

LYON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The development of the Lyon County Comprehensive Land Use Plan was made possible through the dedication and collaboration of many individuals and organizations. The Lyon County Board of Commissioners provided vision and leadership throughout the planning process. We extend our sincere thanks to the members of the Lyon County Planning & Zoning Commission, whose thoughtful input and guidance helped shape the plan's direction.

Appreciation is also extended to County department staff, township supervisors, and local city officials for their contributions and local expertise. We would like to recognize the residents of Lyon County, whose participation through surveys, public meetings, and community conversations ensured the plan reflects the values and priorities of the people it serves. Finally, we thank the Southwest Regional Development Commission for facilitating the planning process and providing technical support and coordination throughout the project.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background & Purpose

The Lyon County Comprehensive Land Use Plan serves as a foundational document outlining the strategic direction for land use and development within the county. The plan recognizes the significance of comprehensive land use planning in guiding sustainable growth, promoting economic vitality, and preserving the unique character of Lyon County's communities.

Through a collaborative planning process involving extensive stakeholder engagement, data collection, and analysis, this plan aims to address the evolving needs and aspirations of Lyon County's residents, businesses, and organizations. By integrating demographic trends, economic analysis, and environmental assessments, the plan seeks to identify opportunities for balanced growth. Furthermore, the plan endeavors to foster partnerships with state, regional, and local entities to achieve shared objectives in land use management.

Comprehensive Plans are required by Minnesota State Law (Minnesota Statute §394.231), for any county wishing to adopt and implement official controls (e.g., zoning regulations, shoreland areas, minimizing the fragmentation and development of agricultural, forest, wildlife, and open space lands). According to State Statutes, the plan should include a combination of policy statements, goals, and maps for guiding the physical, social and economic development of the county.

Additionally, to enhance accessibility and usability, the plan incorporates County Fact Sheets, which provide detailed information and data on specific subjects such as agriculture, education, demographics, housing, natural resources, and public services. These fact sheets serve as valuable resources for county staff, county commissioners, residents and local organizations. They offer in-depth insights into various aspects of Lyon County and can help facilitate conversations and decisions about the county's future.



Historical view of Marshall, MN

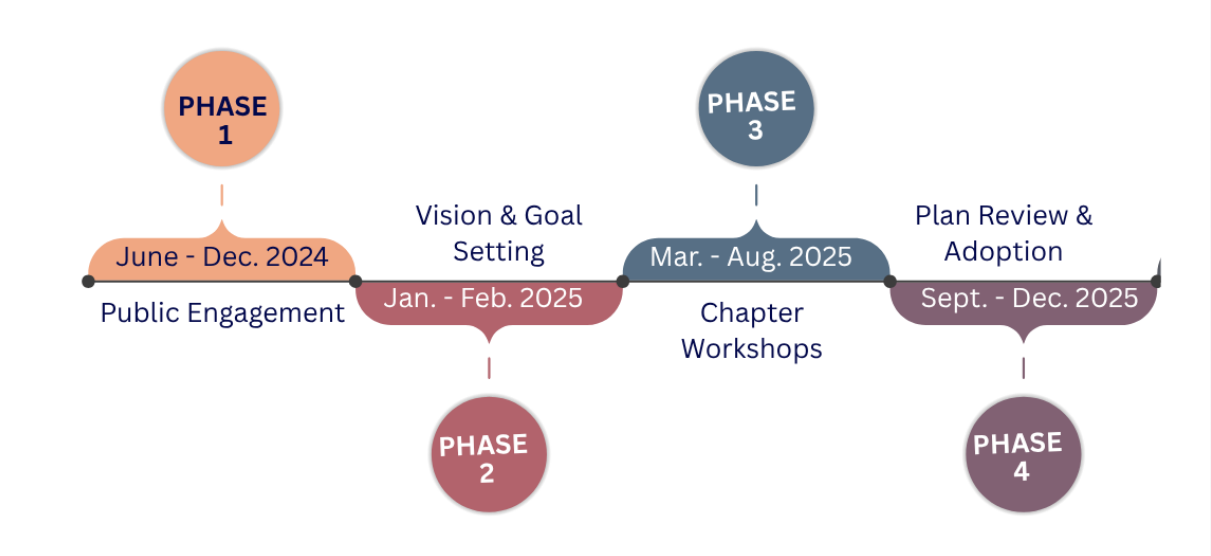
1.2 Overview & History of Lyon County

Lyon County, nestled in the southwestern corner of Minnesota, boasts a rich history and vibrant present-day community. Established in 1868 and named after General Nathaniel Lyon, a Union Army officer during the Civil War, the county encompasses a diverse landscape of rolling prairies, fertile farmland, many lakes and rivers, and on the Southwestern corner of the county lies the Buffalo Ridge. Originally inhabited by Dakota Sioux tribes, European settlers began arriving in the mid-19th century, drawn by the promise of fertile soil and abundant natural resources. The county's early economy revolved around agriculture, with farms dotting the landscape and small towns springing up along vital transportation routes.

Over the decades, Lyon County has evolved into a thriving hub of commerce and industry. The railroad's arrival in the late 19th century spurred further growth, facilitating the transportation of goods and linking Lyon County to regional markets. Agriculture remains central to the county's identity, with crops like corn, soybeans, and livestock farming sustaining its economy. However, Lyon County experienced a significant shift with the rise of manufacturing in the mid-20th century. Companies like Schwan's, ADM, and Ralco have emerged as key players, creating new job opportunities and injecting vitality into the local economy. In more recent years, Lyon County has diversified its economic base; sectors such as manufacturing, healthcare, and education have become a bigger part of the local economy. Today, Lyon County stands as a dynamic blend of small-town charm and modern amenities, offering residents and visitors alike a unique blend of history, natural beauty, and community spirit.

1.3 The Planning Process

The comprehensive planning process for Lyon County's Comprehensive Land Use Plan is structured into four distinct phases, each crucial for ensuring a thorough and inclusive approach to decision-making. This data-driven approach enabled the planning commission to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, laying the groundwork for evidence-based decision-making throughout the planning process



Phase 1 (June - December 2024): Public Engagement & Data Collection/Analysis
This phase involved initial meetings of the steering committee to provide background information on existing plans and development of the process that the plan will take. It also involved collection and analysis of data related to Lyon County. The Steering Committee and county staff held public meetings and engaged with local residents through the community survey.

Phase 2 (January – February 2025): Visioning & Goal Setting
This phase involved the planning commission gathering the information collected in Phase 1 and then in turn creating a vision/direction that the Comp Plan should follow.

Phase 3 (March - August 2025): Chapter Workshops
This phase involved the planning commission taking a specific look at each chapter in detail. This allowed the group to evaluate its contents and finalize the goals of each chapter.

Phase 4 (September - December 2025): Plan Review & Adoption
This phase involved the steering committee, local units of government and citizen review of the newly drafted Lyon County Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

1.4 What's Included in the Comprehensive Plan

CHAPTER 2

LAND USE:

This chapter outlines future development guidance for Lyon County by analyzing current land use patterns and zoning districts. It identifies strategies for water planning, preserving agricultural land, and supporting balanced development across the county.



CHAPTER 3

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

This chapter examines the current economic conditions in Lyon County, identifying trends and opportunities for growth. It provides strategies to strengthen the local economy through workforce development, childcare availability, and collaboration with local partners.



CHAPTER 4

HOUSING:

This chapter illustrates housing needs, challenges, and opportunities within Lyon County. It discusses strategies to improve housing affordability, availability, and diversity for residents at all income levels.



PHASE 4

CHAPTER 5

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE:

This chapter outlines the existing transportation systems and infrastructure that support residents and businesses in Lyon County. It identifies future needs and recommends improvements to enhance mobility, connectivity, and resilience.



CHAPTER 6

PARKS, RECREATION & NATURAL RESOURCES:

This chapter explores Lyon County's park system, recreational amenities, and natural resource assets. It proposes strategies to expand access, protect environmental features, and enhance recreational opportunities for all users.



CHAPTER 7

SUSTAINABILITY:

This chapter outlines strategies to promote environmental, economic, and social sustainability in Lyon County. It emphasizes long-term resilience through responsible land use, clean energy development, solid waste management, and the protection of water resources.



CHAPTER 8

IMPLEMENTATION:

This chapter highlights the tools, timelines, and responsibilities needed to carry out the plan's goals and strategies. It provides a framework for coordinated action among county departments, local partners, and the public.



1.5 Community Engagement

The Steering Committee embarked on a robust community engagement process aimed at ensuring the opportunity for diverse voices from throughout the county to be heard in shaping the county's future. Through a series of town hall meetings held in the Fall of 2024, and an online survey, residents from all corners of Lyon County were encouraged to participate, sharing their visions, concerns, and aspirations for their communities. Local leaders employed social media and other outreach methods to reach a broad spectrum of residents, fostering a sense of equity and ownership in the planning process.

Balaton Monday, October 28 5:00 p.m.	Marshall Monday, October 28 7:00 p.m.	Cottonwood Tuesday, October 29 5:00 p.m.

PHASE 4



In addition to broad public outreach, each chapter of the plan was informed by its own focused workshop. These workshops brought together invited guests who contributed their subject-specific knowledge and expertise, ensuring that the content of each chapter reflected both community input and technical insight. By engaging stakeholders directly connected to topics such as housing, land use, parks, transportation, and economic development, the planning process was able to integrate local experience with professional expertise, resulting in a more comprehensive and actionable plan.

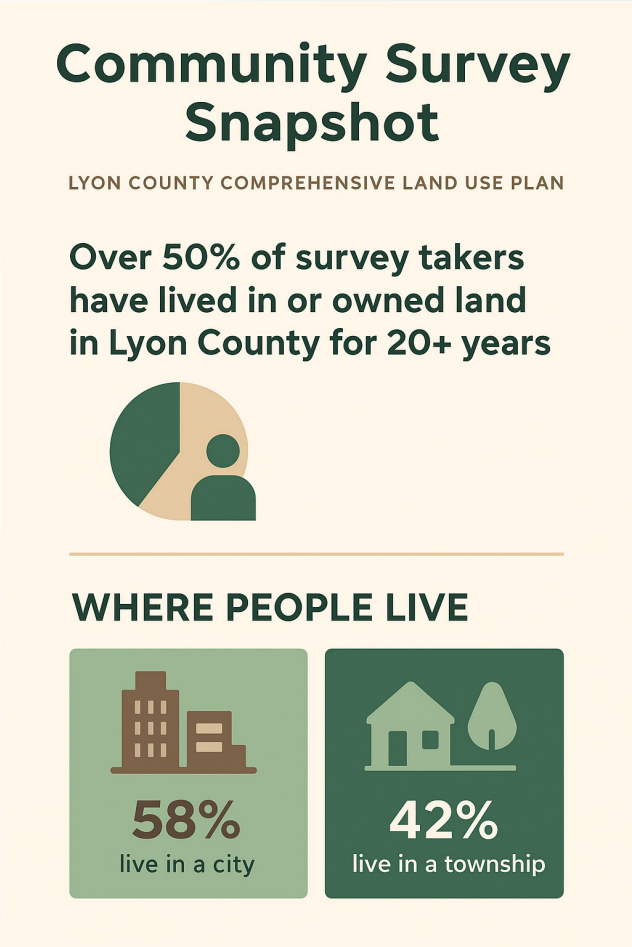
1.6 Implementation & Zoning Ordinance Review

A comprehensive plan is only effective when its vision and strategies are put into practice. Implementation serves as the bridge between the community's aspirations and the on-the-ground actions that shape Lyon County's future. This plan is intended to be a living document, guiding both short-term decisions and long-term investments across the county.

Implementation will rely on a combination of county policies, capital improvement programming, and partnerships with local jurisdictions, regional agencies, and community organizations. Each chapter of the plan includes goals and objectives tailored to its focus area; such as housing, land use, parks, transportation, and economic development, that will direct policies, grant opportunities, and public investments.

Because priorities evolve over time, the County and its partners will need to revisit these actions regularly, identifying near-term opportunities while keeping long-range goals in view. This includes setting realistic timelines, assigning responsible parties, and aligning resources with the highest community needs. Progress should be tracked through periodic reporting and plan updates, ensuring accountability and transparency in how the plan is carried out.

Ultimately, successful implementation depends on collaboration. By working together across local governments, institutions, businesses, and residents; Lyon County can translate this plan from vision to reality, fostering a resilient, and thriving future.



CHAPTER 2: LAND USE

2.1 Introduction

Welcome to the Land Use Chapter of the Lyon County Land Use Comprehensive Plan, a vital document shaping future development and strategies within our diverse county. This chapter serves as a blueprint for managing our land resources, balancing growth, and fostering strong communities for current and future generations. Lyon County, renowned for its agricultural heritage, and vibrant communities, faces the dual challenge of accommodating growth while maintaining sustainability for the future and safeguarding our values. Through thoughtful land use policies, collaborative planning efforts, and community engagement, this chapter aims to guide future development, protect valuable natural resources, and enhance the quality of life for all residents.

LYON COUNTY LAND USE

DESCRIPTION	ACRES	% of County
Urban and Industrial	500.1	1.1%
Farmlands and Rural Residences	602.6	1.3%
Rural Residential Development Complexes	185.1	0.1%
Other Rural Developments	767.9	0.4%
Cultivated Land	387,941.1	88.1%
Transitional Agricultural Land	43.7	0.1%
Grassland	40,048.8	9.1%
Grassland-Shrub-Tree Complex (Deciduous)	170.8	0.1%
Grassland-Shrub-Tree Complex (Coniferous)	0.0	0.0%
Deciduous Forest	1,229.9	2.7%
Coniferous Forest	0.0	0.0%
Water	5,893.7	1.3%
Wetlands	2,794.6	6.3%
Gravel Pits and Open Mines	252.2	0.1
Bare Rock	1.2	0.1%
Exposed Soil	21.0	0.1%
Unlabeled/Unclassified/Outside State or County	-----	----
Total Land Area: 21,637 acres (100%)		

Source: The Land Management Information Center (LMIC)

2.2

Lyon County, located in southwestern Minnesota, exhibits a diverse range of land uses that reflect its rich agricultural heritage, growing urban centers, and commitment to preserving natural resources.



Lyon County's landscape is predominantly agricultural, with approximately 90% of its land dedicated to farming activities. The fertile soils and favorable climate conditions make it ideal for cultivating crops such as corn and soybeans. This extensive agricultural activity not only supports local economies but also positions the county as a significant contributor to Minnesota's overall agricultural output.

Marshall, the county seat, serves as a regional center for Southwest Minnesota. The city hosts a variety of industrial and commercial establishments, including manufacturing plants, retail businesses, and service providers. The presence of Southwest Minnesota State University further enhances the city's economic and cultural landscape. Development in Marshall and its surrounding areas continues to expand, accommodating residential and commercial growth along with infrastructure improvements.



Beyond agriculture, Lyon County has diversified its economy through industrial and commercial development. These areas attract businesses in manufacturing, technology, and services, providing employment opportunities and contributing to the county's economic diversity. The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) reports that Lyon County is the largest employment center in the region, with 13,713 jobs at 847 firms.

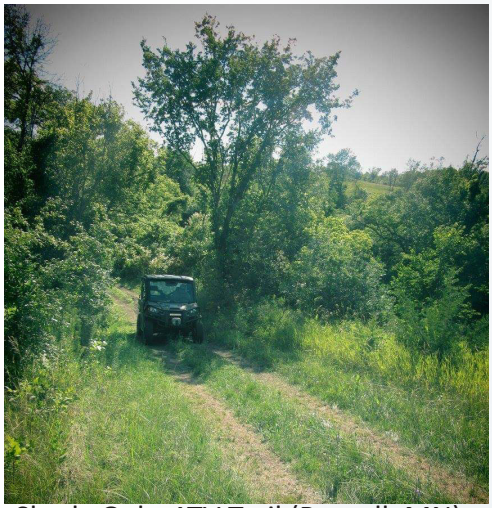


Lyon County's infrastructure supports its diverse land uses, with a network of roads, highways, and rail lines facilitating the movement of goods and people. The county is served by major highways, including U.S. Highway 59, U.S. Highway 14 and Minnesota State Highways 19, 23, and 68, which provide critical regional connectivity for commerce and daily travel. Rail transportation also plays a key role in supporting agricultural and industrial operations, with freight rail services available to transport commodities such as grain and manufactured goods to national and international markets.

Future planning efforts aim to enhance transportation safety, improve public transit access, and support the development of walking and biking infrastructure in both urban and rural areas.

Lyon County is also home to numerous parks, wildlife management areas, and bodies of water that offer recreational opportunities and conserve natural habitats. These areas provide residents and visitors with spaces for outdoor activities like hiking, fishing, camping, hunting, and wildlife observation, contributing to the county's quality of life and environmental sustainability.





Shady Oaks ATV Trail (Russell, MN)

"The trails are nestled on a 96-acre wooded parcel of land in southwest Minnesota. The trails run along and over Coon Creek and include eight bridges that Thooft built himself, including one covered bridge. The drive through these trails are anything but a leisurely run on a straight and flat path. Instead, they are filled with hairpin turns, curves and both modest and steep inclines. Even though the six miles of trails is relatively short in comparison to others within the state, it's still easy to get lost in the maze that takes a rider among native grasses and flowers, as well as massive oaks and many other trees and shrubs".

Source: https://www.srperspective.com/post/a-ride-in-the-woods

Residential areas in Lyon County range from urban neighborhoods in Marshall to rural homesteads scattered throughout the townships. Housing development trends indicate a steady growth in residential construction, catering to the needs of a diverse population. The county's land use planning efforts aim to balance residential growth with the preservation of agricultural lands and natural resources.



This overview of Lyon County's land use illustrates a dynamic interplay between agriculture, urban development, industrial growth, transportation infrastructure, environmental conservation, and residential expansion. Such a balanced approach ensures sustainable development and enhances the quality of life for its residents.



2.3 Growth & Development

Lyon County is committed to managing and accommodating growth through a collaborative approach. Recognizing the diverse growth patterns across its communities, Lyon County includes rural agricultural areas and smaller towns like Balaton and Minneota. These communities, along with the regional center of Marshall, each play a vital role in the county's growth and development. The County will work closely with cities and townships to direct development toward designated growth areas and city cores.

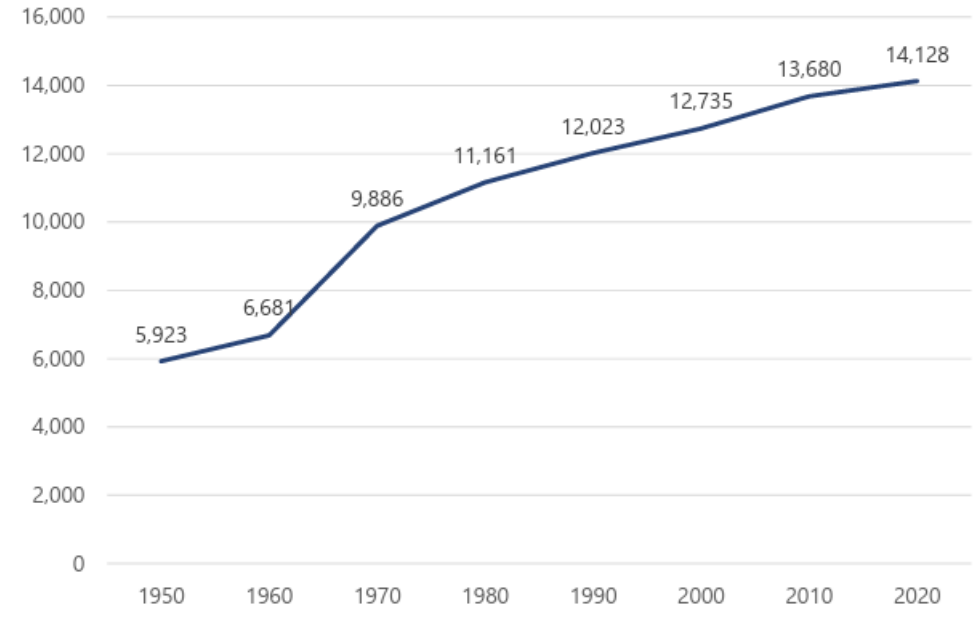


Figure 4: Spec house being built at city-owned Eastbay subdivision

By aligning efforts, local governments can optimize infrastructure investments, promote efficient land use, and preserve valuable agricultural lands. This cooperative approach enhances access to schools, healthcare facilities, recreational opportunities, and other amenities while minimizing developmental impacts. By working together, communities can foster a strong sense of place, improve the quality of life for residents, and ensure that future growth benefits the entire region.

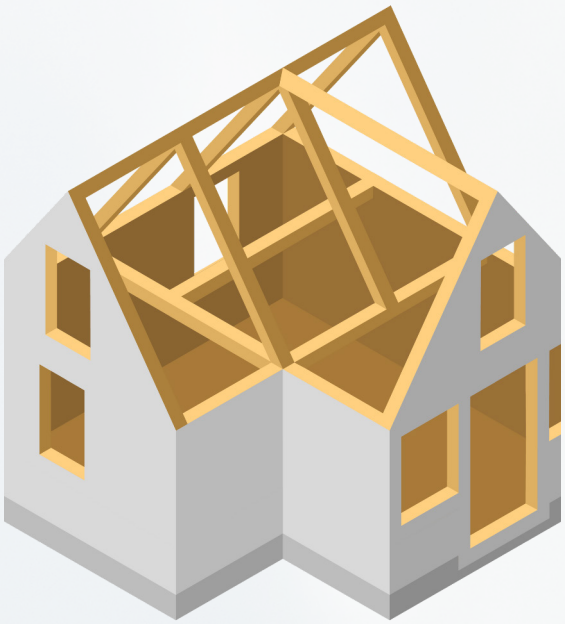
Furthermore, the County seeks to accommodate projected population growth and economic development while maintaining the unique character and identity of Lyon County's communities. Policies support a diverse range of housing options to meet the needs of a growing population, including affordable housing initiatives and strategies to promote housing diversity. Through thoughtful planning and proactive land use policies, Lyon County strives to achieve sustainable growth that balances economic prosperity with community stewardship, ensuring a resilient and thriving future for all county residents.

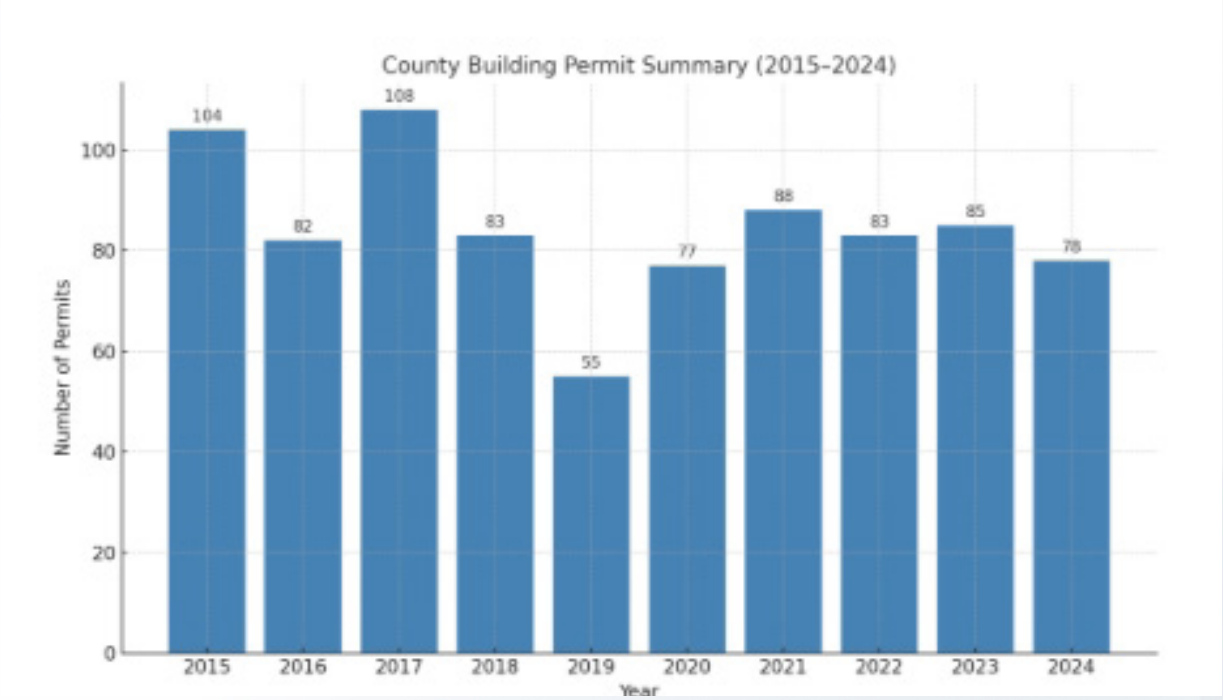
Figure 1. City of Marshall Historic Population, 1950 to 2020



Source: US Census

Furthermore, the County supports policies that encourage sustainable development practices within the commercial and industrial sectors. This includes promoting energy efficiency, water conservation, and waste reduction measures to minimize environmental impacts. The plan also emphasizes the importance of integrating sustainable design principles into new developments and redevelopment projects. By fostering a business-friendly environment that values environmental stewardship and community well-being, Lyon County aims to attract and retain businesses that contribute positively to the local economy while preserving the county's natural and cultural heritage.





2.4 Agriculture & Natural Resources

Lyon County recognizes agriculture as a foundational element of its economy, culture, and rural identity. Both crop and livestock operations are vital to the local economy, and county policies aim to support their long-term viability. Strategies focus on promoting best practices, investing in agricultural infrastructure, and addressing key challenges such as water management, soil health, and pest control. Preserving prime agricultural land from fragmentation and encroaching residential or commercial development is critical to maintaining the county's agricultural base. Protecting agricultural lands from incompatible development remains a top priority, ensuring the agricultural sector remains resilient and economically stable.

