents said they are generally pleased with the quality of life they enjoy. Nine in ten rated the quality of life as good or excellent, and few rate it as only fair or poor. The factors that induce people to live in St. Croix County are the small town atmosphere they seek and the proximity of the Twin Cities. Being near family and friends and economic opportunities are also important reasons they have chosen to live in St. Croix County.

Respondents voiced some concern about the future quality of life in St Croix County. Approximately as many believe that the quality of life in the County will decrease in the next ten years (44 percent) as think it will stay the same (36 percent).

The rapid growth of the County was a concern as well, with nearly six in ten saying there has been too much population growth in the past eight years. Those who said there has been too much growth are much more likely to also believe the quality of life in the County will become worse in the next ten years.

Public services and facilities were given positive ratings by a majority of the respondents. The highest rated were the County’s office facilities, County parks, and the public schools.

Large majorities of respondents indicated that they have a high level of concern about preserving the County’s various natural resources (groundwater, surface water, air, etc.) and cultural heritage. Fewer than half saw a need for stricter regulations or improved enforcement of existing regulations. At the same time, majorities supported increased public education regarding regulations and advocacy by the County for outside funds to help protect the environment. A solid majority said they support programs to use public funds to purchase development rights from private landowners in order to preserve farmland, open space or environmentally important areas.

The overwhelming majority (86%) of St. Croix County residents felt that the current road network meets the needs of its citizens. At the same time, however, two of three respondents said increasing traffic in the County is a problem. Those who said increasing traffic is a problem are also more likely to think the quality of life will decline in the next ten years. More than half would like the County to work on expansion of public transit opportunities.

Majorities of respondents agreed or strongly agreed there is a need for more senior housing, single family housing, and affordable housing in St. Croix County. Large majorities said additional multi-family units, subdivisions, seasonal homes, and mobile homes are not needed. With respect to the location of new residential development, County residents had split opinions regarding whether new housing should be allowed anywhere a private sewage disposal system can be sited or whether new housing should be within or adjacent to existing communities.

St. Croix County residents clearly preferred a conservation design, which features smaller individual lots with preserved common open space in the development, for rural housing developments. County residents said there should be minimum lot sizes for the development of land but were also open to varying the minimum lot size from a single uniform standard to fit particular circumstances.

Respondents wanted to see productive agricultural land within the County used in agriculture and were wary of seeing it converted to residential or commercial uses. They said they are concerned about the amount of farmland being converted to non-farm uses. Fewer than 10 percent of St. Croix County residents said that there should be no restrictions regarding what property owners may do with their land.

St. Croix County residents said they are willing to spend tax dollars to attract or retain jobs in the County, and they think the County should support and coordinate efforts with the St. Croix Economic Development Corporation. A large majority believed that businesses should locate in designated areas such as business parks, etc. Respondents favored pursuing a variety of business types, including agriculture/agri-business, high technology, manufacturing, services, and retail. They also supported certain types of renewable energy development as a strategy for economic development in the County.

Consistent with their primary reason for choosing to live in St. Croix County, respondents said preservation of rural and small town character was second only to property tax reduction as a planning priority for the County. A large majority said the County should use the principles of sustainable community development to guide planning decisions.

Concern about property taxes was reflected in various places in the data. In addition to being a planning priority, it was the most frequent topic in the open ended question that asked for one thing the respondent would like to change about the County.

Direct mailing is the most preferred method of receiving information from the County regarding comprehensive planning.

## Survey Purpose

The purpose of this study was to gather opinions of residents about community planning issues regarding the future of St. Croix County. The survey serves as a key component of the public participation portion of the comprehensive plan for the County. The County chose to work with the Survey Research Center (SRC) at the University of Wisconsin – River Falls to survey residents of St. Croix County about vital planning issues.

## Survey Methods

In September, 2008, the Survey Research Center (SRC) at the University of Wisconsin – River Falls mailed surveys to 1,146 County residences. The surveys were followed up with reminder postcards and a second mailing to non-respondents. The overall response rate was 44 percent (500 completed questionnaires). Based on the estimated number of adults in the population of the County (58,919)<sup>1</sup>, the results provided in this report are expected to be accurate to within plus or minus 4.4 percent with 95 percent confidence.

Any survey has to be concerned with “non-response bias.” Non-response bias refers to a situation in which people who don’t return a questionnaire have opinions that are systematically different from the opinions of those who return their surveys. **Based upon a standard statistical analysis that is described in Appendix A, the Survey Research Center (SRC) concludes that there is no evidence that non-response bias is a concern for this sample.**

In short, the data gathered in this survey is expected to accurately reflect public opinion about the planning issues facing St. Croix County.

In addition to the numeric responses, respondents provided additional written comments which were compiled by the SRC from the surveys. **Appendix B to this report contains the complete compilation of comments.**

**Appendix C contains a copy of the survey questionnaire with a quantitative summary of responses by question.**

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<sup>1</sup> 2008 Wisconsin Department of Administration Estimate

## Profile of Respondents

Table 1 summarizes the demographic profile of respondents to the St. Croix County Comprehensive Planning Public Opinion Survey. Where comparable data were available from the 2000 Census of Population and Housing, they were included to indicate the degree to which the sample represents the underlying adult population in the County.

Concerns about Sample Bias. The sample differs from the Census figures in a number of places. This is important for reasons similar to the preceding discussion about non-response bias. A sample skewed in a particular way can generate results that don't accurately reflect the opinions of the overall population in St. Croix County.

For example, there are substantially more males in the sample than would be expected. The SRC did some statistical tests that show that men and women have statistically significant differences of opinion in about 32 percent of the questions included in the survey. An analysis of the variables with statistically significant differences between men and women revealed that women chose the "Don't Know" response more often than men, but that the women and men mostly had the same overall pattern of response if the don't know responses were not considered. Take, for example, the responses to Question 23, which asked whether development in the County should use less rural land by being more compact around existing cities and villages. Twenty-two percent of women chose the "Don't Know" response compared to four percent among males. As a result the SRC chose to weight the survey results as if the sample contained the same proportion of men (49.6%) and women (51.4%) as were counted in the 2000 Census. The percentages shown in the charts and tables in the text of this report reflect the values after gender weighting. Likewise, the percentages in Appendix C were modified with the gender weightings. The values that changed are italicized and highlighted in bold. In the vast majority of cases, the gender weighting resulted in a change of one percentage point. In only five cases were the results changed by two percent. As we summarize the various elements of the survey, we will point out the noteworthy differences between the opinions of men and women.

A second deviation from the expected demographic profile is with respect to age. There are fewer people under 45 years of age in this sample than the Census indicates should have been included. Our experience is that younger residents in most jurisdictions are less likely to participate in surveys than are their older neighbors. About one-fifth of the variables tested showed a statistically significant difference between the opinions of those age 45 and above and those younger than that. An examination of those variables found no distinct pattern to the variables containing age-related differences. Furthermore, the differences in the percentages of the responses of the age groups were generally quite small and did not alter the overall response pattern and interpretation of the results. An example is found in Question 1, in which 32 percent of respondents under age 45 included the cost of a home in their top three reasons for living in St. Croix County compared to 20 percent of respondents age 45 and older. Differences of opinion based on age will be noted as we proceed through this report.

A third demographic variable that deviated from the expected profile is the proportion of owners and renters. The population of renters is under represented among the respondents. Again, the SRC performed statistical tests and found a statistically significant difference in less than 10 percent of the variables. Thus, we chose not to weigh the data. Differences in the response pattern between those who rent their place of residence and those who own it will be noted in the body of the report.

The sample also had higher levels of formal education than indicated in the Census data and had higher annual incomes. Comparisons of income data, however, to the Census are problematic due to the age of the data and the growth of incomes since the 2000 Census.

Place of Residence. As shown in Table 1a, the geographic distribution of respondents aligns with the pattern of residential location for the adult residents in the County.

As we analyze the data, we will identify when various demographic groups have significantly different views.

<b>Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents</b>							
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>				
Sample	471	61%	39%				
Census (18+)	45,538	50%	50%				
<b>Age 18+</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>18 – 24</b>	<b>25 – 34</b>	<b>35 – 44</b>	<b>45 – 54</b>	<b>55 – 64</b>	<b>65+</b>
Sample	481	1%	13%	19%	28%	23%	16%
Census	45,538	11%	19%	25%	20%	11%	14%
<b>Households with Children</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>With Children</b>	<b>Without Children</b>				
Sample	491	43%	57%				
Census	23,410	39%	61%				
<b>Residential Status</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Own</b>	<b>Rent</b>	<b>Other</b>			
Sample	491	97%	3%	1%			
Census	23,410	76%	24%				
<b>Length of Residency</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Less than 1 yr.</b>	<b>1 – 4 yrs.</b>	<b>5 – 9 yrs.</b>	<b>10 – 24 yrs.</b>	<b>25+ yrs.</b>	
Sample <sup>2</sup>	490	1%	11%	17%	27%	45%	
<b>Employment Status</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Full-Time</b>	<b>Part-Time</b>	<b>Self</b>	<b>Unemp.</b>	<b>Retired</b>	<b>Other</b>
Sample	482	53%	12%	7%	2%	24%	2%
Census (Age 16+)	47,535	68% <sup>3</sup>		5%	2%	25%	
<b>Place of Residence</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Village</b>	<b>Town(ship)</b>			
Sample	474	27%	20%	54%			
WI Official Estimate. <sup>4</sup>	58,919	31%	19%	49%			
<b>Highest Level of Education</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Less than High Sch.</b>	<b>High Sch. Dipl.</b>	<b>Some College/ Tech</b>	<b>Tech/ College Grad.</b>	<b>Bachelor's Degree</b>	<b>Graduate/ Professional Degree</b>
Sample	487	1%	17%	22%	14%	28%	17%
Census (age 25+)	40,357	8%	33%	23%	9%	19%	7%
<b>Annual Household Income Range</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>&lt;\$15,000</b>	<b>\$15-\$24,999</b>	<b>\$25-\$49,999</b>	<b>\$50-\$74,999</b>	<b>\$75-\$99,999</b>	<b>\$100,000+</b>
Sample	467	1%	5%	16%	27%	23%	28%
Census	23,428	8%	9%	27%	25%	16%	15%

<sup>2</sup> Census data does not contain a length of residence category.

<sup>3</sup> Census employment data does not differentiate between full-time and part-time workers.

<sup>4</sup> 2008 Wisconsin Department of Administration Estimate of adult population



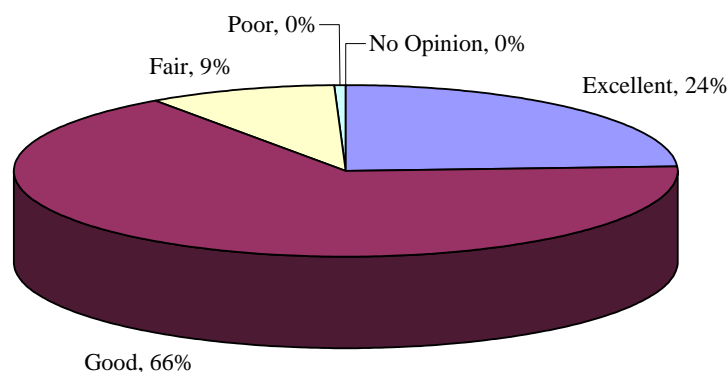
The SRC performed additional analysis on the place of residence data by dividing the County into two regions, east region and west region. With the assistance of the County Planning and Zoning Department, each city, village and town was assigned to a region. Table 1a shows the distribution of places by region. As we analyze the data, we will identify when the response pattern between the two regions has noteworthy differences.

<b>Table 1a. Assignment of Jurisdictions for Geographic Analysis</b>	
<b>West</b>	<b>East</b>
Hudson – Town	Baldwin – Town
Hudson – City	Baldwin – Village
Kinnickinnic – Town	Cylon – Town
New Richmond – City	Deer Park – Village
North Hudson – Village	Cady – Town
Richmond - Town	Eau Galle – Town
Roberts – Village	Emerald – Town
St. Joseph – Town	Erin Prairie – Town
Somerset – Town	Forest – Town
Somerset – Village	Glenwood – Town
Star Prairie – Town	Glenwood – City
Star Prairie – Village	Hammond – Town
River Falls – City	Hammond – Village
Troy – Town	Pleasant Valley – Town
Warren – Town	Rush River – Town
	Springfield – Town
	Stanton – Town
	Woodville - Village
	Wilson - Village

## Quality of Life

The initial section of the survey asked respondents a series of questions about the quality of life in St. Croix County. Chart 1 shows that 9 of 10 St. Croix County residents felt that the overall quality of life in the County is good (66%) or excellent (24%). Residents in the western portion of the county gave a slightly higher overall rating, with a higher proportion of excellent ratings.

**Chart 1. Overall Quality of Life Rating in St. Croix County**



Factors Important in Choosing St. Croix County as a Place to Live. Some of the key reasons for residents' satisfaction with life in St. Croix County are summarized in Chart 2. Respondents were asked to identify the three most important reasons they have chosen to live in the County. The small town atmosphere/rural lifestyle available to them in St. Croix County stands out at the top, having been included in their top three reasons by nearly 60 percent of the respondents. It is clear that being close to the Twin Cities is also an important reason for residing in the County, with 44 percent including it in their top three. Rounding out the top three items was the proximity to family and friends (40%).

Coming in fourth place was to be near job and employment opportunities, which was chosen by about a third of respondents.

In the middle of the pack were home costs, natural beauty of the area, school quality, and low crime rate, ranging between 16 and 22 percent.

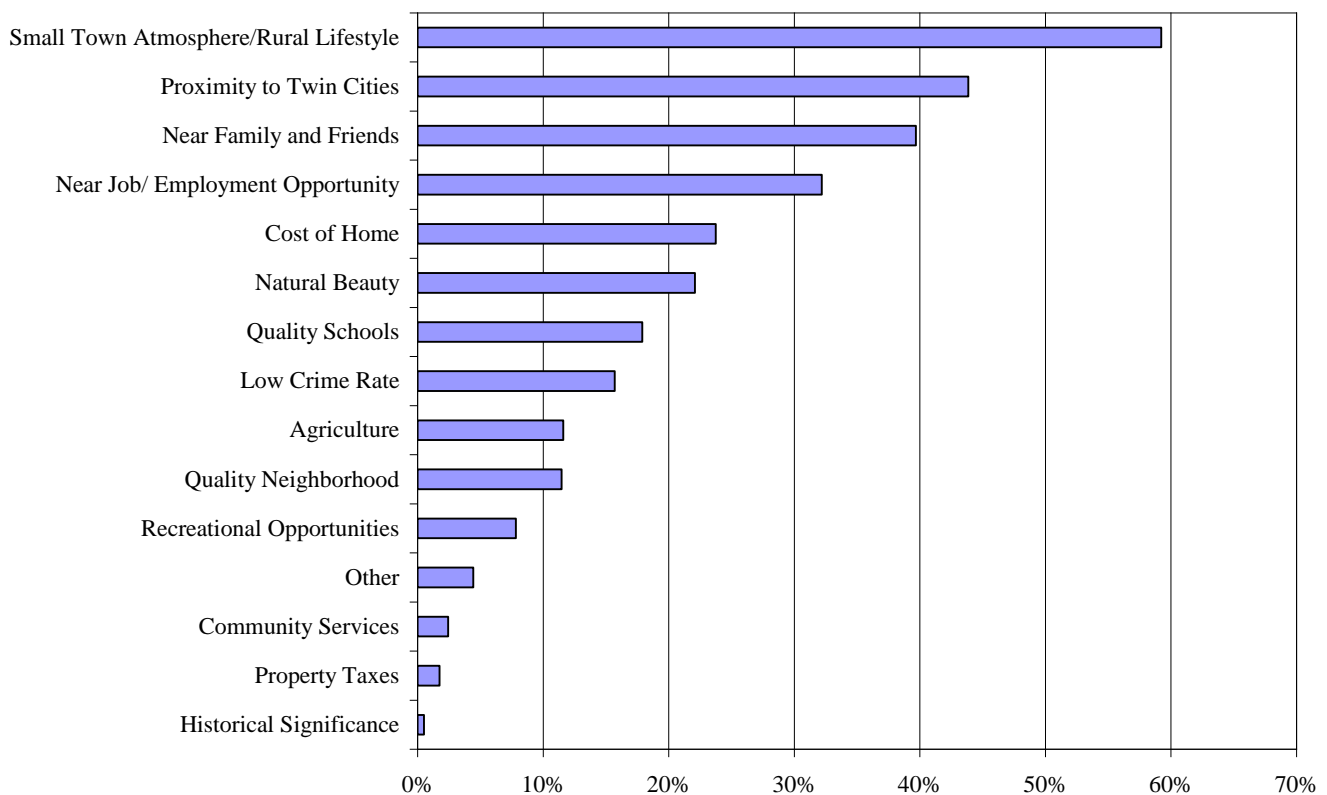
Relatively few included community services, property taxes and historical significance of the area in their top three.

