

**VOLUME THREE  
APPENDICES**

**Section C  
Public Opinion Survey  
Reports**



# *APPENDIX C*

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# PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY SUMMARY REPORT

## JUNE 1996

### ***INTRODUCTION***

The Development Plan Survey is a major component of the community involvement activities for the development of a new plan and ordinance. The survey's purpose is to assess opinions about development in St. Croix County and provide guidance in developing goals and implementation strategies for the Plan. Five major stakeholder groups were identified: the general public; agriculture; the development industry (developers, surveyors, finance/banking); environment/conservation; and local government officials.

The survey was developed with input from representatives of these five stakeholder groups at an issues identification workshop. Priority issues identified by stakeholders formed the core of the questions included in the questionnaire. Please see Appendix C-1 for a complete list.

### ***METHODOLOGY***

A randomly drawn representative sample of each group was selected to receive the survey questionnaire. Multiple sources were used to identify the pool of potential survey recipients.

Telephone listings and property ownership listings were used for the general public. Computer software created one combined list of names and addresses. The addition of property owners to the telephone list resulted in the inclusion of many residents who have unlisted telephone numbers. This step made the sample more representative than using only the telephone listings.

The mailing list of the County Agriculture Agent was used for the agriculture group.

The development industry list was created from separate available lists of bankers, real estate professionals, surveyors, developers and building contractors.

The environment/conservation list was created by compiling names from various organizations, including sportsmen's clubs; rod and gun clubs; lake associations; environmental organizations; and bicycle, horse, and snowmobile clubs.

The local government list was created from official listings of all elected officials from towns, villages, cities, St. Croix County, and school districts.

Every name on each list was assigned a consecutive number. A computer generated random numbers that were matched to the names on the list to create the sample.

The sample size of each stakeholder group varied. There were 650 selected from the general public; 325 from agriculture; 110 from the development industry; 157 from environment/conservation; and 110 elected local government officials.

All groups had a response rate above 80 percent. Specific response rates were as follows: general public - 80 percent; agriculture - 84 percent; development industry - 88 percent; environment/conservation - 90 percent; government officials - 88 percent.

The potential margin of error is estimated to be plus or minus four percent in the public group and between five and eight percent in the other groups.

The first 13 questions listed issues that are frequently cited as problems in areas experiencing growth. Respondents were asked to rate each statement according to the following scale: no problem; minor problem; moderate problem; serious problem; critical problem. Each of the response categories was given a numerical value to calculate an "average" score for each question.

"No problem"	0 points
"Minor problem"	1 point
"Moderate problem"	2 points
"Serious problem"	3 points
"Critical problem"	4 points

The remainder of the survey questions presented a series of statements about various methods and techniques related to the management of development. Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with each of the statements according to the following scale: strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, and no opinion. Each of the response categories was given a numerical value to calculate an "average" score for each question.

"Strongly agree"	+2 points
"Agree"	+1 point
"No opinion"	0 points
"Disagree"	-1 point
"Strongly disagree"	-2 points

Based on its average score, each question is placed into one of the following categories.

Consensus-Large: Those questions that have a high level of agreement are classed as "consensus-large." High levels of agreement can be indicated by high average scores or low average scores. High average scores tending toward +2.00 indicate a strong consensus in agreement with the survey statement. Conversely, low average scores tending toward -2.00 indicate a strong consensus of disagreement with the statement. However in classifying the questions, the positive or negative direction of the score is not considered, since the larger the number, the larger the degree of consensus regardless of the positive or negative direction. Questions with average score values that exceed 0.75 or -0.75 are included in this category.

Consensus-Medium: Questions with average score values of 0.5 to 0.75 or -0.5 to -0.75 are classed as having medium consensus.

Consensus-Small: As average value scores for each question decrease, the level of consensus decreases until there is no consensus. Average score values of 0.1 to

0.5 and -0.1 to -0.5 are classed as low consensus, with few exceptions. Those exceptions fall into the "no opinion" category described below.

Divided Opinion: Low average value scores can be indicative of a relatively equal number of responses in agreement and in disagreement. If the levels of agreement and disagreement are approximately equal, the question is placed in the "divided opinion" class.

No Opinion: Low average value scores can also be indicative of a high proportion of "no opinion" responses to a given question, since zero points are assigned to "no opinion" responses. Questions where the "no opinion" category has the highest number of responses are placed in this class. In a few cases there are questions that have an average score in the "consensus-small" category, but which are reclassified as "no opinion" because of the high proportion of "no opinion" responses.

## **OVERALL SUMMARY AND GROUP COMPARISON**

The survey questions are grouped into eight categories according to topic. Responses for each category are summarized below. The "issue" questions (1 to 13) as well as the "management" questions (14 to 57) are included in the summary.

Across all five groups survey results indicate the highest level of agreement is for government protection of the environment, especially lakes, rivers & streams; wildlife habitat; and groundwater. There is also strong agreement that government should develop land use plans and balance land use regulation with property rights. Additionally, all groups agree that industrial development should be located on municipal sewer and water systems and that more commuters should share rides to work.

Among the groups, the most disagreement concerns the county's rate of growth. The current rate is very acceptable to the development industry group and very unacceptable to the environment/conservation group while the remaining groups have widely split opinions on growth. The five groups are also highly divided on the following issues: impact of residential septic systems on groundwater; whether land use ordinances are fairly and properly enforced; the desire for close neighbors; and the use of public transportation.