In addition to supporting agriculture, the county is committed to preserving and enhancing its diverse outdoor recreation opportunities. Parks, trails, lakes, and natural areas contribute significantly to community health, tourism, and environmental stewardship. These assets offer year-round opportunities for activities such as hiking, hunting, fishing, and camping. Maintaining and improving these resources requires coordinated efforts among local governments, landowners, and recreational organizations. Strategic actions may include improving trail connectivity, upgrading park facilities, and protecting open spaces that support both public access and ecological health.

Conservation of natural resources remains a core priority for the county, particularly within the broader regional landscape of southwestern Minnesota. Protecting watersheds, and native prairie areas contributes not only to local biodiversity, but also to the region's overall long-term agricultural productivity. The county will encourage voluntary, landowner-led land management practices by offering technical resources and support.

Meaningful consultation with farmers and landowners is central to this approach. As the primary stewards of the county's natural and agricultural lands, their insight shapes practical, workable strategies that respect both environmental goals and operational realities. By working closely with local landowners, the county strengthens its ability to work with local and regional agencies in future conservation efforts.

This collaborative approach supports a future where agriculture, recreation, and natural resources coexist productively. Through partnership rather than mandates, the county seeks to sustain its rural character, enhance natural systems, and ensure that residents and visitors continue to benefit from a resilient and vibrant landscape.



AGRICULTURE AND RESOURCES

Preserving prime **agricultural land** is crucial for the county's future and rural identity.



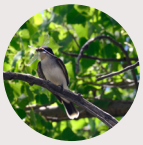
SUSTAINABILITY

Addressing challenges like **water management** is essential for maintaining agricultural productivity and environmental health.



BIODIVERSITY

Best practices enhance **soil health** and promote sustainable agricultural initiatives that benefit the community.



CONSERVATION

Investing in **infrastructure development** supports both agriculture and natural resource conservation effectively.

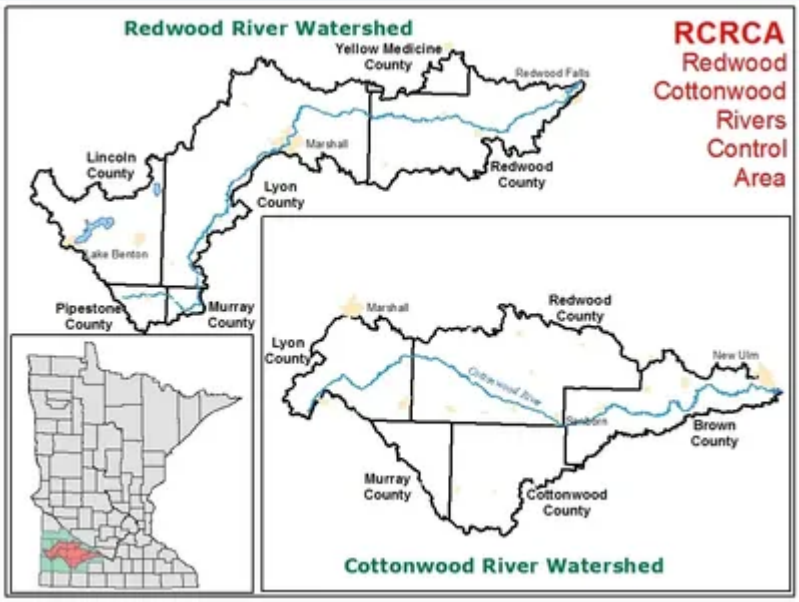


COEXISTENCE

Community engagement ensures **sustainable practices** that enhance agricultural viability while protecting natural resources for future generations.

2.5 Water Planning

Water planning is a critical component of Lyon County's comprehensive land use strategy, ensuring the protection and sustainable management of surface and groundwater resources. The county's approach aligns with regional and state agencies, including the Redwood-Cottonwood Rivers Control Area (RCRCA), the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), as well as the local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). These organizations provide guidance, funding, and technical support for conservation practices, stormwater management, and pollution reduction efforts that protect Lyon County's lakes, rivers, and aquifers.



The RCRCA plays a key role in watershed planning, focusing on the protection and restoration of the Redwood and Cottonwood River watersheds. Through projects such as streambank stabilization, sediment reduction, and wetland restoration, the RCRCA helps improve water quality while also mitigating the impacts of flooding and erosion. Lyon County's land use policies will continue to support these efforts by promoting best management practices (BMPs) in agricultural and urban settings, ensuring that land development minimizes adverse effects on water resources. Local Watershed Districts play a key role in watershed planning, focusing on the protection and resto¬ration of key waterways. Through projects such as stream¬bank stabilization, sediment reduction, and wetland restoration, the RCRCA, as well as the Yellow Medicine and Des Moines Watersheds help improve water quality while also mitigating the impacts of flooding and erosion. Lyon County's land use policies will continue to support these efforts by promoting best management practices (BMPs) in agricultural and urban settings, ensuring that land development minimizes adverse effects on water resources.

The MPCA's role in water resource planning includes monitoring water quality, enforcing regulations on pollutants, and implementing strategies to reduce contaminants such as nitrates, phosphorus, and sediment in local waterways. Lyon County will work in collaboration with the MPCA to meet the goals outlined in the Minnesota Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment, supporting initiatives that reduce stormwater runoff, enhance wastewater treatment, and protect drinking water sources.

The BWSR and the Lyon County SWCD provide critical support for soil and water conservation projects, assisting landowners with erosion control, wetland preservation, and buffer strip implementation along water bodies. These agencies help secure funding for conservation easements and habitat restoration projects that benefit both water quality and wildlife. Lyon County's land use plan will emphasize continued participation in BWSR's One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) framework, integrating water resource management across jurisdictional boundaries to achieve long-term sustainability.

Through a combination of regulatory measures, voluntary conservation programs, and interagency collaboration, Lyon County is committed to protecting its water resources for future generations. By incorporating science-based planning and community engagement, the county will enhance resilience to climate change, maintain healthy ecosystems, and support a thriving agricultural and residential landscape while preserving its vital water assets.

Water Planning - Subsection 1. Rural Water Systems



Rural water systems play a vital role in Lyon County's land use planning by ensuring reliable and safe drinking water for residents, businesses, and agricultural operations. These systems provide a critical alternative to private wells, reducing the risks associated with groundwater contamination and supply shortages. The Lincoln-Pipestone Rural Water System (LPRW), and the Red Rock Rural Water System (RRRWS) serves much of the region, delivering treated water to rural households and farms that might otherwise lack access to a consistent water source. As the county grows and land use patterns evolve, maintaining and expanding rural water infrastructure will be essential to supporting sustainable development while protecting groundwater reserves.

The expansion of rural water systems also promotes public health and environmental protection by reducing reliance on individual wells, which are susceptible to contamination from nitrates, bacteria, and other pollutants. A well-managed rural water system helps mitigate the impacts of agricultural runoff and improper septic system maintenance, both of which can threaten water quality. By ensuring access to treated and monitored water supplies, Lyon County can improve the quality of life for its rural residents while reducing the strain on natural water sources. Coordination with regional water providers, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), and local agencies will be key to maintaining the long-term viability of these systems.

As part of the county's comprehensive land use strategy, planning for rural water infrastructure must consider future population growth, agricultural demands, and recent trends in residents wanting to locate in rural areas that have access to rural water systems as well as other amenities. Investments in water distribution networks, storage capacity, and emergency preparedness will be critical to adapting to changing water needs. Additionally, policies that encourage efficient water use, conservation practices, and infrastructure upgrades will ensure that Lyon County remains proactive in managing its rural water supply. By integrating rural water planning into broader land use decisions, the county can promote balanced development that sustains both its communities and natural resources

Water Planning - Subsection 2. One Watershed Planning Efforts

One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) is a collaborative approach to watershed management that integrates the efforts of multiple local governments within a watershed to address water quality and natural resource issues comprehensively. In the context of Lyon County, several watershed management organizations and local governments participate in 1W1P initiatives aimed at protecting and improving water resources across the region. These plans typically involve watershed districts, soil and water conservation districts, municipalities, and other stakeholders working together to develop coordinated strategies for managing water quality, flood prevention, habitat restoration, and recreational opportunities within their respective watersheds.

The 1W1P process in Lyon County focuses on identifying priority areas and implementing targeted actions to address specific water quality concerns. By aligning efforts across political boundaries and jurisdictions, these plans enhance efficiency in resource allocation and implementation of conservation practices. They also promote community engagement and public participation in decision-making processes related to water management, fostering a shared responsibility for environmental stewardship among local residents and stakeholders.

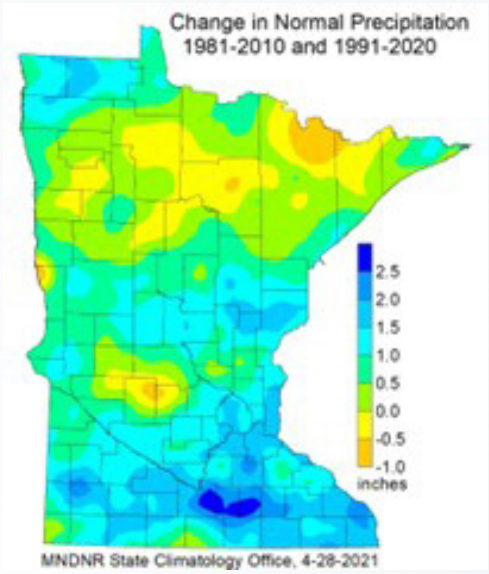
Furthermore, 1W1P initiatives including Lyon County contribute to the protection and enhancement of natural ecosystems, including rivers, lakes, wetlands, and Drinking Water Supply Management Areas (DWMSAs). By adopting a holistic approach to watershed management, these plans aim to achieve measurable improvements in water quality and ecosystem health over time. They also support sustainable agricultural practices and urban development that minimize impacts on water resources while promoting economic growth and community resilience. Through ongoing collaboration and adaptive management, Lyon County and its neighboring communities are actively working to preserve their natural heritage and ensure clean and abundant water resources for future generations.

33%

of the sales tax revenue from the Legacy amendment is allocated to the Clean Water Fund. Those funds may only be spent to protect, enhance, and restore water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams and to protect groundwater from degradation. At least five percent of the clean water fund must be spent to protect drinking water sources.

Water Planning - Subsection 3. Groundwater & Irrigation

Lyon County recognizes the increasing variability in weather patterns and their impact on water resources, including fluctuating precipitation levels, prolonged dry periods, and more frequent extreme weather events. These shifts can strain local water systems, affecting both surface and groundwater availability for residents, agriculture, and industry. To ensure long-term water security, the county will prioritize strategies that enhance resilience, improve water management, and support sustainable land use practices. By strengthening infrastructure, implementing conservation measures, and promoting innovative water management techniques, Lyon County aims to safeguard its water resources against these changing conditions.



One key focus is improving water storage and drainage systems to better handle periods of excessive rainfall or extended dry spells. Investing in stormwater management infrastructure, wetland restoration, and floodplain protection can help mitigate the effects of heavy precipitation while also preserving critical water recharge areas. Additionally, promoting soil health practices such as cover cropping, reduced tillage, and buffer strips can improve water retention in agricultural fields, reducing runoff and protecting both surface and groundwater supplies.

Collaboration among local governments, farmers, and water resource agencies will be essential in addressing these challenges. Encouraging the use of efficient irrigation systems, expanding water reuse efforts, and supporting policies that enhance water conservation will help maintain a reliable water supply for all users. By taking a proactive approach to managing evolving water conditions, Lyon County can strengthen its resilience, protect its natural resources, and ensure that residents, businesses, and agricultural operations continue to have access to safe and sufficient water well into the future.

By promoting development in less environmentally sensitive areas, the county can reduce the pressure on its natural resources while still accommodating growth and maintaining a high quality of life for residents. Public education on the importance of shoreland and floodplain conservation, along with active engagement with property owners and developers, will also be key to ensuring that future development in these areas aligns with long-term environmental and community goals. Through a combination of regulatory measures, incentives, and collaboration, Lyon County can protect its water resources and ensure that its shoreland and floodplain areas continue to provide ecological, recreational, and aesthetic benefits for generations to come.

2.6 Future Development

Lyon County's approach to guiding and managing growth in a way that aligns with its long-term goals for sustainability, community well-being, and economic vitality. By focusing on strategic planning, efficient land use, and infrastructure investments, the county seeks to create vibrant, and resilient communities while preserving its rural character and natural resources. This section highlights key policies and strategies to accommodate growth in designated areas, support diverse housing and business opportunities, and ensure that development is well-integrated with environmental considerations, water resource management, and infrastructure capacity. Through collaboration with local governments, stakeholders, and residents, Lyon County will shape a future that balances growth with quality of life for all.

Future Development - Subsection 1. Emergence of Business Diversification Efforts

An emerging trend in Lyon County is the establishment of agricultural-related businesses on farm acreages, reflecting a growing diversification of the agricultural sector. These businesses, which may include value-added food production, renewable energy projects, specialty crop production, maintenance businesses, storage, and technology innovations, are being developed to capitalize on the increasing demand for locally produced goods, sustainable farming practices, and technological advancements in agriculture. As farmers seek new ways to supplement traditional crop and livestock operations, these businesses provide additional income streams while enhancing the economic resilience of rural areas.





The shift toward these enterprises is driven by several factors, including changes in consumer preferences, advances in technology, and the need for farmers to adapt to evolving market conditions. As demand for organic products, locally sourced food, renewable energy, and sustainable farming practices grows, farm acreages are increasingly seen as ideal locations for such ventures. These developments can also help revitalize rural communities by creating jobs and supporting local economies. By embracing this trend in a sustainable and responsible manner, Lyon County can foster a more diversified, sustainable economy that supports both traditional farming and emerging industries.

Future Development - Subsection 2. Shoreland & Floodplain Considerations

Shoreland and floodplain areas in Lyon County are treated with special consideration due to their critical role in protecting water quality, preserving natural habitats, and reducing flood risks. As such, development in these areas is subject to more stringent regulations compared to other parts of the county, ensuring that these sensitive zones are preserved and protected from the potential negative impacts of unchecked growth.

As development pressures increase, particularly near lakes, rivers, and wetlands, it becomes essential to implement responsible land use policies that safeguard these sensitive areas. Shoreland areas serve as buffer zones that filter runoff, stabilize shorelines, and provide essential wildlife habitats. Similarly, floodplain areas, which are prone to periodic flooding, play a critical role in water storage, flood mitigation, and maintaining the ecological balance of local waterways. Allowing unchecked development in these areas could lead to water quality degradation, loss of biodiversity, and increased flood risks.

PHASE 4

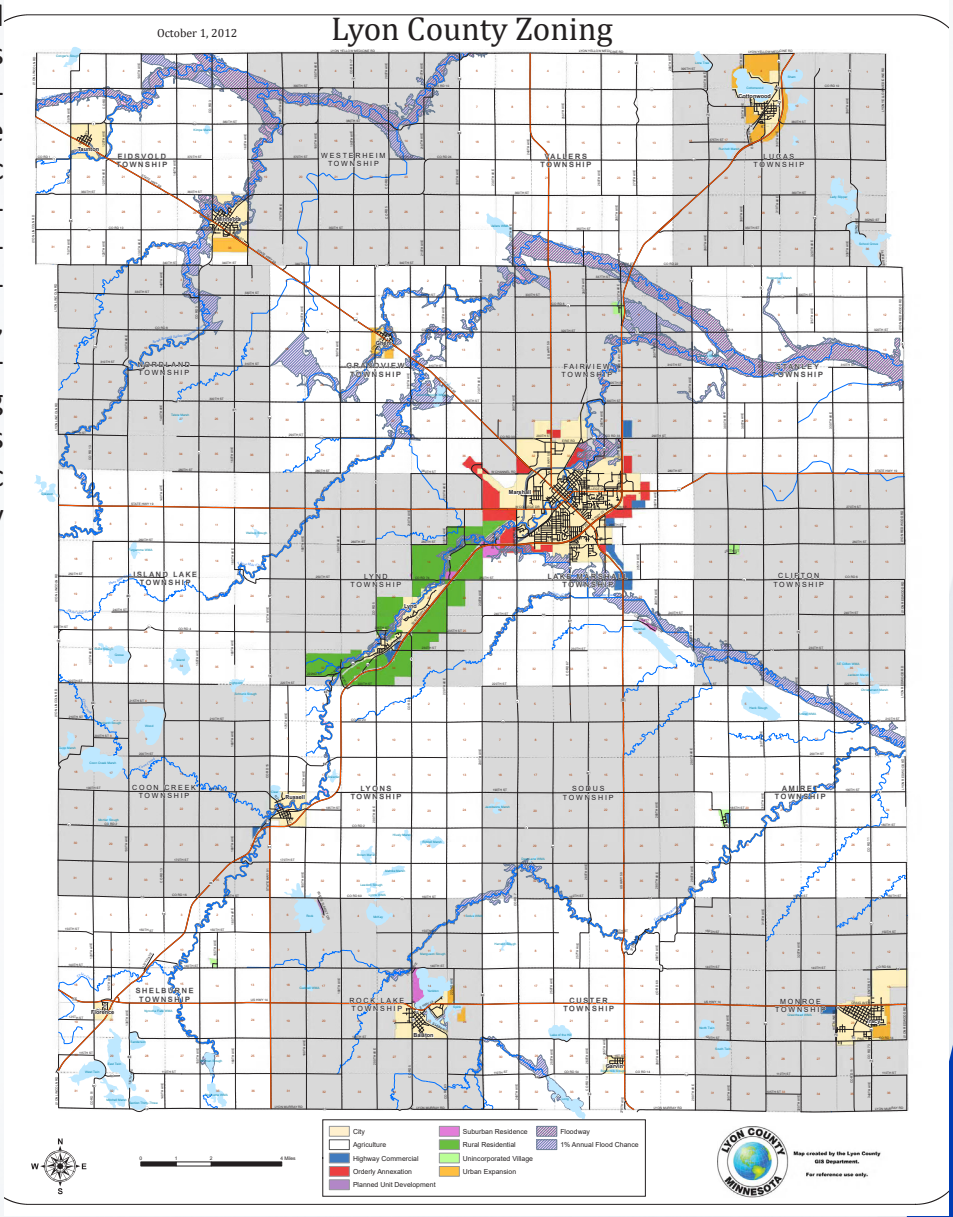


To manage future development in shoreland and floodplain areas, Lyon County should focus on enforcing stringent zoning regulations that limit the extent of development and promote low-impact land uses. These regulations should prioritize preservation and enhancement of natural features such as wetlands, floodplain forests, and native vegetation, which help mitigate the impacts of erosion, stormwater runoff, and flooding. The county can encourage sustainable development practices that minimize impervious surfaces, promote water quality buffers, and require stormwater management systems that protect water resources. Additionally, the county should work closely with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and other agencies to monitor and protect these sensitive areas, ensuring that development proposals meet strict environmental standards.

Future Development - Subsection 3. Land Use Map

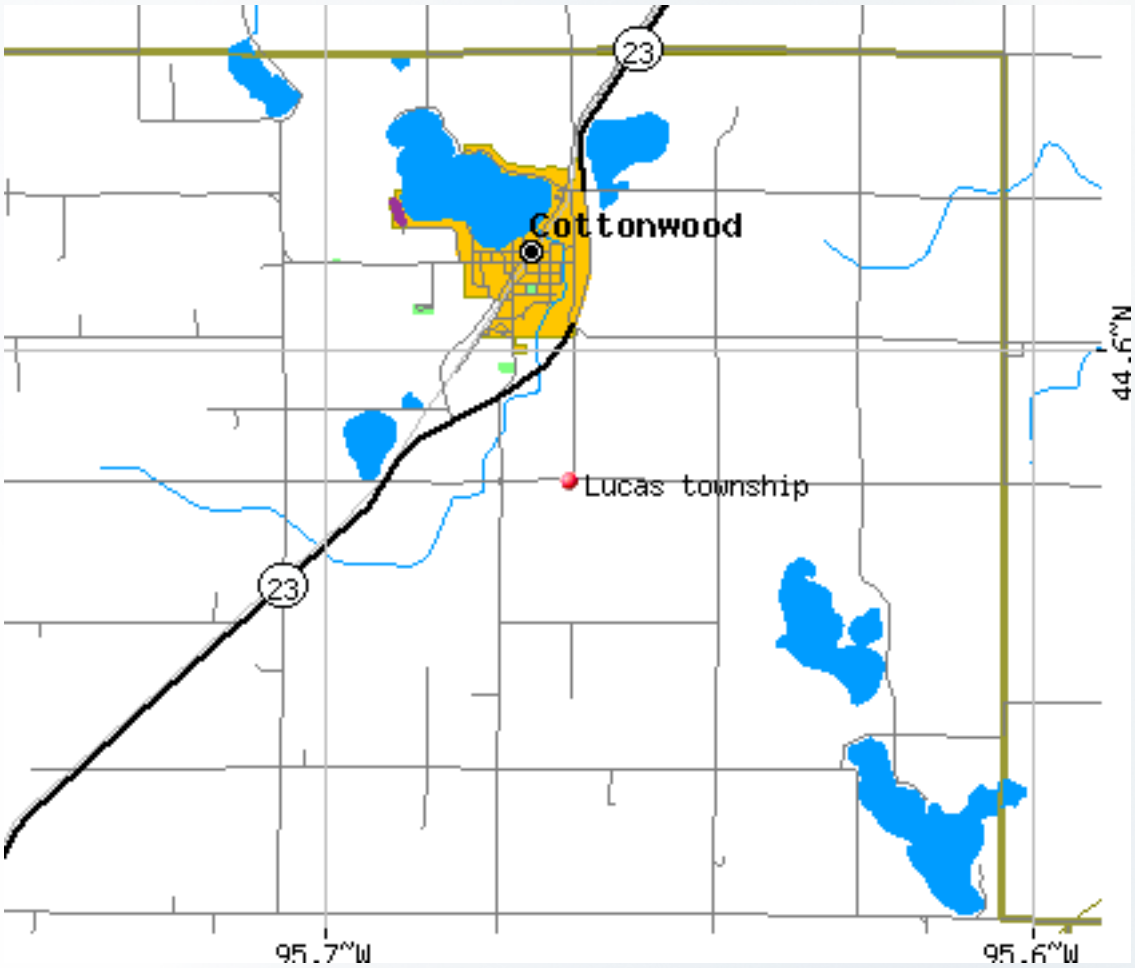
A county-wide land use map provides a comprehensive visual representation of how land is designated and utilized across an entire county. These maps are crucial planning tools used by local governments to guide development, infrastructure projects, conservation efforts, and zoning regulations. Typically, county land use maps categorize land into different zones or designations such as residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, recreational, and conservation areas. Each zone is identified based on its intended use and is accompanied by specific regulations governing what types of activities or development are permitted within that zone.

County-wide land use maps are created through a collaborative process involving planners, community stakeholders, and local government officials. They consider factors such as population growth projections, economic trends, environmental considerations, and social needs to ensure sustainable and orderly development. These maps help to manage urban sprawl, protect natural resources, and promote efficient land use by guiding decisions on where to allocate resources, infrastructure investments, and public services. They also provide clarity and transparency in land use decision-making processes, fostering community engagement and ensuring that development aligns with long-term strategic goals and community priorities.



Future Development - Subsection 4. Urban Growth Boundaries

Urban Growth Boundaries (UGBs) are regulatory tools used by local governments to manage the expansion of cities and prevent sprawl into surrounding rural areas. These boundaries aim to concentrate growth within defined limits, typically by restricting development beyond a certain line or area. The primary goal is to preserve agricultural land, natural habitats, and open spaces while promoting efficient land use within urbanized areas. By delineating where urban development can occur, UGBs encourage sustainable growth patterns that support infrastructure efficiency and environmental conservation.



2.7 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

CURRENT AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES GOALS	
Goal:	Partner with residents and regional agencies to promote and preserve public resources
Objective:	• Promote, support, and maintain public recreation opportunities including trails, parks, outdoor recreation, shooting sports organizations, habitat restoration, and others. • Continue to support voluntary practices that lead to better soil health outcomes.
Timeline:	Ongoing

WATER PLANNING GOALS	
Goal:	• Act to preserve prime agricultural land from fragmentation and encroaching developments.
Objective:	• Continue to support and participate in state agency led existing One Watershed Planning efforts • Work to implement One Watershed Goals and Objectives through State and Federal Grant Programs. • Continue to closely assess and develop ordinances for future development in Shoreland and Floodplain Zones.
Timeline:	Long Term
Goal:	• Support affordable expansion of Rural Water Systems to needed areas in the county
Timeline:	Ongoing
Goal:	• Work to plan and prepare for future weather changing patterns that affect residents and businesses in the county
Timeline:	Ongoing

CHAPTER 3: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Introduction

Welcome to the Economic Development Chapter of the Lyon County Comprehensive Plan, a roadmap designed to foster sustainable growth, enhance economic vitality, and promote prosperity across our vibrant communities. Lyon County, nestled in the heart of Minnesota's rich agricultural landscape, thrives on a diverse economic foundation that includes agriculture, manufacturing, healthcare, and small businesses. This chapter outlines strategic goals and policies aimed at leveraging our strengths, and creating opportunities for businesses, entrepreneurs, and residents alike.

At the core of this chapter lies a commitment to fostering a resilient economy that responds to local needs while embracing innovation and sustainable practices. Lyon County's economic landscape is characterized by a strong agricultural base supported by modern farming techniques and agribusinesses, alongside a growing emphasis on alternative energy. By promoting sustainable growth principles and supporting infrastructure development, we aim to attract new industries, retain local talent, and enhance the overall economic well-being of our communities.

Central to our economic strategy is collaboration among stakeholders, including businesses, educational institutions, government entities, and community organizations. Through partnerships that foster workforce development, entrepreneurship, and access to capital, Lyon County seeks to cultivate a dynamic business environment where innovation thrives. This chapter also emphasizes the importance of maintaining our transportation networks, enhancing our broadband infrastructure, increasing childcare slots throughout the county and community amenities to ensure that businesses can operate efficiently, and residents can enjoy a high quality of life.

