

APPENDIX A ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Renville County Comprehensive Plan Task Force held its first meeting on January 18, 2001. At this initial meeting, task force members identified issues and opportunities facing Renville County, in response to a series of questions. This input is summarized in the table below.

TASK FORCE INITIAL ISSUE AND OPPORTUNITY IDENTIFICATION

LAND USE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT	
New and proposed residential development.	<p>SE and SW Olivia SW and NW Fairfax (handicapped home) Lake Allie (sewage section 34) East and NE Lake Allie (room for 40) East Edge of Danube SE edge of Bird Island East and South Edge of Renville Hector Sacred Heart (4-plex) River valley and river bluff area East side of county (Metro, Willmar, and Hutch connections) Bird Island (Zimmerman Addition and Pelican subdivision) Wilton communities Lake Preston 1 middle-income 4-plex done and another started in Bird Island Clearing of older houses to make open lots available Concern over losing funds when building a new home (won't get your money out of it) No new growth on West side of county Overall new home construction is down (20-50 homes in last 5 yrs) Many homes for sale in some communities Substandard housing</p>
New commercial and industrial development.	<p>Bird Island: new small industry addition Buffalo Lake: MN Beef Inc. MN Energy Co. (ethanol) Fairfax: Kaolin Hardware store Pottery store Schweiss Distributing, Inc. (expansion) Hawkeye Tile Inc.—expansion Plastic storage container company Hector: Loftness Specialize Farm Equipment—expansion Olivia: MN Agriculture Innovation Center (proposed) Precision Soya Industrial park Agriculture-related businesses Seed cleaning plant New building for Hometown Bank Renville: Golden Oval (expansion) Stoney Creek Golf course Renville: Minn. Aqua Fisheries Coop. Southern MN Beet Sugar Co-op. K&M Manufacturing Sacred Heart: Warner Distributing Inc. (expansion)</p> <p>Val ad Co Mining along river Most communities have set aside incentives for economic development Possible ethanol plant (Granite Falls) We desperately need more non-agriculture industry and businesses to keep young people here. Very little decent-paying job development Not much industrial development right now</p>

LAND USE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT CONTINUED		
Conflicts between agriculture and development.	Labor shortage (especially during certain times of year) More conflicts between larger crop (value-added) farm and smaller family farms Between feedlots and cites/neighborhoods (some cases) Annexation of land into communities, taking away top base to townships (on limited basis) Noise from hot mix plants and combining Increase of non-farm rural residents Difficult to expand city limits/growth into agricultural areas Environmental issues Zoning around town Employment Sprawl Environment Feedlots and smell To maintain our present population, the geographic size needs to increase substantially because there are fewer people per household, houses are larger, and placed on larger lots. Responsibility for water pollution	
Major concerns related to agricultural land uses.	Loss of production Quality of life issues Concentrated agricultural use Large hog farms Sugar beet rotations Setbacks for livestock facilities Non-reclaimed closed mines and open pits Absentee land owners Transfer of land to investment groups Restraints on usage Soil and water conservation Spreading beet by-products Fewer people on farms Environmental standards Loss of agricultural land to development Constant drop in number of farms- less farmers (5% decrease per year) Inability to support all 10 towns in Renville Co. due to fewer farms Balancing agricultural vs. environmental vs. recreational issues Drainage (necessary for increased production and land values, but how much can be added before it is in excess of good conservation limits?) Feel land is treated the way it was meant to be used Bad federal programs—we need to actively be lobbying state and federal government agencies so that all agricultural programs deliberately set out to encourage smaller operations	Commodity prices Odor Current agricultural crisis and economic viability Impact of large feedlots on environment Conflict between large and small farms Water pollution Maintaining land for agricultural uses Zoning: no comprehensive plan for agriculture Specialized crops Intensive farming Run-off Erosion problems
Growth controls, if any, that should be exercised.	Density control in agricultural land areas Limit minimum wage jobs Basic uniform building code Growth should be limited Co. needs to encourage economic development, esp. non-agricultural development Limit growth of large commercial animal operations Need proper environmental/odor safe guards Promote growth Possibly decrease minimum lots size for residential areas that are closer to cities Too many restrictions keep people away- the more people living in the county, the better Update zoning ordinance, need zoning controls and to identify areas for growth Encourage growth to occur within VGAs Limit government Some control on massive feedlots Some agricultural land could be changed to other uses—have overproduction in agricultural anyway Pollution controls—co. needs to be proactive in this area	Mining along MN River Large/small farms Twin Cities control of Greater cities