The last question (58) was open-ended asking for comments, concerns, etc. Over 480 of the survey respondents, 43 percent, took the time to write over 36 pages of single-spaced comments. The comments ranged from as short as three words "No More Taxes," to as long as one full page plus numerous attachments. The local government and development industry groups had the highest rate of respondents writing comments at 57 and 54 percent respectively. The agriculture group had the lowest comment rate at 36 percent. However, it should be noted that those in the agriculture group who did write comments wrote extensively, over seven pages. Forty-two percent of the respondents in the general public group wrote comments covering over 15 pages.

The most frequently written comments were in the following categories, shown in descending order: taxes are too high; government should plan for growth and

development; protect the county's small town character and rural atmosphere; protect productive farmland; protect the environment, especially groundwater; slow the county's rate of growth; complaints about roads; negative comments about regulation and enforcement; promote cluster development; create more park facilities; provide more on and off-road bike facilities; and protect private property rights.

Excerpts from the comments are inserted in each category below. Representative comments illustrating both positive and negative points of view are included.

### **AGRICULTURE AND FARMLAND**

- ◆ Four of the five groups rate conversion of farmland to non-farm uses and the existence of fewer family farms in the county as moderate to serious problems. The development industry group rates these as minor problems. (Q4, Q5)
- ◆ The groups have varying opinions about the protection of farmland. The general public, environment/conservation, and local government groups have a small consensus opposing the protection of all farmland; the development industry has a large consensus in opposition; and the agriculture group has divided opinions. The agriculture group's split opinion was reflected in the written comments. The greatest number of comments asked for protection of farmland, but the second largest number wanted to allow some development of nonproductive farmland. (Q48)
- ◆ There is some agreement for protection of productive farmland in particular. The agriculture and environment/conservation groups have a small consensus favoring protection of productive farmland; however the development industry has a medium level of opposition; while the general public and local government groups have split opinions. (Q49)
- ◆ All the groups agree that the agricultural products from farms are more important than the views and open space that farms provide. The level of consensus is large within the agricultural group; medium within the local government group; and small within the remaining groups. (Q23)
- ◆ All the groups except the development industry have small to medium consensus that agriculture in St. Croix County should be based on small to moderately-sized family operated farms. The development industry has divided opinions. (Q31)
- ◆ Conflict between farmers and their non-farm neighbors is seen as a moderately serious problem by farmers, but viewed as a minor to moderate problem by the other groups. (Q6)

*"...If the county does not want farmers to live and prosper in the county and would rather have new city dwellers move out and take over the rural community then they should just tell us to get out and not keep forcing us to pay higher taxes in order to let these people live on their little acreages and send their kids to school and make the farmers pay the bill. ..."*

*My family farm has been in the family for almost 100 years and I don't want to have to think about leaving it so that it can grow houses."*

*Agriculture Group*

*"...Many people who own land look on the land as their retirement - their 401K. When they get too old to farm the land, they often want to be able to sell all of it in order to retire. ..."*

*Agriculture Group*

*"Let houses be built on poor farmland but not on good farmland. ..."*

*Agriculture Group*

*"...Agriculture should be valued as a business with an economic benefit for the county and state, in addition, to being valued for the views and open space that farms provide. Agriculture should be valued just as highly as commercial, industrial, and residential development, and not viewed as a opportunity to convert land for these purposes. ..."*

*Environment/Conservation Group*

*"...Protecting farmland is a lost cause."*

*Agriculture Group*

## **COMMUNITY DESIGN**

- ◆ Loss of open space is viewed as a moderate problem by all groups except the development industry, which sees it as a minor problem. (Q2)
- ◆ All groups have a consensus that they prefer to see open space or trees out their windows rather than other houses. The level of consensus is large among all groups except the development industry, which has a small consensus. (Q33)
- ◆ The general public and agriculture groups have divided opinions about whether they prefer to have close neighbors. The remaining groups have a small consensus for preferring close neighbors. (Q37)
- ◆ The development industry group has a large consensus that the current amount of growth in the county is OK. Local government has a small consensus. The general public and agriculture groups have divided opinions; the environment/conservation group has a medium consensus that the current growth rate is not OK. (Q19)
- ◆ There is a small consensus in the development industry that there is a need for more rural homesites in the county. The other groups have small to medium consensus that there is not a need. (Q27)
- ◆ There is general similarity among the groups regarding the minimum lot size for rural homes. The environment/conservation group has a small preference to see lot minimum sizes raised to four or five acres, while the rest prefer one to three acre lots. (Q54)

- ◆ The general public, agriculture, and environment/conservation groups have a medium consensus that development should rely more on public water and sewer facilities. There is small consensus for this among the development industry and the local government groups. (Q50)
- ◆ The development industry group has a large consensus that new developments should be annexed if they connect to municipal utility systems. The other groups have a medium consensus. (Q39)

*"Let's keep the country - country. Don't take away the peace, privacy, scenery...."*

*Public Group*

*"I love living in the country, looking at the stars, animals, hay. Who wants to look at stoplights and stores. This is Gods land - leave it alone."*