Lyon County recognizes the importance of supporting minority-owned businesses, promoting workforce diversity, and creating pathways to economic advancement for all residents. By prioritizing social equity alongside economic prosperity, we aspire to build a community where everyone can contribute and thrive.

In conclusion, the Economic Development Chapter of the Lyon County Comprehensive Plan sets forth a vision for sustainable economic growth that respects our agricultural heritage, embraces innovation, and fosters a resilient and sustainable economy. By implementing the strategies outlined in this chapter, Lyon County aims to strengthen its position as a dynamic hub for business, innovation, and opportunity, ensuring a prosperous future for generations to come.

Lyon County, MN

Strengthening the Local Economy – One Loan at a Time

46
LOANS CLOSED

$2,470,017.00
TOTAL FUNDS INVESTED

$53,696
AVERAGE LOAN

FAST FACTS

- Loans support start-ups, expansions, equipment, working capital
- Often paired with banks or other lenders
- Goal: Fill financial gaps and spark private investment

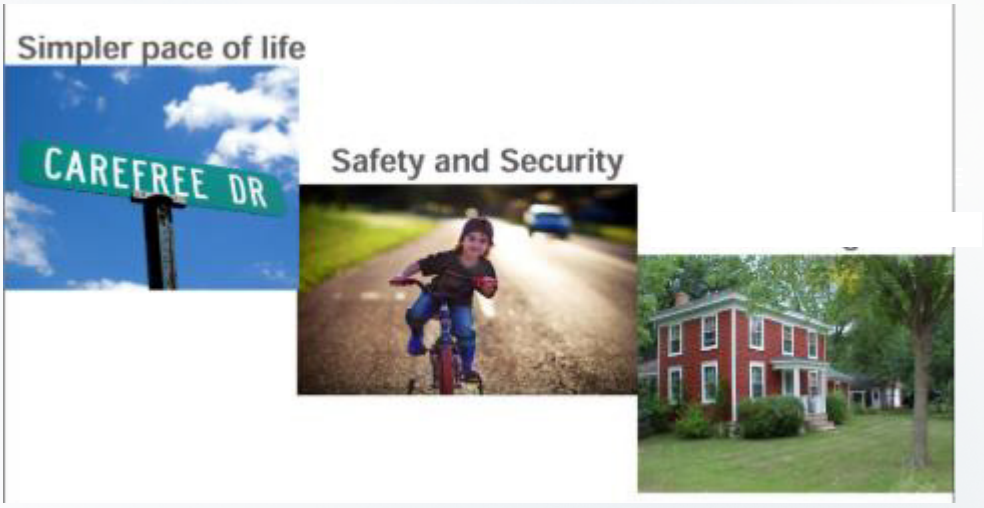
WHY IT MATTERS

- Supports local entrepreneurs
- Boosts rural community resilience
- Promotes job creation and retention
- Drives economic sustainability

Southwest Regional Development Commission
2401 Broadway Ave., Slayton, MN • 507-836-8547

3.2 Rewriting the Rural Narrative: Resident Recruitment

Ben Winchester, a rural sociologist with the University of Minnesota Extension, has extensively researched rural community dynamics and population trends. His work challenges the common narrative of rural decline by highlighting "brain gain" trends, where individuals aged 30-49 and their families are moving to rural areas for a higher quality of life. Winchester emphasizes that this demographic shift is an opportunity for rural communities to strategically focus on resident recruitment efforts to sustain and grow their populations.



Effective resident recruitment strategies start with recognizing and promoting the unique assets of a community. People are drawn to rural areas for various reasons, including affordable housing, a slower pace of life, outdoor recreational opportunities, and a strong sense of community.

Collaboration among local organizations, businesses, and governments is crucial in these efforts. Winchester's research points to the importance of creating a welcoming environment for newcomers by addressing potential barriers such as housing shortages, childcare needs, or access to healthcare. Communities can also foster retention by ensuring new residents feel integrated through networking events, volunteer opportunities, and other social engagements that build relationships and a sense of belonging in their community.

To find a good environment for raising children	76%
To live closer to relatives	67%
To find a safer place to live	64%
Take advantage of the slower pace of life	64%
To live in a smaller community	64%
To find a less congested place to live	60%
To find lower priced housing	58%
To find higher quality schools	58%
To buy available land	56%
To find a job that allowed a better work-life balance	54%
Source: UMN Extension Rural Movers Study, 2019	

Ultimately, these trends can empower communities to shift their perspective from seeing out-migration as a problem to recognizing in-migration as an opportunity. By focusing on strategic resident recruitment and retention efforts, communities in Lyon County can build stronger, more vibrant communities that thrive. This proactive approach enables communities in Greater Minnesota to leverage their strengths and position themselves as attractive destinations for those seeking a slower pace of life.

3.3 Key Economic Drivers

Lyon County thrives on a robust economic landscape driven by several key industries that reflect its diverse strengths and resources. Agriculture stands as the cornerstone of Lyon County's economy, with fertile lands supporting a wide array of crops and livestock production. This sector is bolstered by advanced farming techniques and a strong network of agricultural-related businesses. It not only provides essential goods for local and global markets but also contributes significantly to the county's economic vitality through employment, processing facilities, and agribusiness services.

Beyond agriculture, Lyon County boasts a thriving manufacturing sector that plays a pivotal role in its economic framework. Manufacturing firms in sectors such as food processing, machinery, and metal fabrication capitalize on the region's agricultural resources and skilled workforce. These industries not only provide employment opportunities but also contribute to the county's export base, driving economic growth and stability. Moreover, Lyon County's strategic location and transportation infrastructure support efficient distribution networks, further enhancing the competitiveness of its manufacturing sector.



Economic
& Community Impact:
More starch capacity means enhanced production capabilities and support for both local agriculture and businesses.

ADM continues to emphasize local sourcing, supporting farmers in the region.

Engagement with the community remains strong, with ADM addressing local needs and focusing on job opportunities.

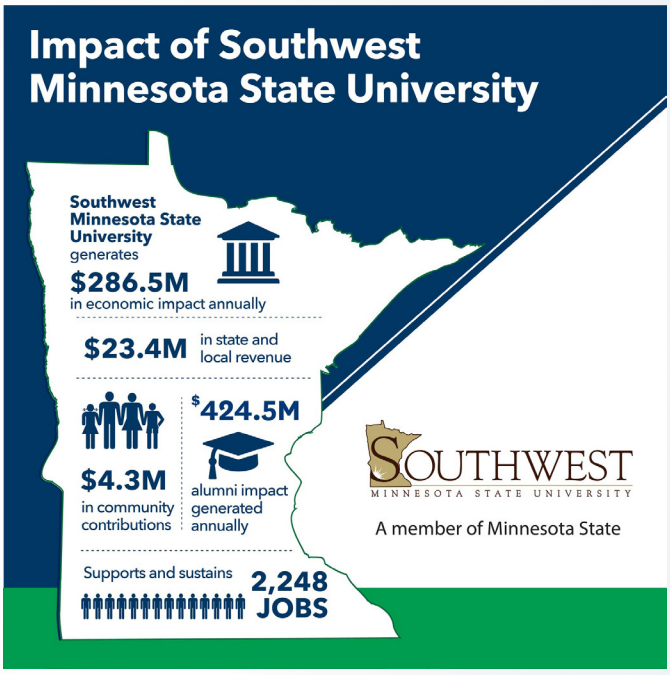
What This Means for Lyon County:
The plant's increased starch production helps meet growing industrial and food-sector demands.
The connection with Solugen could usher in new biotech and green-chem opportunities.

ADM's commitment to hiring and infrastructure shows a long-term investment in southwest Minnesota's future.

Healthcare services also represent a significant economic driver in Lyon County, catering to the healthcare needs of residents and contributing to employment and economic stability. The county is home to healthcare facilities ranging from hospitals to clinics and long-term care centers, providing essential services and generating jobs for healthcare professionals and support staff. The healthcare sector not only supports local employment but also enhances the overall quality of life by ensuring access to quality medical care close to home.



Prairie View Senior Living in Tracy

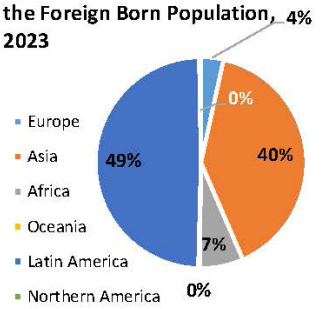


Southwest Minnesota State University (SMSU) plays a crucial role in the economic vitality of Lyon County, MN, serving as a major employer, education hub, and driver of local commerce. The university attracts students, faculty, and staff who contribute to the local economy through housing, retail, dining, and other services. Additionally, SMSU fosters workforce development by providing skilled graduates who strengthen regional industries, particularly in education, healthcare, and agribusiness. The university's events, such as athletic competitions, cultural programs, and academic conferences, draw visitors to the area, further boosting local businesses. Moreover, SMSU's partnerships with businesses and community organizations enhance economic innovation and regional growth, making it a key pillar of Lyon County's long-term prosperity.

Table 3. Place of Birth for the Foreign Born Population, 2023	Lyon Co.		Change 2013-2023		Minnesota	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Percent	Change
Foreign-born Population	**1,534**	**6.0%**	***100***	***7.0%***	**8.6%**	***24.7%***
Europe	53	3.5%	*-15*	*-22.1%*	8.8%	*-3.4%*
Asia	614	40.0%	*158*	*34.6%*	35.7%	*18.1%*
Africa	103	6.7%	*-88*	*-46.1%*	28.3%	*78.8%*
Oceania	3	0.2%	*3*	*#DIV/0!*	0.4%	*5.4%*
Americas:	761	49.6%	*42*	*5.8%*	26.7%	*8.7%*
Latin America	*757*	*49.3%*	*45*	*6.3%*	*24.2%*	*9.7%*
Northern America	*4*	*0.3%*	*-3*	*-42.9%*	*2.5%*	*0.4%*

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 American Community Survey

Figure 2. Place of Birth for the Foreign Born Population, 2023



In recent years, Lyon County has experienced notable shifts in demographics, characterized by increasing diversity and immigration trends that enrich the local fabric. While historically rooted in agricultural traditions and a predominantly Caucasian population, Lyon County has seen a gradual influx of immigrants and individuals from various cultural backgrounds. This demographic shift has brought new perspectives, traditions, and entrepreneurial spirit to the county, contributing to its economic vitality. Immigrants have played a significant role in sectors such as agriculture, food processing, and healthcare, filling essential labor gaps and contributing to the county's workforce diversity.

As Lyon County continues to attract newcomers seeking economic opportunities and a welcoming community, efforts to support integration need to become increasingly important. Community organizations, local governments, and businesses need to prioritize available resources and services tailored to the needs of diverse populations, ensuring access to education, healthcare, housing, and employment opportunities. This demographic transformation not only enriches Lyon County's social fabric but also enhances its economic resilience by fostering innovation, entrepreneurship, and population stability. Embracing diversity as a strength, Lyon County is poised to thrive as a vibrant community that celebrates its multicultural heritage while pursuing sustainable economic growth for future generations.

Additionally, Lyon County embraces small businesses as crucial economic contributors, fostering entrepreneurship and innovation across various sectors. Local retail establishments, restaurants, service providers, and professional services firms play a vital role in meeting consumer needs, creating local jobs, and contributing to the county's commercial vibrancy. These businesses not only serve residents but also attract visitors and tourists, enhancing the county's economic resilience and community spirit.

In conclusion, Lyon County's economy thrives on a diverse blend of agriculture, manufacturing, healthcare, educational institutions, and small businesses, each playing a pivotal role in sustaining growth, fostering innovation, and enriching the quality of life for its residents. By leveraging its natural resources, skilled workforce, and strategic advantages, Lyon County continues to position itself as a dynamic and resilient economic hub in the heart of Southwest Minnesota.

3.4 Workforce Development

Workforce development in Lyon County is a cornerstone of the region's economic strategy, aimed at cultivating a skilled and adaptable workforce that meets the needs of the 21st Century. With a diverse economic base that includes agriculture, manufacturing, healthcare, and small businesses, Lyon County needs to place a strong emphasis on preparing its residents for a wide range of career opportunities. Key stakeholders, including educational institutions, workforce development agencies, employers, and community organizations, need to continue to collaborate closely to enhance workforce readiness through education, training, and career advancement programs.

LYON & MURRAY COUNTY CEO

CEO – short for Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities – is a nationwide program for high school juniors and seniors. With the help of local investors and businesspeople, students get real-life experience in creating and running their own businesses. The year-long program includes visits to local businesses, guest speakers, and an annual student trade show.



Educational institutions in Lyon County play a crucial role in workforce development, offering a range of programs that align with the county's economic priorities. School Districts, Minnesota West, and SMSU provide vocational training, certifications, and degree programs tailored to meet the demands of local industries. These educational pathways not only equip students with technical skills but also emphasize critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills essential for success in today's workforce.

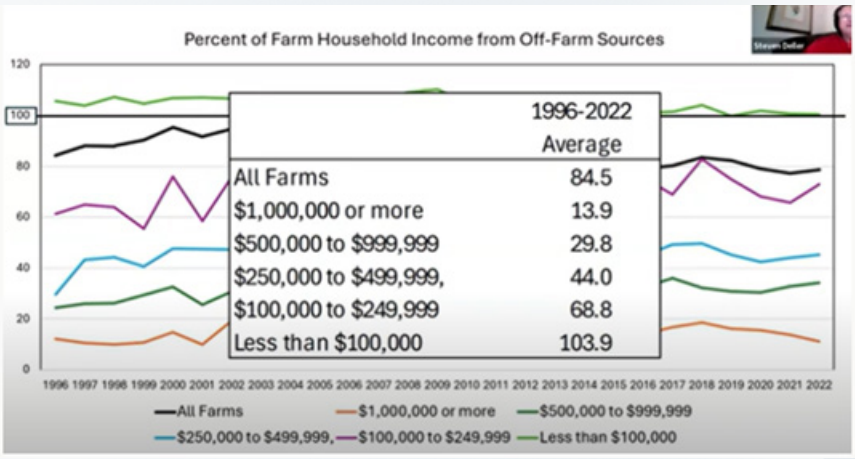
Furthermore, workforce development initiatives in Lyon County need to focus on bridging the gap between education and employment, ensuring that graduates possess the skills and competencies desired by employers. Partnerships between educational institutions and local businesses that facilitate internships, apprenticeships, and job placement programs, providing students with hands-on experience need to continue and develop further. By nurturing these connections, Lyon County can cultivate a pipeline of talent that supports economic growth, innovation, and sustainability across its key sectors.

Moreover, Lyon County's workforce development efforts need to be responsive to emerging trends and technologies, preparing workers for evolving industries such as renewable energy, manufacturing, and vocational positions. Training programs in these areas not only enhance individual career prospects but also strengthen the county's competitive advantage in a globalized economy. Lyon County remains committed to fostering a resilient and adaptable workforce capable of driving future prosperity and sustaining vibrant communities.

3.5 The Importance of Off-Farm Incomes

Professor Steven Deller, an agricultural economist at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, has extensively studied the economic dynamics of Wisconsin's farm families, particularly focusing on the balance between farm-generated income and off-farm employment. Professor Deller's research provides valuable insights into the critical role of off-farm income in sustaining agricultural families and supporting rural economies. Lyon County, with its strong agricultural heritage, mirrors trends observed in Wisconsin, where farm families increasingly rely on off-farm employment to supplement farm-generated income. This diversification of income sources is not merely an economic strategy but a necessity, particularly for small and mid-sized farms that struggle to remain viable solely through farming operations.

In rural areas such as Lyon County, off-farm income plays a vital role in supporting farm families by providing financial stability, access to medical insurance, and resources that can be reinvested into agricultural operations. Deller's analysis of USDA data highlights this reality, showing that smaller farms can derive more than 100% of their household income from off-farm employment. For example, a farm family might earn less than $100,000 annually from crop and livestock sales, but supplement this with $120,000 in income from a family-owned trucking business. In this case, the off-farm income not only exceeds the earnings from the farm itself, but also provides essential resources to keep the agricultural operation viable. In Lyon County, local employment opportunities can play a similar role, helping farm families manage financial risks tied to volatile commodity prices, rising operational costs, and climate uncertainties. By supplementing farm income, these jobs strengthen both the resilience of farm households and the broader rural economy.



Furthermore, Deller's work emphasizes the interdependence between farms and rural communities, with farms relying on the economic vitality of surrounding towns and cities to provide employment for family members. For Lyon County, this highlights the importance of fostering a diverse local economy and supporting industries that create off-farm job opportunities. Strengthening workforce development, investing in infrastructure, and promoting business growth in key sectors will not only enhance overall economic resilience but also support the long-term sustainability of the county's agricultural base. This approach ensures that the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors of the economy grow together, reinforcing the interconnected fabric of Lyon County's rural economy.

3.6 Business Retention & Expansion

Business Retention & Expansion (BRE) is a critical component of supporting local businesses to foster economic stability and growth. Central to this strategy is the proactive engagement with existing businesses to understand their needs, challenges, and opportunities. By maintaining open lines of communication, the county and other local governments can effectively identify potential risks to business continuity and implement targeted interventions to mitigate these risks. This approach not only helps in retaining businesses but also strengthens their capacity to expand and thrive within the community.

Furthermore, BRE efforts in Lyon County shall be designed to create a supportive environment that encourages innovation and entrepreneurship. Initiatives such as providing access to financing, business development resources, and workforce training programs, the county aims to encourage and enhance the competitiveness of local businesses. By working with local businesses, educational institutions, and local governments, Lyon County can foster collaboration where businesses can innovate, adapt to market changes, and seize new opportunities for growth.

In alignment with the Comprehensive Plan, Lyon County also emphasizes the importance of community partnerships and strategic planning in its BRE strategy. By working closely with local chambers of commerce, economic development organizations, and other stakeholders, the county can leverage collective expertise and resources to address broader economic challenges and capitalize on emerging trends. This collaborative approach not only strengthens the county's economic resilience but also ensures that businesses of all sizes and sectors have the support they need to thrive in a competitive global economy. By prioritizing BRE, Lyon County underscores its commitment to sustainable economic development and long-term prosperity for its residents and businesses alike.



3.7 Collaboration & Partnerships

Collaboration and forming partnerships between local organizations, employers, and educational institutions will play a pivotal role in the future of Lyon County's economic vitality. These partnerships are essential for aligning educational programs with the needs of local businesses, ensuring that the workforce possesses the skills and competencies required for current and future job opportunities. By engaging employers in internships, and apprenticeship programs, educational institutions can better prepare students for careers in high-demand sectors, thereby reducing skills gaps and enhancing workforce productivity.

Moreover, local school districts are taking a proactive approach to teaching new programs, aligning education with the evolving needs of the local economy. Recognizing the importance of hands-on skills and technical expertise, these districts are expanding their vocational education offerings to include modern trades such as welding, automotive and certified nursing assistant courses. By partnering with local businesses and industry associations, school districts can tailor their curricula to match industry standards and equip students with the practical knowledge and certifications needed to succeed in these fields.





Additionally, these programs emphasize experiential learning and students gain valuable on-the-job training opportunities that complement classroom instruction, preparing them for seamless transitions into the workforce or post-secondary education. This integrated approach not only enhances student engagement and retention but also strengthens the talent pipeline for local businesses, ensuring a skilled workforce capable of meeting industry demands.

By investing in vocational education, school districts contribute to the county's overall economic development strategy, equipping students with the diverse skill sets necessary to thrive in a competitive marketplace. These innovative educational initiatives not only benefit students by providing viable career pathways but also contribute to the long-term sustainability and prosperity of Lyon County.

3.8 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Goal:	• Expand and retain childcare slots in the county
Objective:	• Work with local partners to create a loan and grant fund for capital projects. • Support local partners to host trainings and appreciation events for local providers. • Support Lyon County 4-H and other local partners in developing and delivering training and other educational experiences.
Timeline:	Ongoing

PHASE 4

Goal:	• Support a local worker pipeline
Objective:	• Work with local partners to support internships, work-based learning opportunities, and training for small businesses to attract and retain employees. • Work with local partners to promote and support succession planning, and other related transitioning planning efforts. • Support Career & Technical Programs that work to fill local occupations in demand.
Timeline:	Long Term
Goal:	• Support Infrastructure Improvements
Objective:	• Support boardband improvement and expansion in the county. • Support the improvement and expansion of Rural Water Systems in the county. • Support tax abatement for local small businesses that are transitioning.
Timeline:	Long Term
Goal:	• Create County Policies that Encourage Business Development
Objective:	• Support tax abatement for local small businesses that are transitioning ownership. • Support local partners and businesses to tap into local and regional revolving loan funds and other opportunities for expansion and retention efforts. • Work to promote and leverage regional, state, and federal programs, grants, and resources to improve worker retention and other community support services.
Timeline:	Ongoing

CHAPTER 4: HOUSING

4.1 Introduction

Welcome to the Lyon County Comprehensive Plan Housing Chapter, a framework for addressing our county's diverse housing needs. As Lyon County continues to grow and evolve, ensuring the availability of safe, and affordable housing options is paramount to fostering a thriving and sustainable community. This chapter analyzes current housing conditions, identifies opportunities, and outlines strategic goals and policies that will guide future housing development and community efforts.

Lyon County, located in the heart of Southwestern Minnesota, enjoys a rich tapestry of communities each with unique characteristics and housing demands. From the bustling streets of Marshall to the serene landscapes of rural townships, our county encompasses a wide spectrum of housing needs; from affordable housing solutions for families and seniors to innovative approaches that promote sustainable and accessible living spaces. By understanding these various needs and employing strategic planning principles, Lyon County aims to promote suitable housing opportunities that support economic vitality, and overall community well-being.

Through collaboration with local governments, stakeholders, and local partners, this chapter seeks to set forth a comprehensive vision for housing that aligns with our county's growth objectives while respecting our natural resources. By fostering a sustainable environment for housing development and implementation of sound policies, Lyon County endeavors to create a resilient housing landscape that meets the needs of current and future residents, ensuring that our communities remain vibrant places to live, work, and thrive.

4.2 Current Housing Market

Across all communities in Lyon County, housing availability and affordability remain key considerations. Local government and stakeholders collaborate to address housing challenges and promote growth. Efforts include initiatives to incentivize housing development, preserve historic properties, and build infrastructure to support residential expansion. By balancing growth with community character and affordability, Lyon County continues to foster a housing market that meets the evolving needs of its residents while maintaining the region's distinctive quality of life.

Current Housing Market - Subsection 1. Workforce Trends in Housing Trades

Lyon County, like much of Greater Minnesota, is experiencing a significant shortage of skilled laborers in the housing sector. A recent survey conducted by Housing First Minnesota on behalf of Project Build Minnesota revealed that 88% of construction firms reported experiencing a labor shortage in the past 12 months, with 63% indicating that this shortage forced them to turn away business. This deficit in skilled workers directly impacts the county's ability to meet housing demands, as projects are delayed or canceled due to insufficient labor. The shortage is exacerbated by the aging workforce and a decline in younger individuals entering the trades, partly due to the emphasis on four-year college degrees over vocational training.

Across southwest Minnesota, many school districts have introduced or expanded career and technical education (CTE) programs to better connect students with opportunities in the skilled trades. These efforts include hands-on courses in construction, welding, and manufacturing, often developed in partnership with local employers, workforce organizations, and community colleges. By offering students early exposure to high-demand career paths, these programs aim to build a homegrown talent pipeline that supports the region's housing and economic development needs. Such education initiatives are a critical piece of the broader strategy to address labor shortages and prepare the next generation of workers in Lyon County.

Tracy Area Schools & Career Building

A Collaborative Housing and Career Development Project

Funding	$100,000 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Seed Money
Project Location	Second Street East, Tracy, MN
Construction Team	TAHS Students (Framing), Karl Campbell (Instructor/Contractor), Local Plumbers & Electricians
Project Scope	Three New Homes Planned - One in partnership with TAHS - Two by UCAP
Current Status	Roofing & Shealthing in Progress - High Quality Work by Students
Future Plans	Ongoing Building Trades Program - Grant Request for Tools & Trailer
Next Development Site	22 Acres on Front Street (City-Owned with Road & Utility Access)

This unique initiative not only addresses local housing needs but also provides Tracy Area High School students with hands-on career experiences in the building trades. The City of Tracy is committed to expanding this impactful partnership for years to come.

Current Housing Market - Subsection 2. Tax Forfeiture Properties

Tax forfeiture properties can pose challenges for counties, as they often remain vacant, underutilized, and become a drain on resources. These properties, which result from unpaid property taxes, can contribute to blight and lower surrounding property values if left unaddressed. As such, it's crucial for counties to adopt a proactive approach to managing these properties, ensuring they are repurposed productively.

A proactive stance allows the county to reduce the negative impacts of tax forfeiture, such as neighborhood decline and lost economic opportunities. By actively working with local partners and municipalities interested in redeveloping these properties, the county can encourage revitalization and enhance the local housing stock. Proactively managing these sites can also attract private investment and foster economic growth, making these properties a valuable asset instead of a burden.

Additionally, a forward-thinking strategy could involve offering incentives, such as tax abatements, to make redevelopment more appealing and accessible. By ensuring that these properties are actively managed and repurposed, the county can create a stronger, more vibrant community that benefits both current residents and future generations.

TAX-FORFEITED LAND FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

STATUTE SUMMARY

Counties may sell or convey tax-forfeited land for less than market value

- Eligible uses
- Housing
- Public Infrastructure
- Public Facilities

REAL-WORLD EXAMPLE

Cook County transferred land to the Cook County/Grand Marais EDA

Housing must be built within a set time'-frame

Result Enabled a public-private partnership for affordable workforce housing

LOCAL RELEVANCE

Lyon County can use this tool to support housing, attract businesses, and improve public services

The county's efforts to address housing needs emphasize affordability, and community development. Strategies include promoting infill development, supporting mixed-use projects, and collaborating with developers and stakeholders to meet the demand for diverse housing options. By balancing growth with the preservation of rural landscapes and community identity, Lyon County strives to maintain a vibrant housing market that supports the quality of life for all residents now and in the future.

