

Comprehensive Plan Goals

Agriculture

Crops, livestock, forestry – small farms – large farms w/ environmental checks – welcome/promote new farms – ag infrastructure w/ value added businesses

- Foster a diverse, productive, and sustainable agricultural industry inclusive of: crops, livestock, forestry, ag support services, small to large farms, value added producers, and opportunities for new farmers into the future.

Economic Facts/Concerns:

- The 2012 average value of land and buildings per farm is 4.3 times as much as it was in 1978 (Table 8 in Appendix A).
- The total number of farms in Pine County from 1978 to 2012 decreased by 32.7% (Table 8 in Appendix A).
- Conversion of land to non-agricultural use raises the value of surrounding agricultural land resulting in an economic difficulty for farms to expand.
- When residential development occurs in agricultural areas, disagreement may occur between residential and agricultural property owners as to what are acceptable practices relating to agricultural operations. These disagreements can be costly to all concerned.
- The market value of agricultural product sold from Pine County is a significant economic driver. Much of this value is from livestock, poultry, and their products as well as crops (Table 9 in Appendix A).
- There are very few agricultural support services located within Pine County (Information gather from public input meeting).

Economic Recommendations:

- 1.) Consider adoption of a countywide zoning ordinance to address scattered residential development, incompatible uses, orderly development supported by existing infrastructure and conversion of land to non-agricultural uses.
- 2.) Continue the pursuit of obtaining an Ag Extension Educator.
- 3.) Develop incentives to encourage agricultural related valued-added businesses.
- 4.) Support niche market farms such as involvement with farmer's markets.

Environmental Facts/Concerns:

- Agriculture is the largest land use within Pine County (Map 2 and Table 7 in Appendix A).
- Pine County has 165 registered feedlots ranging from 0-19,224 animals. Many of these feedlots are near surface water (Map 4 in Appendix A).
- Best management practices for agricultural activities are essential to preserve water quality and the natural environment.

Environmental Recommendations:

- 1.) Continue the pursuit of obtaining an Ag Extension Educator.
- 2.) Promote the use of the AgBMP Loan which provides low interest financing to encourage best management practices that prevent or reduce runoff from feedlots, farm fields and other pollution programs identified in the local water management plan.
- 3.) Support the completion of a USDA NRCS soil survey of Pine County. The soil survey can be used by farmers and land managers to identify environmentally sensitive soils.
- 4.) Participate in implementation of Pine County Water Plan, which addresses water quality on farmland.
- 5.) Feedlots

Economic and Community Development

Broadband, tourism, industrial manufacturing growth, higher wages, affordable housing, blight reduction, quality of life

- Enhance community and economic opportunities by improving access to broadband internet, higher wage jobs, and affordable housing
- Promote property stewardship and management in order to accommodate tourism and attract new large employment businesses such as industrial manufacturing.
- Support small local businesses and entrepreneurship.

Economic Facts/Concerns:

- Much of Pine County does not have access to broadband internet which makes it difficult for businesses and people to thrive in today's society. 82% of Pine County homes do not meet the state's goal for internet speed (Map 1 in Appendix B)
- Since 1990, the unemployment rate in Pine County has trended approximately 2% higher than the State of Minnesota (Graph 2 in Appendix B).
- More citizens commute outside of the county for work than work within the county (Graph 3 in Appendix B).
- The Median Household Income is lower in Pine County than the surrounding counties except Kanabec County (Table 1 in Appendix B).
- The Median resale price of existing homes in 2013 was 17.5% lower than East Central Minnesota, while the rental rates trend up to 4% higher (Table 5 in Appendix A).
- Food preparation and serving related occupations, which have the lowest median wage make up 34% of the workforce in Pine County (Table 3 and Graph 5 Appendix B).

Economic Recommendations:

- 1.) Consider adoption of a countywide zoning ordinance to address scattered residential development, incompatible uses, and orderly development supported by existing infrastructure.