*Public Group*

*"...An oversized new home looks terrible and out of place sitting alone on top of agricultural land. The castle goes up, they move in with the kids, a couple of overfed horses and after the honeymoon is over settle down to be poor neighbors. They also jump on the bandwagon right away to keep everyone else..."*

*Agriculture Group*

*"Growing way too fast! Slow this growth now or will want to move out of the county. We don't want to be a suburb of the cities. We want to be a rural small town. Please don't let growth ruin the county. Do the right thing, change zoning to 20-50 acres minimum on new homes."*

*Public Group*

*"...Rural development should be done in such a way that the development is concentrated and not all spread out. Screwing up a smaller area is more acceptable than screwing up a large area..."*

*Environment/Conservation Group*

*"Some developments ... where there was a 2.5 acre minimum lot size are ugly - too spread out and a waste of land and green space. I fully support the cluster approach and a smaller/reasonable (1 acre) lot size..."*

*Local Government Group*

*"... has a stupid ordinance of a minimum of 35 acres to build a house on. 35 acres is too large to mow the grass and too small to farm."*

*Agriculture Group*

## **DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS**

- ◆ There is large consensus among all groups for local and county governments to develop land use plans that designate the locations of different types of

development. Written comments strongly supported this position and indicated government should control the rate and types of growth. In fact, there were numerous comments promoting or requesting cluster development. (Q44)

- ◆ All the groups except the development industry have a consensus that development in the county should use less rural land and be more compact around existing municipalities. The agriculture and environment/conservation groups have a strong consensus; local government officials have a medium consensus; the general public has a small consensus. The development industry has divided opinions. (Q32)
- ◆ All groups have a medium to large consensus that commercial development outside village and cities should not be permitted wherever a septic system can be installed. (Q28)
- ◆ In contrast, there are widely varying opinions about septic systems and residential development in rural areas. The agriculture, environment/conservation, and local government groups all have a small consensus that rural residences should not be permitted wherever a septic system is possible. However, the development industry has a small consensus that rural residences should be allowed wherever a septic system is possible. The general public has divided opinions. (Q56)
- ◆ Large consensus exists among all groups that industrial development should be allowed only in places where municipal sewer and water services are available. (Q34)

*"I strongly feel that there is an urgent need for St. Croix County to do a comprehensive county plan..."*

*Public Group*

*"...I would like to thank and praise our local county government for taking land use planning seriously, and using these surveys as a tool to try and estimate feelings of urban sprawl...Open space can easily be protected by either keeping lot sizes large (>40 acres) or creating urban developments with some sort of cluster effect..."*

*Environment/Conservation Group*

*"Whether we like it or not further development, both residential and industrial is coming. The best we can do is make sure long range plans are in place to ensure that such development creates as little damage as possible."*

*Public Group*

*"As a landowner I would like to see more residential housing. St. Croix County would only benefit. More houses more taxes. We have to learn to grow with the times."*

*Agriculture Group*

*"Rural development should be allowed yet managed. I believe that rural clusters surrounded by open space and parks is a better long term plan. The alternative is a St.*

*Croix County full of 1 - 3 acre lots with septic and well systems. Everyone would have some space, but no one would have access to a lot of space.*

*Public Group*

*"The county should have a definite dividing line where developing and urbanization most likely occurs. This line could be monitored and its boundary realigned from time to time. If that division of land were known to be urban vs rural, perhaps some of the issues addressed in the survey could start to make sense...."*

*Development Industry Group*

*"...Keep industrial/commercial development in incorporated areas...."*

*Public Group*

*"...do not like the commercial development in rural areas because of environmental and wildlife concerns."*

*Public Group*

*"Rural residential development limited to cluster development with 1 acre of property or less, or 1 site per 20 + acres. Industrial development restricted to municipal parks so waste byproducts can be monitored & municipal services can be provided."*

*Development Industry Group*

## **ENVIRONMENT**

- ◆ Of all the questions on the survey the largest degree of agreement is found in those questions related to environmental topics. There is large consensus across all groups that land use plans should consider the impact of development on natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas. Protection of groundwater quality has the highest level of concern among all the environmental issues as evidenced by the significant number of written comments concerning protection of groundwater, in particular, and the environment, in general. (Q3, Q8, Q9, Q25, Q41, Q43, Q45, Q47, Q57.)
- ◆ There is a significant difference of opinion among the groups about the degree of risk that septic systems pose to groundwater quality. The general public has divided opinions. The environment/conservation group and local government officials have a small consensus that there is a risk, while the development industry has a small consensus that septic systems are not a risk. Within the agriculture group there is a high level of "no opinion" responses. (Q16)
- ◆ There is also a significant difference of opinion about the impact of development on surface waters. The development industry group has a small consensus that development activities do not negatively impact nearby surface waters. The other groups have small to medium consensus that there is a negative impact. (Q18)

*"...It is quite clear to me that a healthy environment is fiscally sound policy at the very least. If we neglect our environment at the justification of the almighty greenback, we gain today. If we weigh the environment with the import it deserves, we gain tomorrow. To look the other way at wetlands, floodplains, riverways, etc. is like handing a toddler a sharp knife and telling him to play with the electrical outlets."*

*Public Group*

*"...Groundwater contamination needs to be a priority above all private rights. Once it's gone, it's gone."*