"The city of Balaton developed a subdivision 15 years ago and sells the lots. Since the end of the Great Recession, Balaton has sold more than 36 of the 70 lots the city developed 15 years ago. These developments have significantly increased the city tax base".

Balaton EDA Director
Tara Onken

BALATON, MN: HOUSING STRATEGY SUCCESS

IN A SMALL TOWN (POP. 628)

Active EDA, Community Investments, and Smart Growth Tactics

CORE ISSUES ADDRESSED

- Aging & Limited Housing Stock
- Affordability Challenges
- Housing Finance Gaps
- Retention of Seniors & Attraction of young families

HOUSING STRATEGIES IN ACTION

EDA Leadership & Bold Investments

- Build spec homes with risk-sharing partners (eg. Ace Hardware)
- $15K lot prices with monthly price drops to encourage sales
- Tax abatement program: -80% - 60% - 40% off over 3 years
- Subdivison Success: 70 developed, 30+ sold since Great Recession
- Solid city-owned duplex and 4-plex to private market

--- more taxable property, freed capital

MARKETING THE COMMUNITY

- Boost in new single-family homes
- Increased property tax base
- Attracted young families & retained senior residents

COMMUNITY PROFILE

- Workforce Flows

Project	Year	Cost
Natural Gas Access	2017-2018	$3 Million+
Fiber Broadband to Homes	2018	$1.5 Million+
Child Care Center	2018	(city funded)
Multigenerational Park (Eastbay)	2018	$10,000 + volunteers

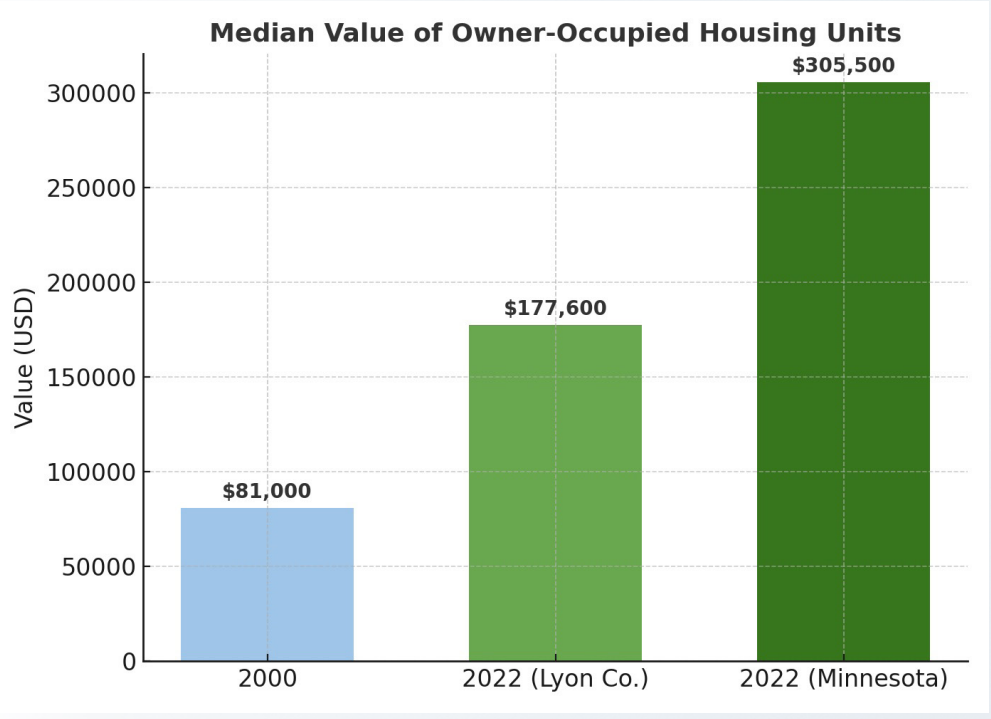
4.3 Current Housing Values

As of 2022, the median value of owner-occupied housing units in Lyon County was approximately $177,600. While this represents significant growth from the median home value of $81,000 in 2000, it remains notably lower than the Minnesota state median of $305,500 in 2022. This gap reflects the broader trend of lower housing costs in Greater Minnesota compared to urban and suburban areas of the state, where housing development pressures are higher.

More recent data from January 2025 indicates that the median sale price of a home in Lyon County reached $176,500, reflecting an 18.5% increase from the previous year. This growth aligns with statewide trends, as Minnesota has experienced rising home values driven by strong demand and limited housing supply. However, Lyon County's housing market remains more affordable to metro areas such as the Twin Cities or Mankato, where median home prices consistently exceed $350,000.

Housing values vary within the county based on location. The city of Marshall, Lyon County's largest community and economic hub, reported a median home value of $198,900, higher than the countywide median but still below the state average. This suggests that urban properties within Lyon County tend to command higher prices, likely due to increased access to employment, services, and amenities. Conversely, more rural areas of the county maintain lower median home values, contributing to overall affordability.

Despite the steady appreciation of home values, Lyon County remains an attractive option for homebuyers seeking affordability within Minnesota. While housing prices have risen, they have done so at a more moderate pace compared to the state's metro areas, where affordability concerns have become more pronounced. As Lyon County continues to grow and evolve, monitoring housing trends and ensuring a balance between development and affordability will be essential for sustainable community growth.



4.4 Housing Affordability

Housing affordability in Lyon County remains relatively favorable compared to more urbanized areas of Minnesota, such as the Twin Cities metropolitan region. As of 2022, the median home value in the county was $177,600, significantly lower than the state median of $305,500. This price point allows many residents to access homeownership, particularly in rural areas with more modest land and property values. Furthermore, the cost of housing in Lyon County is generally more attainable for households with moderate incomes, creating a more accessible market for first-time homebuyers and retirees.

Despite recent increases in home values, Lyon County continues to offer relatively affordable housing compared to the higher price trends seen in urban areas. The median estimated value of a home in Lyon County in 2022 was $193,100. Lyon County's housing market remains below the state average, which makes it an attractive option for residents who may be priced out of more metropolitan areas. This affordability has attracted individuals and families seeking a balance of rural living with proximity to regional economic centers like Marshall.

Table 10. Estimated Value of Owner-occupied Housing Units, 2022	Lyon Co.		Minnesota
	Total	Percent	Percent
Total	**7,057**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**
Less than $50,000	486	6.9%	4.0%
$50,000 to $99,999	880	12.5%	4.0%
$100,000 to $149,999	1,125	15.9%	6.2%
$150,000 to $199,999	1,234	17.5%	8.9%
$200,000 to $299,999	2,039	28.9%	25.7%
$300,000 to $499,999	917	13.0%	33.6%
$500,000 or more	376	5.3%	17.5%
Median (dollars)	**$193,100**		**$305,500**

Source: 2019-2023 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2019-2023 American Community Survey, the median gross rent in Lyon County, Minnesota, was $742. This figure represents the midpoint of rent prices, indicating that half of the renters paid more, and half paid less. The county's rental market is influenced by various factors, including the presence of Southwest Minnesota State University (SMSU) in Marshall, which attracts students seeking housing. Additionally, local economic conditions, employment opportunities, and housing availability contribute to rent levels.

Another factor is that median wages in Lyon County are generally lower than those in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, reflecting broader economic trends between rural and urban regions. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average hourly wage in the Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington metro area was approximately $33.80 as of 2023, significantly higher than in Lyon County, where typical hourly wages across many occupations range from $16 to $25, depending on the industry. This wage gap underscores the importance of aligning local housing strategies with local earning capacity. While Lyon County offers a lower cost of living, the disparity in wages can pose challenges in housing affordability—especially for renters and first-time homebuyers. Acknowledging this difference is essential in planning for housing that meets the needs of local workers.

Table 9. Basic Needs Cost of Living Estimates, 2024									
Single Adult, 0 children	Single Yearly Cost of Living	Hourly Wage Required	Monthly Costs						
			Child Care	Food	Health Care	Housing	Trans-portation	Other	Taxes
Lyon Co.	$28,022	$13.47	$0	$418	$150	$722	$513	$264	$268
State of Minnesota	$36,768	$17.68	$0	$424	$156	$1,154	$573	$365	$392
Typical Family: 2 Adults (1 working full-time, 1 part-time), 1 child	Family Yearly Cost of Living	Hourly Wage Required	Monthly Costs						
			Child Care	Food	Health Care	Housing	Trans-portation	Other	Taxes
Lyon Co.	$52,488	$16.82	$273	$950	$530	$931	$879	$435	$376
State of Minnesota	$70,308	$22.53	$545	$964	$556	$1,446	$1,028	$557	$763

Source: DEED Cost of Living tool

The diversity of its communities from the county seat of Marshall to smaller communities such as Balaton or Tracy brings forth varied housing needs and corresponding solutions. Larger communities typically contend with higher demand for housing due to greater population influx and economic activity. Solutions often involve larger-scale developments, and infrastructure investments to accommodate growth while maintaining quality of life. Marshall, for instance, might focus on mixed-use developments and revitalization projects to meet diverse housing demands and support its economic role as a regional hub.

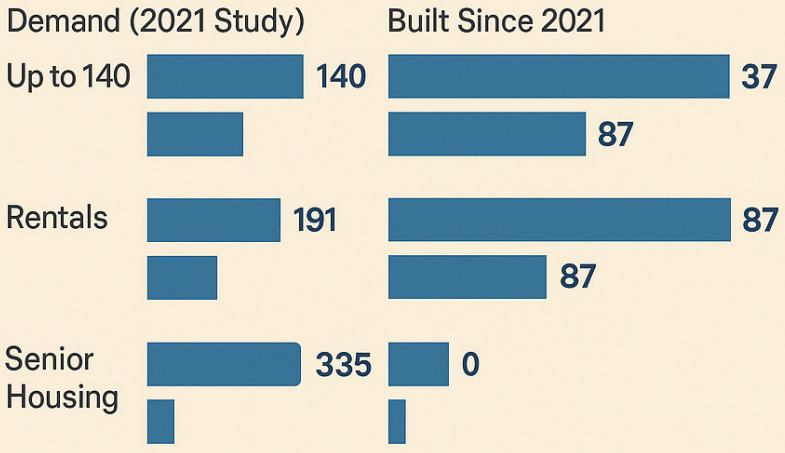
Housing an ongoing need in Marshall

Despite recent developments, Marshall housing supply doesn't match estimated demand. There's a need for more housing in Marshall, whether that's single family homes, rentals or senior apartments, a 2021 housing study said.



Recent housing development

Housing Demand and Development

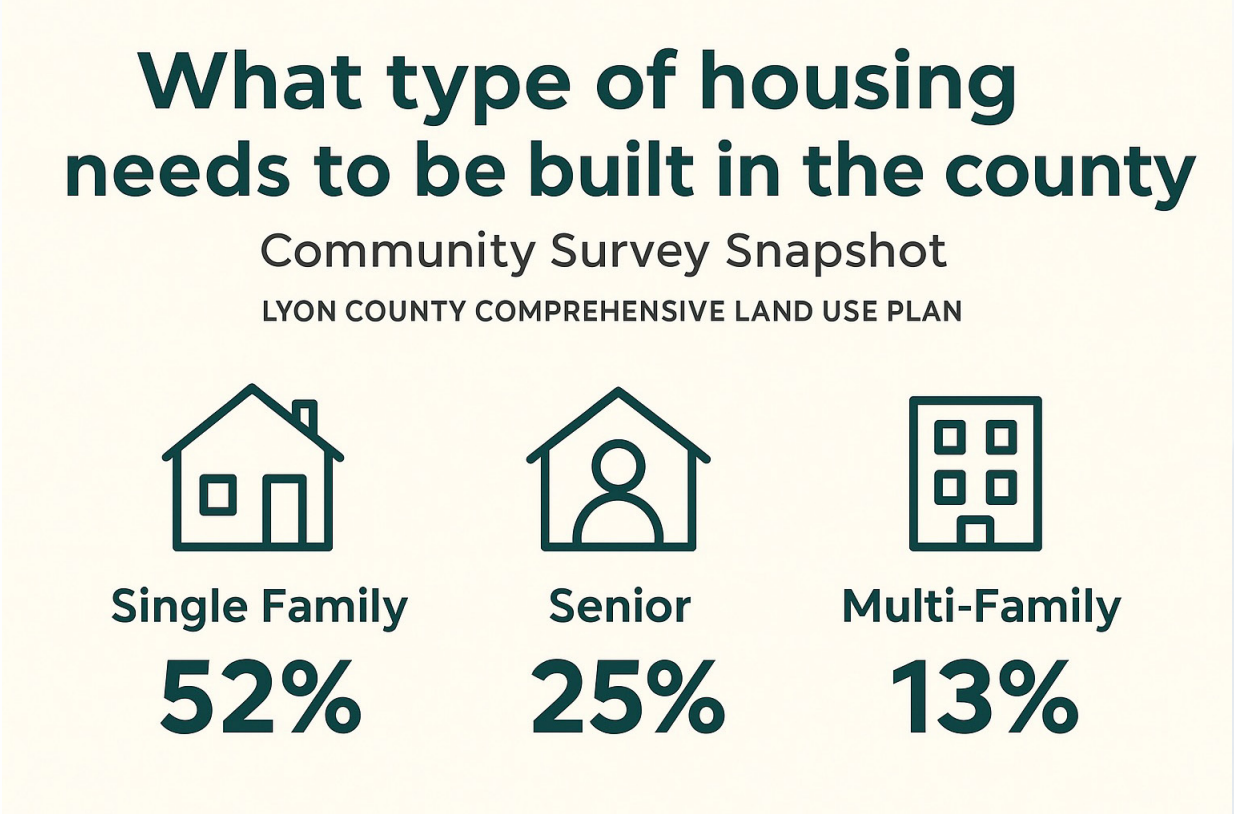


Factors like rising costs, inflation and changing interest rates all have an impact on housing availability in the area, Marshall area realtors said.

Conversely, smaller communities like Minneota and Cottonwood face distinct challenges such as maintaining affordable housing options and preserving community character amidst slower or declining population growth. Solutions in these areas often emphasize preserving existing housing stock, promoting infill development, and leveraging community partnerships to address specific local needs.

By recognizing the unique needs of each community and tailoring solutions accordingly, Lyon County can effectively collaborate, and support housing market dynamics throughout the county. Collaboration among local governments, developers, and community stakeholders is crucial in implementing solutions that balance growth, affordability, and community preservation across the diverse landscape of Lyon County. The county shall support its communities with such tailored approaches to help ensure that all residents have access to housing that meets their needs and enhances their quality of life within their respective communities.

PHASE 4



4.6 Community Amenities and Their Impact on Housing and Attracting Residents

Community amenities such as grocery stores, schools, healthcare facilities, recreational options, and cultural hubs play a crucial role in shaping the overall livability of a community. In Lyon County, the availability of essential services and amenities directly influences the area's attractiveness for prospective residents. For example, easy access to grocery stores, banks, and healthcare facilities like nursing homes ensure that residents have the necessities for daily life close to home. Communities that offer these services are often viewed as more convenient, reducing the need for residents to travel long distances for basic needs, thus improving the quality of life and drawing in potential homebuyers.

Healthcare services, particularly nursing homes, assisted living facilities, senior housing and their proximity to healthcare facilities influence housing demand. As Lyon County's population ages, quality healthcare services become even more significant. Nursing homes and medical facilities not only provide essential care for the elderly but also ensure that residents of all ages have access to timely medical attention. These healthcare services act as an anchor for residents considering relocation, especially retirees or individuals looking for long-term stability in a community. The proximity to these services can increase housing demand, as potential residents view access to healthcare as a key factor when choosing where to live.

Recreational amenities, including parks, trails, and gyms, also significantly impact housing desirability. Lyon County's network of parks and trails encourages outdoor activities, healthy lifestyles, and community engagement, all of which enhance the area's appeal to a diverse group of residents. Families with young children, in particular, are drawn to neighborhoods with easy access to parks and playgrounds. At the same time, active individuals may seek properties near fitness centers or trails for biking and walking. The existence of these amenities can increase the demand for housing in specific neighborhoods, as they contribute to a lifestyle that promotes wellness and a sense of community.

■ Cottonwood Splash Pad Gets $350K in Federal Funding

■■ Big Improvements Coming to C.W. Reishus Park

- The Minnesota DNR has received a $350,000 federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant to renovate C.W. Reishus Park in Cottonwood.
- Funding comes from offshore oil lease revenue under the Great American Outdoors Act of 2020.
- The project includes: a new splash pad, bathhouse, updated playground and sidewalks, and shoreline restoration.
- An archaeological survey is underway before construction begins. If no significant findings occur, building will proceed.
- The city of Cottonwood is working with engineers and hopes to break ground in 2026.
- Total project cost is estimated at $1.1 million, with budget concerns focused on bathhouse construction.
- City Administrator Teather Bliss emphasized that refinements to the splash pad design have helped stay on budget despite delays.

Restaurants, community centers, and libraries further contribute to the vibrancy and social fabric of Lyon County, creating spaces for interaction and cultural engagement. Dining options, from casual eateries to fine dining, not only enhance the community's appeal but also attract a variety of residents, including young professionals and retirees. A well-stocked library serves as both an educational resource and a community gathering place, offering programs and events that enrich the lives of all ages. Additionally, community centers serve as venues for events, meetings, and local activities, fostering a sense of belonging and engagement. These amenities contribute to the development of social capital, making Lyon County an attractive place for individuals and families seeking community connection and a wide range of services.

PLUM CREEK LIBRARY SYSTEM

Finally, the presence of quality schools is perhaps the most significant amenity influencing housing demand in Lyon County. Educational institutions are a top priority for families with children, and the availability of good schools is often a deciding factor when choosing where to live. Lyon County's schools offer a solid educational foundation that draws families to the region. Communities with excellent schools tend to see higher home values, as prospective buyers are often willing to pay a premium for homes located within reputable school districts. In turn, the demand for housing increases in these areas, helping to stabilize the local housing market and foster long-term community growth.

In summary, the availability and quality of community amenities in Lyon County, from grocery stores and healthcare services to parks, schools, and recreational facilities, play a critical role in attracting new residents. These amenities improve the overall quality of life for current residents and act as powerful drivers of housing demand and community growth. As Lyon County continues to invest in and enhance these amenities, it will increase its ability to attract and retain residents, supporting sustainable development and long-term economic vitality.



4.7 Rural Housing in Lyon County Townships

Housing in Lyon County's townships offers a unique rural living experience, blending the advantages of space and privacy with the challenges of rural infrastructure. One of the primary benefits of rural housing is the availability of larger plots of land, which provide homeowners with ample space for farming, recreational activities, or simply enjoying a quieter, more isolated lifestyle. Additionally, homes in the townships are often more affordable than those in urban areas, offering an appealing option for families, retirees, or individuals seeking a lower-cost housing solution.

Despite these advantages, rural housing in townships also faces various struggles. A significant challenge is the lack of access to essential infrastructure, such as public water and sewer systems. In many rural areas, homes rely on private wells for drinking water and septic systems for waste disposal, creating maintenance challenges and higher costs for homeowners. These systems require regular upkeep, and failures or malfunctions can be costly and complicated to address. Moreover, concerns around water quality and contamination, particularly in areas with aging infrastructure, remain an ongoing issue that must be addressed to ensure safe, reliable access to water for rural residents.



Additionally, it will be important to continue working collaboratively with communities across the county, both incorporated and unincorporated to identify opportunities for investment, revitalization, and growth. In particular, the unincorporated villages of Amiret and Green Valley face unique challenges due to their older housing stock, small and substandard lot sizes, and reliance on individual wells and septic systems. These factors can limit redevelopment and reinvestment without targeted assistance. By explicitly identifying these areas in the county's long-range planning efforts, Lyon County can better position itself and its communities to pursue future grant opportunities, infrastructure upgrades, and technical support. Including Amiret and Green Valley in broader housing strategies ensures they are not overlooked and that the county is prepared to assist when state or federal resources become available.

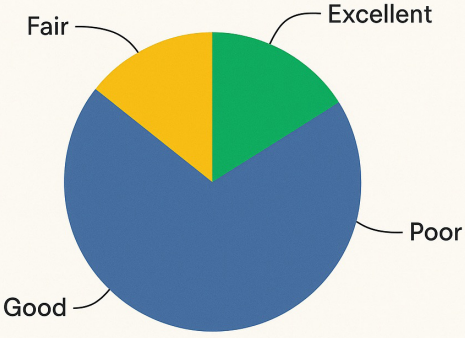
Broadband accessibility is a critical consideration for rural housing. With remote work, online education, telehealth, and digital services becoming essential, reliable internet access is no longer optional; it is necessary for residents to thrive. Some rural areas in Lyon County still face limited or no broadband options, creating barriers to full participation in the digital economy and access to vital services. Expanding broadband infrastructure should be a priority to ensure connectivity for all township residents.

Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) also offers an opportunity to diversify housing options in rural areas. These units such as in-law suites, rental apartments, or housing for caretakers and farm labor provide affordable and flexible living arrangements. By updating zoning regulations to support ADU development, Lyon County could help alleviate housing shortages while offering residents greater choice and adaptability in their housing needs.

Other considerations for rural housing in townships include addressing the challenges of septic systems and water quality concerns. As more people move to rural areas, ensuring that septic systems are properly regulated and maintained becomes increasingly important to prevent contamination of local water supplies. Additionally, developing solutions to improve access to rural water systems, such as supporting the maintenance and upgrading of drinking water supply systems, will be essential for maintaining the quality of life in Lyon County's rural communities. By tackling these infrastructure and housing challenges, Lyon County can foster vibrant and sustainable townships that continue to meet the evolving needs of its residents.

Community Survey Snapshot

How would you rate the quality of life in Lyon County?



Answered: 194 Skipped: 1

4.8 Infrastructure and Services



Local infrastructure plays a vital role in supporting the quality of life and facilitating community development. The county's as well as its local government partners' infrastructure includes essential components such as transportation networks, water and sewer systems, utilities, and public services that are integral to housing development and maintenance. Roadways and highways connect residential areas to amenities and employment centers, ensuring accessibility and mobility for residents across the county's diverse communities.

Water and sewer systems are critical infrastructure elements that provide essential services to homes and businesses throughout Lyon County. These systems are maintained and expanded to accommodate population growth and development, ensuring reliable access to clean water and effective wastewater management. Utilities such as electricity, natural gas, and telecommunications infrastructure are also essential in supporting modern housing needs, enabling residents to enjoy connectivity and essential services for daily life. Lyon County strives to ensure that all prioritized infrastructure is installed, connected, operational, and well maintained.

Public services in Lyon County encompass a range of amenities and facilities that enhance community well-being and quality of life. These include emergency response services, healthcare facilities, schools, parks and recreational facilities, and community centers. Efficient emergency services ensure the safety and security of residents, while healthcare facilities provide essential medical services and support. Schools and educational institutions contribute to developing a skilled workforce and a well-educated community, enhancing Lyon County's attractiveness as a place to live and work. Overall, Lyon County encourages development to occur near existing services. This can optimize existing infrastructure investments, promote sustainable growth patterns, and create vibrant, resilient communities where residents can live, work, and thrive. This approach supports efficient resource utilization and enhances community cohesion and overall livability for current and future generations.

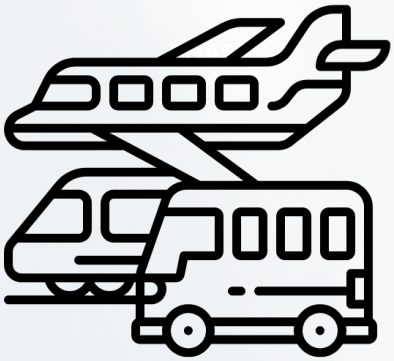
Lyon County's housing infrastructure and services need to be carefully planned and managed to meet the evolving needs of its residents and support sustainable growth and development. By investing in and maintaining robust infrastructure and essential services, Lyon County continues to foster a thriving community where residents can enjoy a high quality of life and economic opportunity.

4.9 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Goal:	• The county will work to create a variety of housing options for both workforce and seniors.
Objective:	• Identify properties for new housing development • Support local cities and EDAs to identify potential contractors and developers. • The county will promote the use of universal design principles in building projects (new or renovation) whenever possible. • Work with other local governments to provide clear and efficient regulations for new construction throughout the county. • Prioritize development of housing where existing infrastructure exists and is suitable.
Goal:	• The county will encourage development of an adequate workforce in the local building trades.
Objective:	• The county will work with local schools, colleges, and workforce partners to incentivize more people to work in the building trades • The county will work to incentivize hiring local for building projects.
Timeline:	Ongoing
Goal:	• The county will support development of housing with a diversity of cost ranges, including affordable housing for low-to-moderate-income households.
Timeline:	Near Term
Objective:	• The county will work with local partners to advocate for adequate low-income housing options. • The county will discourage activities that form a concentration of housing for low and moderate-income families within a single project or community. • The county will work with local partners to develop financial assistance programs for rehabilitation of substandard housing units as funding sources or market conditions permit. • The county will proactively work to prevent properties from becoming tax forfeited.
Timeline:	Ongoing

CHAPTER 5: TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

5.1 Introduction



Welcome to the Transportation and Infrastructure Chapter of the Lyon County Comprehensive Land Use Plan, where the foundation of our community's growth, mobility, and connectivity is shaped by both current realities and future ambitions. Situated in the heart of Southwestern Minnesota, Lyon County blends rural charm with a regional economic hub, necessitating a robust infrastructure and transportation framework to support both current residents and anticipated growth. This chapter serves as a strategic guide, outlining our vision to enhance accessibility, safety, and efficiency across all modes of transportation while ensuring the resilience and sustainability of essential infrastructure systems.