Demographic differences in the reason for living in St. Croix County include:

- Agriculture was less important to residents of cities and villages and was more important to residents in the eastern portion of the county.
- Small town atmosphere/rural lifestyle was more important to men.
- Proximity to the Twin Cities was rated higher by residents in the western portion of the county and those with more formal education but was less important to long-term residents (25 or more years).
- The cost of a home was rated higher by village residents than by city and town residents.

- Being near family and friends was more important to long-term residents, retirees, and those with less formal education.
- Households with children gave a higher level of importance to the quality of schools.
- A quality neighborhood was less important to town residents.
- Natural beauty was a more important factor for residents in the western portion of the county, single adult households, and those with more formal education.
- The cost of a home was more important to younger respondents (under 45 years old).
- The quality of the local schools was less important to village residents than to city or town residents.
- Not surprisingly, being near employment opportunities was more important to respondents currently employed.

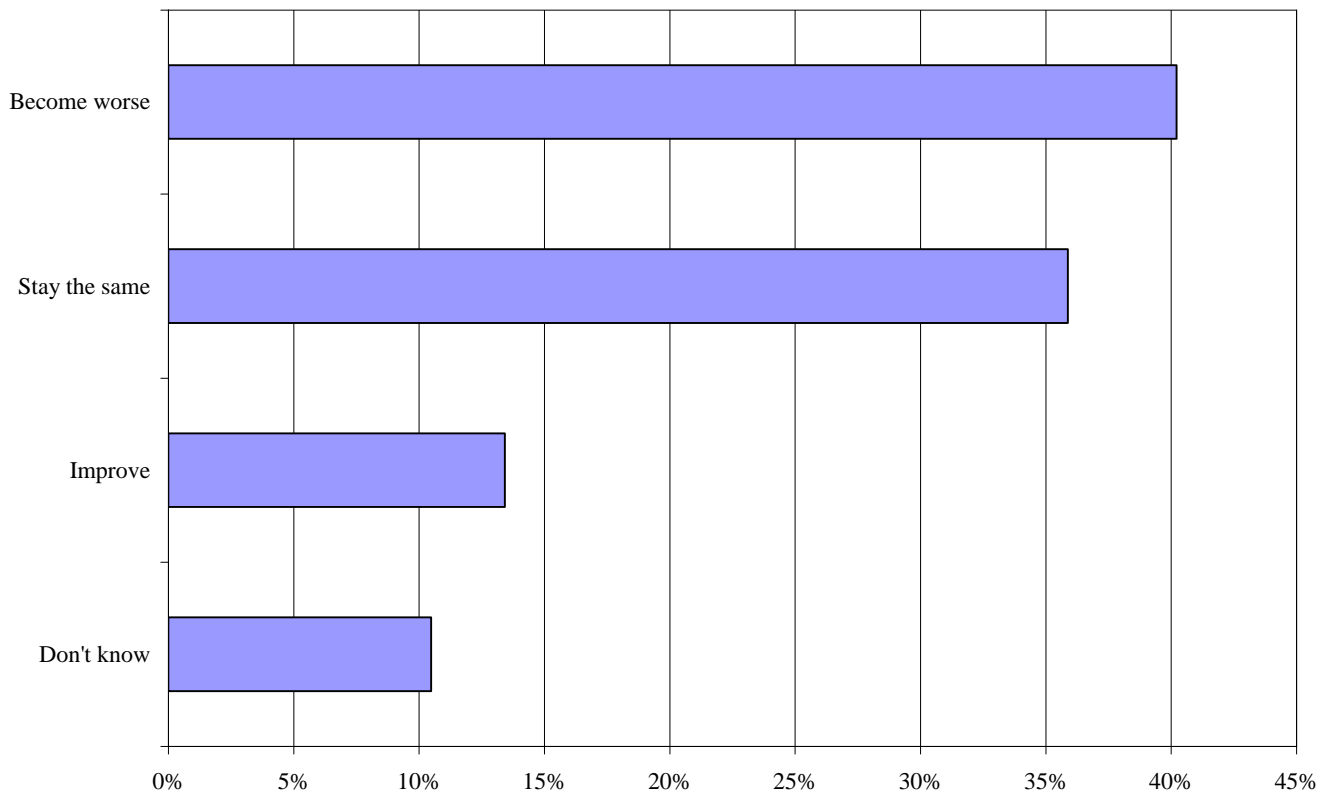
**Chart 2. Top Reasons for Living in St. Croix County**



Respondents voiced some concern about the future quality of life in St. Croix County. As shown in Chart 3, residents had split opinions about this question. Slightly more (40%) said they believe the quality of life will become worse than those who said it would remain the same (36%). Only about one in seven had a more optimistic view of the future quality of life in the County.

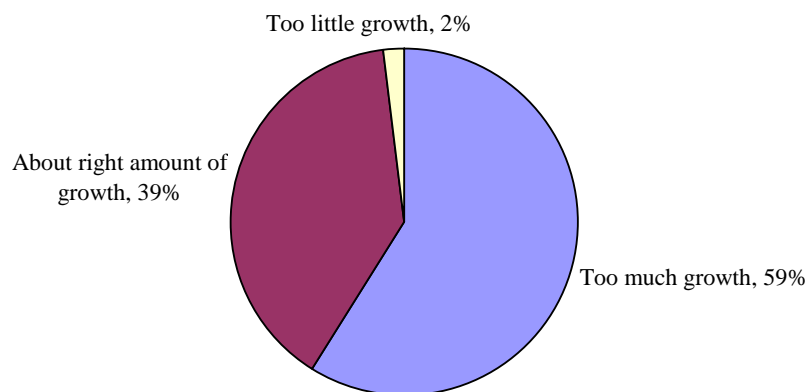
Among the demographic groups, those who had lived in the County for 25 or more years and residents in the eastern portion of the county were more likely to believe that the quality of life will decline in the next ten years.

**Chart 3. Change in Quality of Life in Ten Years**



The final question in this group asked for respondents' opinions about the recent rate of population growth in St. Croix County. As shown in Chart 4, a majority (59%) said the County's 26 percent population growth between the years 2000 and 2008 was too much. About four in ten said that rate was about right, while two percent would like to see more growth. This concern was reflected in the open-ended question at the end of survey that asked respondents to list one thing they would like to change about the County; a desire for less growth and development was second only to reduction of property taxes.

**Chart 4. Opinions About Recent Population Growth**



The length of time the respondent had lived in St. Croix County made a difference in the response pattern to this question. Those who have lived in the County for at least 25 years and residents of the eastern

portion of the county were more displeased with the rate of growth. At the same time, recently arrived residents (less than five years) were significantly more comfortable with the County's growth rate in the past eight years. Respondents who said there has been too much growth in the County are four times as likely to have also said the quality of life will "become worse" in the next ten years when compared to those who think the growth rate has been "about right."

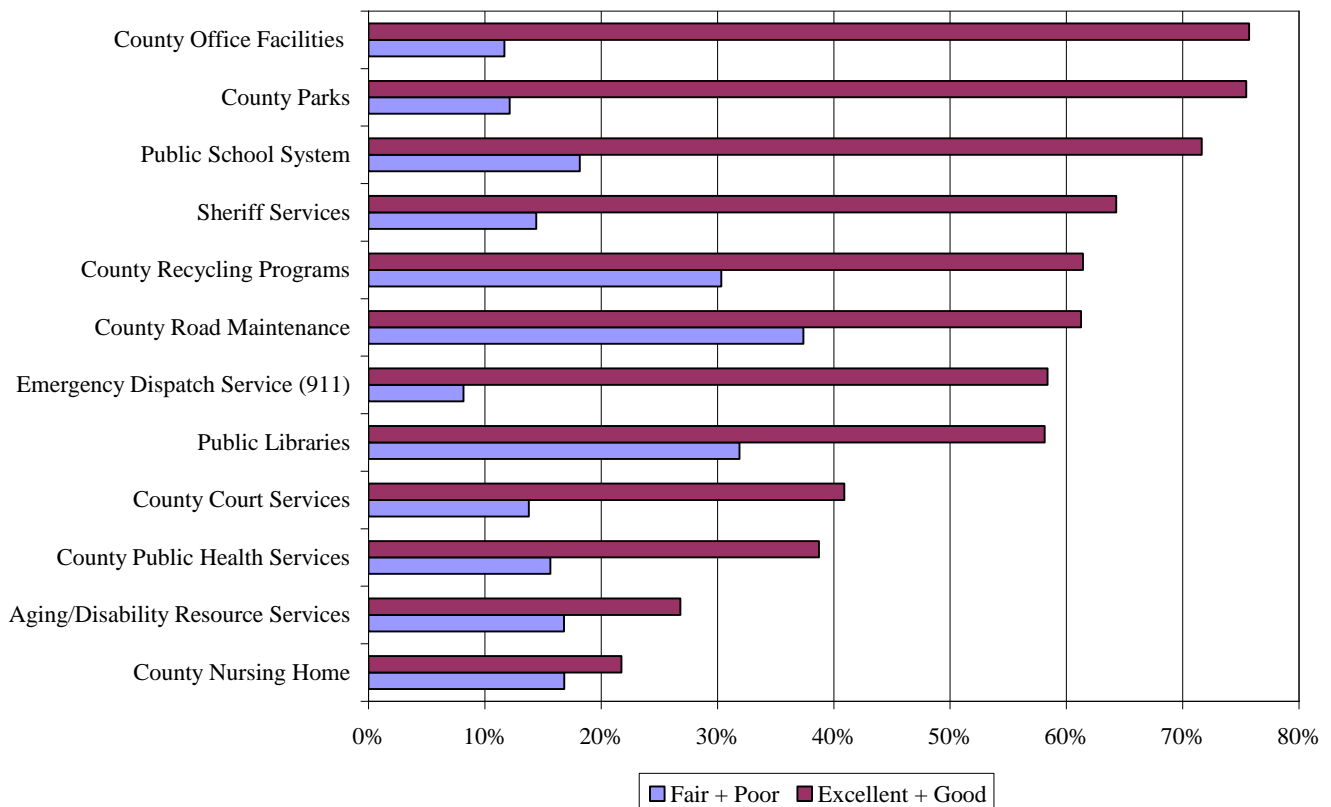
## Community Services and Facilities

Respondents said they are generally pleased with St. Croix County community services and facilities. Residents were asked to rate each as excellent, good, fair, poor, or don't know. As shown in Chart 5, eight of the ten services were rated excellent or good by at least half the respondents. As detailed in Appendix C, all listed items receive more ratings in the "good" category than in the "excellent" category. The top rated services and facilities were the County office facilities, County parks, and the local public schools; each received combined excellent and good ratings that ranged from 72 percent to 76 percent.

Sheriff services, recycling, road maintenance, emergency dispatch, and libraries received excellent or good ratings between 58 percent and 64 percent.

It is noteworthy that several of the services had high percentages of responses in the "don't know" category. These tended to be services that are not generally used by a broad spectrum of the general public: County nursing home (61%), aging/disability resources (56%), public health (46%), and County court services (45%). Among respondents who had an opinion, the largest proportion rated these services as good or excellent.

**Chart 5. Rating of St. Croix County Services**



Among the demographic groups, the most significant variation was related to the proportion of respondents who provided a “don’t know” response regarding particular services that they are less likely to use.

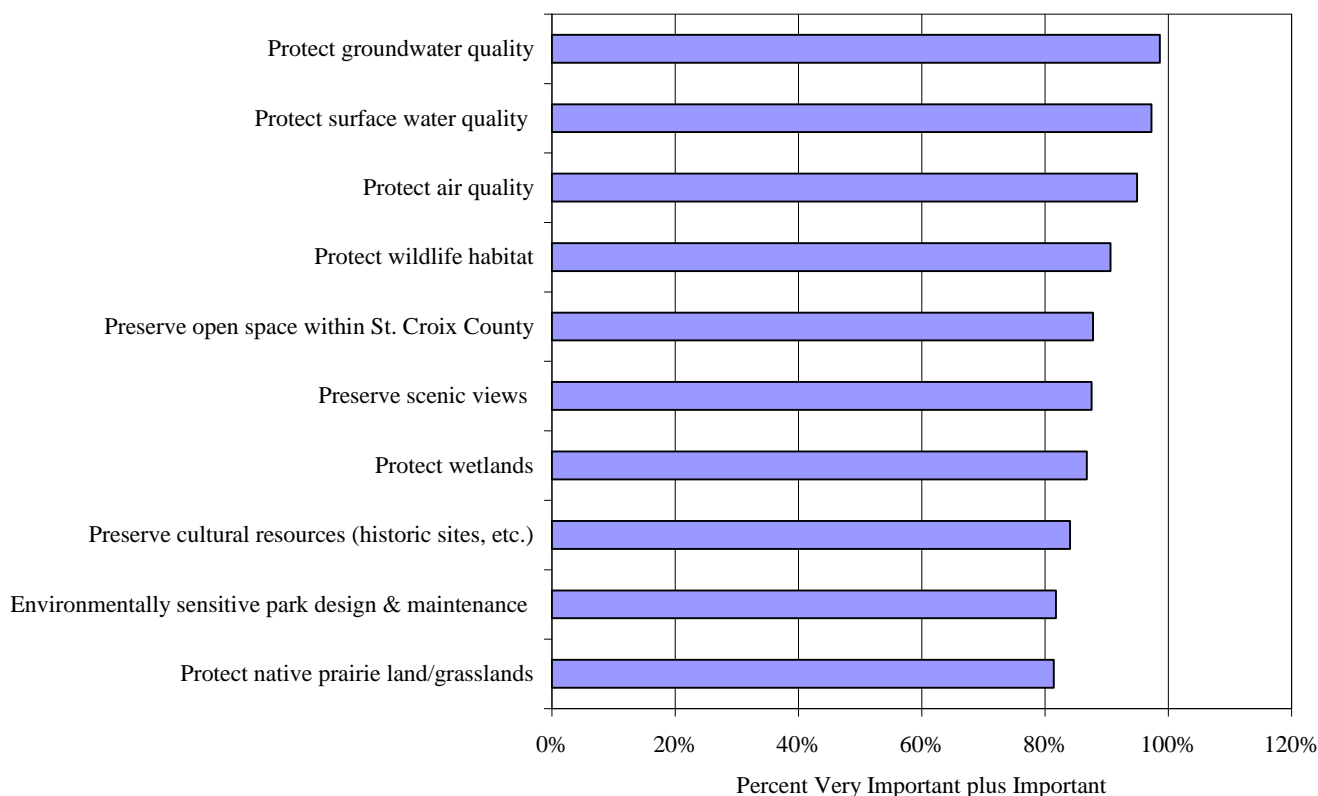
- Aging/disability resources drew more “don’t know” responses from those under age 45, those in the workforce, households with children, those with higher levels of education, higher income households, and residents in the western portion of the county.
- Younger respondents, employed residents, and those who have lived in the county less than 25 years were more likely to give a “don’t know” rating to the County nursing home.
- Similarly, the County’s public health services received a higher proportion of “don’t know” responses from households with higher income, those in the workforce, and residents of the western portion of the county.
- The proportions of “don’t know” responses for the emergency dispatch system and for the court system were higher among respondents who have lived in St. Croix County for less than 25 years.

## **Natural and Cultural Resources**

Chart 6 indicates that residents in St. Croix County are quite interested in preserving natural and cultural resources in the area. Respondents were asked how important they think it is that the County should use regulations to protect the resources included in Chart 6. The percentage of respondents saying that it was “important” or “very important” to do so ranged from a low of 81 percent for protecting native prairie/grasslands to near unanimity for protecting groundwater (99%) and surface water (97%). Given that the question was framed specifically to ask about the use of regulations to protect or preserve these resources, the fact that no less than 80 percent of respondents said this is important or very important is a remarkably strong result.