*Public Group*

*"...Sprawling residential to commercial development will use up land to no good purpose, it will eventually pollute the groundwater and rivers and property values for everyone. The woodlot, wetlands, parks and unpolluted streams in the county are immensely valuable to the county...."*

*Public Group*

## **PARKS AND OPEN SPACE**

- ◆ Loss of open space is viewed as moderate problem in the county by all groups except the development industry, which rates it as a minor problem. Written comments, most strongly from the public group, indicated a need for more parks, open space and trail systems in the County. (Q1)
- ◆ All groups, except agriculture, have either divided opinions or small consensus regarding their willingness to have a small increase in county taxes to expand or improve county parks. The agriculture group has a large consensus in opposition. (Q55)
- ◆ The agriculture group has a medium level of satisfaction with the current county park facilities. The environment/conservation group has a medium level of dissatisfaction with the facilities. Remaining groups have divided opinions or have a small consensus of satisfaction. (Q29)
- ◆ Lack of access to hunting and fishing is viewed differently by the groups. The environment/conservation group sees it as a serious problem; the general public, agriculture, and local government groups see it as a moderate problem; the development industry rates it as a minor problem. (Q10)

*"...We have a very good start at acquiring public lands and we must follow up on more! Instead of value being taken off the tax rolls, continuing resolution is paid and the land value held further increases in value...."*

*Environment/Conservation Group*

*"Important to develop parks, recreational facilities and have the health of the environment as a number one priority...."*

*Public Group*

*"I believe St. Croix County has adequate parks for the area ... I believe adding another park in this area is a waste of taxpayers money.... "*

*Public Group*

*"... We would like a long range development plan to provide incentives/rules which would protect riparian, woods and prairie areas remaining.... "*

*Public Group*

*"I am a hunter and fisherman and I am worried about the acreages that are being closed to hunting every year. "*

*Agriculture Group*

### **REGULATIONS AND PROPERTY RIGHTS**

- ◆ There is a large degree of consensus among all groups that land use regulations must be carefully balanced with individual property rights. (Q24)
- ◆ All groups, except agriculture, have large consensus that neighbors do not have the absolute right to do whatever they want on their lands. The agriculture group has a small consensus supporting absolute freedom of choice by neighbors. (Q42)
- ◆ When asked if there is currently too much land use regulation in the county, the groups have differing opinions. The agriculture and development industry groups are equally divided pro and con on the amount of land use regulation. Local government officials and the environment/conservation groups have a small consensus that there is not too much regulation. The general public has a high proportion of "no opinion" responses. (Q22)
- ◆ All of the groups have a small to medium consensus that existing land use regulations have not reduced their property values. (Q15)
- ◆ The agriculture group has a large consensus that landowners should be compensated whenever regulations decrease their property value; other groups have a small consensus. However, none of the groups favor raising local property taxes to pay compensation. (Q26, Q36)
- ◆ All groups have a small to medium consensus that regulations should not be more restrictive in urban areas compared to rural areas. (Q53)
- ◆ There is no consensus within any of the groups about whether local land use ordinances are fairly and properly enforced. The agriculture, development industry, and local government groups have split opinions, while the general public and the environment/conservation groups have a high proportion of "no opinion" responses. (Q20)

*"...Zoning can steal people's property rights.... If you are going to change the usage on a piece of property, restricting what a land owner can do, then you must compensate them for your actions."*

*Environment/Conservation Group*

*"Property owners' rights are paramount, but must be balanced against environmental concerns (water, erosion, open space). Development-residential & commercial-must be allowed but controlled ultra restrictively. This is admittedly a very difficult balancing act but it must be done carefully and advisedly. But lean toward property owner rights!!!"*

*Development Industry Group*

*"...I feel that if the county or townships tell you what you can or cannot do with your land the landowners should be compensated. It would be very unfair to take one part in the county and let some owners profit from high rates for their property for development and others are told they have to leave their land agriculture. It would also be very unfair if you came around and told me as of right now you would compensate me to keep my land in agriculture because the only time this would be fair would be at the time I was ready to sell..."*

*Agriculture Group*

*"...There must be an educated balance as to property rights and the environment. As long as these two approving philosophies are at odds, there will continue to be problems. I really do have a problem with the attitude that promotes and advocates the philosophy that 'this is my land and I can do what I please'. We are stewards of our land for a season. People come and go, the land and environment is everlasting."*

*Agriculture Group*

*"...You will note that I own a residence and also other undeveloped and legally undevelopable property. Yet I strongly disagree with the idea that property owners should be compensated for land use decisions other than "takings" as currently defined. I would ask the question should land use decisions which benefit a property owner be assessed against such owners. If parks, streets, open space is near your property - you benefit - your value goes up. The net result of attempting to place a dollar value on those who gain a loss in land use decisions is to make zoning and related ordinances impossible. Indeed that is probably the goal as well as the intent of such propositions. I would take the opposite point of view."*

*Public Group*

*"...We have a very good quality of life in our area due to owners' pride in their homes, stringent zoning regulations and good planning...."*

*Local Government Group*

*"I think the county and its municipalities have lost control of development. No one is willing to crack down on violations or deny variances & special exceptions. We run the risk of degrading our assets, particularly the St. Croix River."*

*Development Industry Group*

*"I think it is important that local town boards bring all of their ordinance in compliance with strict county guidelines so the two governing bodies can work together for the same common good."*