Lyon County's transportation network forms the lifeline of its economy and community cohesion, encompassing a diverse range of infrastructure, including state highways, county roads, bridges, bike paths, and public transit systems. At the same time, the county's broader infrastructure—water supply systems, wastewater treatment, solid waste management, energy distribution, and broadband connectivity—ensures that residents, businesses, and institutions have the necessary resources to thrive. As the county navigates the challenges of modernization, population shifts, and climate resilience, our approach emphasizes strategic planning, community engagement, and the effective use of state and federal funding opportunities.

Figure 1-1: Minnesota GO Vision and guiding principles

MINNESOTA'S MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM MAXIMIZES THE HEALTH OF PEOPLE, THE ENVIRONMENT AND OUR ECONOMY.

The system:

- Connects Minnesota's primary assets—the people, natural resources and businesses within the state—to each other and to markets and resources outside the state and country.
- Provides safe, convenient, efficient and effective movement of people and goods.
- Is flexible and nimble enough to adapt to changes in society, technology, the environment and our economy.

QUALITY OF LIFE

- Recognizes and respects the importance, significance and context of place—not just as destinations, but also where people live, work, learn, play and access services
- Is accessible regardless of socioeconomic status or individual ability

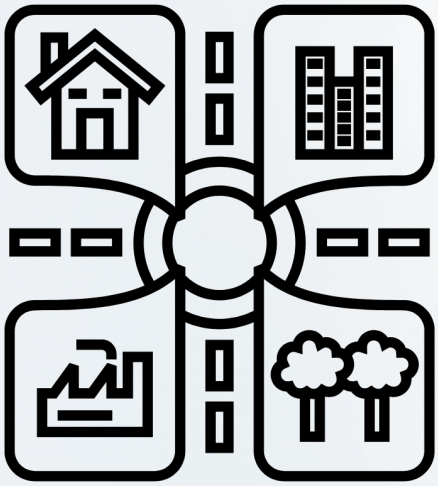
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

- Is designed in such a way that it enhances the community around it and is compatible with natural systems.
- Minimizes resource use and pollution.

ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

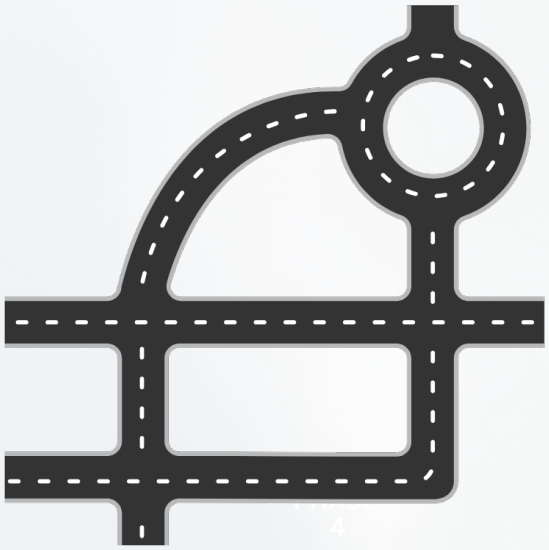
- Enhances and supports Minnesota's role in a globally competitive economy as well as the international significance and connections of Minnesota's trade centers.
- Attracts human and financial capital to the state.

A well-maintained and forward-thinking infrastructure system is essential to Lyon County's continued prosperity. As technological advancements and economic shifts reshape how people live and work, the county must proactively assess its infrastructure needs to ensure efficiency, safety, and longevity. Investments in roads and transit must align with upgrades to water, energy, and digital infrastructure to create a seamless, integrated system that supports economic development and enhances residents' quality of life. By fostering partnerships with regional stakeholders and leveraging innovative solutions, Lyon County aims to build an infrastructure network that not only meets present demands but also anticipates future needs.



This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of Lyon County's transportation and infrastructure systems, analyzing current conditions and identifying opportunities for improvement. It sets forth goals, policies, and strategies that prioritize safety, accessibility, and multimodal integration.

5.2 Surface Road Network



The surface road network in Lyon County forms the backbone of its infrastructure, crucially supporting economic development and shaping land usage across the region. Lyon County's roads serve as vital arteries connecting its diverse communities, agricultural lands, and industrial zones. Efficient roadways facilitate the transportation of goods and services, enabling businesses to thrive and expand their market reach. Whether it's the shipment of agricultural products from farms to markets or the movement of manufactured goods from factories to distribution centers, these roads play an indispensable role in ensuring the smooth flow of commerce.

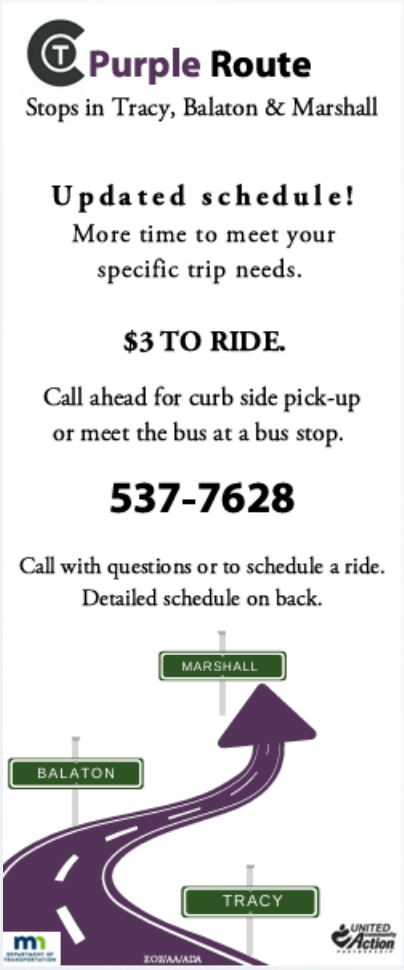
Beyond their economic significance, Lyon County's roads also influence the organization and development patterns of its urban and rural areas. Well-planned road networks contribute to efficient land usage, guiding residential, commercial, and industrial growth while preserving agricultural and natural landscapes. Moreover, these roads foster connectivity among communities by enhancing accessibility to essential services such as healthcare, education, and public amenities.

In Lyon County, the maintenance and expansion of its surface road network are ongoing priorities that reflect its commitment to fostering a robust economy and land management practices. By investing in infrastructure improvements and transportation projects, local authorities not only enhance mobility and safety but also attract investment and stimulate economic activity. As Lyon County continues to evolve, its road network will remain a cornerstone of its development strategy, balancing the needs of industry, agriculture, and community life while ensuring a prosperous future for its residents.

5.3 Public Transportation

Public transportation in Lyon County is primarily facilitated through United Community Action Partnership (UCAP), which operates a vital bus service connecting residents across the county. UCAP's bus routes serve as lifelines for many community members, offering affordable and accessible transportation options for commuting to work, accessing essential services, and attending appointments. The bus service plays a crucial role in enhancing mobility for individuals who may not have access to personal vehicles, thereby reducing isolation and ensuring equitable access to employment opportunities and healthcare services.

UCAP's commitment to providing reliable public transportation extends beyond mere mobility. It plays a pivotal role in fostering community cohesion by connecting people from diverse backgrounds and geographic locations. By offering convenient routes and schedules, UCAP enables residents to participate more fully in community activities, social gatherings, and educational opportunities. As a cornerstone of Lyon County's transportation infrastructure, UCAP's bus service exemplifies a dedication to enhancing quality of life and promoting mobility of all residents within the community.





5.4 Active Transportation

The development of active transportation infrastructure represents a concerted effort to promote healthier lifestyles, enhance community connectivity, and improve safety for residents of all ages. These pathways not only provide recreational opportunities but also serve as practical transportation routes, connecting neighborhoods, schools, and commercial areas. By prioritizing active transportation, Lyon County aims to create more livable communities where residents can easily access essential services and amenities on foot or by bike.

Furthermore, schools, public health, and other local organizations in Lyon County have placed a strong emphasis on enhancing safe routes to schools, ensuring that children have secure pathways to walk or bike to their educational institutions. These improvements include sidewalk installations, crosswalk enhancements, and traffic calming measures around schools, effectively creating environments that prioritize pedestrian and cyclist safety. Such initiatives not only promote physical activity among youth but also benefit the whole community. By collaborating with local schools, parents, and community stakeholders, Lyon County, along with local organizations, has developed comprehensive strategies that address infrastructure needs while fostering a culture of safety and active living.

As Lyon County works in conjunction with other local governments to continue to invest in active transportation and safe routes to schools infrastructure, it remains committed to creating equitable access to healthy transportation options for all residents. These efforts not only support public health goals but also contribute to the county's broader objectives of enhancing quality of life, as well as promoting economic vitality. By integrating these initiatives into its long-term planning strategies, Lyon County strives to build communities where all modes of transportation are available.

Minnesota SAFE ROUTES to School

SRTS Plans

- 2016 - City of Marshall
- 2022 - City of Tracy

SRTS Infrastructure Grants

- 2012 - City of Cottonwood - $88,000 Barstad Road Pedestrian / Bike Path. Construct a pedestrian/bike path to link an existing path on the Lakeview Public School's property to the existing City sidewalk infrastructure.
- 2017 - City of Marshall - $85,000 (State Match for Federal Grant) Establish properly marked school zone speed limits, including radar speed indication signage and pedestrian activated crosswalk signals.

5.5 Aviation

The county is supported by two key airports: Southwest Minnesota Regional Airport-Marshall/ Ryan Field (MML) and Tracy Municipal Airport (TKC). These facilities serve as critical hubs for general aviation, providing essential services to local businesses, recreational flyers, and emergency responders

Tracy Municipal Airport, situated northwest of Tracy, complements Lyon County's aviation infrastructure with its own runway facilities and services. This airport serves the needs of local pilots, aerial photography, and agricultural operations. Tracy Municipal Airport enhances regional connectivity by offering convenient access to nearby communities and recreational areas. Both Marshall and Tracy airports contribute significantly to Lyon County's economic vitality and quality of life, providing essential aviation services that support diverse industries and enhance transportation options for residents and businesses alike.

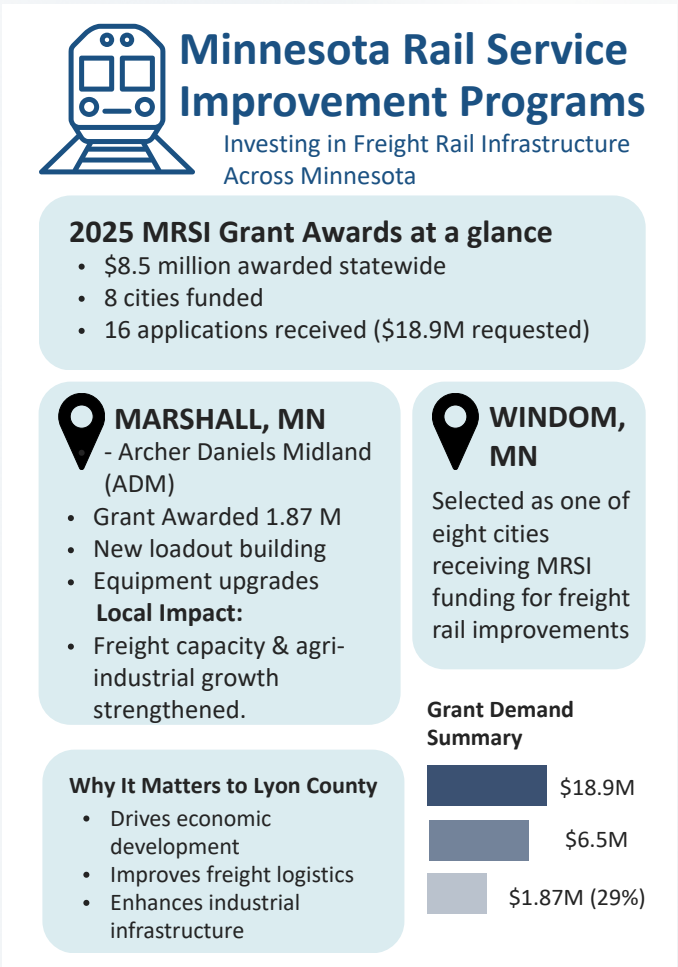


Tracy Municipal Airport

5.6 Rail & Frieght

The rail and freight network in Lyon County is instrumental in supporting the region's economy by facilitating the efficient transport of goods across local, regional, and national markets. Railroads serve as vital corridors for the shipment of agricultural commodities, manufactured goods, and raw materials. They play a crucial role in connecting Lyon County's industries to major urban centers and international trade hubs, enhancing market access and competitiveness for local businesses. A robust rail infrastructure reduces transportation costs and maximizes overall logistics efficiency.

Lyon County's freight network integrates seamlessly with its agricultural and industrial sectors, providing essential logistical support that drives economic growth and development. By linking producers with suppliers and consumers, railroads facilitate the timely delivery of goods, bolstering the county's position in national and global markets. Moreover, these networks are pivotal in attracting investment to the region, as businesses seek reliable transportation options to streamline supply chain operations. As Lyon County continues to expand and diversify its economic base, the rail and freight infrastructure will remain indispensable assets in sustaining prosperity and fostering a thriving community.



5.7 Land Use & Transportation Integration



Transportation plays a crucial role in shaping community development and enhancing overall quality of life. Effective integration ensures that transportation infrastructure aligns with the county's land use goals, facilitating efficient movement while minimizing environmental impact. By strategically planning transportation corridors, such as roads, bike paths, and public transit routes, alongside residential, commercial, and industrial zones, Lyon County can optimize accessibility and connectivity. This approach not only reduces congestion but also supports economic growth by improving access to employment centers and markets.



Furthermore, integrating land use and transportation planning fosters development practices that prioritize conservation of natural resources and preservation of rural landscapes. Lyon County's efforts in mixed-use zoning, transit-oriented development, and pedestrian-friendly designs promote walkability. Such initiatives contribute to healthier communities by encouraging physical activity and reducing carbon emissions. By fostering collaboration among local governments, transportation engineers, and economic development stakeholders, Lyon County continues to advance a holistic approach to land use and transportation integration that supports its long-term vision for a resilient and thriving community

5.8 Water Supply & Distribution

Access to a reliable water supply is essential for the health, economy, and overall well-being of Lyon County residents. The county's water supply system consists of municipal water systems, rural water associations, and private wells that serve both residential and agricultural needs. The primary sources of water include groundwater aquifers, which provide drinking water to most of the region, and surface water sources that support agricultural and industrial operations. Ensuring the continued reliability and safety of these water sources requires ongoing investment in infrastructure, monitoring, and regulatory compliance.

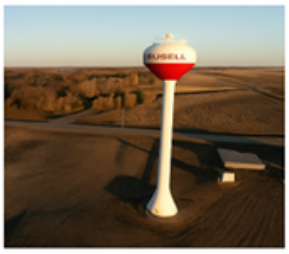
As Lyon County's population and agricultural demands evolve, future water infrastructure must be carefully planned to meet increasing needs. Growth in residential, commercial, and industrial sectors may place additional strain on existing water resources, necessitating system upgrades and potential expansions. Strategic investments in water storage, treatment facilities, multi-purpose drainage management, and distribution networks will be crucial to maintaining service reliability and preventing shortages. Additionally, collaboration with state and regional water agencies will help the county implement policies that balance water use with long-term reliability.

Water conservation and efficiency measures play a key role in preserving this vital resource for future generations. Encouraging best practices such as low-water landscaping, efficient irrigation techniques, and leak detection programs can help reduce unnecessary water consumption. Public education campaigns and incentive programs may further promote responsible water use among residents, businesses, and farmers. By prioritizing conservation and infrastructure resilience, Lyon County can ensure a stable and high-quality water supply for years to come.

City of Russell

Water Tower Replacement





Old Water Tower Overview

- Built circa 1935
- Capacity: 50,000 gallons
- Served the community for 85 years
- Routine maintenance cleanings & surface recoating
- Traces of lead-based paint
- Ice buildup on exterior surfaces
- Structural aging impacting safety and functionality

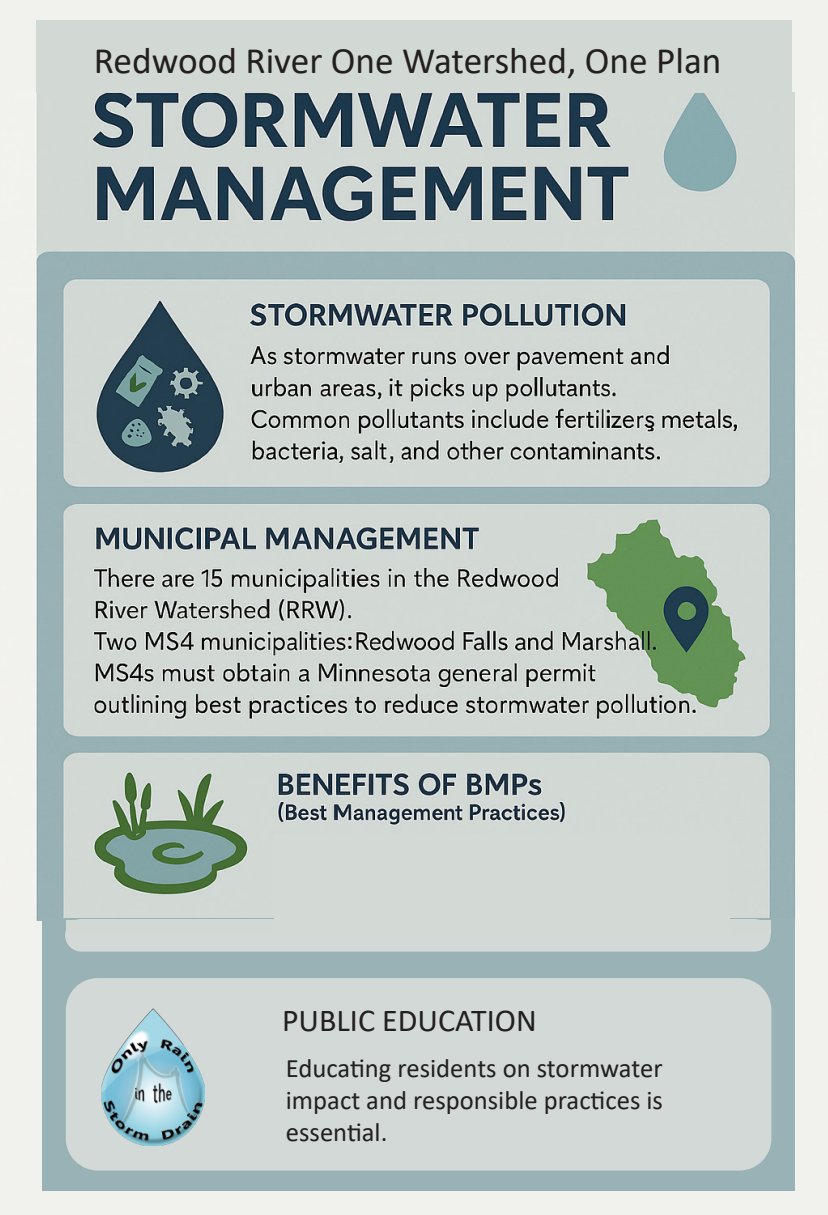
Project Outcome:

- New water tower construction to replacing aging structure
- Modern design ensuring compliance with MDH standards
- Enhanced safety, durability, and efficiency for the community

5.9 Wastewater & Stormwater Management

Effective wastewater and stormwater management is critical to protecting public health, water quality, and the environment in Lyon County. The county's wastewater infrastructure includes municipal treatment plants, rural septic systems, and regional wastewater collection systems that serve both residential and industrial users. Municipalities operate centralized wastewater treatment facilities that process and safely discharge treated water, ensuring compliance with state and federal environmental regulations. In rural areas, individual septic systems remain the primary method of wastewater treatment, requiring proper maintenance and oversight to prevent groundwater contamination and system failures.

Rural wastewater management presents unique challenges due to dispersed populations and the reliance on individual septic systems. To safeguard water quality, Lyon County enforces regulations that govern septic system installation, maintenance, and replacement. Programs supporting septic inspections, upgrades, and alternative wastewater treatment options help ensure these systems function properly and minimize pollution risks. As rural development expands, the county must explore innovative wastewater solutions, such as clustered treatment systems or partnerships with regional wastewater facilities, to provide cost-effective and environmentally responsible alternatives for managing wastewater in unincorporated areas.



Stormwater management is another crucial component of the county's infrastructure, helping to control runoff, reduce flooding, and prevent pollutants from entering local waterways. Lyon County's drainage system includes natural waterways, culverts, storm sewers, and retention basins designed to manage excess stormwater efficiently. As development increases, the implementation of best management practices (BMPs), such as permeable pavements, rain gardens, and green infrastructure solutions, will be essential in mitigating the impact of impervious surfaces. Additionally, collaboration with local watershed districts and regulatory agencies will help strengthen stormwater management policies and enhance overall flood resilience.

By investing in modern wastewater treatment technologies, enforcing responsible septic system management, and implementing forward-thinking stormwater solutions, Lyon County can protect its water resources while supporting growth. A proactive approach to wastewater and stormwater infrastructure will help reduce environmental impacts, enhance community resilience, and ensure a cleaner, healthier future for residents.



5.10 Broadband Expansion and Cellular Service Coverage

Expanding access to high-speed broadband internet and reliable cellular service is vital to supporting Lyon County's economic resilience, educational opportunities, and overall quality of life. In today's increasingly digital world, broadband is essential infrastructure, just as critical as roads, water, and electricity. More rural communities like those in Lyon County face significant disadvantages without reliable internet access, limiting residents' ability to work remotely, access telehealth services, participate in online education, and operate or grow small businesses. Enhancing broadband infrastructure ensures that the county remains competitive and can attract and retain residents, particularly younger generations and professionals seeking rural lifestyles without sacrificing digital connectivity.

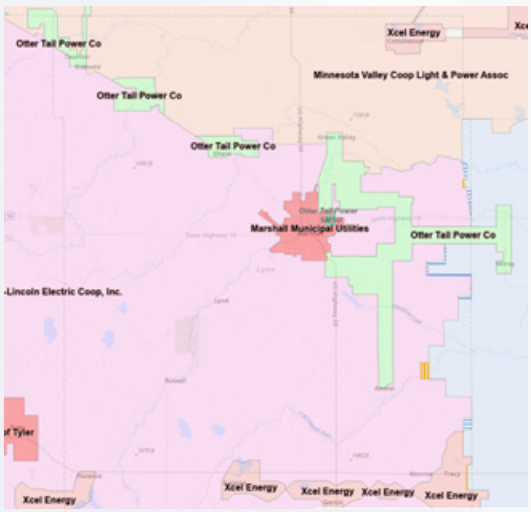
Improving cellular service coverage across Lyon County also plays a crucial role in safety, communication, and economic development. Gaps in coverage can hinder emergency response, create isolation for rural residents, and limit the functionality of GPS and mobile apps that support agriculture, logistics, and local businesses. As cell phones are now a primary communication tool for most individuals and businesses, expanding coverage ensures that all parts of the county are connected, helping support both everyday needs and emergency preparedness. Coordinated efforts to invest in broadband and cellular infrastructure will be essential in ensuring access to modern services for all Lyon County residents, regardless of geography.



5.11 Energy & Utilities

A reliable and efficient energy and utility infrastructure is essential for Lyon County's economic growth, public safety, and overall quality of life. The county's energy network is powered by a combination of electrical and natural gas services provided by regional utility companies, ensuring that homes, businesses, and industries have consistent access to power. As energy demands grow, investment in infrastructure upgrades and the integration of alternative energy sources will be key to maintaining reliability and affordability. Expanding energy efficiency initiatives and grid modernization efforts can help reduce costs and enhance the sustainability of the county's energy systems.

Electrical service in Lyon County is supplied by a mix of investor-owned utilities, municipal power providers, and rural electric cooperatives, delivering power to both urban and rural areas. Natural gas services, where available, provide an efficient and cost-effective heating source for residents and businesses. However, in more remote areas, propane and other fuel alternatives remain essential for heating and energy needs. As technology ad¬vances and energy markets shift, the county has opportunities to support the expansion of alternative energy sources such as wind and solar, align¬ing with the Minnesota's Clean Electricity by 2040 Law while promoting local economic development.



Beyond traditional utilities, access to high-speed broadband and telecommunications infrastructure is increasingly critical for economic development, education, healthcare, and remote work opportunities. While urbanized areas of Lyon County generally have access to reliable internet and cellular services, rural parts of the county face gaps in broadband availability and connection speeds. Expanding broadband access through partnerships with service providers, grant programs, and infrastructure investments will help bridge the digital divide and ensure all residents and businesses can fully participate in the modern economy.

By prioritizing investments in energy infrastructure, alternative energy development, and broadband expansion, Lyon County can enhance its resilience and competitiveness in an evolving technological landscape. Strengthening these essential services will support economic growth, improve the quality of life for residents, and ensure a connected future for the county.

5.12 Public Facilities & Services

Lyon County's public facilities and services play a vital role in supporting the well-being, safety, and daily needs of residents. Government buildings, community centers, libraries, and other public facilities serve as hubs for civic engagement, education, and essential county services. Maintaining and modernizing these facilities ensures they continue to meet the needs of a growing and evolving population. Strategic investments in public infrastructure will help enhance service delivery, improve energy efficiency, and ensure accessibility for all residents.

Emergency services, including fire protection, law enforcement, and emergency medical services (EMS), are critical to public safety in Lyon County. The county is served by a combination of local police departments, the sheriff's office, volunteer fire departments, and ambulance services that respond to emergencies across urban and rural areas. As the population grows and community needs change, ongoing investments in personnel, training, equipment, and facilities will be essential to maintaining high-quality emergency response capabilities. Additionally, fostering interagency cooperation and mutual aid agreements with neighboring jurisdictions can help strengthen the county's emergency preparedness and disaster response efforts.