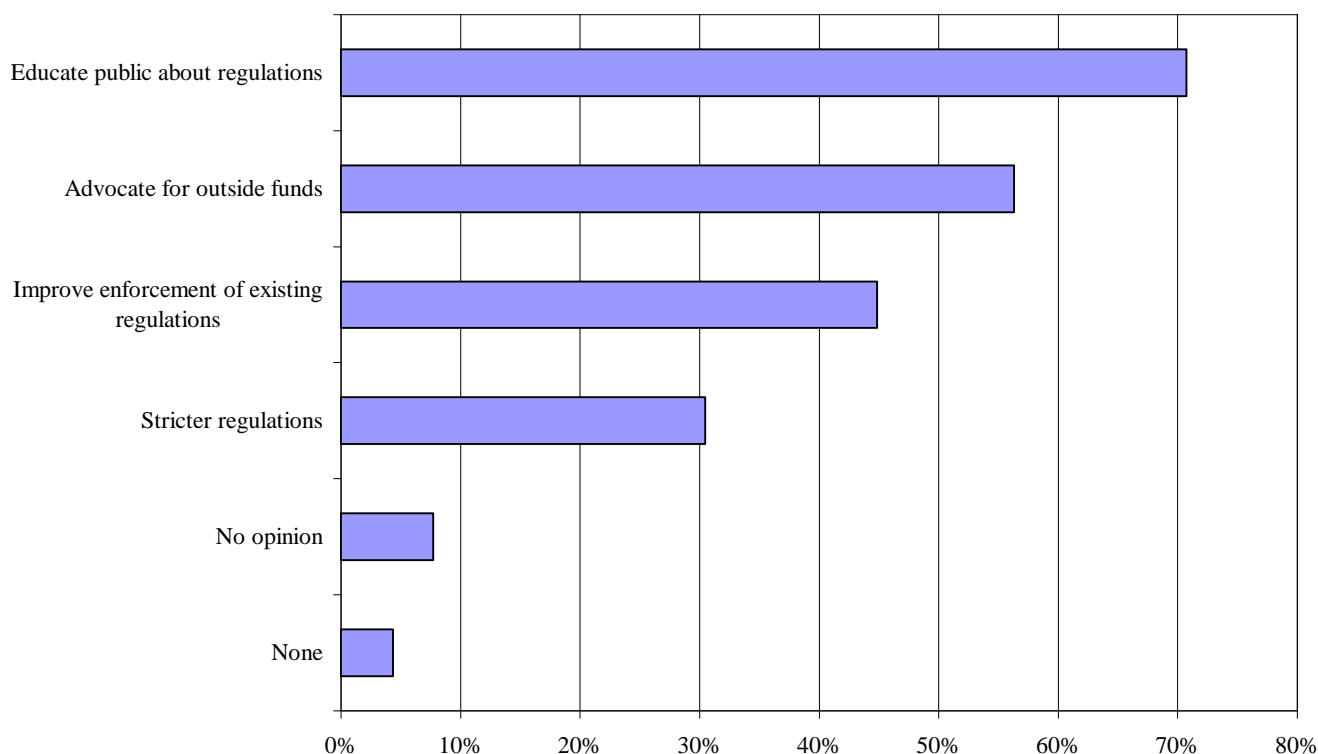
Women were more likely to give higher levels of importance to preservation of open space and scenic views and the use of environmentally sensitive park designs and park maintenance practices.

**Chart 6. Importance to Use Regulations for Environmental Issues**



An additional question in this section of the survey asked St. Croix County residents what roles the County government should play in protecting natural resources. Respondents were given a series of choices and asked to mark all roles they viewed as appropriate for the County. The results are shown in Table 7. More than half of residents said the County should educate the public about existing regulations (70%) and advocate for matching funds from sources outside of County government (56%). Slightly fewer than half of respondents opted for additional or improved enforcement of County ordinances, while about a third chose stricter regulations, and only four percent said none of these roles was appropriate. Taken in conjunction with the responses shown in Chart 6 above, County residents were supportive of regulations to protect the natural resource base. At the same time majorities did not support stricter regulations; nor did they say there is a need for improvement in the enforcement of existing ordinances.

**Chart 7. Roles of St. Croix County in Protection and Preservation of Natural Resources**



Respondents with more formal education were more likely to include improved enforcement of existing ordinances and stricter regulations among their choices. Residents who have lived in the County for at least 25 years were less likely to have chosen stricter regulations.

## Transportation

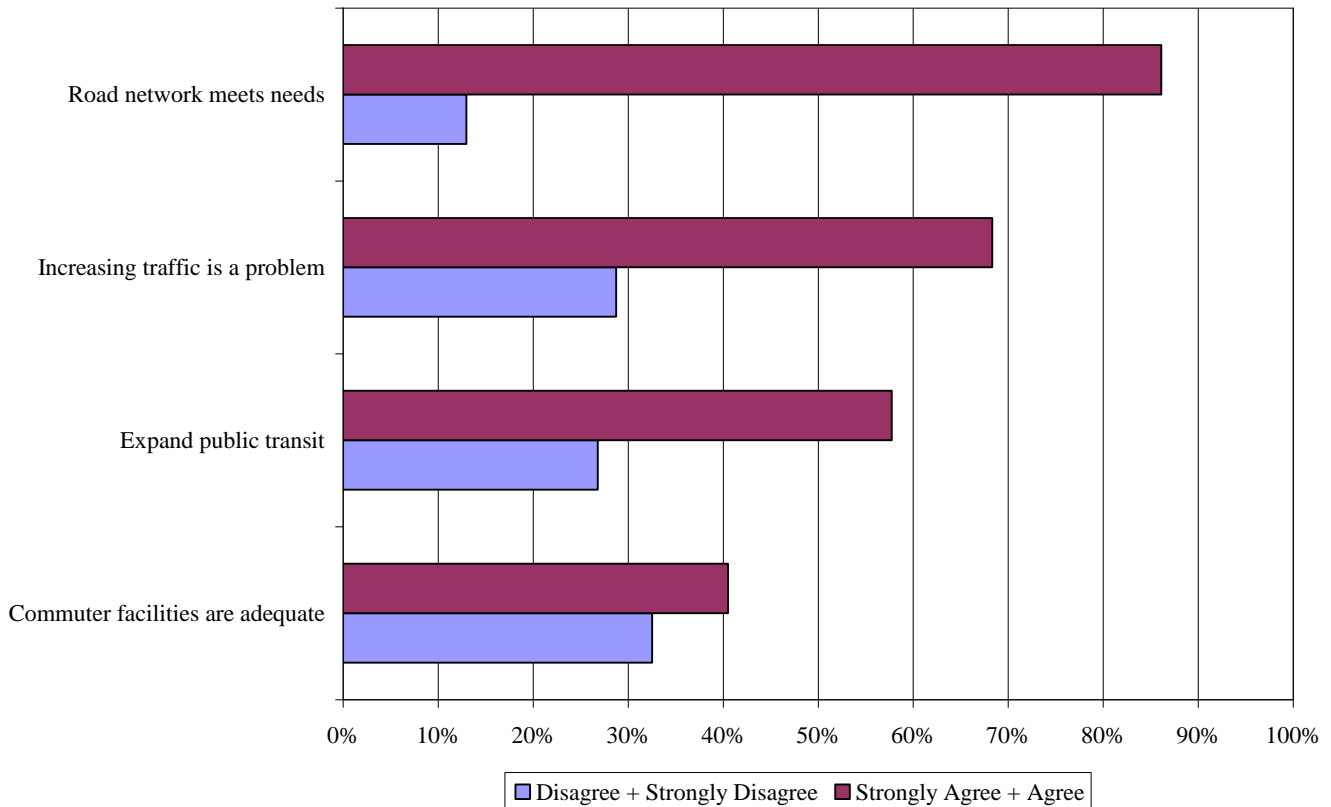
As shown in Chart 8, the overwhelming majority (86%) of St. Croix County residents felt that the current road network meets the needs of its citizens. Two of three respondents said the increasing traffic in the County is a problem, which is related to the earlier concern regarding the potential decline in the quality of life in the County (Chart 3). Those who were concerned about increasing traffic were more likely to also have said that the quality of life in the County will decline in the next ten years.

More than half of respondents said they would like the County to work on expansion of public transit opportunities. Respondents had mixed opinions about the adequacy of commuter facilities. While the largest proportion (40%) said commuter facilities and services are adequate, a third disagreed or strongly disagreed. At the same time more than a quarter of residents chose the “don’t know” response.

With regard to demographics, the only noteworthy differences were among those who gave a “don’t know” response. Women were more likely to have responded “don’t know” to the question about increased traffic. Recent arrivals (five years or fewer) and women had a higher proportion of responses in the “don’t know” category regarding the adequacy of commuter facilities.



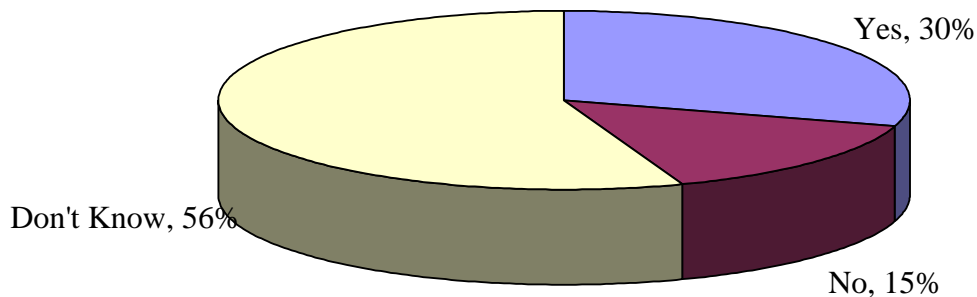
**Chart 8. Opinions About Transportation Issues**



## Intergovernmental Cooperation

When asked whether they are satisfied with the working relationship between St. Croix County government and their local government, the majority of residents chose the “don’t know” response. (See Chart 9). Among those with an opinion, they are satisfied by a two-to-one margin. This response pattern indicates that the day-to-day relationship between their local government and the St. Croix County government is mostly invisible to them. Women were even more likely than men to have expressed a “don’t know” opinion.

**Chart 9. Satisfied with Relationship Between County and Local Government**



## Housing

St. Croix County respondents were asked if additional units of assorted types of housing are needed in St. Croix County. As shown in Table 2, St. Croix County residents expressed differing opinions about the need for various housing types. More than half of respondents agreed or strongly agreed there is a need for more senior housing, single family housing, and affordable housing in St. Croix County. Support was particularly strong for senior housing (72%), followed by single family housing (66%).

In regard to single family housing, the SRC notes that respondents who said that the County had experienced too much recent growth (Chart 4) were slightly less likely to have agreed (46%) or strongly agreed (14%) that more single family housing is needed in the County than those who said the growth rate was about right or too little. Nevertheless, a majority who think there has been too much growth said there is a need for more single family housing in the County. The reason for this apparent contradiction (concern about the pace of growth but wanting more single family housing) is unclear.

Housing subdivisions, multiple-family housing (duplexes, apartments, and condos), and seasonal housing received support from no more than a quarter of respondents. More than 80 percent of respondents disagreed that more mobile homes, whether freestanding or in a mobile home park, are needed in the County.

**Table 2. Additional Housing Needs in St. Croix County**

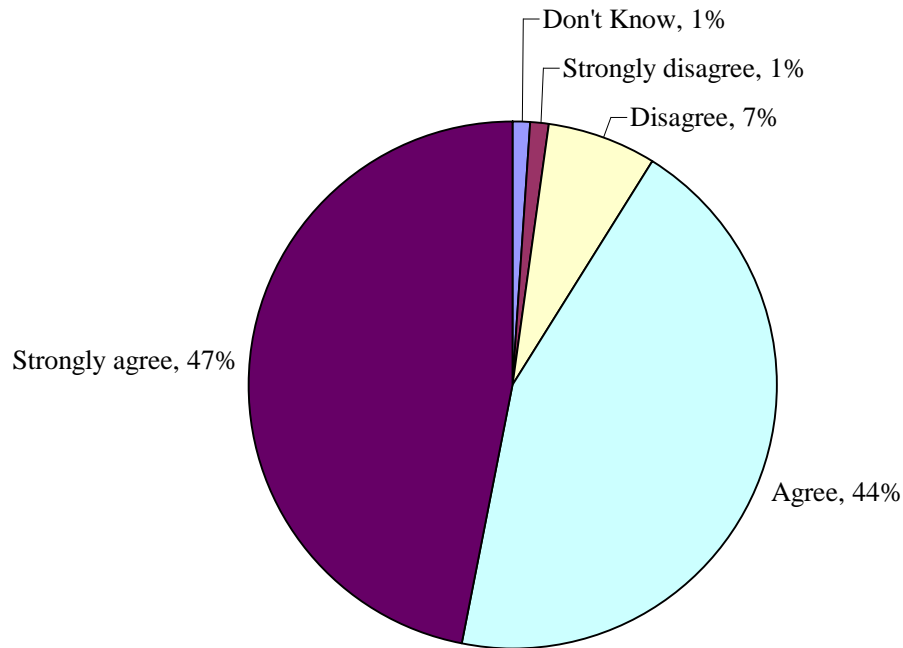
	Count	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Senior housing	486	19%	53%	9%	2%	17%
Single family housing	479	16%	50%	18%	6%	10%
Affordable housing	486	16%	36%	25%	11%	11%
Housing subdivisions	481	3%	25%	39%	21%	12%
Duplexes (2 units)	480	3%	22%	44%	15%	15%
Condominiums, apartments	483	3%	18%	47%	18%	14%
Seasonal and recreational homes	480	1%	17%	42%	21%	20%
Mobile home parks	489	2%	7%	35%	47%	9%
Freestanding mobile homes	486	1%	6%	41%	45%	7%

Among the demographic groups:

- Support for senior housing was stronger among long-term residents, retirees, households without children, and households with annual income under \$50,000.
- Renters were more likely to say there is a need for more duplex units and affordable housing.
- Residents of the western portion of the County were less likely to see a need for additional condos/apartments and were more strongly opposed to mobile homes and mobile home parks.

Respondents said the aesthetics of nearby housing is an important item, with more than 90 percent saying the external appearance of residences in their neighborhoods is important to them. (See Chart 10).

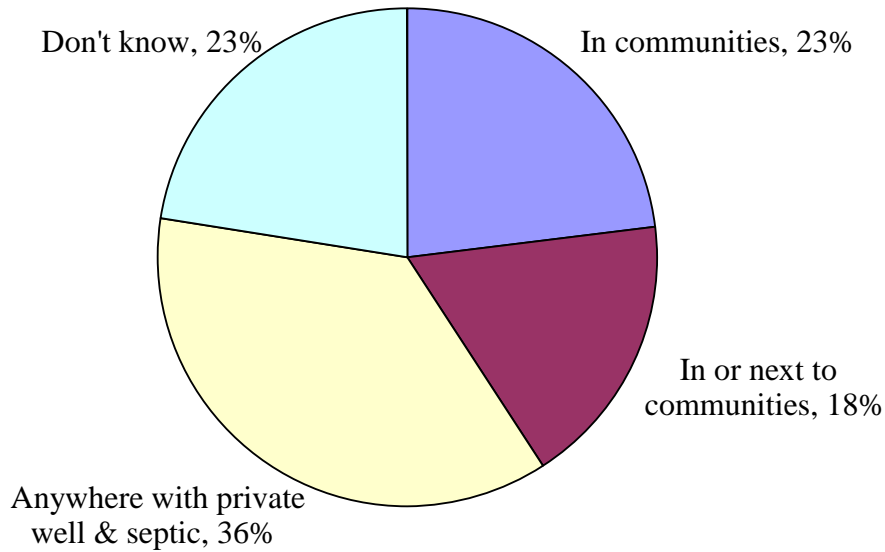
**Chart 10. External Appearance of Neighboring Residences is Important**



St. Croix County residents had split opinions regarding whether they prefer new housing to be built in or near existing communities where public water and sewer is available or could be made available. As shown in Chart 11, about four in ten said they favor focusing new home developments in such locations. Nearly as many (36%) said homes could be build anywhere in the County where a well and private onsite sewage treatment (e.g., septic system) could be sited. Nearly a quarter of respondents said they “don’t know.”

Women were much more likely to have responded “don’t know” to this question.

**Chart 11. Location of New Residential Development**



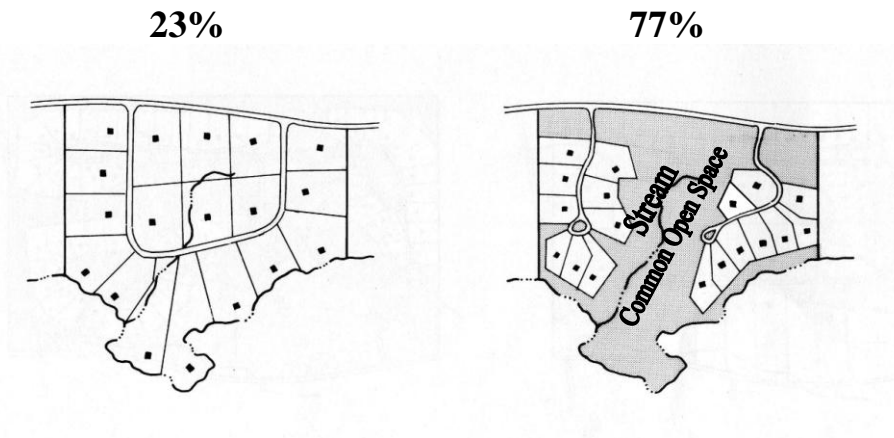
Majorities of St. Croix County residents said they are open to varying the minimum lot size for residential development in certain circumstances. As shown in Table 3, they are most likely to support increasing the minimum lot size in environmentally sensitive areas (59% strongly agree or agree). Closer to half agreed or strongly agreed about reducing the minimum lot size for residential development near local communities (51%) or reducing the minimum lot size for residences where small scale sewage treatment systems are available (50%).

The only demographic difference was the proportion of “don’t know” responses, which was more frequent among women respondents for all three options. Single adult households provided a “don’t know” response more frequently to the first and third options.

<b>Table 3. Opinions About Variations in the Minimum Lot Size</b>						
	<b>Count</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>
Larger lots in environmentally sensitive areas	480	15%	44%	17%	11%	14%
Smaller lots near local communities	480	10%	41%	22%	10%	17%
Smaller lots with small scale sewage treatment	478	8%	42%	22%	9%	20%

The last question relating to housing issues was about preferred layout for rural housing lots. Respondents were shown a drawing of a hypothetical traditional rural housing development with large lots and an alternative design of the same site with smaller individual lots with preserved open space. As shown in Figure 1, St. Croix County residents preferred the alternative layout by more than a three-to-one margin. There was no difference in the responses among the demographic groups.