*Agriculture Group*

*"Competency of county planning commission, administrators, township authorities, referral agencies should be reviewed and raised to acceptable standards and levels. These agencies for the most part view development as invasion by strangers."*

*Public Group*

*"...New restrictions will do no good if not enforced..."*

*Public Group*

### **TAXES AND COSTS**

- ◆ Increased local government service costs and land value inflation are viewed as moderate to serious problems by all the groups. (Q12, Q13)
- ◆ There is general agreement that property taxes are not reasonable considering the services received. The general public has a large consensus; the agriculture and environment/conservation groups have a medium consensus; the development industry and local government have a small consensus. Negative commentary about taxes was the most frequent topic brought up in the written comments. (Q21)
- ◆ All groups oppose paying higher taxes to support low-density development. The level of consensus in the development industry is small, while there is large consensus among the other groups. (Q52)
- ◆ The groups are divided about the potential for commercial and industrial development to lower local property taxes. There is a small consensus in the development industry group that commercial and industrial development will reduce property taxes, while the other groups have small to medium levels of disagreement. (Q17)
- ◆ All groups, except the development industry, have medium to large consensus that new development should pay for the costs of additional public services. The development industry has a small consensus against such a requirement. (Q30)

*"Taxes are way too high for the services we do and do not receive in St. Croix County..."*

*Public Group*

*"I really like where I live. My husband and I don't mind paying taxes because we really feel we have benefited from living where we do..."*

*Public Group*

*"...Bring on industrial development - it is the only true source of tax relief. (not commercial development!)..."*

*Public Group*

*"...I do not agree that people moving into the county and dispersing themselves in rural areas will increase taxes for public services. The opposite seem more likely as common services such as roads and schools can be paid for by larger numbers of people...."*

*Public Group*

*"...There has always been the idea that development will bring more money to the government that will help offset the costs of services, thus reducing the tax burden. This is bull...."*

*Environment/Conservation Group*

*"Developers should pay for services. I do not want to subsidize rural development. They should pay for their own services."*

*Public Group*

## **TRANSPORTATION**

- ◆ Increased traffic on roads is viewed as a moderate to serious problem. (Q7)
- ◆ Large consensus exists that the streets, roads, and highways used to travel to work are adequate. All groups have large consensus that not enough commuters share rides to work. (Q14, Q38)
- ◆ There is a large degree of uncertainty about using public transportation if it were available. The general public and environment/conservation groups have a small consensus that they would use public transportation. The development industry and local government officials have divided opinions; the agriculture group has a high level of "no opinion" responses. (Q46)
- ◆ The general public, development industry and environment/conservation groups have a small consensus that they are not satisfied with available bicycle routes. The agriculture group has a small consensus that current facilities are satisfactory; while local government officials have divided opinions. (Q40)
- ◆ All groups, except agriculture, have a small to medium consensus that there should be more off-road bicycle paths and more bike lanes along local roads. The agriculture group has a small consensus opposing more off-road bike paths and has divided opinions about bike lanes. (Q35, Q51)
- ◆ Longer school bus rides are viewed as a minor to moderate problem by all groups. (Q11)

*"I believe our country roads need a lot of work and should be widened. The way the buses bounce around; maybe they would even need less repair."*

*Environment/Conservation Group*

*"Plow the roads and pave the roads that are not paved...."*

*Public Group*

*"...There is no sense to the increased amount of traffic. It is a nightmare to try and get field work done traveling on highways. It is like the farmer even with SMV signs have no rights being on the road when we in fact pay a good share of taxes for the road upkeep...."*

*Agriculture Group*

*"There is nothing here for bike trails."*

*Environment/Conservation Group*

*"I would like to see the development of bike trails within the county as well as paved shoulders to facilitate bike travel on many county roads...."*

*Public Group*

*"The existing roads are plenty good for bike riding, etc. People should be able to come up with their own routes...."*

*Environment/Conservation Group*

# Comparison of Survey Responses From the General Public

## August 1996

### *INTRODUCTION*

The examination of the responses by various groups within the general public can often lead to greater insight into the pattern of opinions. Demographic questions on the Development Plan Survey provide the data to break out data for separate groups and to compare the group responses to look for differences and similarities in their opinions. For the purpose of this analysis, three types of groupings were analyzed: place of residence; length of residence; household income.

### *PLACE OF RESIDENCE COMPARISON*

The purpose of the place of residence analysis is to determine if St. Croix County residents differ in their opinions according to what part of the county they live in. Question 59b (place of residence) provides the data for this analysis.

The county was divided into three areas, and the responses to the survey questions were calculated for each area. The responses to each question from the three areas were compared to each other.

(Insert graphic)

For the purposes of description in this analysis Area 1 is termed "western"; Area 2 is termed "middle"; Area 3 is termed "east".

The data from the three areas were compared using a statistical test called "Analysis of Variance." Results from this analysis indicate that there are thirteen questions in the survey in which there is a statistically significant difference based on the area of the county where the respondent lives. The scores of the remaining questions were determined to have numerical differences so small that the numerical differences could be the result of random sampling error rather than actual differences within the population of county residents. The level of statistical significance varies among the questions.