Access to healthcare and public health services is another fundamental component of a thriving community. Lyon County residents benefit from services provided by Southwest Health and Human Services (SWHHS), which offers public health programs, social services, and disease prevention initiatives to promote community well-being. The Lyon County Environmental Office plays a crucial role in managing land use regulations, septic system compliance, and environmental health initiatives that safeguard the county's natural resources.



The Lyon County Highway Department ensures the maintenance and safety of the county's extensive road network, facilitating efficient transportation for residents, businesses, and emergency responders. Meanwhile, the Lyon County Auditor/Treasurer's Office manages critical financial functions, including tax collection, budgeting, and fiscal oversight, which are essential for funding public infrastructure and services. By continuing to support and enhance these key departments, Lyon County maintains strong public service delivery while ensuring transparency, accountability, and long-term sustainability.

By investing in modernized public facilities, strengthening emergency response services, and enhancing the capabilities of key county departments, Lyon County can ensure a high quality of life for its residents. A well-planned and well-maintained network of public services supports community resilience, fosters economic growth, and ensures that all residents have access to the resources they need to thrive.



PHASE 4

Lyon County Cities with a Library

Discover the cities in Lyon County that are home to valuable library resources for everyone.

CITY 1

Minneota Library

Visit the Minneota Library to access books, community programs, and helpful resources that enrich the local community.

CITY 2

Cottonwood Library

The Cottonwood Library offers diverse reading materials and programs that promote literacy and lifelong learning for residents.



CITY 3

Marshall Library

At the Marshall Library, you can find an extensive collection of books and materials, along with engaging events for all ages.

CITY 4

Balaton Library

Balaton Library provides a welcoming space for reading, research, and community gatherings that strengthens connections among residents.

CITY 5

Tracy Library

The Tracy Library is a hub for knowledge and creativity, featuring a wide variety of resources and activities for the entire community.

5.13 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Goal:	• The county will work to support expansion of public utilities and other infrastructure to all parts of the county.
Objective:	• Explore opportunities to expand broadband and reliable cell service through out the county.
Timeline:	LongTerm
Goal:	• The county will work to identify the extent of and promote the use of aggregate resources in the county.
Timeline:	Near Term
Goal:	• Work to consider local and regional partners in the county permitting process. Giving priority to water sources, road access, and other public utilities.
Timeline:	Near Term
Objective:	• Consider utility setback ordinances for public utilities. • Add Acknowledge of Water Sources to permitting process. • Continue support of utilities in the county Right of Way. • Continued communication of projects/developments that may affect utility relocation, wellhead protection areas, and DWSMA's.
Goal:	• Continue to work with MnDOT to properly plan for and prioritize local road and bridge projects in the county.
Timeline:	Ongoing

CHAPTER 6: PARKS, RECREATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES

6.1 Introduction

Welcome to the Parks, Recreation, and Natural Resources Chapter of the Lyon County Comprehensive Plan, where the rich tapestry of our natural landscapes converges with our commitment to fostering vibrant community life. Nestled in the expansive prairies and river valleys of southwestern Minnesota, Lyon County is blessed with an abundance of parks, trails, and natural resources that enhance our quality of life and define our sense of place. This chapter serves as a blueprint for preserving and enhancing these assets while strategically planning for sustainable use and enjoyment by residents.



Lyon County's parks and recreational facilities play a pivotal role in promoting health, well-being, and providing outdoor recreation opportunities. From serene nature reserves to bustling recreational hubs, our diverse spaces cater to a wide range of interests and activities. This chapter outlines our vision to update current facilities and expand access to recreational opportunities; protect sensitive ecosystems and promote outdoor education and stewardship. Through sustainable planning, we aim to create a network of green spaces that not only enriches our lives but also contributes to the economic vitality of our region.

This comprehensive plan reflects the collective input of residents, stakeholders, and experts who share a passion for preserving our natural heritage and enhancing recreational experiences. It sets forth goals, policies, and strategies aimed at balancing conservation with responsible development, ensuring that Lyon County remains a desirable place to live, work, and play. Join us as we embark on a journey to sustainably manage our parks, recreation areas, and natural resources for generations to come.

6.2 Current Inventory of Sizable Parks & Natural Areas

Lyon County offers a wealth of outdoor recreation opportunities through its diverse county parks, natural areas, campgrounds, and vibrant fairgrounds. Garvin Park, situated along the scenic Cottonwood River, stands out as a serene haven for nature lovers. Its extensive trail system winds through woodlands and along riverbanks, providing excellent opportunities for hiking, birdwatching, and horseback riding. Families often gather at the park's picnic shelters and playgrounds, camping, while anglers test their skills in the river's tranquil waters, making it a beloved destination for both relaxation and outdoor adventure.

Camden State Park, encompassing over 2,200 acres of rolling hills and hardwood forests, is another jewel. This expansive park offers a variety of activities for visitors, including hiking trails that lead to scenic overlooks and historic sites. The park's Redwood River Valley is a popular spot for exploration, showcasing the region's natural beauty. Camping facilities are available, allowing visitors to extend their stay and immerse themselves fully in the park's tranquil atmosphere, making it an ideal spot for both day trips and extended overnight trips.



CAMDEN STATE PARK

For those seeking water-based activities, Twin Lakes County Park beckons with its two picturesque lakes surrounded by wooded landscapes. Boating, swimming, and wildlife observation are popular pastimes here, and the park's trails cater to hikers and cyclists alike, offering opportunities for exploration and exercise in a serene natural setting. In winter, the park transforms into a snowy wonderland, inviting enthusiasts to cross-country ski or snowshoe through its pristine trails, showcasing Lyon County's year-round appeal for outdoor recreation.

The Camden Regional Trail is a paved, multi-purpose recreational path that extends from Southwest Minnesota State University (SMSU) through the City of Marshall, connecting residents and visitors to Camden State Park. Within Marshall, about 4 miles of trail link SMSU and Marshall High School, integrating with the city's network of bike lanes. West of Marshall, the off-road trail spans 10 miles of gently rolling hills from Victory Park along MN Highway 23 to Camden State Park, offering scenic views and a pleasant experience for cyclists, walkers, and nature enthusiasts.

Beyond its natural attractions, Lyon County is also home to several campgrounds that cater to visitors seeking a closer connection with nature. These campgrounds offer various amenities, from basic tent sites to RV hookups, ensuring that outdoor enthusiasts of all preferences can find their ideal spot to relax and recharge amidst the county's scenic landscapes. Whether pitching a tent under starlit skies or enjoying the comforts of an RV, local campgrounds provide a perfect base for exploring the area's parks and natural wonders.









Lyon County Fairgrounds host various events throughout the year, including the annual Lyon County Fair. This lively event showcases local agriculture, crafts, and entertainment, drawing visitors from near and far to celebrate the community's rich heritage and vibrant spirit. The fairgrounds also host other community gatherings and events, offering a hub of activity and celebration throughout the seasons, highlighting Lyon County's dynamic blend of rural charm and community pride. Together, Lyon County's parks, campgrounds, and fairgrounds create a tapestry of outdoor recreation and cultural vibrancy, inviting visitors to experience the best of Minnesota's natural beauty and community spirit.

6.3 Major Lakes



Lake Yankton and Cottonwood Lake are two significant water bodies in Lyon County, offering recreational opportunities and natural beauty. Lake Yankton, located near the city of Balaton, is a shallow, 289-acre lake known for fishing, boating, and wildlife habitat. It is part of the Des Moines River watershed and provides a home for various fish species, including walleye, northern pike, and panfish. The lake has faced water quality challenges due to sedimentation and nutrient runoff, prompting local conservation efforts to improve its ecological health. Public access and nearby parks make it a popular spot for fishing, kayaking, and wildlife observation, contributing to the area's outdoor recreational appeal.

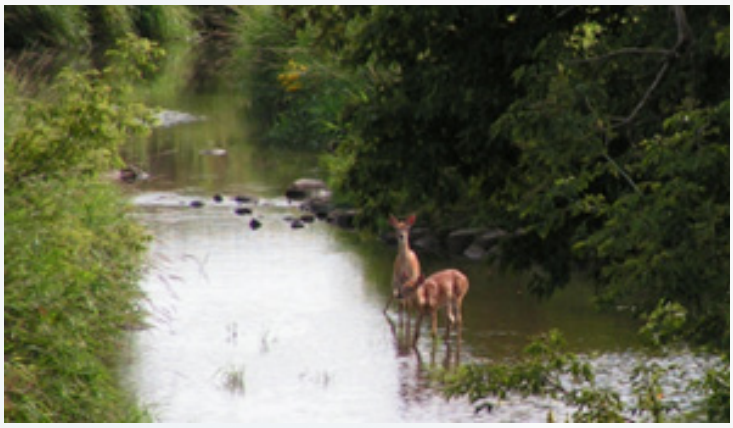
Cottonwood Lake, situated adjacent to the city of Cottonwood, spans approximately 300 acres and serves as a focal point for community activities. The lake supports a diverse fish population and is commonly used for angling, with species such as perch, crappie, and bass drawing local fishermen. Its proximity to town enhances its role as a recreational hub, with a public beach, boat access, and trails encouraging outdoor engagement. Like many prairie lakes, Cottonwood Lake faces periodic water quality concerns, but conservation efforts and community initiatives aim to maintain its health and usability.

Lake Marshall, located south of Marshall, is a 252-acre natural environment lake that offers a blend of urban access and natural shoreline. Its location near the city makes it a popular site for fishing, and other family-friendly outdoor activities. Clear Lake, located on the edge of Russell, is a smaller but cherished body of water in Lyon County. Known for its peaceful setting and easy access, the lake supports fishing, small-boat use, and wildlife observation. Its shoreline offers a mix of open views and natural vegetation, making it an attractive spot for residents seeking quiet, nature-based recreation. Though not as large as other lakes in the county, its proximity to Russell plays a significant role in supporting the outdoor lifestyle of nearby residents.

Rock Lake, situated south of Russell, covers 379 acres and is known for its rocky shoreline and shallow waters. With approximately 3.9 miles of shoreline, Rock Lake provides opportunities for boating, fishing, and wildlife viewing in a quiet, rural setting. It is managed primarily for Walleye and secondarily for Yellow Perch and Black Crappie. The lake is surrounded by gently rolling farmland and native vegetation, and its landscape makes it well-suited for those seeking a more natural and undeveloped outdoor experience. The lake also supports a variety of fish species and is commonly used for shore and small-boat angling.

Other notable lakes include Island Lake, with its scenic central island; Lake of the Hill near Tracy; Wood Lake; Goose Lake; Sham Lake; and the East and West Twin Lakes. These lakes vary in size and character, but together they form a vital network of natural resources that support recreation, habitat, and scenic value throughout Lyon County.

6.4 Major Rivers



Lyon County is also home to several rivers that shape the landscape and provide essential environmental and recreational +benefits. The Redwood River is the most prominent waterway, flowing from the northeastern part of the county through Marshall before joining the Minnesota River. This river plays a crucial role in regional hydrology, supporting agriculture, wildlife, and aquatic ecosystems. Historically, the Redwood River has experienced periodic flooding, leading to the construction of flood control structures such as the diversion channel in Marshall. Conservation efforts, including riparian buffer zones and water quality improvement projects, aim to reduce sedimentation and nutrient runoff, ensuring the river remains a vital natural resource for the county.

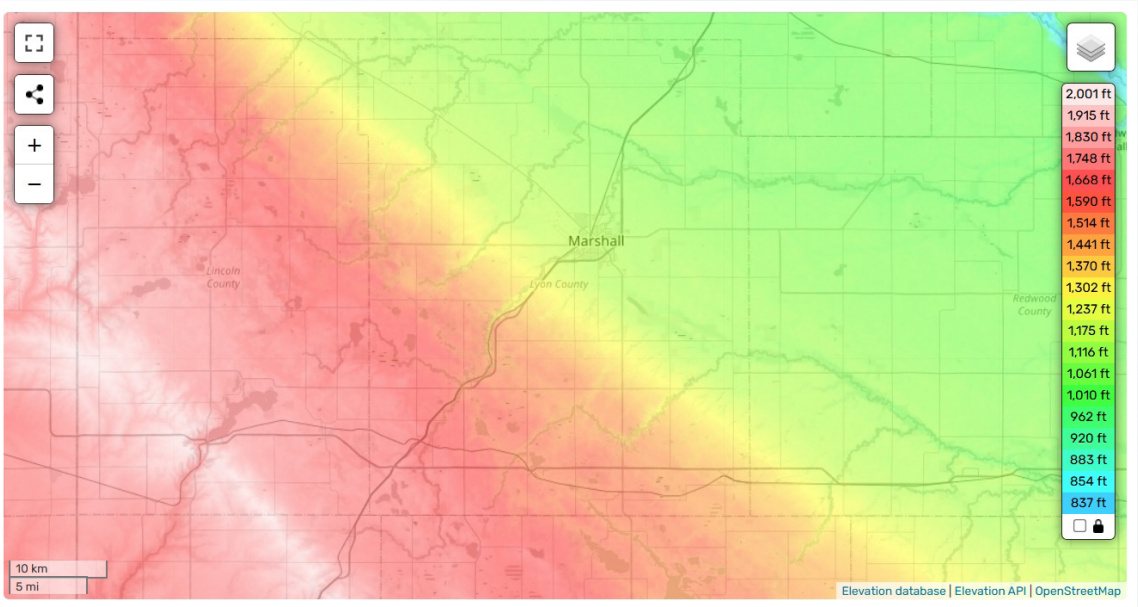
In northern Lyon County, the Yellow Medicine River winds northeast through a landscape of rural farmland and wooded ravines before exiting the county and continuing toward the Minnesota River. Draining an area of approximately 665 square miles, the river is shaped by steep slopes and narrow floodplains carved into the region's glacial terrain. Although much of the watershed is dominated by agriculture, the Yellow Medicine River remains a scenic and ecologically significant feature. Its winding course is dotted with bridges, crossings, and informal access points that connect area residents to the surrounding natural environment. Alongside the Cottonwood and Redwood Rivers, the Yellow Medicine River helps define the county's hydrology and contributes to its environmental character.

Another significant river in the county is the Cottonwood River, which flows through the southeastern part of Lyon County before eventually joining the Minnesota River. The Cottonwood River supports diverse wildlife and provides opportunities for canoeing and fishing. However, like the Redwood River, it faces challenges related to erosion and water quality due to agricultural runoff. Additionally, Three Mile Creek, a tributary of the Yellow Medicine River, runs through the county's western region and plays an important role in local watershed health. While smaller in scale, Three Mile Creek helps manage stormwater runoff and supports prairie wetland ecosystems. Collectively, these rivers are essential to Lyon County's environmental sustainability, influencing land use planning, conservation efforts, and recreational opportunities.

6.5 Geology and Topography

Lyon County's geology is characterized by glacial deposits left behind from the last Ice Age, shaping the landscape into a mix of rolling plains, river valleys, and scattered moraines. The county lies within the Western Corn Belt Plains ecoregion, with soils primarily composed of glacial till and loess, which provide rich agricultural productivity. The underlying bedrock consists of Cretaceous shale, sandstone, and scattered outcrops of Sioux Quartzite, a durable, reddish-pink rock found in some areas of southwestern Minnesota. These geological features have influenced the county's land use patterns, particularly in terms of soil fertility, drainage, and availability of aggregate resources.

Topographically, Lyon County is relatively flat to gently rolling, with elevations ranging from approximately 1,100 to 1,600 feet above sea level. The Redwood River, a key tributary of the Minnesota River, meanders through the county, creating localized valleys and lowlands that contribute to floodplain areas. Other smaller streams and drainageways shape the landscape, supporting both natural ecosystems and agricultural irrigation. The county's terrain has made it well-suited for row crop agriculture, while also posing challenges related to erosion control and stormwater management.

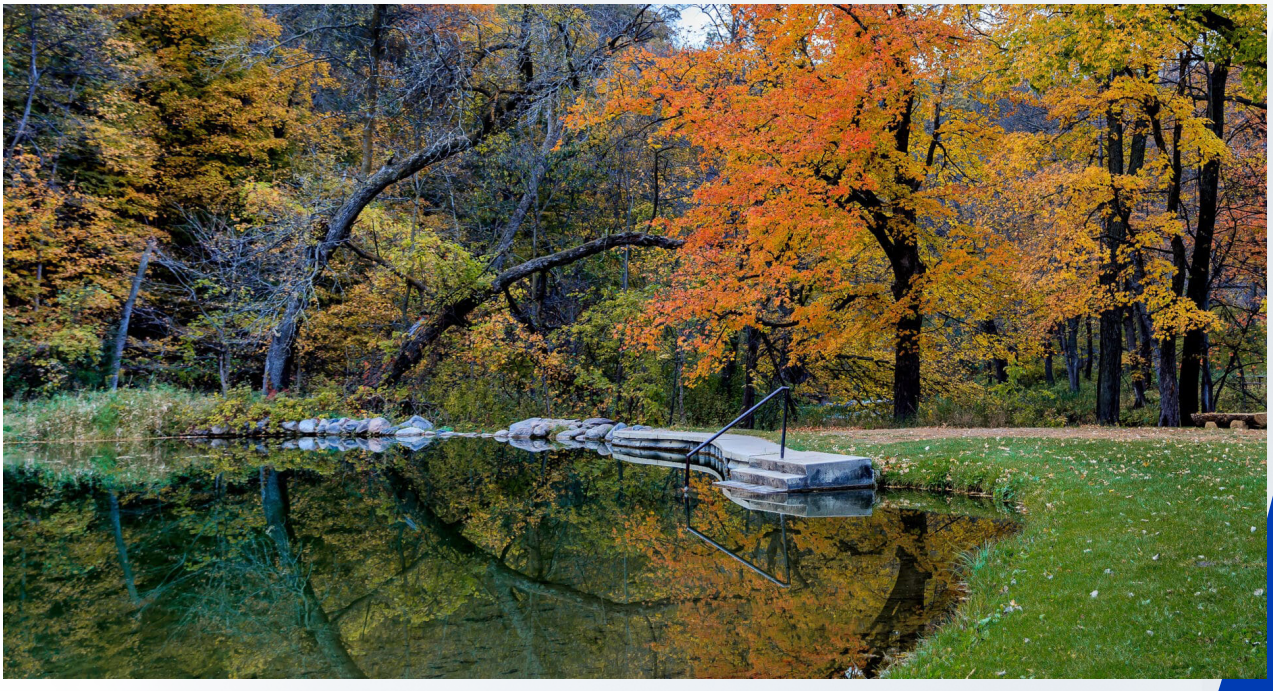


6.6 Forests and Vegetation

Historically, Lyon County was part of the tallgrass prairie biome, with vast expanses of native grasses and scattered oak savannas. Today, most of the county's native prairie has been converted to agricultural land, but remnant prairie patches still exist, particularly in conservation areas, roadside rights-of-way, and along river corridors. These prairie remnants provide critical habitat for pollinators, grassland birds, and other wildlife, making them a priority for conservation efforts.



Tree cover in Lyon County is limited due to its natural prairie landscape, but riparian woodlands exist along the Redwood River and other water bodies, featuring species such as Cottonwood, Silver Maple, and Green Ash. Windbreaks and shelterbelts, primarily composed of planted conifers and deciduous trees, are common in rural areas to reduce soil erosion and protect farmsteads from harsh winter winds. Conservation programs, such as the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) program and the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), play an important role in restoring native vegetation and improving habitat connectivity throughout the county.

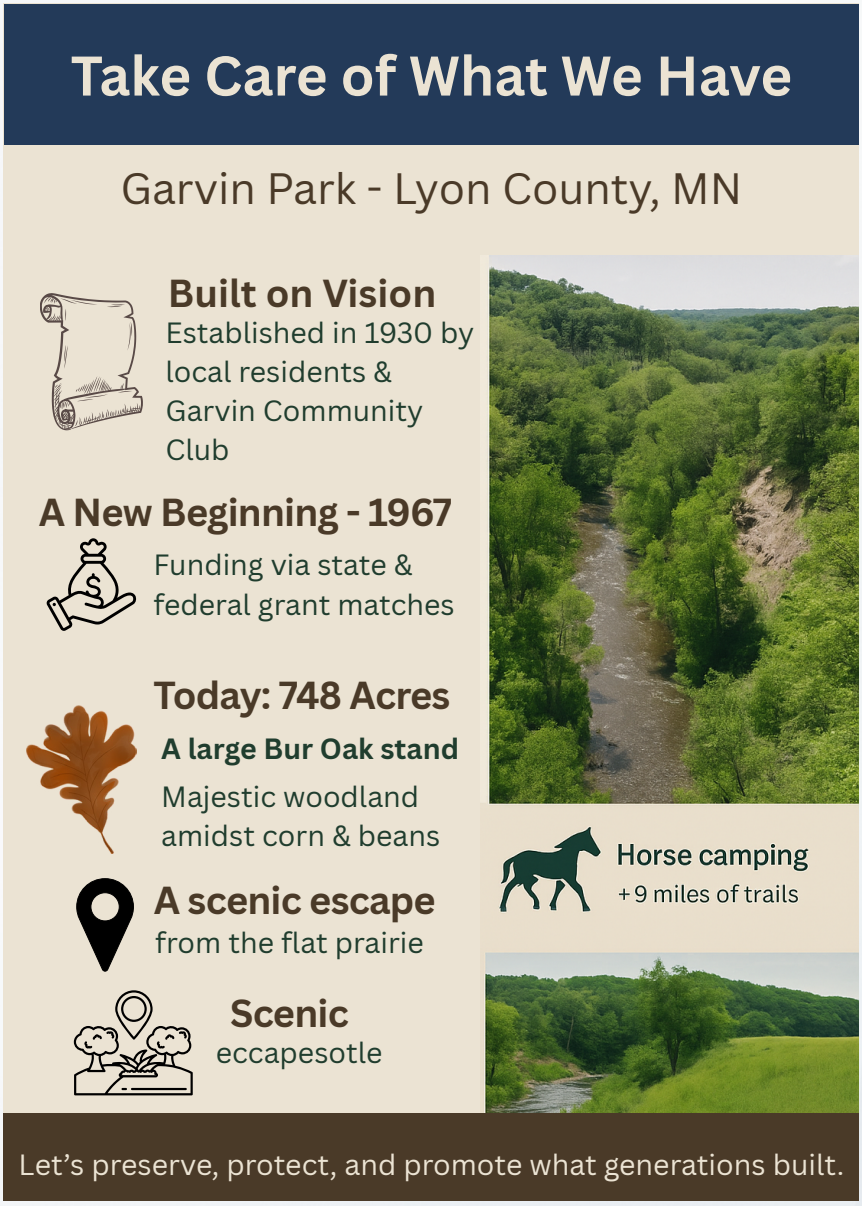


6.7 Parks & Recreation Planning

The quality of life can significantly improve for residents through thoughtful development and management of public parks, recreational facilities, and natural areas. Long-term planning aims to meet the diverse recreational needs of Lyon County's communities while preserving and promoting the region's natural beauty. Goals include expanding access to recreational opportunities, improving park infrastructure, and fostering partnerships with local stakeholders to ensure best-use management practices.

Key objectives within this section focus on enhancing park amenities, promoting active lifestyles, and conserving natural resources. Efforts are directed towards maintaining and developing parks that cater to a range of interests, from playgrounds, to hiking trails and picnic areas. By prioritizing community engagement, Lyon County aims to create vibrant, accessible, and resilient recreational opportunities for all residents to enjoy.

Taken from the GMRPTC Annual Report - 2021

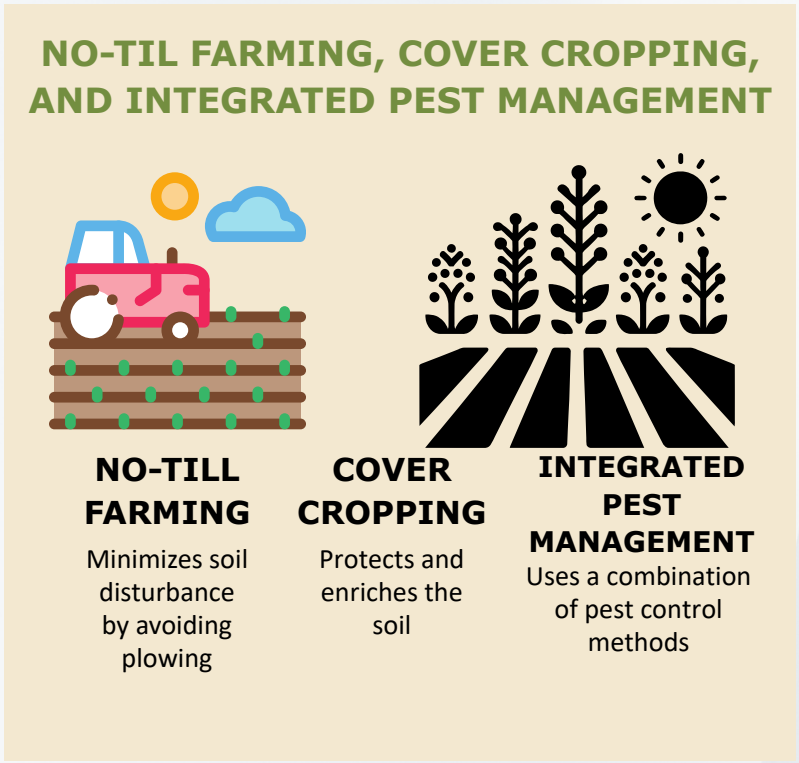


6.8 Natural Resource Management

Natural resource management is a multifaceted approach aimed at preserving and sustainably utilizing the region's diverse ecosystems. Water quality and conservation are top priorities, with initiatives focused on monitoring and improving the health of rivers and lakes through watershed management plans and pollution prevention measures. These efforts involve partnerships with local stakeholders to promote responsible water use and ensure clean water for both natural habitats and human consumption.

Agricultural land management strategies prioritize conservation practices such as no-till farming, cover cropping, and integrated pest management. These practices aim to improve soil health, reduce nutrient runoff, and support sustainable agricultural productivity while preserving natural resources. Programs also encourage farmers to enhance wildlife habitat and biodiversity on their lands, fostering a balance between agricultural production and environmental stewardship.