**Figure 1. Preferred Rural Housing Layout**



## **Agriculture**

Farmland Use and Conversion. Chart 13 shows that there was a near consensus on allowing productive farmland to be used in agriculture. In contrast, a majority of St. Croix County residents were opposed to using productive farmland for non-agricultural uses; a majority (56%) opposed residential uses, and more than seven in ten respondents opposed commercial, industrial or any other uses.

There were few differences across demographic groups in terms of how they feel agricultural land should be used. Retirees were more likely to strongly disagree with the use of productive farmland for commercial uses. Women had a higher proportion of “don’t know” responses to the use of productive farmland for commercial and industrial purposes. Renters were more likely to give a “don’t know” response to the use of productive farmland for agricultural uses. Residents from the eastern portion of the County were more likely to strongly agree with the use of productive agricultural land for agriculture and to strongly disagree with using such land for residential purposes.

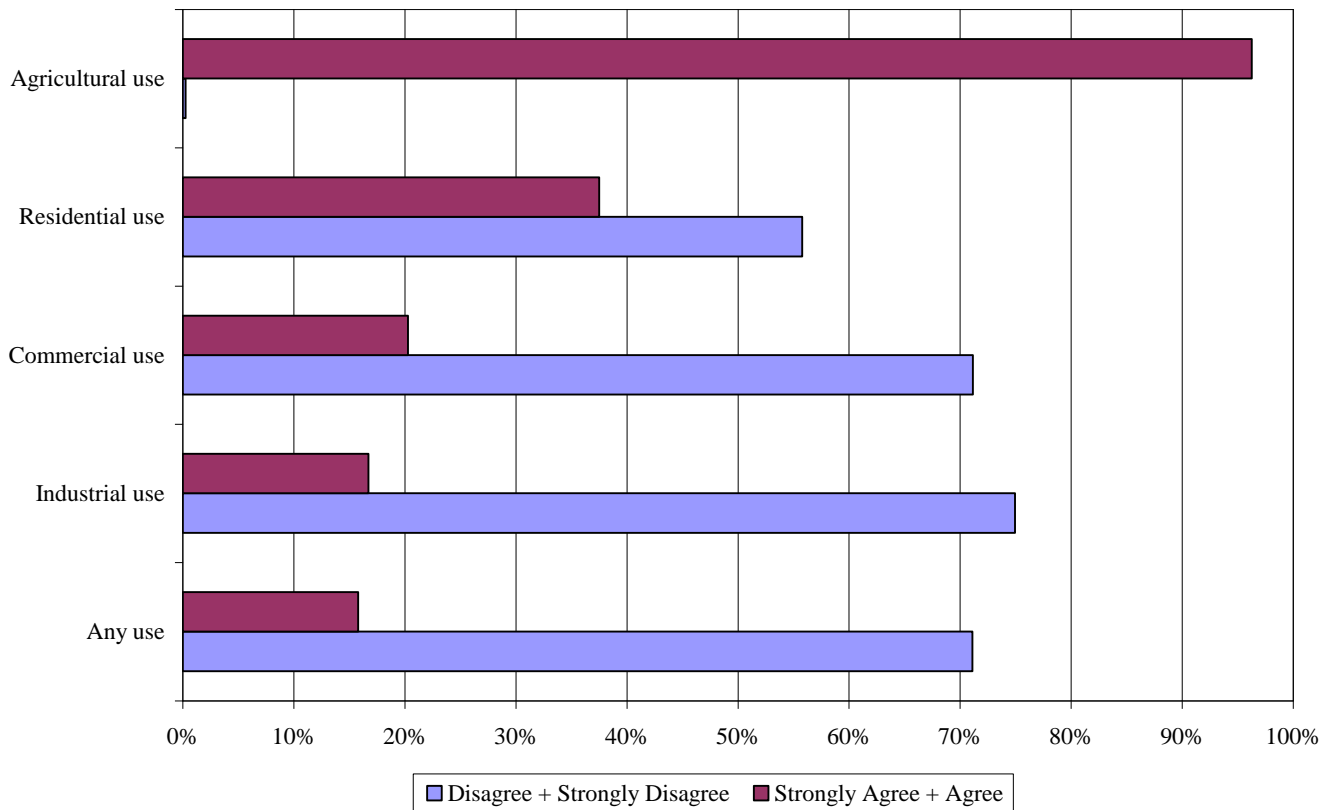
Table 4 contains the responses to three additional questions about agriculture. In the first question, St. Croix County residents said they were concerned about the amount of farmland being converted to non-farm uses. More than 70 percent agreed or strongly agreed that too much farmland is shifting to other uses.

Retirees were more likely to strongly agree with this statement, while recent arrivals (fewer than five years) were more likely to have said they don’t know.

When asked if they think that local agricultural production should be encouraged and marketed locally, more than nine in ten agreed or strongly agreed. There were no differences in the response pattern among the demographic groups.

In contrast, nearly half of respondents said they didn’t know if conflicts between farms and neighbors regarding dust, noise and odors, are common in the County. A higher portion of residents from the eastern portion of the County strongly agreed or agreed that these conflicts are common. Three demographic groups had significantly higher percentages of responses in the “don’t know” category: those who have lived in the County fewer than five years, those with more formal education, and higher income households.

**Chart 13. Productive Agricultural Land Should Be Used For:**



**Table 4. Opinions About Agriculture**

	Count	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Too much farmland is being converted to non farm uses	473	35%	38%	14%	4%	9%
Local agricultural production should be encouraged and marketed locally	474	44%	48%	2%	1%	5%
Conflicts between farms and neighbors are common in St. Croix County	472	4%	16%	32%	7%	<b>41%</b>

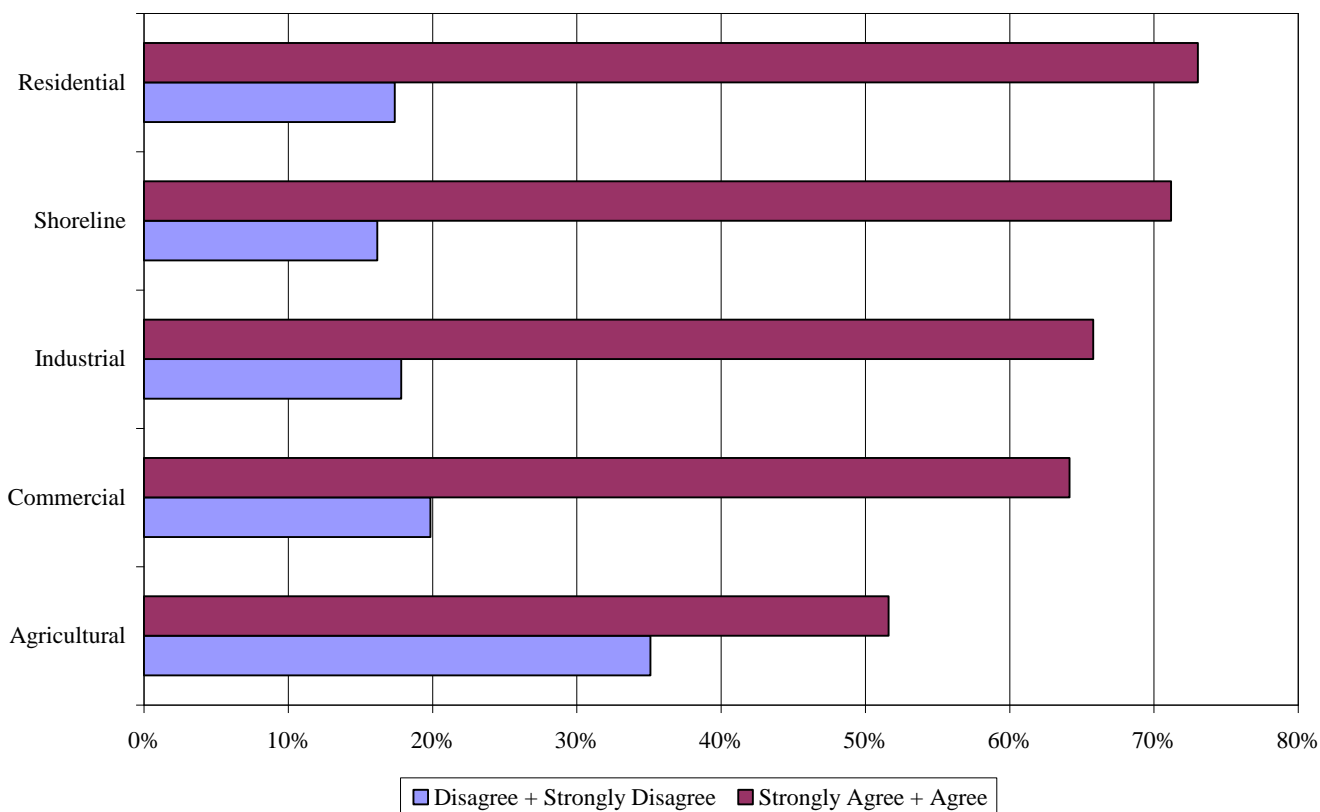
## Land Use

Chart 14 indicates that St. Croix County residents said they support a minimum lot size for development. Between 64 percent and 72 percent agreed or strongly agreed with a minimum lot size for commercial, industrial, shoreline, and residential development. About half of respondents agreed or strongly agreed there should be a minimum lot requirement for agricultural operations.

In terms of demographic differences:

- Residents from the western portion of the County were more likely to strongly agree with a minimum lot size for residential and shoreline development.
- Respondents with more formal education were more likely to agree that a minimum lot size for shoreline development is needed.
- Women were more likely to say they didn't know if there should be a minimum lot size for agricultural, residential, and shoreline development.
- Renters were more likely to say they didn't know if there should be a minimum lot size for residential and shoreline development.

**Chart 14. There Should Be a Minimum Lot Size For:**



As shown in Table 5, a majority of St. Croix County residents (56%) said they would prefer that development use less rural land and be more compact around existing villages and cities. Although this question is similar to an earlier question (see Chart 11), the wording of the earlier question was specifically about housing, while the wording of this question is generic and refers to “development” without specifying any particular type of land use.

A larger proportion of residents of the eastern portion of the County said they strongly agreed with this statement. Renters and women were more likely to provide a “don’t know” response.

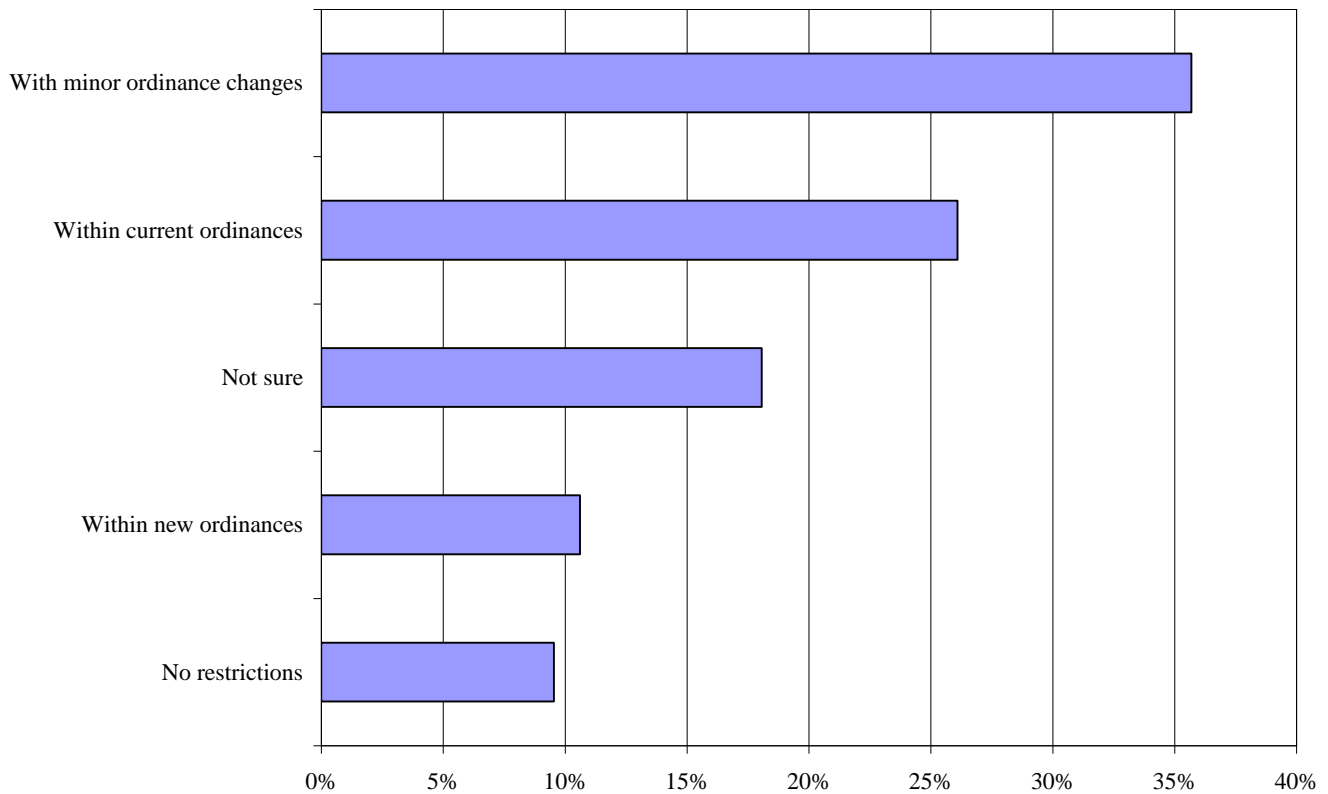
Many St. Croix County residents are unsure whether land use regulations are enforced to their satisfaction. Table 5 indicates the largest portion (39%) of respondents chose the “don’t know” response. Among those who have an opinion, those who said they are satisfied outweigh those who are not satisfied.

**Table 5. Opinions About Development Patterns and Ordinance Enforcement**

	Count	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
Development should use less rural land and be more compact around existing villages & cities	471	26%	40%	18%	4%	12%
I am satisfied with the enforcement of existing land use regulations in St. Croix County	473	2%	33%	20%	7%	<b>39%</b>

The only demographic differences were among women and those who have lived in the County fewer than five years. Both groups were more likely to have chosen the “don’t know” response.

When asked about property owner rights and regulations, fewer than 10 percent of St. Croix County residents said that there should be no restrictions regarding what property owners may do with their land. As shown in Chart 15, the largest portions favored development with minor changes to the current ordinances or within current ordinances.

**Chart 15. Landowners Should Be Able to Develop Their Land**

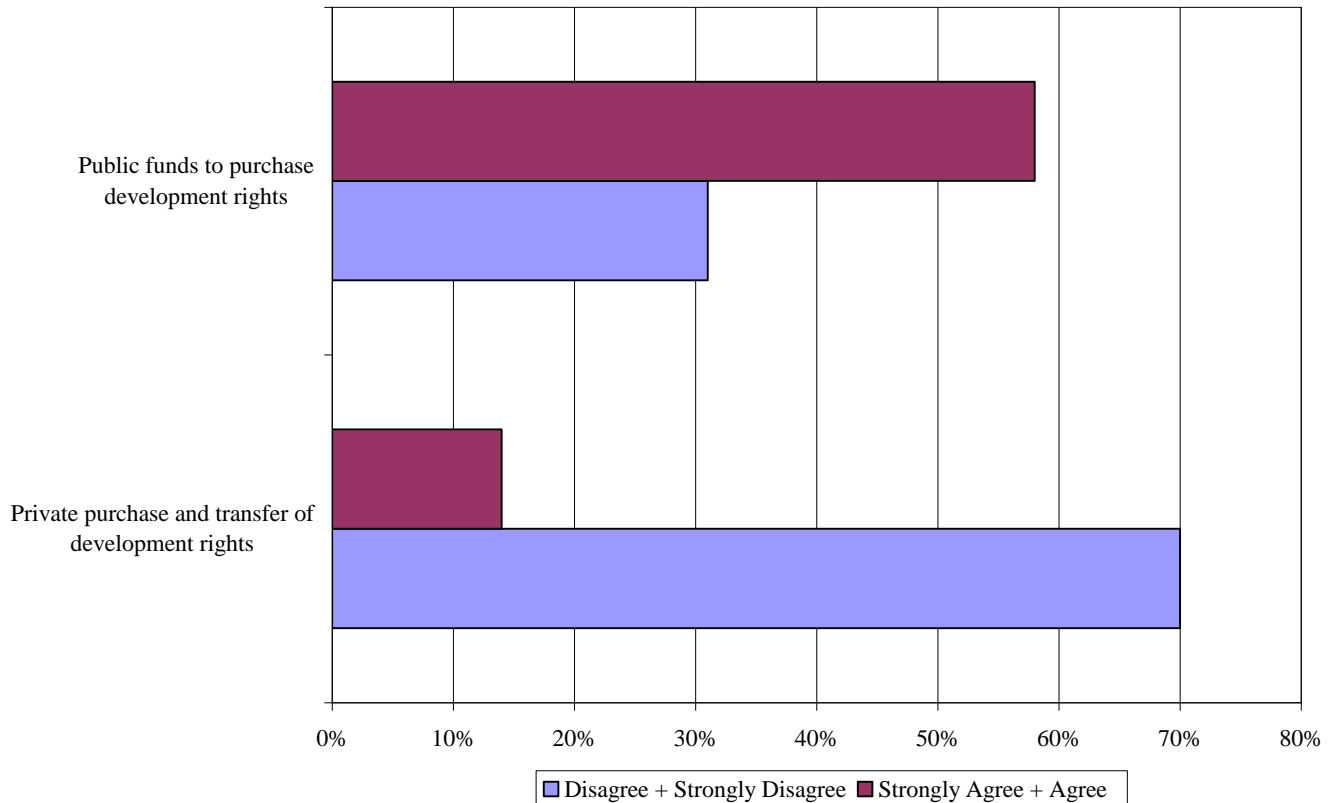
Women and recent arrivals to the County were more likely to have provided a “not sure” response.