### ***QUESTIONS WITH STATISTICAL DIFFERENCES BASED ON PLACE OF RESIDENCE***

The following is a list of those 13 questions and a brief description of the differences among the three areas of the county. Appendix C-1 contains the scores for each of the thirteen questions broken out according to the three geographic areas. Question 54 is not included because the structure of the question is very different and uses scoring categories incompatible with the other questions.

#### ***Q1 Loss of open space and scenic areas due to development in St. Croix County.***

- ◆ There is a trend for residents in the western portions of the county to believe that loss of open space is somewhat more of a problem. The score for the western area is slightly above "moderate," while the score for the eastern area is slightly below "moderate ."

#### ***Q5 Fewer family farms.***

- ◆ Residents in the western edge of the county rate this as a less significant problem than the rest of the county. The western area score is just above "moderate" while those for the middle and east are between "moderate" and "severe."

#### ***Q6 Conflict between farm and non-farm neighbors.***

- ◆ This issue gets rated slightly higher in the middle and eastern areas, but the differences are relatively small, and scores in all three areas are below the "moderate" level. It is important to note that although there is only a small difference based on place of residence, farmers within the county perceive this to be a significantly larger problem than other stakeholder groups (see the survey "Summary Report").

#### ***Q19 The amount of growth the county is experiencing is OK.***

- ◆ None of the groups have a strongly dominant opinion. The middle area has a small consensus of agreement to be satisfied with the current growth; the western area has a small consensus of dissatisfaction; the east has divided opinions.

#### ***Q21 Property taxes are reasonable considering available facilities and services.***

- ◆ Residents in all portions of the county disagree that property taxes are reasonable, but those in the western portion of the county have a large level of consensus while those in the middle and eastern areas have a moderate level of consensus.

*Q23 Views and open space provided by farms are more important to me than the agricultural products they produce.*

- ◆ Although residents in all areas of the county tend to disagree with this statement, those in the middle and eastern areas have a higher level of disagreement. The western area has a small consensus of disagreement, while the middle and east have a moderate consensus.

*Q31 Agriculture in St. Croix County should be based on small to modest size family operated farms.*

- ◆ Residents in the middle and eastern portions of the county have a moderate consensus of agreement with this question; the level of consensus is small in the western area.

*Q35 There should be more off-road bike paths in the county.*

- ◆ Although there is moderate consensus of agreement among the three areas, the level of agreement is higher in the western part of the county.

*Q39 Development land should be annexed by a city or village when they provide public sewer and water.*

- ◆ All groups agree, but the level of agreement is moderate in the western part, compared to a large level of agreement in the middle and eastern areas.

*Q40 I'm satisfied with available bicycle routes and facilities in St. Croix County*

- ◆ Residents in the middle and eastern parts have a small consensus of disagreement with this statement, while those in the western portion of the county have a moderate level of disagreement. Thus, western residents are slightly less satisfied with available bike routes.

*Q44 Local and county governments should develop land use plans to designate the locations of different types of development.*

- ◆ Residents in all areas of the county have a large consensus of agreement with this statement, but the level of agreement is slightly higher in the western part of the county.

*Q51 There should be more bike lanes along county and town roads and local streets.*

- ◆ Support for more bike lanes is slightly stronger among residents of the western part of the county, where there is a large consensus of agreement. Residents in the middle and eastern areas have a moderate level of consensus.

*Q54 The current minimum lot size for a rural residence ranges from 1 to 3 acres depending on location. I think the lot size for a rural residence should be:*

- ◆ Residents in the eastern part of the county have more support for larger minimum lot sizes than do residents in the west or middle areas. Over half the residents in the west and middle prefer lot sizes of 1 to 5 acres, while less than 40 percent of the eastern residents prefer minimum lot sizes in this range. Conversely, while

only ten percent of residents in the west and middle prefer minimum lot sizes over ten acres, almost a quarter of residents in the east believe the minimum lot size should be over ten acres.

### ***SUMMARY OF PLACE OF RESIDENCE COMPARISON***

The analysis of the responses reveals that some differences of opinion exist among county residents according to the area of the county where they live. These differences are relatively small, reflecting a difference in the intensity of similar opinions rather than conflicting opinions. This is in sharp contrast to the large differences of opinion among the stakeholder groups (agriculture, development industry, environment/conservation, government officials and the general public), which have strongly conflicting opinions on several questions (see the "Summary Report" for more detail).

### ***LENGTH OF RESIDENCE COMPARISON***

The purpose of the length of residence analysis is to determine if county residents differ in their opinions according to how long they have lived in the county. Question 59a provides the data on length of residence.

Length of residence data was divided into five categories: less than three years; three to five years; six to ten years; eleven to twenty years; and over twenty years. The responses to the survey questions were calculated for each category. The responses to each question from the three areas were compared to each other using "Analysis of Variance" statistical analysis.

Results from this analysis indicate that there are nine questions in the survey in which there is a significant difference based on the length of time the residents have lived in the county. The scores of the remaining questions were determined to have numerical differences so small that the differences could be the result of sampling error rather than actual differences within the population of county residents. Appendix C-2 contains the scores for each of the nine questions broken out according to the five length of residence groups.

### ***QUESTIONS WITH STATISTICAL DIFFERENCES BASED ON LENGTH OF RESIDENCE***

#### ***Q1 Loss of open space and scenic areas due to development in St. Croix County***

- ◆ All groups except those residing in the county over 20 years rate this issue as slightly above the "moderate" level. The longest term residents rate it a bit lower, slightly below the "moderate" level.