Habitat conservation and wildlife management initiatives in Lyon County focus on preserving natural habitats, restoring ecosystems, and managing wildlife populations sustainably. Collaborative efforts with conservation organizations and land trusts aim to protect critical habitats. Public education and community engagement play crucial roles in raising awareness and fostering community involvement in local conservation efforts, ensuring the long-term health and resilience of Lyon County's natural resources for future generations.



6.9 Community Engagement, Education, & Partnerships

Community engagement and education initiatives are integral to the success of natural resource management efforts. These initiatives aim to raise awareness, build partnerships, and empower local residents to become stewards of their environment. Soil and water conservation districts play a pivotal role in leading this effort. They work closely with farmers, landowners, and community members to provide technical assistance, develop conservation plans, and administer cost-share programs that support practices like cover cropping, and buffer strip installations.



Local workshops, seminars, and field days are organized to educate farmers, landowners, and residents about sustainable agricultural practices, water conservation techniques, and habitat preservation strategies. These events provide practical knowledge and resources, empowering participants to implement environmentally friendly practices on their own properties and within their communities.

Partnerships with local schools and youth organizations are also crucial in promoting environmental education and fostering a conservation ethic among the next generation. Educational programs in schools may include outdoor learning experiences, nature walks, and classroom lessons on topics such as biodiversity, water conservation, and sustainable agriculture. These initiatives aim to instill environmental awareness and responsibility early on, equipping young people with the knowledge and motivation to protect Lyon County's natural resources as they grow older.



Moreover, community engagement in natural resource management involves ongoing dialogue and collaboration with local businesses, organizations, and government agencies. Public input and feedback are solicited through community meetings, surveys, and advisory committees, ensuring that management strategies align with community values and priorities. By fostering a sense of shared responsibility and collaboration, Lyon County continues to strengthen its efforts in preserving its natural heritage and ensuring a sustainable future for generations to come.

6.10 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Goal:	• The county will work with local partners to identify and bring a wider variety of recreational activities to the county.
Objective:	• Study the possibility of establishing a Ropes Course, Rock Climbing, and a Water Trail on the Redwood River.
Timeline:	Long Term
Goal:	• To create a county-wide parks inventory
Timeline:	Long Term
Goal:	• The county will work to encourage collaboration between the county parks department and our local partners in an effort to share resources, equipment, and enhance communication.
Timeline:	Immediate
Objective:	• Work with cities on programming and equipment purchases
Goal:	• The county will work to encourage collaboration between the county parks department and our local partners in an effort to share resources, equipment, and enhance communication.
Timeline:	Immediate
Objective:	• Work with cities on programming and equipment purchases 1 Partner with 4-H, ROYO (Returning Our Youth Outdoors), and other local agencies to create more programming in county parks 2 Build stronger relationships with local funders and outdoor groups to enhance programming and equipment at county parks.
Timeline:	Ongoing
Goal:	• Build safe routes to parks
Objective:	• Expand off road trails • Work with UCAP (United Community Action)and other agencies to create more affordable transportation opportunities
Timeline:	Ongoing

CHAPTER 7: SUSTAINABILITY

7.1 Introduction

Welcome to the Sustainability Chapter of the Lyon County Comprehensive Plan, which stands as a cornerstone of Lyon County's vision for a resilient and vibrant future. This chapter outlines Lyon County's commitment to building a resilient, efficient, and environmentally responsible future by focusing on four critical areas: solid waste management, energy efficiency, water resource protection, and public education and outreach.

The County aims to increase recycling, responsible disposal of hazardous materials, and continue regional coordination via the Lyon County Landfill. Energy efficiency is also a priority, with a focus on lowering energy costs for households and businesses in both private and public facilities. Protecting surface water resources is vital to preserving the County's natural assets and ensuring clean water for future generations. The plan supports stormwater management improvements, erosion control, and partnerships with watershed districts and conservation agencies.

Finally, education and outreach are essential tools for long-term change. Lyon County is committed to raising awareness through local programs, public campaigns, and community events that empower residents to make sustainable choices in their daily lives. By addressing these issues, Lyon County is working toward a more resilient, efficient, and livable future.

Sustainability

Sustainability in Lyon County means using our resources (land, energy, water, and materials) in ways that support current needs while protecting the ability of future generations to thrive. It is about making practical, balanced choices that protect the environment, strengthen the economy, and enhance quality of life.

7.2 Solid Waste Management

Lyon County is committed to responsible solid waste management through its participation in the Southwest Regional Solid Waste Commission, a joint powers board organized to facilitate planning, management, and implementation of solid waste management across the twelve-county area. The county operates its own landfill and household hazardous waste facility, ensuring that waste is managed in an environmentally sound manner while providing residents with safe disposal options for materials that could pose risks to human health and the environment. Through its partnerships, Lyon County aligns with regional efforts to reduce landfill dependency, encourage waste diversion, and promote public awareness of proper waste management practices.

Recycling plays a crucial role in Lyon County's sustainability strategy, with local programs supporting the collection and processing of paper, plastics, metals, and other recyclable materials. The county works alongside its regional partners and area municipalities to enhance recycling accessibility, increase participation, and minimize contamination in the recycling stream. Additionally, special collection events for electronics, appliances, and hazardous household materials provide residents with responsible disposal alternatives beyond traditional waste collection services. By investing in waste reduction initiatives and sustainable disposal methods, Lyon County continues to strengthen its environmental stewardship while supporting the long-term health and resilience of its communities.

Aluminum and Steel Cans



Aluminum Cans
Steel Food Cans
Tin Cans

Recycling tips
***No need to remove labels**
***Quick rinse**

Food and Beverage Cartons



Broth Boxes
Drink Boxes
Juice Cartons
Milk Cartons

Recycling tips
***Quick rinse**
***No need to remove cap**
***Do not crush**

Glass Bottles and Jars



Glass food containers
(example: pickle jars, jam jars)
Pop bottles
Beer bottles

Recycling tips
***No need to remove labels**
***Quick rinse**
***No need to remove caps**
***No dishware glass or window/mirror glass**

Kitchen, Laundry, Bath: Bottles and Containers



Berry containers
Juice containers
Milk jugs
Water bottles
Yogurt or butter tubs

Recycling tips
***No need to remove labels**
***Quick rinse**
***No need to remove caps**

Paperboard including pop/beer boxes



Beer and pop boxes
Cake and snack boxes
Cereal boxes
Pizza delivery boxes
Frozen food boxes
(food must not touch inside of container)

Recycling tips
***No need to crush**
***Leave windows in boxes**

Cardboard and Paper



Brown paper bags
Catalogs
Magazines
Office/school paper
(all colors)
Junk mail
Newspaper and inserts
Cardboard

Recycling tips
***Flatten cardboard**

Solid Waste Management – Subsection 1. Lyon County Landfill

The county recognizes the importance of efficient waste management practices in minimizing environmental impact and maximizing resource recovery. At the forefront of these efforts is the Lyon County Landfill, which serves as a critical facility for waste disposal and recycling operations. Landfills are complex operations complete with pumps, pipes, wastewater collection, and landfill gas flaring controls. It's not just a "dump", and several people work there to ensure that our landfill is run effectively and efficiently at no risk to the environment.

Lyon County's Regional landfill serves eight (8) Counties with garbage disposal and is a collection point for recycling bulky materials such as TVs & computer electronics, large appliances, tires, and triple-rinsed pesticide jugs. Without this facility, counties would be forced to haul waste much farther; leading to significantly higher costs. The local availability of a regulated disposal site ensures that waste can be handled cost-effectively and in compliance with state and federal standards.

The presence of the landfill also allows for regional coordination of waste reduction, recycling, and hazardous material collection programs, assisting smaller counties meet regulatory requirements they might otherwise struggle to achieve on their own. Additionally, it provides infrastructure that supports business and industrial development. Developers are more likely to invest in areas where waste services are reliable, affordable, and locally accessible. In short, the Lyon County Landfill is not just a waste site; it's an important factor in regional resilience, inter-county collaboration, and economic competitiveness.



Furthermore, the landfill is managed with a focus on sustainability principles, aiming to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfills through comprehensive recycling and composting programs. Additionally, the landfill implements technology and best practices to maximize landfill capacity and efficiency.

Lyon County is committed to community engagement and transparency regarding waste management practices at the landfill. The county regularly communicates with residents through mailers, programs, and other informational campaigns to raise awareness about proper waste disposal methods and the importance of recycling. By fostering a culture of environmental stewardship and responsibility, Lyon County aims to ensure that waste management practices align with sustainable development goals and contribute to the overall well-being of the community.

PHASE 4

Solid Waste Management – Subsection 2. Household Hazardous Waste Facility

In addition to the county landfill, there is a Household Hazardous Waste Facility in Marshall which plays a pivotal role in the county's waste management strategy within the broader context of sustainability. This facility serves as a crucial hub for residents to safely dispose of hazardous materials that pose environmental and health risks if not managed properly.

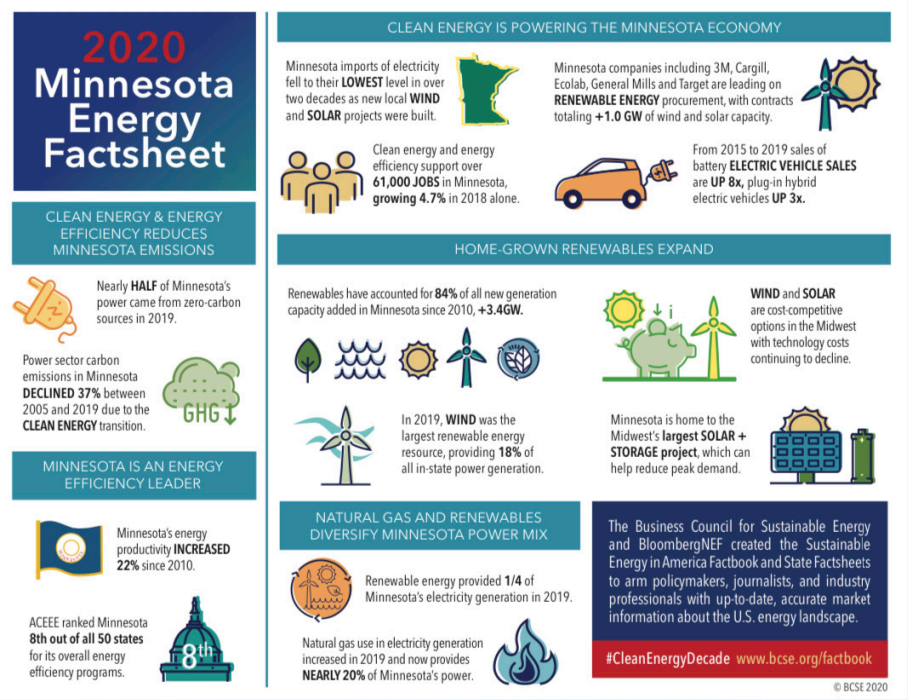
The Household Hazardous Waste Facility is designed to accept a wide range of household hazardous waste items, including paints, solvents, pesticides, batteries, and electronics. By providing a convenient and accessible disposal option, Lyon County aims to prevent these materials from entering landfills or being improperly disposed of, thereby reducing potential contamination of soil, water, and air.

Moreover, the facility operates with a focus on education and outreach, offering resources and guidance to residents on the safe handling and disposal of hazardous materials. Lyon County conducts educational workshops, distributes informational materials, and promotes the use of the Household Hazardous Waste Facility through community engagement initiatives. These efforts are aimed at increasing awareness among residents about the importance of responsible waste management practices and encouraging participation in sustainable behaviors.

Furthermore, Lyon County continually evaluates and enhances the operations of the Household Hazardous Waste Facility to ensure compliance with environmental regulations and best practices in hazardous waste management. The facility incorporates innovative technologies and processes to efficiently manage and process hazardous materials while minimizing environmental impact. By maintaining a dedicated facility for household hazardous waste, Lyon County demonstrates its commitment to protecting public health and the environment, promoting sustainability, and fostering a cleaner and safer community for all residents

7.3 Clean Energy

Lyon County is quickly becoming an epicenter for clean energy projects. A 345 kV transmission line, wind projects, and a large solar project are anticipated to change the landscape of southern Lyon County. In southwestern Minnesota, landowners and local governments receive revenue from these developments. For the county and local townships, this comes in the form of a Production Tax Credit (PTC). These revenues fund roads and bridges, public building renovations, matching funds for grants, broadband expansion, and even property tax relief.



As Lyon County experiences increased investment in wind and solar energy, the landscape; not just physically but economically, is shifting. Traditionally, agricultural landowners have generated revenue through crop or livestock production, then reinvesting those earnings into farm operations by purchasing inputs like seed, equipment, fuel, and labor. This spending cycle has long supported a broad network of local agri-businesses and suppliers. However, with the emergence of renewable energy leases, landowners are now receiving stable, long-term payments from energy developers. While this still represents revenue flowing into the local economy, how that revenue is spent is changing. Rather than reinvesting directly into agricultural production, some of this income may support family finances, off-farm business ventures, or savings and retirement. This shift has complex implications for the local economy; on one hand, diversifying income strengthens financial security for landowners; on the other, it may reduce local spending on ag-related goods and services. Recognizing this evolving economic pattern is essential for understanding the broader impacts of land use change and the role renewable energy can play in a rural economy.

Clean Energy – Subsection 1. CERT's PV Success Workshops

Introduction

The following is a summary of priorities expressed in a series of 15 interviews and a two-part solar workshop conducted by the Clean Energy Resource Teams (University of Minnesota Extension) in Lyon County during January - March 2025. Participants were Lyon County residents: predominantly farmers, as well as members of the business community, local government staff, and elected officials.

The primary focus of the engagement was solar development, though wind was also discussed at times. Workshop topics included economic development aspects of renewable energy development, sitting and permitting decision making processes at county and state levels, visual preferences, and desired community benefits from renewable energy development.

The sections below summarize key themes that arose during the engagement process.

Land Use and Energy Development Priorities

Farmland: Maintenance of prime farmland was the most frequently expressed priority, with a desire to see renewable energy sited on marginal lands, buildings, and parking lots. A related priority was land access for farmers who rent from other landowners. Overall, cropland tended to be seen as the desired use for the majority of land in the county, complemented by other land uses (especially agricultural, but also including small business, industrial, and housing) to support economic diversity. Agrivoltaics was discussed—and generally viewed favorably—with grazing and vegetable production seen as the most likely compatible uses. The idea of farming or gardening in buffers was also raised.

Aesthetics: The priority expressed with respect to aesthetics was maintaining views of the agricultural landscape. Also discussed were buffers and flower plantings under installations. A related question shared by several participants was the potential impact of renewable energy development on property values.

Natural resources: This was another common theme throughout the engagement process, particularly the importance of outdoor recreation, parks, hunting, and wildlife, including ensuring that the movement of wildlife is not inhibited by development. Other natural resource issues prioritized included the protection of soil health and water quality, as well as pollinator habitat. Ground cover and use of no-till practices were raised in connection with this conversation.

Energy and economy: Multiple participants shared questions or concerns about the degree to which energy and economic benefits associated with solar would remain in the community, with priority placed on generation for local use. Interest was expressed in having a neutral source of analysis of economic costs and benefits associated with utility-scale renewable energy development. Related questions included differences in tax rates based on zoning of solar developments vs. agricultural land uses, as well as production taxes related to community-scale installations.

Decommissioning: Participants shared previous experiences with businesses (such as elevators) that have been abandoned, expressing concerns about this happening with energy projects. Accountability for project sites was thus a high priority for participants, particularly the need to ensure that regardless of future ownership changes, decommissioning costs would not be borne by the community. Another key priority raised was ensuring that soil health would be maintained on sites throughout the life of the project.

Community needs: Over the course of the engagement, participants identified the following as important priorities in Lyon County communities (not specific to energy development):

- Workforce
- Childcare
- Employment
- Cell and broadband coverage
- Infrastructure: sewer upgrades, good roads
- Local schools and scholarships, including for education in the trades
- Housing
- Revolving loan fund

Process Priorities

In addition to the land use priorities described above, project development and decision-making processes were an area of major concern for numerous participants, who highlighted the importance of engaging with communities up front, incorporating local decision makers, and finding an appropriate balance between property rights and community priorities. Participants' ideas included:

- Transparency from the beginning (by developers and decision-makers), while there is still time to shape the outcome
- Incorporating participation of local staff and officials into the State's decision-making processes (e.g., county commissioners, local staff of State offices, etc.)
- Reliable information about potential projects, shared in multiple formats
- Landowner education (contracting, screening developers)
- Developers notifying the County before seeking agreements with landowners
- Finding the appropriate balance between property rights and community priorities.

Clean Energy – Subsection 2. Energy Efficiency

Lyon County recognizes the importance of energy efficiency in promoting sustainability, reducing long-term costs, and minimizing environmental impacts. Improving energy efficiency in public infrastructure, businesses, and residential properties helps lower energy consumption while supporting the county's broader sustainability and resilience goals. The county encourages energy-efficient building practices, including high-performance insulation, LED lighting, and smart energy management systems, to reduce demand on the electrical grid. Additionally, the county recommends that municipal buildings and county facilities should explore opportunities to integrate energy-efficient retrofits and renewable energy sources, such as solar and geothermal, to enhance operational sustainability.

PACE Projects in Lyon County, MN

PHASE 4

Empowering Energy Efficiency Through Innovative Financing

■ County Impact Snapshot

PACE-financed Projects	Total Investment
4	$242,440

■ What is PACE?

Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) financing helps businesses improve energy efficiency by funding improvements—such as insulation, HVAC upgrades, or solar—paid back through a property tax assessment.

■ Benefits for Lyon County Businesses:

- No upfront capital required
- Long-term savings through lower energy costs
- No impact on the business's bottom line
- Increases building value and sustainability

■ Administered By:

Southwest Regional Development Commission (SRDC)
In partnership with the Rural Minnesota Energy Board (RMEB)





The county will continue collaboration with partners including the Minnesota Department of Commerce, the Rural Minnesota Energy Board, the Southwest Regional Development Commission, and the Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs) to identify, and explore energy-saving strategies for both new developments and existing infrastructure. By collaborating with regional and state partners, Lyon County can stay informed on emerging technologies and best practices that make energy efficiency more accessible and beneficial for the entire community. This will also provide access to technical assistance and funding opportunities for energy efficiency programs.

Lyon County also promotes participation in utility rebate programs and energy audits that help homeowners and businesses identify cost-saving energy improvements. On a broader scale, land use planning efforts support compact development patterns and infill developments, which can reduce energy demand by minimizing urban sprawl and improving transportation and utility efficiency. The county continues to explore innovative ways to improve energy efficiency while balancing cost savings and long-term sustainability. By focusing on practical, cost-effective solutions, the county can help residents, businesses, and local governments reduce energy expenses while enhancing overall efficiency.

7.4 Water Resources

Lyon County's surface waters, its rivers, streams, lakes, and wetlands are vital natural assets that support agriculture, recreation, wildlife habitat, and the overall quality of life. Major rivers such as the Redwood, Yellow Medicine, and Cottonwood Rivers shape the landscape and serve as critical drainage systems across the county. Protecting the health of these surface waters is essential to maintaining water quality, preventing soil erosion, and reducing the risk of downstream flooding during extreme weather events.

The Comprehensive Plan emphasizes the need for proactive surface water management through coordinated watershed planning, improved agricultural runoff controls, and preservation of riparian buffers. These practices help reduce sedimentation, nutrient loading, and contaminants that impair water bodies and threaten aquatic ecosystems. The county also supports efforts to protect and restore wetlands, which naturally filter pollutants, provide habitat, and mitigate flooding.

While rural water systems like Lincoln Pipestone and Red Rock Rural Water ensure reliable drinking water, the protection of surface water sources is a foundational component of public health and long-term water security. Similarly, modern wastewater systems play a critical role by preventing untreated effluent from entering rivers and streams. The Plan promotes investment in sewer infrastructure and stormwater management techniques to reduce surface water impacts from urban runoff and failing septic systems.

Lyon County recognizes that surface water protection depends not only on infrastructure, but also on land stewardship and public engagement. By promoting conservation practices, educating residents on watershed health, and supporting collaborative partnerships with the Redwood-Cottonwood Rivers Control Area and agencies, the county aims to safeguard its surface waters for future generations.

Water Storage Project



This project was constructed in 2023 and received a BWSR Water Quality & Storage Grant. The project is located in Section 10 of Custer Township, only ¼ mile from the Cottonwood River above Garvin Park.

Project Impacts:
• Reduces 100-year stormflow by 45.8% (181 cfs)
• Stores 30.4 acre-feet of floodwater for 18 hours
• Reduces sediment load to the Cottonwood River by 213 tons/year

Funding:
• Grant amount: $94,732.84
• Local match: $31,565.62
• Total cost: $126,298.46

This was one of the first grants awarded through this new funding source with a 75% cost-share. Due to the program's success, newer grants now offer up to 90% cost-share.



Education and outreach efforts will play a crucial role in promoting sustainable practices. The county recognizes that education is fundamental to empowering residents, businesses, and organizations to make informed decisions that positively impact the environment and the community's long-term resilience. Through targeted initiatives, workshops, and programs, Lyon County aims to raise awareness about sustainability issues such as energy conservation, waste reduction, and water management. By providing accessible information and resources, the county encourages active participation and collaboration among stakeholders in achieving sustainability goals.

Moreover, Lyon County's sustainability efforts will focus on accessibility, ensuring that all residents can contribute to and benefit from sustainable practices. Our efforts extend beyond traditional methods to include digital platforms, social media campaigns, and partnerships with local schools, businesses, and community organizations. These collaborations aim to amplify the reach and impact of sustainability initiatives and programs, fostering a culture of shared responsibility and collective action. By engaging diverse voices and perspectives, Lyon County seeks to build a resilient community that is equipped to address current and future challenges effectively.

Additionally, the importance of continuous learning and adaptation in its sustainability strategies needs to be maintained as a central theme. The county supports ongoing research, pilot projects, and innovative solutions that align with its sustainability goals. By staying informed of emerging trends and best practices in sustainability, Lyon County ensures that its education and outreach efforts remain relevant and responsive to the evolving needs of the community. Through these proactive measures, the County is committed to cultivating a sustainable future where residents thrive while preserving resources for future generations.

Environmental Fair in Marshall – September

Overview



The Environmental Fair took place over Tuesday and Wednesday in Marshall, Minnesota, attracting 35 schools from across Southwest Minnesota.



Students engaged in interactive, hands-on lessons covering a range of topics including water conservation, recycling, prairie ecology, and more.

Why It Matters

The fair promoted experiential learning, giving students the opportunity to actively explore environmental science. Activities like the soil science demonstration and interactions with live animals likely help deepen understanding and inspire curiosity.

Additional Details

- Attendance: 35 schools
- Lead educators: Miller (soil science), Gene Jeseritz (fisheries)
- Student activities: hands-on demos soil, water, prairie, recycling

7.6 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Goal:	• Increase resident participation in recycling.
Objective:	• Make connections with local organizations and schools to increase awareness • Continue to conduct environmental fair • Work with other counties to increase recycling rates • Work with regional school districts and 4-H to increase class fields trips and other programming at the landfill and the household hazardous waste facility
Timeline:	Near Term

Goal:	• Increase communication and coordination with the watershed districts, MnDOT, and other agencies on projects.
Timeline:	Ongoing
Objective:	• Create an agency checklist for initial planning meetings of projects • Add agency collaboration to regular county employee trainings
Goal:	• Identify and prioritize tile and ditch systems in local projects with local government
Timeline:	Near Term
Objective:	• Encourage multi-jurisdictional stormwater studies between townships and cities in the county.
Goal:	Identify and prioritize water storage and erosion control projects through future One Watershed grants and programs.
Timeline:	Near Term

Goal:	• To consider alternatives and future strategies based on the expected closure of C&D landfills in the region.
Timeline:	Near Term
Objective:	• Study Expansion of Rural Recycling sites throughout the region • Study the feasibility of establishing a Material Recovery Facility in Marshall
Goal:	• Identify Public Health, wellness, and local impact of land use in relation to the Landfill.
Timeline:	Long Term
Objective:	• Consider Economic Development, Public Utility, and State Standards. 1 To adhere to State/Federal Minimums in relation to Landfill operations and standards.
Timeline:	Long Term
Goal:	• To further study and implement through county policies end of life procedures and recovery plans on solar/wind development
Timeline:	Long Term
Goal:	• Work with CERT's, RMEB, and SRDC to further develop and implement Community Benefit Agreements with solar and wind developers.
Timeline:	Near Term
Goal:	• Study the feasibility of future solar development out at the landfill
Timeline:	Immediate

CHAPTER 8: IMPLEMENTATION

8.1 Introduction



Welcome to the Implementation Chapter of the Lyon County Comprehensive Plan, which serves as a guiding framework to translate the plan's vision and strategies into tangible actions and outcomes. Building upon the foundation laid out in earlier chapters, this chapter focuses on the practical steps and initiatives needed to achieve those objectives.

The plan's implementation strategy is shaped around four central themes that emerged across all chapters: Collaboration and Partnership Building, Infrastructure and Service Expansion, Economic and Workforce Development, and Resource Management. These themes represent the backbone of county-wide efforts to address current needs while positioning Lyon County for future success.

Achieving these goals will require deliberate coordination among county departments, cities and townships, schools, nonprofits, local businesses, as well as regional and state partners. By working together and leveraging shared resources, Lyon County can enhance quality of life, support a strong and diverse economy, safeguard and expand critical services, and protect its natural assets for generations to come.

8.2 COMMON THEMES

COLLABORATION & PARTNERSHIP BUILDING

Many goals emphasize partnering with local cities, counties, EDAs, schools, nonprofits, regional agencies, and state/federal partners. This includes areas like housing, workforce, recreation, utilities, agriculture, energy, and water planning.