As shown in Chart 16, 58% St. Croix County residents said they support programs to use public funds to purchase development rights from private landowners in order to preserve farmland, open space or environmentally important areas. There were no noteworthy differences among the demographic groups.



In contrast, a 13 percent favor programs that allow developers to purchase development rights in one area and transfer them to another area in return for being allowed to increase the density of development. Renters were more likely to say they aren't sure about this issue.

**Chart 16. Opinions About Development Rights Programs**

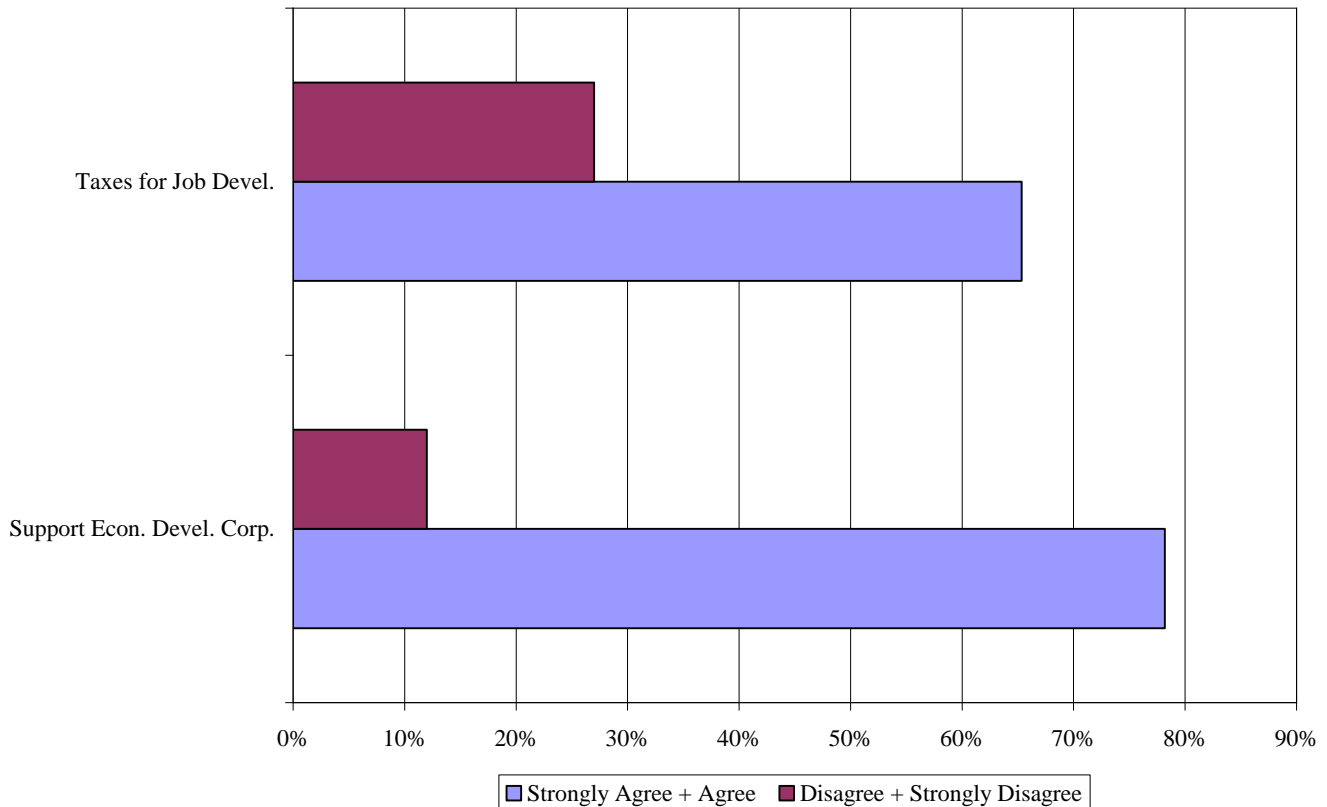


## Economic Development

Chart 17 shows that St. Croix County residents are willing to spend tax dollars to attract or retain jobs in the County. Nearly two-thirds agree (13%) or strongly agree (52%) that tax dollars should be used to recruit or retain jobs; only 27% disagree with using tax revenues in this fashion. Women were more supportive of using tax dollars to recruit or retain jobs. Additionally, more than four of five respondents said the County should support and coordinate efforts with the St. Croix Economic Development Corporation.

If the County were successful in their business recruitment efforts, Table 6 indicates that businesses should be built in designated areas. More than 80 percent agreed (60%) or strongly agreed (22%) that commercial or industrial construction should be located in designated areas, such as business parks, industrial parks, or downtowns; only 13% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. Opinions about the location of businesses were remarkably consistent across all the demographic groups, with no significant differences.

**Chart 17. Opinions About Economic Development**



**Table 6. Opinions About Business Location**

	Count	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
Businesses should be located in designated areas, such as business parks, industrial parks, or downtowns.	472	22%	60%	12%	1%	5%

A suggestion of the types of businesses respondents would like to see recruited to the County is provided by Chart 18. Residents were asked their level of agreement regarding types of businesses to pursue as listed in the chart. Seven business categories were listed along with the non-business category of public sector/government. Chart 11 shows the percentage that gave each item a “5” or a “4” high priority rating. The results indicated that St. Croix County residents want the County to pursue a variety of business types. Of the seven business types listed, a majority gave the two highest priority ratings to six types of businesses. Three types were grouped together at the top of the priorities: agricultural (75%), high technology industry (75%), and light industry (73%). In addition, a majority, ranging between 61% and 68%, gave a rating of five or four to pursuing manufacturing, service businesses, and retail development. Respondents had split opinions about recruiting tourism-based businesses. While a plurality (49%) gave it a high priority (four or five), 30 percent gave it a priority rating in the middle (3). The only item on the list for which a majority of respondents were not supportive was the aforementioned public sector/government category, which is consistent with the large proportion of residents who listed reduction of property taxes as their top priority in a later question.

There were the following demographic differences:

- Agricultural businesses were rated more importantly by residents from the eastern portion of the County.
- Respondents from the western portion of the County more strongly favored high technology industry. Renters gave a higher proportion of “don’t know” responses regarding high technology industry.
- Long term residents were less supportive of tourism development, while residents in the western portion of the County were slightly more supportive than those from the eastern portion.
- Residents from the western portion of the county and city/village residents were more supportive of additional retail development.

**Chart 18. High Priority Businesses to Attract**

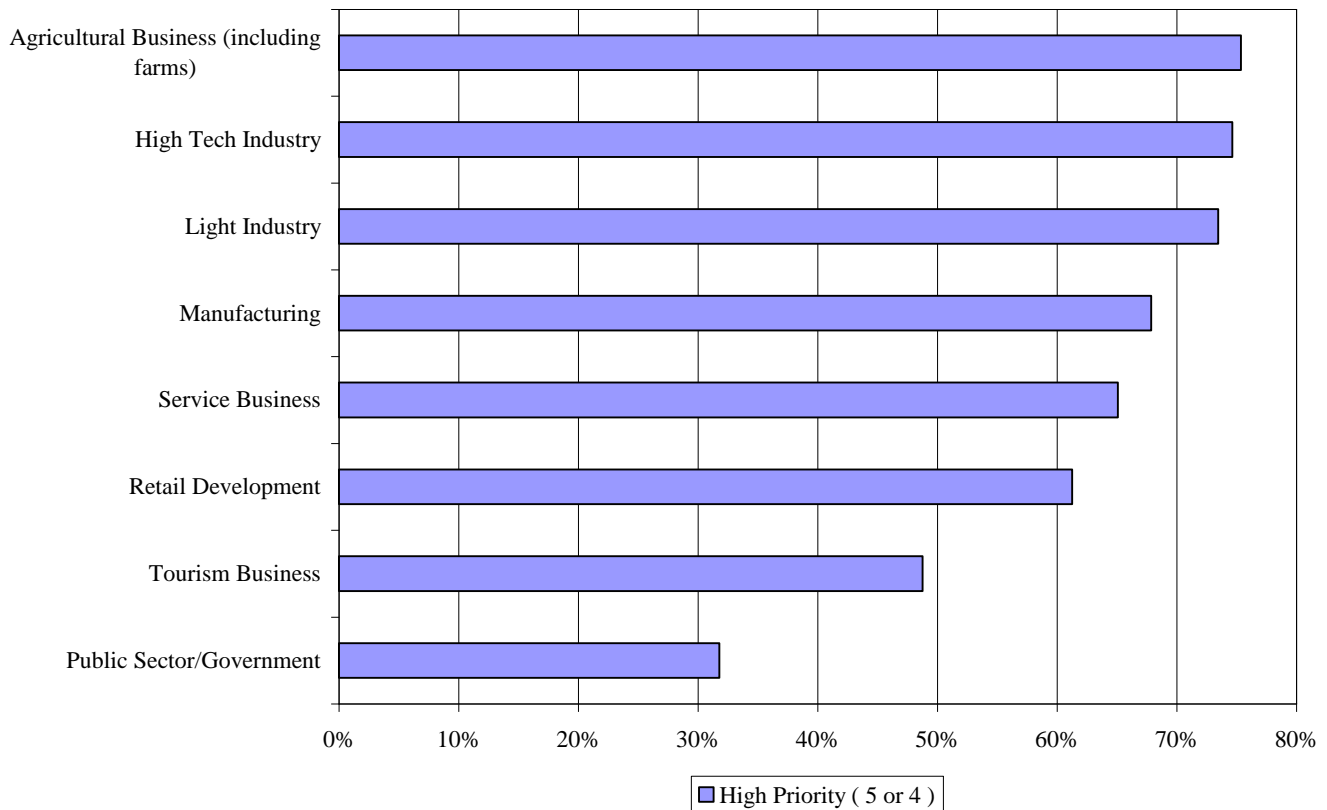
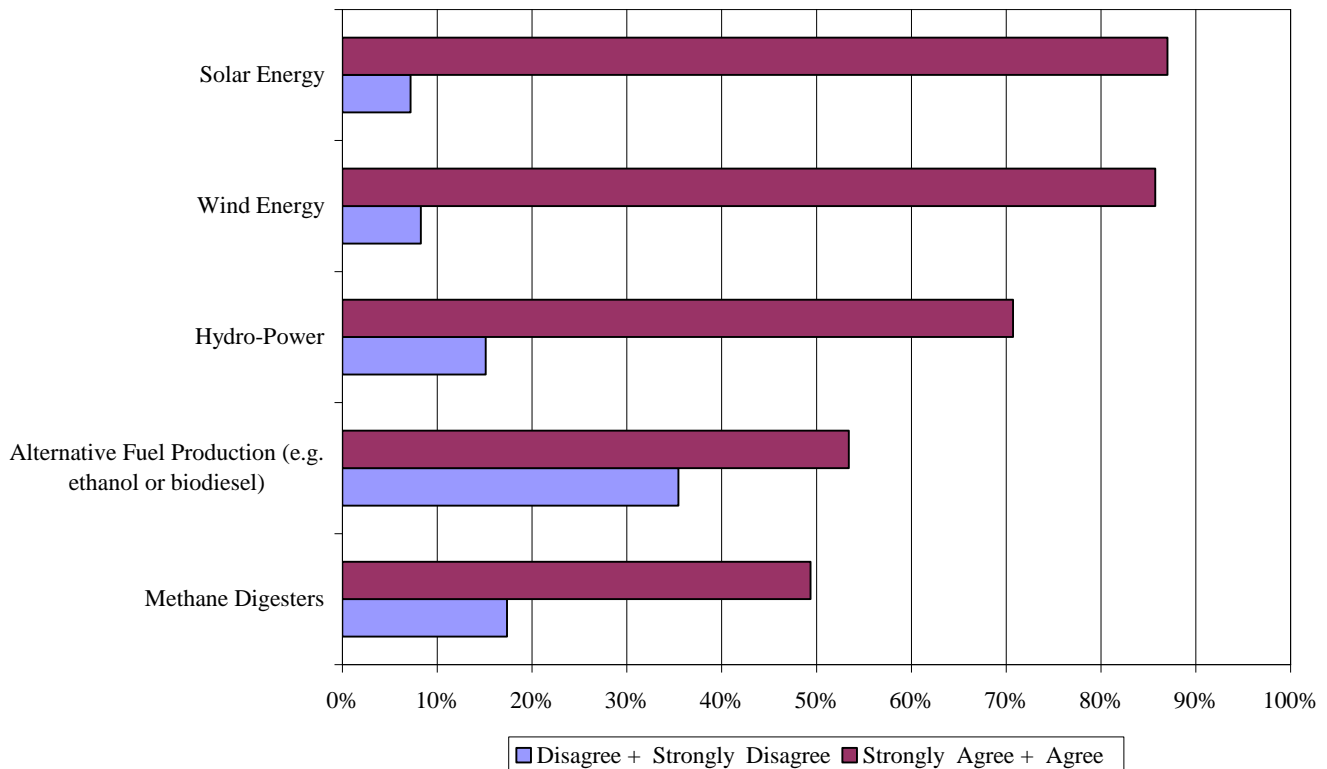


Chart 19 summarizes the opinions of St. Croix County residents with respect to another economic development strategy – generating alternative or renewable energy. Both wind and solar power were seen as worthy economic development options by more than 80% of the respondents; about seven in ten felt this way about hydropower. Support was not quite as strong for biofuels (ethanol or biodiesel) or for methane digesters. While a majority (53%) supported biofuels, a third was opposed. About half favored methane digesters, but a third said they “don’t know.”

Residents from the eastern portion of the County were stronger supporters of methane digesters. A higher proportion of women also said they didn’t know if methane digesters should be pursued. Recent arrivals (fewer than five years) were more likely to agree or strongly agree with biofuels as an option. Women and single adult households were more likely to have said they don’t know whether hydropower should be pursued.

**Chart 19. Should St. Croix County Pursue Renewable Energy as an Economic Development Strategy**



## Planning Priorities and Communication

Respondents were given a list of potential actions pertaining to planning issues and asked to select their top three priorities. Their responses are summarized in Chart 20. It was not surprising that property tax reduction was the top priority; two-thirds of respondents included it among their top three choices. Preservation of the rural and small town character came in second and was chosen by 38 percent. This second place ranking behind property taxes is consistent with the selection of small town atmosphere/rural lifestyle as the top reason people choose to live in St. Croix County (see Chart 2). Taken together, the responses to these two questions suggest that St. Croix County residents want planning priorities to focus on retaining the small town atmosphere and rural lifestyle in the County. Additional items on the list, including minimizing urban sprawl (28%), preservation of productive agricultural land (22%), and preservation of green space (20%) are likely associated with the small town atmosphere/rural lifestyle as well.