LAND USE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT CONTINUED		
Nuisance land uses.	Vacant building sites Abandoned wells Lack of control for uses Livestock odors (especially swine) Lack of sewer drain fields Noise ordinance proposed Air quality standards and emissions Traveling gun irrigations Wild animals kept on property Misuse of park land and use conflicts (horses vs. 4-wheelers, etc.)	Ill-maintained housing Non-permitted trailer parks Non-restores gravel pits Junk yards Feedlots Irrigating manure Water quality and run-off policies Run-down grain elevators in Bird Island
Environmental concerns.	Groundwater contamination Erosion control Air quality (smoke, exhaust, emissions) Water quality / watershed of creeks and river Livestock / manure lagoons and odor MN River quality Lack of recycling in rural Lake Allie-Preston Drain fields Feedlots Protect environment without more regulations Protect what we have Air emissions at Beet Plant Illegal and failing septic systems Spreading of rotten sugar beets Waste quantity and quality Manure spills Excessive run-off—drainage that works too well Encouraging any business to move here before knowing what environmental concerns can be overcome.	Keep existing access to gravel Non-reclaimed gravel pits Non-capped wells Noise problems Irrigating manure Hog farms Radon Chemical usage (not just agricultural) Structural conditions of houses/buildings Mining
PARKS AND RECREATION		
County's most important natural resources.	Minnesota River Valley and river bottom area Park systems Lakes Allie and Preston Quality productive farm land Black top soil Gravel Rollin Dennison Brookfield	Agricultural community People Flat areas Natural ground Prairie land and history Aggregates Church hill
Park improvements needed.	Better improvements of parks Trail systems along river Some parks need to be larger More campsites/campgrounds Hiking/biking/snowmobile trail along river Develop them as use increase Advertising/visibility/signs User's needs Horse-people using park—#1 Preservation of any existing prairie Historic preservation in general Skalbakken Lake Allie parks area (more campsites, electrical hook-ups, waste disposal) New park in Bird Island and Pelican Lake walking path	Better park maintenance Canoeing opportunities and accesses Upkeep of park south of Fairfax Rails to trails Make them more available to all Identify allowable uses for each park Maps Swimming areas More circular trails Historical sites
Park user groups (special recreational interests) and issues and conflicts.	Saddle clubs / horse riders ATV (3 and 4-wheelers, dirt bikes) Campers Fishermen Schools Picnickers Bikers	Snowmobiles Cross country skiing Dog walkers Canoers Possible resident/non-resident people Under-age drinkers

PARKS AND RECREATION CONTINUED	
Park user groups (special recreational interests) and issues and conflicts continued.	<p>Noise presents a conflict</p> <p>Erosion and gullies have resulted from use</p> <p>Conflicts between horses, 4-wheelers, and dogs</p> <p>If the trails are made available to snowmobiles and four-wheelers, there will definitely be a conflict. The horse-riding groups have done a huge amount of grooming trails in our parks.</p> <p>At Lake Allie, I see the same campers there all summer—this could be a problem for some others who would want to use the park.</p>
Where there is a need for an expanded trail system.	<p>In parks and along river</p> <p>Connecting parks</p> <p>Around all county and state parks</p> <p>Especially need walking/biking trails</p> <p>Concern for maintenance, use, cost</p> <p>Between cities (i.e. Olivia to Bird Island—follow ditch system)</p> <p>Create cycling trails and cross-country skiing trails</p> <p>Around lakes</p> <p>Fairfax to Fort Ridley</p> <p>At rest area chateaus</p>
Tourism opportunities that exist or could be developed.	<p>Recreation: boating, hunting, canoeing, bicycling, camping, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing</p> <p>Park system and trails</p> <p>Agricultural tourism (e.g. Agricultural Innovation Center, Co-ops)</p> <p>Birch Coulee, Fort Ridgely History, and other historical sites (Dakota Conflict)</p> <p>Minnesota River</p> <p>Lakes</p> <p>Quarry</p> <p>Lower Sioux Agency</p> <p>Bed and breakfasts</p> <p>Minnesota River Valley Scenic By-way (i.e. history and scenery of MN River Valley)</p> <p>Jackpot Junction</p>
TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE	
Highway safety problems and issues.	<p>US Highways: 212 and 71</p> <p>Unsafe intersections—may need signals, becoming busier</p> <p>Should be 4 lanes in more places</p> <p>Heavy traffic on TH 212 and TH 71—need another 4-lane highway</p> <p>Intersection of TH 212 and TH 71</p> <p>State Highways: 19 and 4</p> <p>State Aid highways #1 problem—failure to stop/yield and speed</p> <p>TH 19 west of Fairfax</p> <p>County roads: (specifically mentioned: 23, 21, 11, 5, 6, 14)</p> <p>CR 11 has become major road—not in good condition for all the use</p> <p>Beet traffic during harvest on CR 11—blinking lights</p> <p>CR 14 north of Olivia</p> <p>CR 6 from hill to Delhi</p> <p>CR 6 near Delhi Bridge</p> <p>Curve on CR 6</p> <p>Specific intersections:</p> <p>TH 212 and TH 71</p> <p>TH 212 and TH 4</p> <p>CR 21 and CR 11</p> <p>CR 6 and CR 11</p> <p>CR 14 and CR 11</p> <p>Where TH 4 turns in CR 6, intersection not marked</p> <p>Rural intersections</p> <p>Farm machinery and trucks</p> <p>By the Hector beet dump</p> <p>Bird Island RR crossing</p> <p>At some places, crops get too high and too close to see at intersections</p> <p>Mn/DOT Issues</p> <p>Road weight restrictions</p> <p>Heavy truck traffic and farm machinery traffic</p> <p>Speeding</p>

TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE CONTINUED

Road maintenance problems.	<p>No black top on River Road Living snow fences Snow drifting—need more natural snow fences Some bridges need improvements Roads being “beat-up” by living snow fences and heavy gravel hauling More sanding of roads Finish widening roads Hwy 212 (specifically from Olivia to Danube and Hector to Bird Island) CR 22 runs through poorly drained area—needs more maintenance County and State Aide roads: money is short which makes it hard to keep up with 5-yr plans Finish CR 16 south of Fairfax RR crossing on Co Rd 1 in Danube Intersection marking</p>		
Gaps in the road system.	<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>Along County lines By-way near river Certain roads are not entirely paved Hwy 212 (two lanes near Cologne) Road weight restrictions—need for heavier capacity Narrow shoulders and bridges (too narrow for farm equipment) Large difference between the County and Township roads vs. State and County roads</p> </td><td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>River bottom Bridges and county roads CR 20 and CR 24 Need 4 lanes to the Cities CR 39 bridge</p> </td></tr> </table>	<p>Along County lines By-way near river Certain roads are not entirely paved Hwy 212 (two lanes near Cologne) Road weight restrictions—need for heavier capacity Narrow shoulders and bridges (too narrow for farm equipment) Large difference between the County and Township roads vs. State and County roads</p>	<p>River bottom Bridges and county roads CR 20 and CR 24 Need 4 lanes to the Cities CR 39 bridge</p>
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Highway jurisdiction issues.	<p>State doesn't clear entire right-of-way for snow removal Issues between Mn/DOT and Bird Island Maintenance on connections between state and county roads Townships should take over more county roads Weight restrictions Speed limits on US highways Roads in Cities 830th Ave—high traffic Turn back issues</p>		
Transit needs.	<p>Need more public transit (e.g. night-time Heartland Express; after-hours transit) Minimum wage jobs connected to significant drives to work are a problem Need for more transit after school and for people with disabilities Expand use of Heartland system to outlying communities (12,000 riders last year) More needed in southern half of county Would be nice to have public bus if cost effective Greyhound bus service</p>		
Problems and opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle systems.	<p>More trails/paths – more bike paths in rural area would be good Bird Island has abandoned many of their sidewalks Park system trails Possibly along railroad (county owns right-of-way of RR—94 miles) Walking trails near lake and golf course housing area Not part of our culture—need to create more interest for cycling and physical activity Very few pedestrians/bicyclists System is bad – put yourself at risk if running/biking along roads</p>		
Railroads Issues.	<p>RR along TH 19 could be better developed (many derailments, etc.) RR along TH 19 should be abandoned and no county money should be spent on it Issues with Southern Minnesota Rail Authority Improvements and upgrades needed The Bird Island rail crossing Fairfax RR, road crossings Update TC & W railroad—need more funding for improvements/maintenance RR along TH 212 is working well—no complaints Investigate beet hauling by rail</p>		

TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE CONTINUED		
Frequent complaints about the County's transportation system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Condition of roads – maintenance Not enough paved roads Weight restrictions Narrow shoulders Steep road ditch banks Rail system, southern part Lobby for transportation with state officials Too many trucks, not enough trains Some roads unsafe for the transportation they carry (e.g. CR 11) We need to increase the use to justify the cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beet haulers Many trucks (semis) Snow removal Grading (summer time) Public transit needs expanding Train derailling on a regular basis
Issues with the County's ditch system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setbacks Buffer strips (to avoid run-off) Determine benefits on ditches Expense strips along ditches Not able to add to tile in the north Tile collapse Only when it rains too much Support SWCD programs usage Great infrastructure and maintenance More federal funding Maintenance difficult on some ditches County tile lines over-used—need to upgrade Need better systematic maintenance plan Utilize CREP program to plant grass 200 ft from ditch edge to resists dirt run-off Will need to be redesigned to meet new age agricultural and environmental issues Bird Island's sanitary sewer is part of the county ditch system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bird Island joint system Rip rap of washouts Wash outs Ditch 66 Seepage tile Some ditches should be cleaned Better design Expand ditch in step system Maintaining grass filter strip
Other infrastructure needs (drinking water, wastewater, etc.).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pattern tiling City well protection Communications infrastructure Franklin needs better wastewater treatment Bird Island has problems with the state and its sewer system High nitrates in rural farm wells—may need to consider rural water system in future Can't improve systems Clay soils—impact septic drainage Southern county wells—hard to find water Telecommunications and information technology infrastructure Water treatment plants All areas could use revamping of drinking water 	
HOUSING AND HUMAN SERVICES		
Key public facilities (health, education, community programs) and whether they are meeting the needs of the County.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No age-appropriate housing Gap in assisted living facilities Primary care Specialty care for health Libraries East side of county uses Hutchinson Hospital in Olivia Clinics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No local health care Youth to elder programs Need building space for human services Community Christian Outreach Center Schools are struggling More consolidating? Maintain hospital and ambulance services Education always needs improved facilities
Health care issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age-appropriate housing Adequate housing Aging population needs Keeping hospital profitable Emergency preparedness Dentists not serving the poor Child psychiatrist availability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disparities in health: foreign-born health conditions Chemical dependency Workforce shortage Farmers being able to afford medical insurance Under-insured or uninsured

HOUSING AND HUMAN SERVICES CONTINUED		
Health care issues continued.	Immunization vaccines at clinics Maintenance of city hospital Quite good healthcare available, but not sure if most residents can afford it Aging health care providers (doctors all retiring within 10 years) Immunization of non-insured children Children's health needs Long term high incidence of congenital defects at birth Population seems to be moving more toward Willmar for the healthcare	
Education issues.	Language issues; Spanish language education Cut backs; cutting electives Need social workers in schools Basic education; quality education Funding base structure; increasing costs; budget problems Consider long range school plan School day treatment and/or alternative learning centers needed Teachers inadequately trained in child development/mental health State mandates Funding tax reform—less money from state Lower quality teachers, classes and curriculums Rural school system struggles for lack of money as well as declining enrollment	
Other human service concerns.	More choices for seniors and their families More care at home or in-home settings More drug treatment options for kids Call list for drivers of elderly (out of town) Elderly: fuel costs, rising medical costs Children out of home placement The cost to local tax payer Hispanic labor force aid in transitional period Housing/service needs during peak migrant labor use Taking better care of our dependents: our children and elderly More activities in community for youth and seniors	More services needed Living wage work Outreach for health care Affordable day care Need for battered women shelters Fraud in high school More mental health care
Location and need for affordable housing.	Poor housing a major issue Somewhat located where it's needed No, only if the housing gap is corrected Better migrant housing More high-quality rental housing Three-bedroom rental units do not exist Probably not enough affordable in Buffalo Lake Many towns have mobile home parks that tend to be substandard People working at new treatment facility live elsewhere because housing is not available	Not enough Major issue Every town has some of both Mid-range is missing
Appropriate mix of housing types (style, price range.	Not enough of a mix Lower to mid salary ranges not available (e.g. \$40,000-\$80,000) More need for assisted living housing in the future No migrant labor camp Fear of building new houses Too many single-occupant households – if more multiple housing units were provided, more houses would be available for families Many county business employees live outside of county—congregated housing	
Housing condition and Maintenance concerns.	80% of county-wide housing stock built prior to 1940 Lack of maintenance Grants are available Migrant housing "in city" Poor maintenance of many homes and manufactured homes Condemned houses are being used by seasonal employees Trailer park in Buffalo Lake needs maintenance	

HOUSING AND HUMAN SERVICES CONTINUED

**Obstacles that affect
efficient planning and
delivery of community
services.**

Delivery services	Lack of diversity
Fear of change	Money
Communication	Loss of young
Education	Costs
Distance	Lack of knowledge
State mandates	Acceptance by the public
Lack of volunteers	Environmental issues or controls
Block grants	
Lack of industry—too agriculturally related	
Trust and communication between agencies	
County government system – consider “regionalized government”	
Perceived threats to individual life styles	