#### ***Q17 More commercial and industrial taxes will lower my property taxes***

- ◆ There is no dominant opinion within any of the groups. All the groups have either split opinions or small levels of disagreement.

#### ***Q25 Local land use planning should consider the impacts of development on lakes, rivers and streams***

- ◆ All groups have large levels of agreement with this statement; those residing in the county over 20 years have a slightly smaller level of agreement.

*Q38 Not enough commuters share rides when they travel to work*

- ◆ Those residing in the county eleven years or longer have a large level of consensus with this question, while the remaining groups have a moderate level of agreement.

*Q40 I am satisfied with available bicycle routes and facilities in St. Croix County*

- ◆ All length of residence groups disagree with this question. The level of consensus is moderate in all groups except those living the longest in the county, which has a low level of consensus, bordering on divided opinions.

*Q45 The county should protect environmental features in the county such as wooded areas; steep slopes; wildlife habitats; and prairies.*

- ◆ There are very small differences among the groups on this question. The level of consensus is large regardless of length of residence, with the level of agreement being slightly higher among the most recent residents.

*Q51 There should be more bike lanes along county and town roads and local streets*

- ◆ The longest residents have a small level of consensus of agreement with this question; the remaining length of residence groups have a moderate level of consensus.

*Q55 I would be willing to have a small increase in County taxes to expand and improve the County park system*

- ◆ Those living in the county over twenty years have a small consensus of disagreement to this question. The remaining groups have divided opinions or a small consensus of agreement.

*Q57 The County should protect water resources in the County such as lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, groundwater, and floodplains.*

- ◆ All groups have a strong consensus of agreement with this question. The level of agreement is slightly higher for those living in the county between three and ten years.

### **SUMMARY OF LENGTH OF RESIDENCE COMPARISON**

The analysis of the responses reveals that some differences of opinion exist among county residents according to the length of time residents have lived in the county. Like the previous analysis of responses based on place of residence, these differences are relatively small, reflecting a difference in the intensity of similar opinions rather than conflicting opinions.

## ***HOUSEHOLD INCOME COMPARISON***

Survey questions were subjected to Analysis of Variance to test for differences of opinions based on family income. Data on income comes from Question 66, which has the following income groupings:

- Less than \$20,000
- \$20,000 - \$39,999
- \$40,000 - \$59,000
- \$60,000 - \$79,000
- \$80,000 - \$99,000
- \$100,000 and above

Results from this analysis indicate that there are eighteen questions on the survey in which there are significant differences based on the household income. Appendix C-3 details the scores for each of the questions containing differences.

### ***QUESTIONS WITH STATISTICAL DIFFERENCES BASED ON HOUSEHOLD INCOME***

#### ***Q4 Converting farmland to nonfarm uses***

- ◆ Lower income residents tend to view this as a more of a problem than do higher income residents. The score for lower income groups is near the "moderate" level, while upper income groups rate it between "minor" and "moderate".

#### ***Q5 Fewer family farms***

- ◆ The highest income group rates this as a slightly smaller problem than do the other income groups. In a pattern similar to Q4 above, the score for the highest income group is between "minor" and "moderate," while the other group scores are at or above the "moderate" rating.

#### ***Q6 Conflict between farmers and non-farm neighbors re: odors, dust, noise***

- ◆ Lower income groups rate this issue between "minor" and "moderate," while the score for the highest income group is at the "minor" level.

#### ***Q10 Lack of access to hunting and fishing***

- ◆ The upper two income groups rate this as slightly above the "minor" level, while the remaining groups rate it closer to the "moderate" level.

#### ***Q11 Longer school bus rides***

- ◆ Similar to previous questions, the upper most income group score is near the "minor" level, while the lower income group rate it closer to "moderate".

#### ***Q13 Inflated land values***

- ◆ The higher income groups score this issue between "minor" and "moderate". Lower income groups score it between "moderate" and "serious".

*Q22 There is too much regulation of land use in St. Croix County*

- ◆ Lower and middle income groups have a high proportion of "No Opinion" responses or a small consensus of disagreement with this statement. The upper two income groups have a moderate consensus of disagreement.

*Q27 St. Croix County needs more rural residential homesites*

- ◆ The lowest income group has split opinions regarding this question. The other income groups have a small to medium consensus of disagreement.

*Q28 Commercial development outside cities and villages should be allowed wherever a septic system can be installed*

- ◆ The lowest income group has a small consensus of disagreement, while the other income groups have a large consensus of disagreement.

*Q29 There are enough parks, open space, and outdoor recreation facilities now in St. Croix County*

- ◆ This is the first of three questions in which there is conflicting opinions among the income groups. The lowest income group has a small consensus of agreement, while the middle income group has a small consensus of disagreement with this statement. The remaining groups have divided opinions.

*Q37 I enjoy the social interaction and security of having close neighbors*

- ◆ This is the second of the questions in which groups within the general public have conflicting opinions rather than differing levels of similarity. The lowest two income groups have a small consensus of agreement; the middle income groups have divided opinions; and the two upper income groups have a small consensus of disagreement. Thus there is a clear difference of opinion regarding the preference for close neighbors: the higher the income, the weaker the preference for close neighbors.