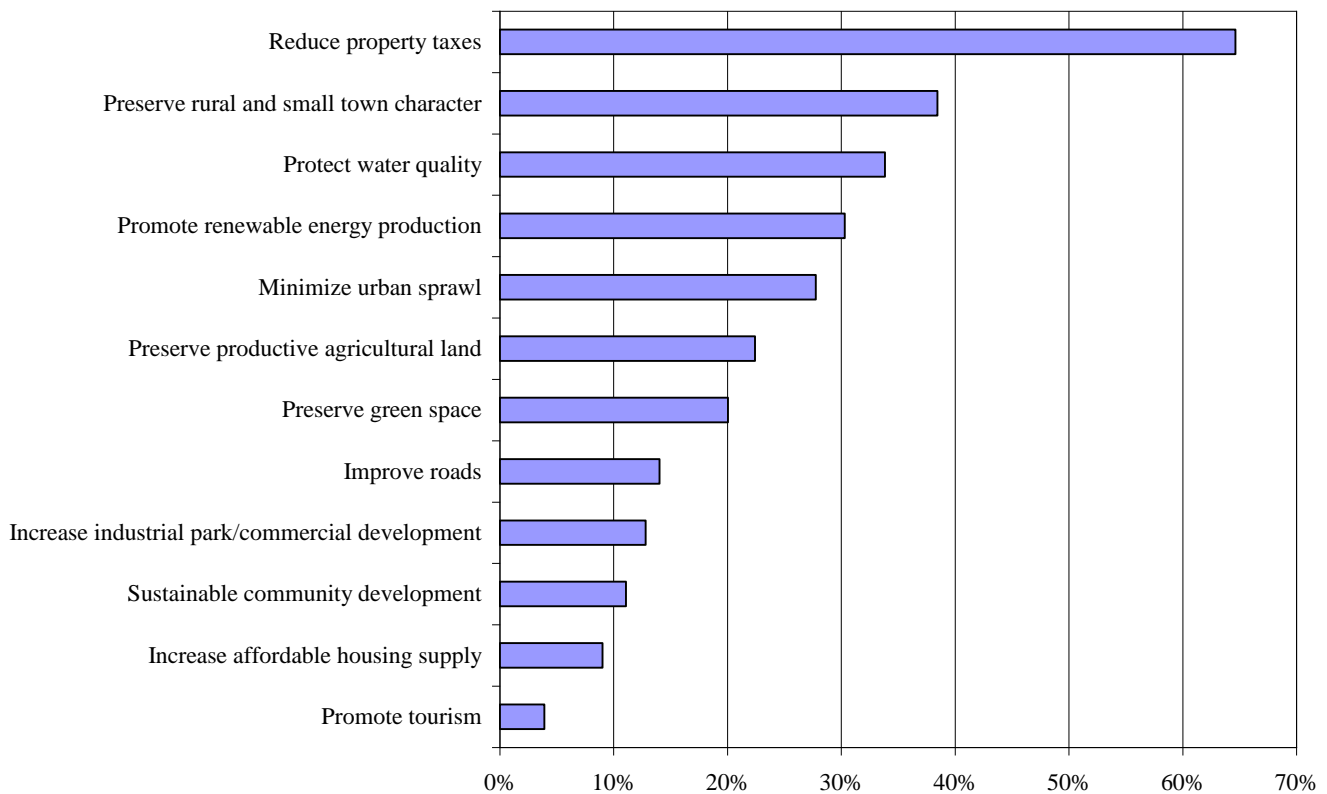
Protection of water quality was ranked in third place. Again, this is consistent with responses to earlier questions in which respondents said protection of surface and ground water were the top two resources to be protected by planning and zoning regulations (see Chart 6).

In terms of demographic differences:

- Preservation of rural and small town atmosphere was included in the top three less frequently by single adult households.
- Retirees were more likely to include protection of water quality in their priorities.

- Those who more frequently included preservation of productive farmland were residents from the eastern portion of the County, respondents age 45 and above, and those from households with annual income less than \$50,000. Those who have lived in the County fewer than five years were less likely to include farmland preservation in their top three.
- Preservation of green space was favored by a higher proportion of respondents with more formal education.
- Increasing industrial and commercial development was less likely to be included in the top three by retirees. Households with annual incomes more than \$50,000 were more likely to select industrial and business development.
- Renters and households with incomes less than \$50,000 were more likely to include expansion of affordable housing among their priorities.

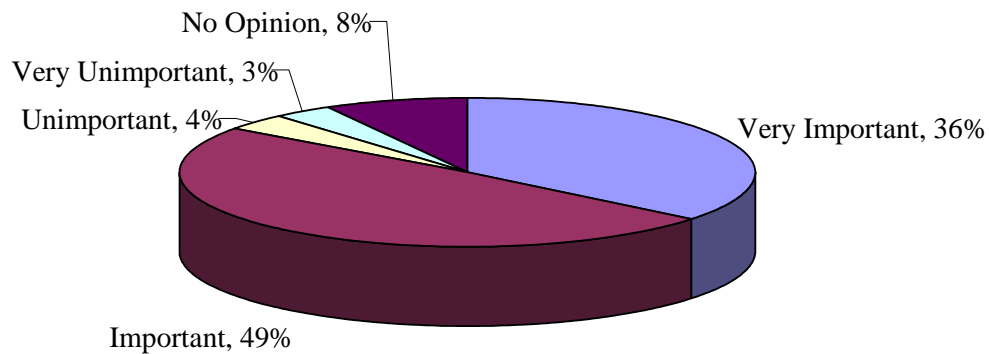
**Chart 20. County Planning Priorities**



When asked about the importance of using sustainable development principles as a guide for making planning decisions, a large proportion (85%) of St. Croix County residents said it was important (49%) or very important (36%). The SRC notes that sustainable community development was one of the lower planning priorities in the data on the previous question (see Chart 20). A possible explanation for this apparent discrepancy may be that many of the higher priorities identified by St. Croix County residents (e.g., water quality protection, minimizing urban sprawl, preservation of farmland and green space, etc.) shown in Chart 20 are, in fact, components of sustainable community development practices. Thus, the respondents may have identified the elements of sustainable development that they view as the most important.

Two demographic groups, renters and households with less than \$50,000 income, were more likely to have given a “don’t know” response to the question about using sustainability principles in planning decisions.

**Chart 21. Importance of Sustainable Development in Planning Decisions**

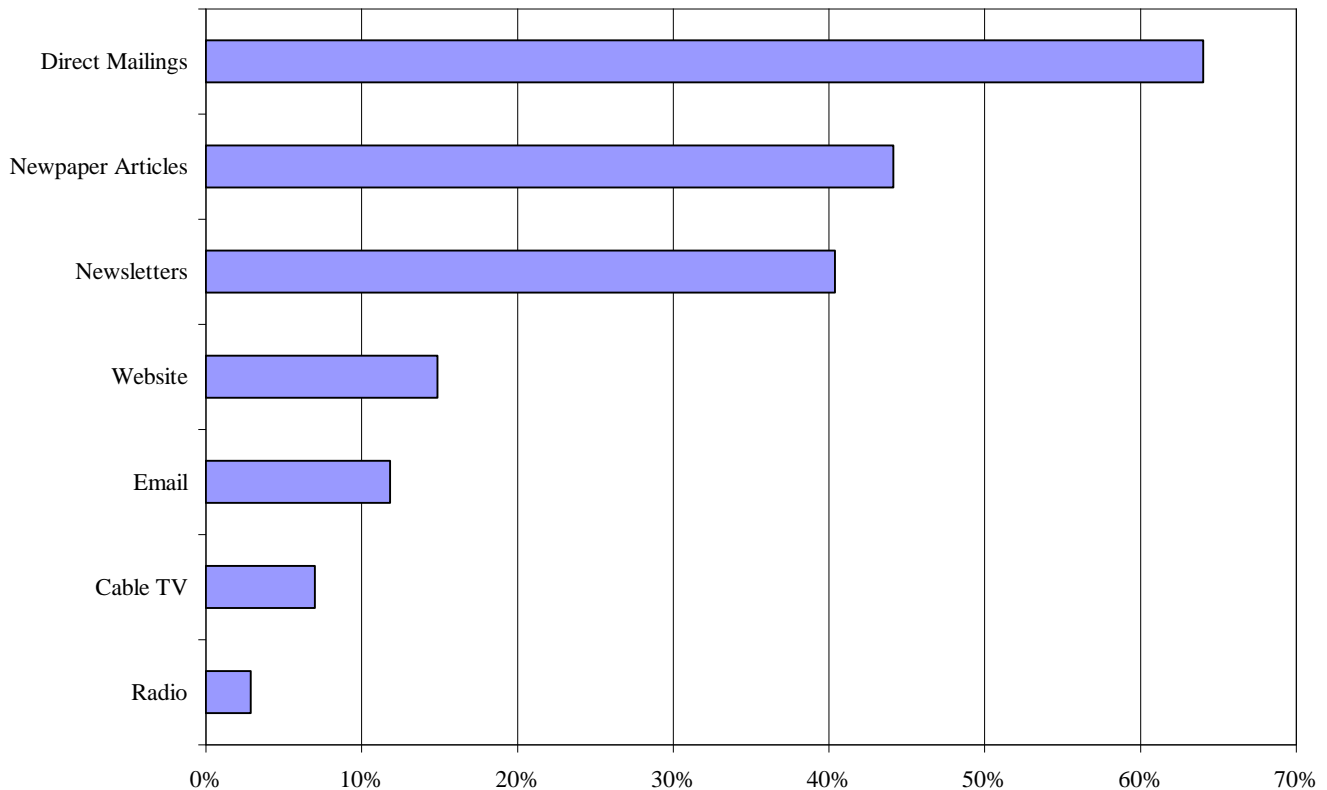


Respondents were asked to identify the two most effective ways for St. Croix County to provide people with information about comprehensive planning. Chart 22 summarizes the responses and indicates that direct mail is, by a large measure, the preferred information conduit. Newsletters and newspaper articles were selected in the top two by about four in ten respondents. Other surveys of this type that the SRC has done around the state have consistently identified direct mailings as a preferred means of getting information about public services, including comprehensive planning.

The County website, while not identified as one of the two most preferred means of receiving information about programs and services, does appeal to specific subgroups in St. Croix County. Younger respondents, renters, those with more formal education, and households with more than \$50,000 annual income all identified the website as a preferred means of getting information about County services in higher proportions than the County average.

Longer term residents, older respondents (45+ years of age), and retirees reported a stronger preference for newspaper articles.

**Chart 22. Two Preferred Methods of Communication**



## Desired Change in St. Croix County

Near the end of the survey, respondents were asked the following open-ended question, “If you could change one thing about St. Croix County, what would it be?” Three hundred twenty-eight respondents provided answers to this question. The answers were grouped into specific topics by the SRC and are summarized in Table 7. The complete list of responses is included in Appendix B.

Two topics, taxes and development/growth, topped the list of desired changes. The topic of taxes received the most responses, with more than one in four comments relating to this issue. Most responses related to taxes stated a specific desire for lower property taxation.

Table 7. One Change in St. Croix County by Topic		
Topic	Count	%
Taxes	90	28%
Development/Growth	72	22%
Roads/Transportation	44	13%
Government	39	12%
Recreation	18	6%
Police/Law Enforcement	12	4%
Retail/Shopping	8	2%
Nothing	6	2%
Environment	5	1%
Schools	5	1%
Employment Opportunities	4	1%
Miscellaneous	23	7%
Total	326	

More than one in five comments was about growth and development in the County. Nearly all were a request for less development and growth than the County has been experiencing.

Comments relating to roads/transportation (13%) and government (12%) were grouped close together. Within the transportation comments, the most frequently mentioned item related to moving forward with the construction of the St. Croix River bridge near Stillwater. Other frequent transportation comments focused on repair and maintenance concerns.

Within the comments related to government, the desire for smaller County government and a reduction in the number of Supervisors on the County Board were the most frequent concerns.

The development of additional trails was the most frequently mentioned item among the comments related to recreation issues.

## **Conclusions**

The results of this survey indicate that, in large measure, St. Croix County residents are pleased with the quality of life they have in the County. They particularly value the small town atmosphere and the proximity to the Twin Cities that living in St. Croix County affords them. They value the natural and cultural resources in the County. However, they expressed some doubt about whether the quality of life they enjoy will continue in the face of the population growth that has occurred in the County. Furthermore, the residents said preservation of rural and small town atmosphere should be a planning priority.

They are generally satisfied with the services they receive from the County and with the road network in the area, but they see increasing traffic as a problem.

Perhaps reflecting the bad economic times that were becoming ever clearer during the time that data were being gathered, respondents are supportive of using tax dollars to expand employment opportunities in a fairly wide range of economic sectors.



## Appendix A – Non-Response Bias Test

Any survey has to be concerned with “non-response bias.” Non-response bias refers to a situation in which people who don’t return a questionnaire have opinions that are systematically different from the opinions of those who return their surveys. For example, suppose most non-respondents are not satisfied with the adequacy of the current road network in the County (Question 8), whereas most of those who returned their questionnaire said they are satisfied with the road network. In this case, non-response bias would exist, and the raw results would overstate public’s opinion about the adequacy of the road network in St. Croix County.

The standard way to test for non-response bias is to compare the responses of those who return the first mailing of a questionnaire to those who return the second mailing. Those who return the second questionnaire are, in effect, a sample of non-respondents (to the first mailing), and we assume that they are representative of that group. In this survey, 396 people responded to the first mailing, and 104 responded to the second mailing.

We found four variables with statistically significant differences between the mean responses of these two groups of respondents (Table A1) out of 114 tested. Table A1 indicates that even when statistical differences exist, the magnitude of this difference is very small. **The Survey Research Center (SRC) concludes that there is no evidence that non-response bias is a concern for this sample.**

Table A1 – Statistically Significant Differences Between Responses of First and Second Mailings			
Variable	Statistical Significance	Mean First Mailing	Mean Second Mailing
5a. County Office Facilities	.003	2.27	2.64
7f. Don’t Know	.011	.06	.13
32h. High Technology Industry	.031	2.04	2.31
33h. Roads	.017	.16	.08

## Appendix B –St. Croix County Community Planning Survey Comments

**Question 1.** *What are the three most important reasons you and your family choose to live in St. Croix County?*

*'Other' responses (21 responses)*

- Born and raised here. **(4x)**
- Born here. **(2x)**
- Ability to have livestock.
- Born, raised and stayed.
- Born, raised, own business 45+ years.
- Can't leave WI.
- Child in college nearby.
- Family historical significance.
- Farm here in Hudson.
- Husband farms here.
- Husband was lifelong resident.
- Job transfer.
- Money.
- Only 2 choices made.
- Owned land in St. Croix County.
- Property has been in family 40 years.
- Quality of life.

**Question 36.** *If you could change one thing about St. Croix County, what would it be?*

**Taxes (90 responses)**

- Lower property taxes. **(20x)**
- Lower taxes. **(16x)**
- Reduce property taxes. **(7x)**
- Taxes. **(5x)**
- Property taxes. **(2x)**
- Taxes too high. **(2x)**
- Being a 100% disabled Vietnam veteran I would lower property taxes by 100%. Especially when the only check one gets is from the Veterans Administration and Social Security!
- Cost of water and taxes.
- Decrease property taxes.
- Decrease Taxes.
- Definitely reduce property taxes!
- Every time we turn around, we are being taxed. Whether it is on the utilities or car tabs. Coming from MN it definitely is a lot more money and not getting the services.
- Frozen property tax at time of retirement.
- High property taxes because of a large County government with many social programs.
- High taxes are killing everyone.
- High taxes.
- Hold property taxes in check.
- I am 65 years old, on a fixed income, my property taxes in ten years went from \$2,700 per year to \$5,400 per year. If it keeps doubling every ten years, the County should just take my S.S. check each month.
- Improve city planning; be more conservative in planning new school, libraries, etc. Be more concerned with the average taxpayer and middle class citizens.

- I think St. Croix County should tax CRP property higher. The taxpayers of St. Croix County should not have to pay for land that provides minimal tax revenue, zero economic gain, and zero jobs.
- I would like to see lower property/real estate taxes. Mine are two times what Minnesota co-workers are paying.
- Keep it rural and affordable.
- Lower property taxes! Cut spending!
- Lower property taxes, so that more people can keep their houses and not feel stressed about paying high taxes.
- Lower property taxes, they are ridiculous.
- Lower taxes on housing.
- Lower the egregiously high property taxes. They are deplorable and exorbitant.
- Need lower property taxes.
- Open casino to lower taxes. (Hudson)
- Property taxes (school spending) unable to sell property because of an average tax bill of \$3,000 - 4,000 per year.
- Property taxes are out of control.
- Property taxes are outrageous!
- Property taxes are too high.
- Property Taxes! Freeze them for seniors at a minimum.
- Quit taxing us as if we are Minneapolis and St. Paul, i.e. .005% above WI tax added charges for vehicle purchases and registrations.
- Reduce property taxes to be able to attract more people to buy the excess housing available now this is very much affecting the current market in our area. I am a single income family and this is very hard.
- Reduce taxes by the county, reduce fees for developers.
- Reduce taxes within the City of River Falls, St. Croix Co.
- Reduce taxes!
- Stop raising my real estate taxes. I am a senior citizen making \$700 a month. You are taxing me out of my home.
- Tax burden.
- Taxes are extremely high. Representatives need to figure out how we can solve tax issues. Cannot afford to live in St. Croix County much longer.
- The property taxes need to be lowered.
- The ridiculously high property taxes.

#### **Development/Growth (72 responses)**

- Slow down development. (2x)
- Slow population growth. (2x)
- All farm land turning to residential subdivisions and they get farm top rate on land.
- Availability of farmland to promote local agri-tourism and local food source.
- Cluster housing.
- Continue to closely monitor urban sprawl.
- Control sprawl.
- Control urban development.
- Don't let this town be a suburb of St. Paul.
- Don't want to see Hudson & surrounding areas become urban, Woodbury like. Most people in the county moved to and stay here due to less population. More green space, corn fields, trees, county and state parks. A more natural, safe community for our families is the top priority.
- Fewer housing developments. There are already a high number of existing homes on the market for people who are interested in moving here.
- Fewer restrictions regarding home additions.
- Get common sense in the zoning department.
- Growth.