- 2.) Work with broadband providers and other group for access to broadband including examining feasibility approaches.
- 3.) Continue the ongoing outreach to recruit high wage sector businesses to expand or locate within the county.
- 4.) Continue to coordinate and support relationships with the communities within the county to move joint projects forward including affordable housing projects.
- 5.) Investigate other incentives the county can provide to increase the stock of industrial buildings.
- 6.) Work with individuals and companies to improve the amount of value-added agriculture in business in the County.
- 7.) Continue implementing the County Economic Development Plan found in Appendix D.
- 8.) Facilitate awareness with local contractors to create more workforce housing.

Social Well-Being Facts/Concerns:

- A lack of property stewardship and management can be detrimental to property values and the environment.
- Best management practices for industrial and manufacturing activities are essential to preserve water quality and the natural environment. 186 respondents of 397 in the community survey stated manufacturing oriented businesses are needed in Pine County (Question 9 in Appendix C).
- Mental Health
- Health Equity
- Housing

Social Well-Being Recommendations:

- 1.) Explore the expansion of the services provided through the solid waste management fee to include countywide curbside garbage service.
- 2.) Consider adoption of a countywide zoning ordinance to address concerns over industrial and manufacturing activities using best management practices through the use of conditional use permits, interim use permits, or not permitting certain activities in specific areas.
- 3.) Address Mental health
- 4.) Address Health Inequity
- 5.) Address Housing

Recreation

Develop and maintain trails for all users, youth oriented opportunities, maximize use of county owned land, use recreation for tourism, identify and promote assets

- Identify, support, and promote existing recreational assets for tourism development and resident education.
- Develop and maintain trails for all user types.
- Create recreational opportunities on county lands to maximize their potential.

Economic Facts/Concerns:

- Tourism is an important revenue source from public lands.
- Leisure and Hospitality is the largest industry within Pine County (Graph 5 in Appendix B).

Economic Recommendations:

- 1.) Consider adoption of a countywide zoning ordinance to address scattered residential development, incompatible uses, and orderly development supported by existing infrastructure to ensure opportunities for tourism and recreation.
- 2.) Develop a Countywide recreational (trails and parks) plan.
- 3.) Support development of the Oberstar Trail which is the missing trail segment from the Twin Cities to the Twin Ports.
- 4.) Increase information on the County website regarding recreational opportunities that already exist.

Social Well-Being Facts/Concerns:

- Public (federal, state, locally owned) land uses is the second largest land use within the county (Map 2 and Table 7 in Appendix A).
- The current active recreational opportunities within the county revolve around water resources or motorized vehicles (Map 3 in Appendix A). In the community survey, 56.9% and 54.7% of the respondents stated they would like to see more youth-oriented facilities and hiking/biking trails provided (Question 7 in Appendix C). Additionally, it was noted in the public input meetings that there are only 2 beaches in the county, the Pine City Beach and Dago Lake (Appendix D?).
- There are currently 33,971 acres of County Conservation and Memorial Forest lands designated within Pine County, which are generally undeveloped (Information per the Pine County Website).
- The 2015-2020 Kanabec-Pine Community Health Assessment identifies obesity as a priority issue. Local recreational opportunities can increase the probabilities of being active.

Social Well-Being Recommendations:

- 1.) Implement the countywide recreation plan with a focus on physical activity.
- 2.) Develop a public land use policy to provide the framework for acceptable uses of county owned land.

Natural Resources

Protect for future, utilize responsibly for economic and energy development, manage them for future, reduce, reuse, recycle waste

- Manage natural resources to optimize economic and environmental benefits in perpetuity.
- Reduce waste being land filled by facilitating residents and businesses to reduce, reuse, and recycle.

Economic Facts/Concerns:

- In 2014, 2.6% of the labor force within the County is employed in Natural Resources and Mining professions (Table 2 in Appendix B).
- The revenue from the logging and forestry industry generates just 6.9% of the revenue agricultural products do, however it is still an important segment of the local economy (Tables 9 & 10 in Appendix A).