*Q40 I am satisfied with available bicycle routes and facilities in St. Croix County*

- ◆ Although there are differences among the scores of the income groups, there is no definite pattern. All group scores indicate varying levels of disagreement.

*Q42 Your neighbor should have the absolute right to do whatever he/she wants with his/her property*

- ◆ All the groups have moderate or large consensus of disagreement with this question. The top two income groups have the highest level of disagreement.

*Q44 Local and county governments should develop land use plans to designate the locations of different types of development*

- ◆ All except the lowest income have a large consensus of agreement with this statement. The lowest income group has a moderate level of consensus.

*Q46 I would use public transportation such as bus or light rail if it were available*

- ◆ The lowest income group has a high level of consensus in agreement. Other income groups have a small consensus of agreement or split opinions.

*Q51 There should be more bike lanes along county and town roads*

- ◆ The middle income group has a large consensus of agreement. The low income groups have a small level of consensus. The high income groups have a moderate level of consensus.

*Q53 Development regulations in urban areas should be more restrictive than in rural areas*

- ◆ The two lowest income groups have divided opinions. The middle income and upper middle income groups have a small consensus of disagreement. The highest income group has a strong consensus of disagreement.

*Q56 Residential development outside cities and villages should be allowed wherever a septic system can be installed*

- ◆ This is the last of the three questions that have conflicting opinions among the income groups. The lowest income group has a small consensus of agreement, while the other income groups have a small consensus of disagreement or divided opinions.

***SUMMARY OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME COMPARISON***

The analysis of the responses reveals that some differences of opinion exist among county residents based on the size of their household incomes. Like the previous comparisons of responses based on place of residence and length of residence, these differences are relatively small, reflecting a difference in the intensity of similar opinions rather than conflicting opinions in all but three questions.

## Appendix C-1

Place of Residence

Questions With Statistically Significant Difference

Area 1 (west)      Area 2 (middle)      Area 3 (east)

0=no problem 1=minor problem 2=moderate problem 3=serious problem 4=critical problem

Q1	2.19	2.03	1.81
Q5	2.11	2.71	2.52
Q6	1.42	1.78	1.69

2=strongly agree 1=agree 0=no opinion -1=disagree -2=strongly disagree

Q19	0.12	-0.20	0.02
Q21	-1.02	-0.52	-0.33
Q20	-0.18	-0.57	-0.47
Q31	0.35	0.59	0.76
Q35	0.72	0.45	0.50
Q39	0.48	0.76	0.76
Q40	-0.47	-0.13	-0.26
Q44	1.00	0.74	0.79
Q51	0.74	0.35	0.43
Q54	See text		

## Appendix C-2

Length of Residence

Questions With Statistically Significant Difference

2 Years or Less    3 to 5 Years    5 to 10 Years    11 to 20 Years    Over 20 Years

0=no problem 1=minor problem 2=moderate problem 3=serious problem 4=critical problem

Q1	2.28	2.04	2.27	2.12	1.85
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2=strongly agree 1=agree 0=no opinion -1=disagree -2=strongly disagree

Q17	-0.03	-0.25	-0.03	-0.34	-0.39
Q25	1.57	1.36	1.51	1.36	1.25
Q38	0.49	0.63	0.68	0.85	0.85
Q40	-0.35	-0.41	-0.55	-0.55	-0.12
Q45	1.31	1.37	1.28	1.22	1.04
Q51	0.63	0.81	0.77	0.74	0.37
Q55	0.07	0.11	0.02	0.12	-0.33
Q57	1.19	1.43	1.46	1.21	1.22

## Appendix C-3

### Questions With Statistically Significant Difference

#### Household Income

Under \$20,000   \$20,000-39,999   \$40,000-59,999   \$60,000-79,999   \$80,000-99,999   100,000+

0=no problem 1=minor problem 2=moderate problem 3=serious problem 4=critical problem

Q4	2.14	2.19	2.17	2.16	1.74	1.67
Q5	2.38	2.47	2.27	2.26	1.91	1.60
Q6	1.52	1.72	1.62	1.42	1.24	1.02
Q10	1.49	1.88	1.91	1.90	1.28	1.23
Q11	1.77	1.60	1.60	1.64	1.35	0.94
Q13	2.59	2.63	2.47	2.30	1.93	1.68

2=strongly agree 1=agree 0=no opinion -1=disagree -2=strongly disagree

Q22	-0.07	0.04	-0.17	-0.29	-0.48	-0.48
Q27	0.09	-0.34	-0.38	-0.53	-0.17	-0.40
Q28	-0.18	-0.72	-0.58	-0.87	-0.71	-0.96
Q29	0.20	0.07	0.11	-0.37	0.11	-0.17
Q37	0.31	0.17	-0.11	-0.05	-0.32	-0.31
Q40	-0.30	-0.17	-0.39	-0.57	-0.09	-0.54
Q42	-0.72	-0.52	-0.63	-0.98	-0.87	-1.04
Q44	0.60	0.97	0.81	1.02	1.11	1.07
Q46	0.73	0.32	0.28	0.38	0.04	0.08
Q51	0.36	0.38	0.62	0.90	0.46	0.60
Q53	0.00	0.09	0.31	0.30	0.35	0.71
Q56	0.23	0.04	-0.21	-0.39	-0.22	-0.27