- Help existing homeowners deal with land development right on their doorstep before it happens.
- I would like there to be less unsustainable development.
- I would like to remain small town, but I don't think that is realistic, us being so close to the sprawling Twin Cities & Woodbury (in Hudson).
- I would reduce the growth of housing developments, i.e. spec. homes must have live-in owner prior to construction.
- Keep country life country, stop the BUILDING!
- Keep River Falls as a small community. Once you run out of land for development, stop building.
- Land that is being sold for big housing developments.
- Less development, 5 acre min.
- Less development, let's use what we have.
- Less development.
- Less housing developments.
- Less housing on our farm and open land. Slow down.
- Less Rural Development. The big developers have changed a "Life Style" forever.
- Limit population growth.
- Limit the sprawl that eats up agriculturally productive land.
- More development of community living spaces, library, parks, walking paths, open green spaces in residential areas.
- More restrictions on new housing developments, in other words, preserving more green space.
- Move the county further from the metro/Twin Cities and its influence.
- No more growth - way too much. Hudson is NOT "small" town anymore. There is much more traffic and much more crime lately.
- No new houses, our usual lifestyle is no more. We are one big paved housing development. Pretty sad.
- Not so many housing projects that are developed and then get tax rates farmers do.
- Not to let our village get too large.
- Over development.
- People should have more freedom with their property unless they choose to live in a development with established covenants.
- Population is too high.
- Preserve open space. (less subdivision development)
- Preserve the farmland!
- Put the Casino in Hudson where we have facilities to provide for it plus the revenue to help the poor Government Center.
- Reduce cluster housing, 3-5 acre minimums.
- Reduce over-building of residential areas.
- Reduce population growth.
- Reduce restrictions on developing land; this is America, less control by the county and townships. If people want to control development, they can buy the land themselves, not dictate what others can or cannot do with their land.
- Reduce urban sprawl and low income housing developments.
- Reduce urban sprawl.
- Restrict building of cheap homes by outside developers who have little interest in long-term appearance of dwellings.
- Slow down growth.
- Slow down the growth-housing developments popping up everywhere.
- Slow down urbanization.
- Slow growth. We have too many empty storefronts and too many developments (housing) that are empty.
- Slower but more thoughtful county growth.
- Stay a family farm community.
- Stop building - use what we have.

- Stop development housing. Keep it rural community.
- Stop development of rural land!!!
- Stop development run amok! Adding strip malls while downtown becomes abandoned does not make sense.
- Stop the building!!
- Stop the growth.
- Stop the housing developments! Too many sitting empty. Build and then let it sit, Wrong!!
- Stop the loss of rural farmland to residential subdivisions.
- Stop urban and commercial growth.
- Stop wasting our valuable farmland on housing developments. Developments should only be allowed on land with a certain percentage of grade or land not suitable for agriculture.
- Things rather than going straight for residents money in taxes or donations. More things built by a community than built for a community.
- Uncontrolled growth with no planning problems.
- Urban sprawl - including traditional housing developments on farmland.
- We need a paradigm change on how we regulate non-conforming structures. Current rules are needlessly burdensome, especially in the Riverway District.
- Would not let houses be built all over the countryside.

### **Roads/Transportation (44 responses)**

#### ***Bridge (24 responses)***

- Build the new bridge. (4x)
- A new bridge crossing St. Croix River from Houlton to Stillwater before there is another 35E accident.
- Build a new bridge for hwy 36/64 crossing from MN to WI.
- Build a new bridge to MN/Stillwater Hwy 36.
- Build new bridge between Minnesota and Wisconsin at Stillwater.
- Build the bridge, make two lane roads safer.
- Building a new Stillwater bridge! Whatever our county can legitimately do to encourage and complete that project is huge.
- Connect 36 and 64 with a 6 lane bridge near Stillwater / 4 lane from I94 to east of New Richmond.
- Expedite bridge at Stillwater.
- Get the bridge across the St. Croix River at Stillwater. It's not really a scenic river there anyway the old bridge is a piece of s\*\*\*.
- Get the bridge built in Stillwater connecting northern St. Croix County to Minnesota.
- Get the bridge done!
- Get the new bridge built over the St. Croix.
- Get the Stillwater Bridge built and quit wasting taxpayer dollars fighting over the economics of it. It will benefit all people. It will also help promote many of the ideas that improve quality of life in the St. Croix River Valley.
- I would change the bridge to Minnesota in Stillwater. I think with populations growing it is time to figure out a new bridge that would attach to Hwy 36.
- Plan and demand for a new bridge across the Stillwater area.
- Pursue the bridge project from hwy 64 WI to hwy 36 MN. This is in my opinion the most important thing to be done in the next 5 years.
- Put a new bridge between highway 64 WI and highway 36 Minnesota.
- Stillwater bridge project needs to be started and completed in next couple of years.
- Stillwater bridge.
- The fact that nothing has happened re: Stillwater Bridge is a joke.

### ***Road Repair/Maintenance (13 responses)***

- Blacktop all the rustic roads. The one I live on is horrible! It's like an old time washboard all the time. It's dirty and dusty and when it's wet, it washes, gets muddy and gets slippery just as bad as ice. My vehicle is always dirty or muddy; why are some rustic roads surfaces and others are not? Just because their black topped doesn't spoil the beauty along the sides of the roads. The roads just become much easier to walk, bike, or motor along.
- Do better job on winter roads.
- Expand Vine St.--Past schools Hudson.
- Hwy 65 north of Star Prairie.
- I think we could get by just fine with roads that are adequate and spend less money on the highway dept.
- Keep hwy 35 pristine without stoplights.
- No round-a-bouts.
- Pave my road.
- Put a "no turn" sign on county road E during the morning commute into Stillwater. People skip around traffic on 64 and cause dangerous situations trying to merge back onto 64. I have seen many close calls and road rage incident.
- Quicker removal of road kill.
- The one thing I would change about St. Croix County would be the length of grass on many country roads. I keep the grass short all the way to the road on my property.
- There needs to be better road maintenance in rural areas. Better repair and snow removal.
- Wider roads and better planning for future roads.

### ***Public Transportation (5 responses)***

- Better public transit into Twin Cities.
- Commuting options to Twin Cities.
- Consider implementing public transportation to/from Twin Cities to offer more employment options for people living out here. Economy will be stronger then with that.
- Help with low income people: housing and bus system that links to Twin Cities.
- More access to mass transit.

### ***Traffic (3 responses)***

- Less traffic on Hwy A by widening 12 out to 65 and add off road bike path from Hudson to Willow River State Park.
- Reduce traffic.
- Traffic decreased!

### **Government (39 responses)**

- Reduce the size of the County Board. (4x)
- Less government control. (2x)
- Better advertising for community events.
- Change county management to county administrator and reduce county board to 15 members.
- Change the attitude of the Board members in regards to area politics. Example: board refusal to improve roads in the Hudson area. Why does the Board clearly hate Hudson?
- Cut wasteful spending in all departments; especially get rid of nursing home business.
- Decrease the size of the county board.
- Get out of the nursing home business.
- Get rid of comprehensive planning, unless you are willing to pay my property taxes.
- Has been done. Reduction in number of county supervisors.
- Have the county quit wasting money and fix problems that are important with money.
- I wish the county would mail to all residents a monthly report on all political activities (by cities, county, and state level) reviewed by a volunteer bipartisan committee.

- Keep big city liberals off the county board!
- Keep realtors off County Board and development.
- Less people on the county board - too many cutting into income needed in court systems.
- Less spending on local government.
- Lower number on County Board.
- Lower the number of supervisors.
- Minimize government.
- More timely adjustments to real estate/property value. Currently, adjustments are quick to come when the value of the real estate climbs but not as responsive during downward slides.
- More uniform/consistent assessment of property.
- No involvement in nursing home.
- Not to be in ANY business where private sector can accommodate - namely county nursing home.
- Reduce the amount of people on the county council so things can get done.
- Reduce the number of commissioners to about 9.
- Resist Metropolitan Council influence.
- Ridiculous spending on wants not needs by our government. Smaller government.
- Smaller county board and new sheriff.
- Smaller government.
- Stop trying to do too much.
- The belief that the county must provide "services" for everyone. Let the private market handle more things-like nursing homes, energy production, and transportation.
- The County Board and its make-up on committees.
- The county should operate and maintain at current level the nursing home in New Richmond.
- The local zoning office has too much power. The zoning office should figure out a way to help its residents to accomplish what the residents need within the zoning ordinance instead of using the ordinance as a tool to stop everything that goes on in the county.
- Town of Richmond MUST get stricter building codes and take on property owners that do not abide. No restrictions - we live next to a rotten homeowners pit that the Co. will do nothing about 6 old cars, building for 7 yrs and not complete and don't mow the lawn. This is across the street from New Richmond city limits and Richmond won't do a thing about it.

### **Recreation (18 responses)**

- More public hunting. (2x)
- Access to public hunting on City property.
- Add bike paths/shoulders.
- Become more bike friendly, pedestrian travel easier.
- Better parks and recreation department.
- Bike paths and trails, dog parks.
- Community outdoor swimming pool.
- Development of recreational trail system to include ATV use.
- Four wheeler trails.
- I would like miles of hiking/biking trails made so that we do not have to use roads or County roads. It would be much safer and we could enjoy the environment and wildlife. There are trails in the Twin Cities and other areas in Wisconsin. I think we should have them locally. (Very important).
- I would make sure St Croix County had many more paved walking/bike paths.
- More bike trails.
- More bike trails/park developments.
- More recreation available in North Hudson such as walking/bike paths, tennis courts, grocery store, and parks. Develop green space all over county.
- More running/biking/hiking trails.
- Provide more fields for kids to play ball on. To me it seems Hudson Soccer (Boosters) provide the fields and the city, towns and county provide very little. Other communities take care of their kids.

- We would like to see more bike trails on old railroad beds and much wider shoulders to accommodate biking on county roads.

#### **Police/Law Enforcement (12 responses)**

- County law enforcement staff should obey the laws that they are hired to enforce. RE: County squad cars speeding on roads and rolling through stop signs with no lights or sirens on. I see it all the time. Lead by setting a good example. Not adding to the problem!!
- Drug traffic through county.
- Enforcement of land use and crime. (Not just speeding)
- Enforcement of traffic laws.
- Get rid of drugs and drug dealers.
- Get the drug problem under control, straighten out Somerset's reputation.
- More enforcement on Highway 12.
- Need more rural police patrol. Speeding and reckless driving is becoming a big issue.
- People moving into the area slow down and obey speed limits and stop running stop signs and passing on right shoulder. Maybe they need Wisconsin driver education before getting a Wisconsin license.
- Reduce the number of hours police cars spend running while parked.
- The apparent problem with Hudson police department is catching major criminals.
- Tough on crimes.

#### **Retail/Shopping (8 responses)**

- Better shopping choices, department store like Dillard's. Do most of clothes shopping by catalog.
- Develop the old Dike Road in downtown Hudson to small shops and restaurants and a park for children.
- Get a grocery store in North Hudson!!
- Less retail business.
- Limit number of "mini" or strip malls built wherever and whenever the developer wants -they serve no purpose and are an eyesore.
- More clothing stores in New Richmond.
- More retail stores and restaurants.
- The communities work together to recruit new businesses to the county not just to their communities. If one community talks to a business and the business is looking for something they don't have or can't give recommended a different community.

#### **Nothing (6 responses)**

- Cannot think of a thing!
- Don't know at this time.
- Don't know.
- It's o.k. with me!
- Not much.
- Nothing to say at this time.

#### **Environment (5 responses)**

- It should be greener to help protect the environment. Teach people the importance of being eco-friendly.
- Monitor/clean up the riverfront, Hudson dike, and river depot businesses to maintain the natural beauty.
- Stop cutting trees to create/preserve prairies, but leave the poison ivy and buckthorn throughout the park (like at Willow River).
- Stop mowing roadsides so frequently or mow one time late fall - this mowing is reducing nesting habitat and spreading noxious weeds like wild parsnip and leafy spurge!
- We support the eco-friendly harnessing of wind and solar for private residences, community property, co-op based communities, and would like to see government offices utilize this source of raw energy.



### **Schools (5 responses)**

- Additional public school services/activities, i.e. after school programs, sports, etc.
- Control expenditure for schools. We need good education of course - but just throwing money does not do it. Better outcomes are a result of students' desire to learn.
- Increase funding to school districts.
- Not allow school district to hold special referendum elections! Costs taxpayers extra and is a political maneuver to get their way.
- The accountability of the Hudson High School and those in the board.

### **Employment Opportunities (4 responses)**

- Higher-paying local jobs.
- Increase employment opportunities.
- More job opportunities.
- Perhaps high tech economic development so I wouldn't have to commute to the Twin Cities every day.

### **Miscellaneous (23 responses)**

- Be a good friend to all people.
- Be able to enjoy life and have all the conveniences of a big city.
- Get the mud-ducks back in their own state. We do not need them crossing the border.
- I honestly do not know all I would like to know about what is available to do here. Example: Parks and where town/local festivals are.
- Make all the issues discussed here well publicized, including open public sessions of discussion.
- Make it more a part of Wisconsin than Minnesota. I can't even buy a Sentinel or Journal any more, only Pioneer Press or Star Tribune.
- Make sure people know that when they move to the country that there are times that there will be manure smell and machine noise at times when they don't want it.
- Maybe I should live in St. Croix County because I live in Pierce.
- More coverage of Wisconsin state and regional, i.e. county news since major TV networks come out of the Twin cities. Our hometown paper discontinued the state page. We feel more like Minnesota residents than Wisconsin residents.
- More organization of private citizens to help with community needs. Examples: Trash along roadsides and food bank assistance.
- More volunteer information or involvement for changes. Trying to enlist the community for time to complete.
- Need for a luxury hotel with a river view.
- Our daughter is disabled with autism. County support does not appear adequate to effectively provide the most beneficial assistance for her. We would like to see autism to be thought of as a separate handicap to be addressed and not lumped in with other disabilities.
- Promote small, organized farming through special programs and grants.
- Reduce Bars.
- Reduce low housing options. Really dislike the "sexual" predators offenders able to reside within our communities - the closeness of "lower" housing proximity to our schools (EP Rock) requiring unnecessary lockdowns.
- Require people to remove old cars and debris from their property or pay to have it removed.
- Sell (and/or make) dog track in Hudson into a casino.
- This is a great place to live, keep it good!
- Tough question, we love living here.
- Warmer winters.
- We need more tourism. No one wants to come and watch corn grow. Let's give them a reason to make St. Croix Co. a destination.

- We value the services available through YCSS and are looking into transferring into transitional services for our special needs teen. Please do not cut funding in these areas. There needs to be more jobs available for higher functioning disabled teens/adults with autism.

**Question 40. *Employment tatus***

*'Other' responses (8 responses)*

- Homemaker. (2x)
- Disabled.
- Hobby Farm.
- Semi-retired.
- Stay at home mother.
- Student.
- Widowed

## Appendix C - Quantitative Summary of Responses by Question

### ST. CROIX COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

Using blue or black ink, fill the circle that most closely describes your response:

Like this: ● Not like this: ✓ ✗ /

**QUALITY OF LIFE.** The following questions ask your opinion on the quality of life in St. Croix County.

1. From the following list, a – o, mark the **THREE** most important reasons you and your family choose to live in St. Croix County? Mark ● three. (Percent answered YES)

<u>12%</u> a. Agriculture	<u>22%</u> f. Natural Beauty	<u>18%</u> k. Quality Schools
<u>2%</u> b. Community Services	<u>40%</u> g. Near Family and Friends	<u>8%</u> l. Recreational Opportunities
<u>24%</u> c. Cost of Home	<u>32%</u> h. Near Job/ Employment Opportunity	<u>59%</u> m. Small Town Atmosphere/Rural Lifestyle
<u>1%</u> d. Historical Significance	<u>2%</u> i. Property Taxes	<u>44%</u> n. Proximity to Twin Cities
<u>16%</u> e. Low Crime Rate	<u>11%</u> j. Quality Neighborhood	<u>4%</u> o. Other: <b>See Appendix B</b>

2. How would you rate the overall quality of life in St. Croix County?	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Opinion
	<u>24%</u>	<u>66%</u>	<u>9%</u>	<u>0%</u>	<u>0%</u>
3. Over the next 10 years, do you think the quality of life in St. Croix County will:	Improve	Stay the Same	Become Worse	Don't Know	
	<u>13%</u>	<u>36%</u>	<u>40%</u>	<u>10%</u>	

4. The population St. Croix County grew by about 16,500 people or 26% between 2000 and 2008. How do you feel about this amount of growth?	Too much growth	About right amount of growth	Too little growth
	<u>59%</u>	<u>39%</u>	<u>2%</u>

**FACILITIES AND SERVICES.** These questions are asking for your opinion about facilities and services in the County.

5. Rate the following <u>services/facilities</u> .	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't Know
a. County Office Facilities	<u>14%</u>	<u>61%</u>	<u>10%</u>	<u>2%</u>	<u>13%</u>
b. County Parks	<u>20%</u>	<u>55%</u>	<u>11%</u>	<u>2%</u>	<u>12%</u>
c. Sheriff Services	<u>10%</u>	<u>54%</u>	<u>12%</u>	<u>3%</u>	21%
d. Public Libraries	<u>13%</u>	<u>45%</u>	<u>24%</u>	<u>8%</u>	<u>10%</u>
e. Public School System	<u>18%</u>	<u>53%</u>	<u>14%</u>	<u>4%</u>	<u>10%</u>
f. County Public Health Services	<u>7%</u>	<u>32%</u>	<u>12%</u>	<u>3%</u>	<u>46%</u>
g. Aging/Disability Resource Services	<u>5%</u>	<u>22%</u>	<u>12%</u>	<u>5%</u>	<u>56%</u>
h. County Road Maintenance	<u>9%</u>	<u>52%</u>	<u>30%</u>	<u>7%</u>	<u>1%</u>
i. County Nursing Home	<u>5%</u>	<u>16%</u>	<u>14%</u>	<u>3%</u>	<u>61%</u>
j. County Recycling Programs	<u>10%</u>	<u>51%</u>	<u>24%</u>	<u>6%</u>	<u>8%</u>
k. Emergency Dispatch Service (911)	<u>15%</u>	<u>44%</u>	<u>7%</u>	<u>1%</u>	<u>33%</u>
l. County Court Services	<u>5%</u>	<u>36%</u>	<u>10%</u>	<u>4%</u>	<u>45%</u>

**NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES.** The following questions ask your opinion about the importance of natural and cultural resources in St. Croix County.