Economic Recommendations:

- 1.) Explore objectives with the industries which rely on natural resources (timber, mining, etc)
- 2.) Partner with and support the Audubon Center of the North Woods.
- 3.) Support reforestation programs such as reviving the General Andrews Nursery.
- 4.) Support education of rural land owners on management considerations including invasive species such as Oak Wilt, Emerald Ash Borer, and noxious weeds.

Environmental Facts/Concerns:

- In 2015, the East Central Solid Waste Commission spent \$2 million dollars to expand the landfill.
- There is a significant amount of speculative secondary aggregate resources identified within Pine County (Map 5 in appendix A).
- In the survey of the community, 248 out of the 430 responding stated protecting natural areas and water quality should be a primary goal over the next 20 years (Question 6 in Appendix C).

Environmental Recommendations:

- 1.) Consider adoption of a countywide zoning ordinance to address scattered residential development, incompatible uses, preservation of natural resources, and orderly development supported by existing infrastructure.
- 2.) Ensure the Pine County Waterplan is implemented.

Education

Support lifelong learning, job training, K-12 integrated job training, Education as a tool for citizenship, broadband

- Support lifelong learning for citizenship, a competent workforce, and a high quality of life by improving access to broadband, K-12 integrated job training, and adult job training

Economic Facts/Concerns:

- Pine Technical and Community College and the Local 49 Training and Apprenticeship Center provide adult education within the county.
- The Audubon Center of the North Woods in Sandstone provides a significant local opportunity for outdoor/environmental education.
- Only 13.5% of citizens age 25+ have a bachelor's degree or higher, as compared to 32.6% of the citizens throughout Minnesota (Graph 2 in Appendix A). Higher education is linked to higher paying jobs.

Economic Recommendations:

- 1.) Engage with guidance counselors in order to identify the changing needs of high school students.
- 2.) Supports schools in seeking funding from the state for additional guidance counselors.
- 3.) Foster development of future employees through participating career fairs, job shadows, etc.

Social Well-Being Facts/Concerns:

- Lifelong education encourages stewardship of resources for generations to come.
- In the survey of the community, education ranked as the second highest planning priority for Pine County's future (Question 4 in Appendix C).

Social Well-Being Recommendations:

- 1.) Support Coordination with Pine Technical and Community College
- 2.) Partner and educate the public on citizenship including providing high school social studies/civics courthouse days.

Transportation and Infrastructure

Improve public transportation, broadband development, improve non-emergency medical transportation, stable funding for roads and bridges

- Maintain a strong base of infrastructure for the community inclusive of: quality roads and bridges, public transportation, broadband internet, and non-emergency medical transportation.

Economic Facts/Concerns:

- Pine County has several major thoroughfares which span the county including Interstate 35 running north to south, with Old Highway 61, a portion of one of the original highways constructed within the U.S. highway system which was later decommissioned and turned back to the county. Additionally, the east-west connections include: State Highway 23, 18, 48, and 70 through the county.

- There are currently two public transit options within the county including the Arrowhead Transit and the Chisago-Isanti Heartland Express. Additionally, Attaboys Taxi Service from Sandstone is available for a private transportation option.
- The population 65 years and older is expected to increase from 18.0% in 2013 to 26.4% in 2025, more transit options are necessary to support this population (Table 3 in Appendix A).

Economic Recommendations:

- 1.) Develop a long term adequate and sustainable plan to fund local roads.
- 2.) Consider adoption of a countywide zoning ordinance to address scattered residential development, incompatible uses, and orderly development supported by existing infrastructure.
- 3.) Continue working with Arrowhead Transit to expand services throughout the county.
- 4.) Continue working towards additional mass transit opportunities such as the Rushline Corridor including establishing a park and ride.
- 5.) Consider feasibility study to do rail-based economic development.
- 6.) Explore possibility of medical transport van system similar to the veteran's van.

Environmental Facts/Concerns:

- In the community survey, sustainable built infrastructure ranked among the highest planning priorities for Pine County's future along with sustainable natural infrastructure mid-way through the planning priorities (Question 4 in Appendix C).

Environmental Recommendations: **SECTION TO BE DEVELOPED**