6. How important is it for planning and zoning regulations to:	Very Important	Important	Unimportant	Very Unimportant	No Opinion
a. Protect air quality	<b>52%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<u>3%</u>	<u>1%</u>	<u>1%</u>
b. Protect groundwater quality	<u>69%</u>	<u>30%</u>	<u>1%</u>	<u>0%</u>	<u>0%</u>
c. Protect surface water quality	<b>60%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<u>0%</u>	<u>1%</u>
d. Protect wildlife habitat	<u>45%</u>	<b>45%</b>	<u>6%</u>	<u>1%</u>	<u>2%</u>
e. Protect native prairie land/grasslands	<b>35%</b>	<u>46%</u>	<b>12%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<u>3%</u>
f. Preserve cultural resources (historic sites, etc.)	<b>30%</b>	<u>54%</u>	<u>12%</u>	<u>1%</u>	<u>3%</u>
g. Protect wetlands	<b>40%</b>	<u>47%</u>	<b>9%</b>	<u>2%</u>	<u>2%</u>
h. Preserve open space within St. Croix County	<b>47%</b>	<u>41%</u>	<b>9%</b>	<u>2%</u>	<u>2%</u>
i. Preserve scenic views	<b>41%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<u>2%</u>	<b>3%</b>
j. Encourage landscape designs, maintenance of parks and open spaces that don't use irrigation, pesticides, herbicides, synthetic fertilizers, and require limited mowing	<b>36%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<u>3%</u>
7. What role(s) do you think St. Croix County should play in protecting and preserving the quality of life and shared natural resources (air, water, wildlife, etc.)? Mark <b>•</b> <u>all</u> that you think apply. (Percent answered YES)					
<b>30%</b> a. Regulator – Impose stricter ordinances and regulations at the county level					
<u>45%</u> b. Enforcer – Improve and expand enforcement of county ordinances					
<u>71%</u> c. Educator – Provide educational materials to inform property owners of ordinances and regulations					
<b>56%</b> d. Advocate – Pursue outside funding to match local funds to protect and preserve natural areas and farmland					
<u>4%</u> e. None of these roles					
<u>8%</u> f. Don't Know/No Opinion					

**TRANSPORTATION.** These questions ask your opinion about transportation issues in St. Croix County.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
8. The overall road network (roads, streets, and highways) in St. Croix County meets the needs of its citizens.	<u>12%</u>	<b>74%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<u>2%</u>	<u>1%</u>
9. Increasing traffic on roads is a problem.	<b>25%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<u>27%</u>	<u>2%</u>	<u>3%</u>
10. Commuter facilities & services such as park and rides, carpools and van pools and ride share are adequate.	<u>4%</u>	<b>37%</b>	<u>26%</u>	<u>6%</u>	<b>27%</b>
11. The County should work to expand public transit opportunities such as bus or van service.	<b>21%</b>	<u>37%</u>	<u>20%</u>	<u>7%</u>	<u>15%</u>

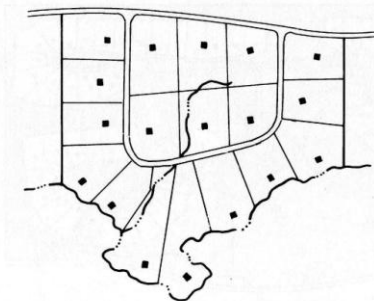
**INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION.** These questions ask your opinion about intergovernmental cooperation within St. Croix County.

12. Are you satisfied with the working relationship between county government and your local government?	Yes	No	Don't Know
	<b>30%</b>	<u>15%</u>	<b>56%</b>

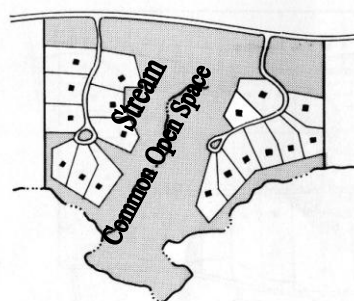
**HOUSING.** The following questions ask your opinion about the development of housing in St. Croix County.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
13. More of the following types of housing are needed in St. Croix County:					
a. Affordable housing (costing no more than 30% of income at each income level)	<u>16%</u>	<b>36%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<u>11%</u>
b. Condominiums, Apartments	<u>3%</u>	<u>18%</u>	<u>47%</u>	<u>18%</u>	<u>14%</u>
c. Duplexes (2 units)	<u>3%</u>	<u>22%</u>	<b>44%</b>	<u>15%</u>	<u>15%</u>
d. Freestanding mobile homes	<u>1%</u>	<u>6%</u>	<b>41%</b>	<u>45%</u>	<u>7%</u>
e. Housing subdivisions	<u>3%</u>	<u>25%</u>	<u>39%</u>	<u>21%</u>	<u>12%</u>
f. Mobile home parks	<u>2%</u>	<u>7%</u>	<b>35%</b>	<u>47%</u>	<u>9%</u>
g. Seasonal and recreational homes	<b>1%</b>	<u>17%</u>	<u>42%</u>	<u>21%</u>	<b>20%</b>
h. Senior housing	<b>19%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<u>9%</u>	<u>2%</u>	<u>17%</u>
i. Single family housing	<b>16%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<u>18%</u>	<u>6%</u>	<u>10%</u>
14. The external appearance of residences in my neighborhood is <u>important</u> to me.	<u>47%</u>	<u>44%</u>	<u>7%</u>	<u>1%</u>	<u>1%</u>
15. New homes should be built: Mark ● one only.					
Primarily in communities where public sewer and water are available	<u>23%</u>				
In or next to communities where public sewer and water can be extended		<b>18%</b>			
Anywhere in the County with private septic systems and wells			<b>36%</b>		
Don't Know/No Opinion				<b>23%</b>	
16. Variations from St. Croix County's 2 acre minimum residential lot size should be allowed for:	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>
a. Smaller lots near local communities (e.g. New Richmond)	<u>10%</u>	<u>41%</u>	<b>22%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>17%</b>
b. Larger lots in environmentally sensitive areas (lakes, steepness of terrain, wildlife habitat, etc.)	<u>15%</u>	<u>44%</u>	<b>17%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>14%</b>
c. Smaller lots where small scale sewage treatment systems are available	<b>8%</b>	<u>42%</u>	<u>22%</u>	<u>9%</u>	<b>20%</b>
17. Traditionally, rural housing developments have been designed on large lots as in the diagram (Option A) on the left below. An alternative layout for rural housing is the "cluster" concept, which has smaller lots and permanently preserved open space as in the diagram (Option B) on the right below. Please mark ● which you prefer (one only).					

23% **OPTION A**



77% **OPTION B**



**AGRICULTURE.** The following questions are asking for your opinion about agriculture in St. Croix County.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
18. Productive agricultural land should be allowed to be used for:					
a. Agricultural Use	<b>65%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<u>0%</u>	<u>0%</u>	<u>3%</u>
b. Residential Use	<u>5%</u>	<b>33%</b>	<u>40%</u>	<b>16%</b>	<b>7%</b>
c. Commercial Use	<u>3%</u>	<b>17%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<u>26%</u>	<b>9%</b>
d. Industrial Use	<b>2%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<u>45%</u>	<u>30%</u>	<b>8%</b>
e. Any Use	<b>5%</b>	<u>11%</u>	<u>37%</u>	<b>34%</b>	<u>13%</u>
19. There is too much farmland being converted to non-farm uses.	<b>35%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<u>14%</u>	<u>4%</u>	<u>9%</u>
20. Local agricultural production should be encouraged and marketed locally.	<u>44%</u>	<b>48%</b>	<u>2%</u>	<u>1%</u>	<u>5%</u>
21. Conflicts between farms and neighbors (dust, noise, and odors) are common in St. Croix County.	<u>4%</u>	<u>17%</u>	<u>32%</u>	<u>7%</u>	<b>41%</b>

**LAND USE.** The following questions are asking for your opinion about land use in St. Croix County.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
22. There should be a minimum lot size limit for development in:					
a. Agricultural	<b>17%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<u>27%</u>	<u>8%</u>	<b>13%</b>
b. Residential	<u>21%</u>	<u>52%</u>	<u>15%</u>	<b>2%</b>	<b>10%</b>
c. Shoreline Properties	<u>24%</u>	<u>48%</u>	<b>13%</b>	<u>3%</u>	<b>13%</b>
d. Commercial	<u>17%</u>	<u>47%</u>	<b>17%</b>	<u>3%</u>	<b>16%</b>
e. Industrial	<u>19%</u>	<b>47%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>16%</b>
23. Development in St. Croix County should use less rural land and be more compact around existing cities and villages.	<b>26%</b>	<u>40%</u>	<b>18%</b>	<u>4%</u>	<b>12%</b>
24. I am satisfied with the enforcement of existing land use regulations in St. Croix County.	<u>2%</u>	<b>33%</b>	<u>20%</u>	<u>7%</u>	<b>39%</b>

25. Land owners should be allowed to develop their land: Mark ● one only.

Without any restrictions	Within County's current ordinances/regulations	Within County's current ordinances/regulations with minor ordinance amendments	Within newly created ordinances	Not Sure
<u>10%</u>	<u>26%</u>	<u>36%</u>	<b>11%</b>	<b>18%</b>

Some Wisconsin municipalities have put programs in place that allow land owners to sell and transfer the development rights to their land. Sale of development rights ensures the land will be used in agriculture or remain as open space in the future. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
26. St. Croix County should use public funds to purchase development rights to preserve farmland, maintain open space or protect important environmental areas	<b>23%</b>	<u>34%</u>	<u>21%</u>	<u>9%</u>	<b>12%</b>
27. St. Croix County should allow developers to purchase development rights from one Town property and transfer them to another in order to increase the number of lots that can be developed on the receiving property (increase density)?	<u>3%</u>	<u>11%</u>	<u>39%</u>	<u>31%</u>	<u>16%</u>

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.** These questions ask your view about economic development in St. Croix County.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
28. St. Croix County should support and coordinate efforts with the St. Croix Economic Development Corporation to actively recruit new business and industry.	<b>20%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<u>10%</u>	<u>2%</u>	<b>10%</b>
29. Local tax dollars should be used to help attract new jobs or retain existing jobs in St. Croix County.	<u>13%</u>	<b>52%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<u>7%</u>
30. Businesses should be located in a designated area, such as business parks, industrial parks or downtowns.	<b>22%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<u>12%</u>	<u>1%</u>	<u>5%</u>
31. St. Croix County should pursue the following renewable energy sources as a form of economic development:					
a. Alternative Fuel Production (e.g. ethanol or biodiesel)	<u>15%</u>	<b>39%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>11%</b>
b. Solar Energy	<u>33%</u>	<u>54%</u>	<u>5%</u>	<u>3%</u>	<u>6%</u>
c. Wind Energy	<b>37%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<u>5%</u>	<u>3%</u>	<u>6%</u>
d. Hydro-Power	<u>25%</u>	<u>46%</u>	<u>12%</u>	<b>3%</b>	<b>14%</b>
e. Methane Digesters	<b>15%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<u>13%</u>	<u>4%</u>	<b>33%</b>
32. What types of businesses do you believe are the most important for St. Croix County to attract? Rank each: 5=High Priority to 1=Low Priority	5	4	3	2	1
a. Tourism Business	<b>14%</b>	<u>35%</u>	<u>30%</u>	<u>13%</u>	<u>8%</u>
b. Agricultural Business (including farms)	<u>29%</u>	<u>47%</u>	<u>18%</u>	<u>4%</u>	<u>3%</u>
c. Manufacturing	<b>20%</b>	<u>48%</u>	<u>22%</u>	<u>6%</u>	<u>4%</u>
d. Public Sector/Government	<u>5%</u>	<b>27%</b>	<u>36%</u>	<u>18%</u>	<b>14%</b>
e. Service Business	<u>12%</u>	<b>53%</b>	<u>25%</u>	<u>5%</u>	<u>5%</u>
f. Retail Development	<u>14%</u>	<u>47%</u>	<b>24%</b>	<u>9%</u>	<u>6%</u>
g. Light Industry	<b>18%</b>	<u>55%</u>	<u>16%</u>	<u>5%</u>	<u>5%</u>
h. High Tech Industry	<b>31%</b>	<u>44%</u>	<u>14%</u>	<u>4%</u>	<u>7%</u>

**GENERAL ISSUES.** The following questions ask how you view select general issues facing St. Croix County.

33. From the following list, a – l, please mark the **THREE** most important actions you feel the County should pursue.  
Mark ● three. (Percent answered YES)

<u>65%</u>	a. Reduce property taxes	<u>9%</u>	g. Increase affordable housing supply
<u>20%</u>	b. Preserve green space	<u>14%</u>	h. Improve roads
<u>28%</u>	c. Minimize urban sprawl	<u>4%</u>	i. Promote tourism
<u>34%</u>	d. Protect water quality	<u>11%</u>	j. Sustainable community development
<b>22%</b>	e. Preserve productive agricultural land	<u>30%</u>	k. Promote renewable energy production
<u>13%</u>	f. Increase industrial park/commercial development	<u>38%</u>	l. Preserve rural and small town character

34. How important is it that planning decisions be guided by sustainable community development principles, which stress that public policy decisions explicitly consider impacts on the local economy, the local social structure, and the local environment?

Very Important	Important	Unimportant	Very Unimportant	No Opinion
<u>36%</u>	<b>49%</b>	<u>4%</u>	<u>3%</u>	<b>8%</b>

## General Issues (continued)

35. What are your two preferred methods of receiving information from St. Croix County regarding Comprehensive Planning information? Mark ● your top two only. (Percent answered YES)

Direct Mailings	Radio	Newspaper Articles	Newsletters	Website	Email	Local Access Cable TV Channel
<u>64%</u>	<u>3%</u>	<u>44%</u>	<b>40%</b>	<u>15%</u>	<u>12%</u>	<u>7%</u>

36. If you could change one thing about St. Croix County, what would it be?

**See Appendix B**

## DEMOGRAPHICS. Tell us a bit about yourself.

37. Place of Residency: Please mark (●) the type of municipality you live in and write in the name of your city, village, or town(ship):

27%	City of	<b><u>See Appendix B</u></b>
20%	Village of	<b><u>See Appendix B</u></b>
54%	Town(ship) of	<b><u>See Appendix B</u></b>

38. Gender:	Male	Female	39. Age:	18–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	65+
	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>		<u>1%</u>	<u>13%</u>	<b>20%</b>	<u>28%</u>	<b>22%</b>	<u>16%</u>

40. Employment Status:	Employed full-time	Self – employed	Employed part-time	Unemployed	Retired	Other: <b><u>See Appendix B</u></b>
	<u>53%</u>	<b>11%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<u>2%</u>	<u>24%</u>	<u>2%</u>

41. Residential Status:	Own	Rent	Non-Resident Property Owner				
	<b>96%</b>	<u>3%</u>	<u>1%</u>				
		0	1	2	3	4	5+

42. Number of Adults (18 or older) in Household:		<b>15%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<u>8%</u>	<u>3%</u>	<u>0%</u>
43. Number of Children (under 18) in Household:	57%	15%	18%	<b>6%</b>	2%	1%

44. Highest Level of Education:	Less than high school	High school diploma	Some college/tech	Tech college graduate	Bachelor's degree	Graduate or professional degree
	<u>1%</u>	<u>17%</u>	<u>22%</u>	<u>14%</u>	<u>28%</u>	<u>17%</u>

45. How many years have you lived in St. Croix County?	Less than 1	1 – 4	5 - 9	10 - 24	25+
	<u>1%</u>	<b>12%</b>	<u>17%</u>	<b>26%</b>	<b>44%</b>

46. Household Income Range:	Less than \$15,000	\$15,000 – 24,999	\$25,000 – 49,999	\$50,000 – 74,999	\$75,000 – 99,999	\$100,000 or More
	<b>2%</b>	<u>5%</u>	<u>16%</u>	<u>27%</u>	<b>22%</b>	<b>27%</b>

**Thanks for completing the survey!**

Please return your survey by October 9, 2008 to:

Survey Research Center  
124 RDI Building  
University of Wisconsin – River Falls  
410 S. 3<sup>rd</sup> St.  
River Falls, WI 54022