INFRASTRUCTURE & SERVICES

Chapters consistently reference the need for expanding or upgrading infrastructure, including public utilities, broadband, childcare, transportation, parks, water systems, and housing.

ECONOMIC & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

There is a strong emphasis on supporting local economies through job training, business retention, agricultural diversification, clean energy, and access to job-ready infrastructure and services.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Multiple chapters support protecting natural resources, promoting recycling and waste reduction, enhancing water planning, encouraging clean energy, and using land efficiently through sensible development practices.

	Timeline	Lead Department	Community Partners
COLLABORATION & PARTNERSHIP BUILDING:			
Action 1: Create an annual countywide interagency meeting among cities, watershed districts, MnDOT, EDAs, nonprofits, and state agencies.	Immediate	Admin	SRDC
Action 2: Develop an agency partnership toolkit for county employees. This would guide employees and especially department heads on local contacts and organizations to touch base with on an annual basis.	NearTerm	Admin	SRDC SHIP
INFRASTRUCTURE & SERVICE EXPANSION			
Action 1: Conduct a countywide infrastructure assessment to identify gaps in utilities, broadband, housing, and childcare services.	Long term	P&Z	SHIP
Action 2: Prioritize development in areas where infrastructure exists or can be expanded efficiently, guided by a utility and transportation growth map.	Near Term	P&Z	
Action 3: Establish a capital improvement plan (CIP) fund for rural utility upgrades, safe routes to schools/parks, and broadband extension in under-served areas.	Near Term	Admin	
ECONOMIC & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT			
Action 1: Partner with local schools, SMSU, Mn West, SW PIC, LYFT, to continue the focus on providing workforce training opportunities.	Immediate	Admin	SW PIC
Action 2: Promote and support rural business development with tax abatements, revolving loans resources, and succession planning support.	Near Term	Admin	SBDC
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT			
Action 1: Expand recycling education and rural drop-off services in partnership with cities, townships, local businesses, and local waste haulers.	Near Term	Environmental	

TIMELINES

Immediate	Within 12 months
Near Term	1-3 years
Long Term	3+ years

Appendix

Appendix 1: County Fact Sheets

Appendix 2: Town Hall Meetings Summary

Appendix 3: Community Survey Results

PHASE 4



POPULATION TRENDS & CHARACTERISTICS

Figure 3. Population by Race, 2022

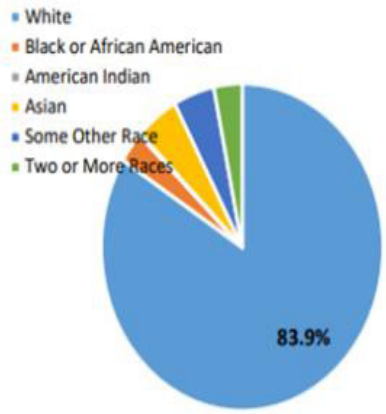


Table 4. Race and Hispanic Origin, 2022	Lyon Co.			Minnesota	
	Number	Percent	*Change from 2011-2022*	Percent	*Change from 2011-2022*
Total	**25,352**	**100.0%**	***-1.4%***	**100.0%**	***7.9%***
White	21,277	83.9%	*-8.2%*	79.7%	*-0.4%*
Black or African American	780	3.1%	*56.0%*	6.7%	*44.3%*
American Indian or Alaska Native	43	0.2%	*-66.9%*	0.9%	*-10.2%*
Asian or Other Pac. Islanders	1,236	4.9%	*78.9%*	5.1%	*37.1%*
Some Other Race	1,192	4.7%	*39.4%*	2.3%	*84.7%*
Two or More Races	824	3.3%	*135.4%*	5.3%	*159.6%*
Hispanic or Latino origin	1,934	7.6%	*26.5%*	5.7%	*34.6%*

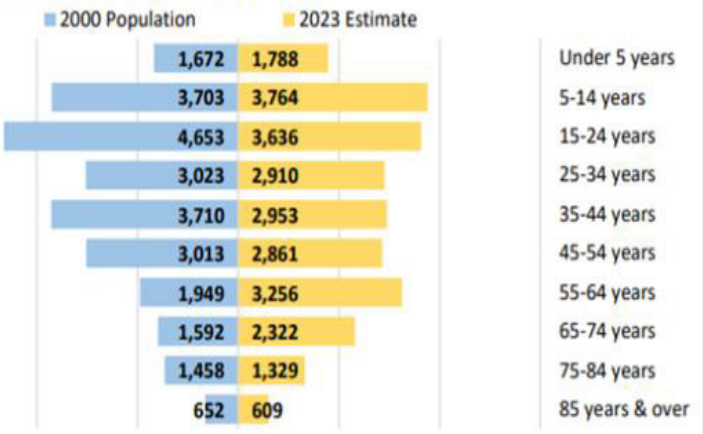
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey

Lyon County's population is predominantly White, but growing diversity is evident, particularly in Marshall and Tracy. Age distribution data show a balanced spread, with 21% under age 14, 17% age 65 or older, and the largest share between 25 and 54, representing the county's core workforce. Over the past two decades, international migration has been critical in sustaining population growth and offsetting declines from domestic outmigration and an aging population, while also contributing significantly to the local labor force and community life.

Table 1. Population by Age Group, 2023		
	Number	Percent
Under 5 years	1,788	7.0%
5-14 years	3,764	14.8%
15-24 years	3,636	14.3%
25-34 years	2,910	11.4%
35-44 years	2,953	11.6%
45-54 years	2,861	11.3%
55-64 years	3,256	12.8%
65-74 years	2,322	9.1%
75-84 years	1,329	5.2%
85 years & over	609	2.4%
Total Population	**25,427**	**100.0%**

Source: Census 2023 Population Estimates, 2018-2022 ACS

Figure 1. Population Pyramid, 2000-2023



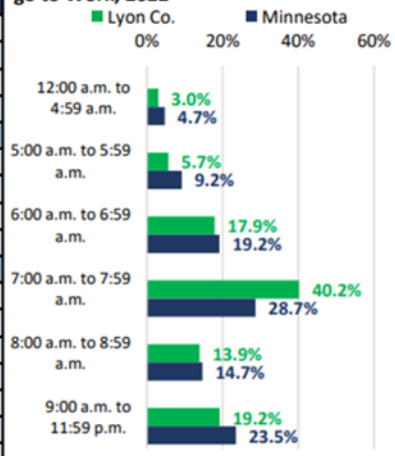
At the same time, projections suggest that the 65+ population will continue to grow over the next decade, increasing demand for health care, senior housing, and transportation services. Maintaining and attracting working-age residents (including international migration) will be critical to sustaining economic vitality and ensuring adequate labor supply.



LABOR FORCE TRENDS & CHARACTERISTICS

Table 8. Commuting Characteristics, 2022	Lyon Co.		Minnesota	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Worked in state of residence	12,469	99.0%	2,867,086	97.7%
Worked in county of residence	*11,487*	*91.2%*	*1,957,366*	*66.7%*
Worked out of county of residence	*982*	*7.8%*	*909,720*	*31.0%*
Worked outside state of residence	126	1.0%	67,495	2.3%
MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK				
Car, truck, or van	10,643	84.5%	2,338,861	79.7%
Public transportation (excl. taxicab)	25	0.2%	73,365	2.5%
Other method (walk, bike, taxi, etc.)	768	6.1%	120,318	4.1%
Worked at home	1,171	9.3%	399,103	13.6%
TRAVEL TIME TO WORK				
Less than 10 minutes	5,592	44.4%	475,402	16.2%
10 to 19 minutes	3,791	30.1%	906,786	30.9%
20 to 29 minutes	1,700	13.5%	651,477	22.2%
30 to 44 minutes	856	6.8%	563,440	19.2%
45 to 59 minutes	202	1.6%	181,944	6.2%
60 or more minutes	466	3.7%	155,533	5.3%
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	***15.2 minutes***		***23.3 minutes***	

Figure 10. Time Leaving Home to go to Work, 2022



Source: 2018-2022 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

Lyon County's labor force participation rate (67.2%) is slightly below the Minnesota average (68.7%), but its unemployment rate (3.0%) is notably lower than the statewide rate (4.0%). The highest participation rates are seen among residents aged 25 to 54, which aligns with typical peak working years. Educational attainment appears to influence participation significantly; those with a bachelor's degree or higher have a participation rate of 92.9%, compared to just 71.1% for individuals without a high school diploma. The racial breakdown of the labor force is overwhelmingly White (87.6%), with smaller shares represented by other racial and ethnic groups.

Most residents (91.2%) work within the county, and a large majority (84.5%) commute by car, truck, or van. Nearly half of residents' commute is under 10 minutes, which reflects that the majority of residents live and work within the City of Marshall. Departure times are concentrated between 7:00 and 7:59 a.m. (40.2%), aligning with traditional workday schedules. Interestingly, Lyon County has a slightly higher share of residents working from home (9.3%) compared to Minnesota as a whole (7.2%). This is most likely due to white collar employers in the area continuing Work-From-Home policies left over from the COVID-19 Pandemic.

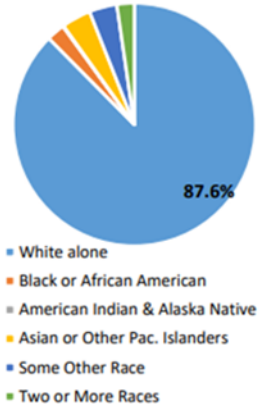


LABOR FORCE TRENDS & CHARACTERISTICS

Table 7. Employment Characteristics, 2022							
	Lyon Co.			Minnesota		*Labor Force by Gender*	
	In Labor Force *(available workers)*	Labor Force Partic. Rate	Unemp. Rate	Labor Force Partic. Rate	Unemp. Rate	*Male*	*Female*
Total Labor Force	**13,139**	**67.2%**	**3.0%**	**68.7%**	**4.0%**	***6,894***	***6,254***
16 to 19 years	814	49.4%	7.1%	53.0%	9.8%	*364*	*450*
20 to 24 years	1,322	77.2%	1.9%	83.1%	6.7%	*659*	*663*
25 to 44 years	5,245	89.7%	3.0%	88.8%	3.5%	*2,790*	*2,456*
45 to 54 years	2,431	85.2%	0.7%	87.8%	2.9%	*1,258*	*1,173*
55 to 64 years	2,529	77.9%	5.0%	72.8%	3.1%	*1,310*	*1,219*
65 to 74 years	634	27.4%	2.2%	27.6%	3.3%	*369*	*265*
75 years & over	172	8.9%	0.0%	6.6%	3.2%	*144*	*28*
Employment Characteristics by Race & Hispanic Origin							
White alone	11,511	67.5%	3.1%	67.8%	3.4%		
Black or African American	318	59.1%	6.6%	71.5%	8.7%		
American Indian & Alaska Native	16	80.0%	0.0%	57.6%	11.9%		
Asian or Other Pac. Islanders	511	64.2%	1.8%	73.9%	3.6%		
Some Other Race	486	63.3%	0.2%	76.1%	6.1%		
Two or More Races	303	80.6%	3.6%	74.3%	6.6%		
Hispanic or Latino	780	67.5%	1.8%	77.0%	6.3%		
Employment Characteristics by Disability, 20 to 64 years							
With Any Disability, 20 to 64 years	688	50.1%	6.1%	54.4%	10.2%		
Employment Characteristics by Educational Attainment, 25 to 64 years							
Population, 25 to 64 years	10,200	85.4%	3.0%	84.4%	3.3%		
Less than H.S. Diploma	493	71.1%	4.2%	67.2%	4.6%		
H.S. Diploma or Equivalent	1,920	75.2%	1.5%	76.8%	2.5%		
Some College or Assoc. Degree	4,267	87.0%	2.7%	85.1%	3.6%		
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	3,524	92.9%	2.7%	90.3%	2.0%		

Source: 2018-2022 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

Figure 9. Labor Force by Race, 2022



The labor force in Lyon County has experienced a modest long-term decline, shrinking by approximately 300 workers since The Great Recession in 2008. This trend reflects broader demographic shifts, such as aging populations and smaller incoming youth cohorts, which are evident in the labor force projections for 2025 to 2035.

While the overall labor force is expected to remain relatively flat (from 13,250 in 2025 to 13,159 in 2035), the projections show notable changes within age groups. The number of workers aged 16 to 24 and 25 to 54 is projected to rise slightly, while older age cohorts (55 to 64 and 65+) will see minimal growth or stabilization, indicating a continued reliance on older workers to maintain labor force levels. These trends show the continued historical decline in township populations throughout Lyon County.



CITY & TOWNSHIP POPULATION TABLE

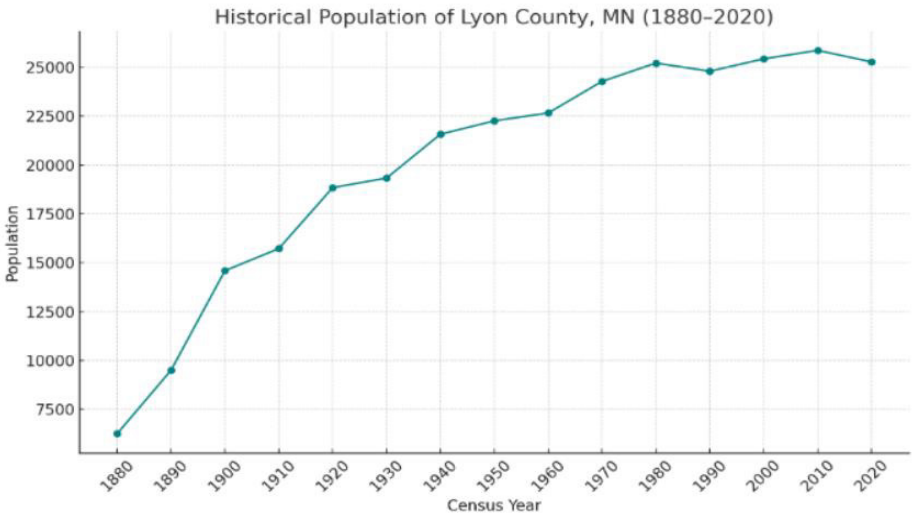
Cities	1980 Population	1990 Population	2000 Population	2010 Population		2020 Population		Change from 1980 - 2020	
Balaton	752	737	637	643		595		**-21%**	
Cottonwood	924	1,005	1,148	1,212		1,149	*	**24%**	
Florence	55	53	61	39		28		**-50%**	
Garvin	172	149	159	135		124		**-28%**	
Ghent	356	316	315	370	**	376		**6%**	
Lynd	304	287	346	448	***	436		**43%**	
Marshall	11,161	12,023	12,735	13,680		13,906		**25%**	
Minneota	1,470	1,417	1,449	1,392		1,366		**-7%**	
Russell	412	394	371	338		348		**-16%**	
Taunton	177	175	207	139		136		**-23%**	
Tracy	2,478	2,059	2,268	2,163		2,076		**-16%**	
Cities Subtotal	18,261	18,615	19,696	20,559		20,540		**12.50%**	
Townships	1980 Population	1990 Population	2000 Population	2010 Population		2020 Population		Change from 1980 - 2020	
Amiret	366	285	230	245		205		**-43%**	
Clifton	334	291	288	249		263		**-21%**	
Coon	306	286	282	244		248		**-19%**	
Custer	340	279	220	203		175		**-49%**	
Eidsvold	312	229	223	236		202		**-35%**	
Fairview	561	513	485	394		374		**-33%**	
Grandview	332	345	317	288		261		**-21%**	
Island Lake	286	250	208	175		172		**-40%**	
Lake Marshall	570	511	517	568		564		**-1%**	^^
Lucas	321	258	260	246		210		**-35%**	
Lynd	458	468	471	423	^	414		**-10%**	
Lyons	258	211	208	199		192		**-25%**	
Monroe	294	259	242	202		181		**-38%**	
Nordland	267	267	251	213		185		**-31%**	
Rock Lake	362	324	282	265		272		**-25%**	
Shelburne	285	227	180	178		189		**-33%**	
Sodus	345	271	282	283		262		**-24%**	
Stanley	299	294	254	238		194		**-35%**	
Vallers	313	289	243	214		218		**-30%**	
Westerheim	337	317	286	235		226		**-32%**	
Townships Subtotal	**6,946**	**6,174**	**5,729**	**5,298**		**5,007**		**-28%**	

* City of Cottonwood lost a major employer, Norcraft in 2018
** City of Ghent developed the Blue Bird Housing Subdivision in early to mid 2000's
*** City of Lynd gained population because it annexed in an existing housing development along its northern border in 2009
^ Lynd Township lost population because of the annexation of properties into the City of Lynd in 2009
^^ Lake Marshall Township includes 3 suburban developments (early 2000's) located just outside of City of Marshall City Limits



POPULATION OF LYON COUNTY CITIES & TOWNSHIPS

Lyon County's population grew rapidly between 1880 and 1930 as homesteaders settled the fertile farmland, tripling the population to over 19,000. Growth continued modestly until the 1960s and 1970s, when the expansion of Schwan's in Marshall spurred industrial and commercial development, pushing the county past 25,000 residents by 1980. The farm crisis of the 1980s caused some decline, and since then the county's population has remained relatively stable, just above 25,000. While smaller towns and rural areas have seen losses, Marshall has continued to grow as the county's economic and service hub.



Overall, these population shifts underscore a continued trend toward urbanization within Lyon County, as residents gravitate toward cities with more amenities, services, and economic opportunities. The concentration of growth in and around Marshall highlights the challenges faced by the more rural townships. This calls for strategies that address aging demographics, housing availability, and economic diversification to help stabilize population loss.

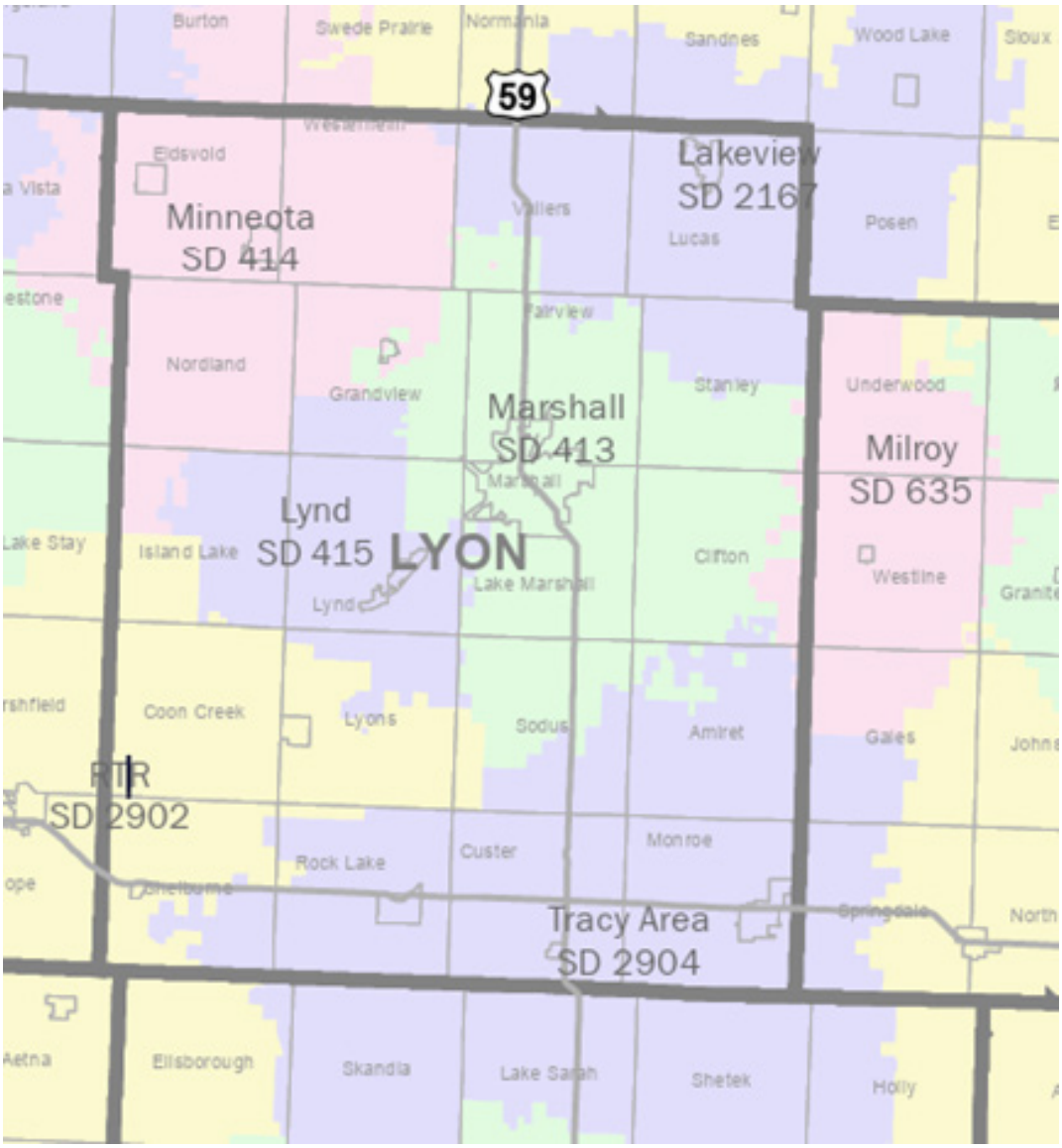
Population Trends in Lyon County

Over the past 40 years

Growth	Decline
Population in cities	Population in townships
12.5%	28%
(1980-2020)	(1980-2020)



EDUCATION:
Local School Districts





EDUCATION:
Local School Districts

Lakeview Public School

Lakeview School is comprised of two communities: Cottonwood and Wood Lake. The school is located in the town of Cottonwood, 13 miles North of Marshall. Lakeview's enrollment is approximately 710 students in Pre-K through 12th Grade.

The main building was built in 2002 after a consolidation vote. An addition was built in 2015 that included a new gymnasium, additional classroom space, and administrative offices. New athletic facilities (including an artificial turf football field) were built in 2021.

Lynd Public School

Lynd Public School operates a single building school serving Pre-K to 8th grade; Lynd is located 7 miles Southwest of Marshall. The district enrolls 160 students, with a student–teacher ratio of about 10 to 1.

Marshall Schools

Marshall Public Schools serves students in Pre-K to 12th grade. As of October 2023, total enrollment was 2,534, showing a slight dip from previous years. Recent developments in the district include a new elementary school, Southview (2nd-4th Grades) in 2021, as well as a new Alternative Learning Center opened in 2024 on the SMSU campus. The ALC shares space with Adult Basic Education and the SWWC Educational Learning Center. This modern facility supports around 48 students in alternative learning programs and demonstrates the district's commitment to diverse student needs.

Four faith-based private schools operate in Marshall, generally serving Pre-K to 8th Grade with a small alternative high school option. Collectively, they enroll approximately 450 students; about 14% of the city's school-aged population.

- Holy Redeemer School (Catholic, Pre-K to 8th Grade) ~275 students
- True Light Christian School (Christian, Pre-K to 10th Grade) ~100 students
- Samuel Lutheran School (WELS, Pre-K to 8th Grade) ~70 students
- Hope Academy of Hope Harbor (girls-only alternative, 7th to 12th Grade) ~ 5 students

Together, these private schools offer religious education options alongside the public system, serving a sizable portion of families seeking faith-based learning in the Marshall.



Minneota Public School

Minneota Public School serves grades Pre-Kindergarten through 12th Grade, encompassing two schools in one building: Minneota Elementary (Pre-K - 6) and Minneota Secondary (grades 7 - 12). The district enrolls 518 students.

Minneota Public School works with 2 partner elementary schools. Most of the students at St. Edwards Catholic School (Pre-K to 8th Grade) and Lincoln Elementary (Pre-K to 6th Grade School in Ivanhoe) attend Minneota Public School for their secondary education.

Tracy Area Public School

Tracy Area Public School District serves students from Pre-K to 12th grade in Tracy. As of 2025, the district's total enrollment is around 688 students. The Tracy Area School District was established through a merger with the Balaton School District in 2009. While Balaton had already been sending its middle and high school students to Tracy, the consolidation brought Balaton's K–6 students into the unified district.

In February 2025, the Milroy School District's Board of Education approached Tracy Area Schools for a possible merger. It is anticipated that the Milroy School District will merge into the Tracy Area School District in the next few years. Tracy is also home to St. Marys' Catholic School. A private Pre-K to 6th Grade school. Its enrollment is approximately 60 students.

Russell-Tyler-Ruthton Schools

RTR School District serves Pre-K to 12th Grade across the communities of Russell, Tyler, and Ruthton. A consolidation dating back to 2006 brought these three towns into a single district. Although centered in Lincoln County, its district boundary spans parts of Lyon, Murray, and Pipestone Counties as well, meaning residents in those counties contribute tax revenue, and some of its students attend there as well. Enrollment stands at roughly 700 students (2023)

Milroy Public School District is a very small, rural district primarily in Redwood County, but portions of its boundary extend into Lyon County (notably in Clifton Township). Making the district's operations and tax levies relevant to those living in the county. The district operates a single school building serving Pre-K to 6th grade. Enrollment stands at roughly 32 (2023).

Together, RTR and Milroy highlight how rural districts in Greater Minnesota can straddle county lines, both extending into Lyon County. This means that Lyon County property taxpayers and students are included in district operations, planning, and tax levies, even if the school buildings themselves are located in neighboring counties.



PUBLIC HEALTH & LOCAL HEALTHCARE FACILITIES

Public Health

Southwest Health & Human Services (SWHHS) is the public health and human services agency serving Lyon County and five neighboring counties: Lincoln, Murray, Pipestone, Redwood, and Rock. Its mission is to strengthen individuals, families, and communities through accessible care across public health, social services, licensing, child protection, and financial assistance programs.

SWHHS provides a wide range of services designed to protect and promote the health and well-being of individuals and families. Its Public Health Department is responsible for disease prevention, health promotion, emergency preparedness, and environmental health services. Programs include immunizations, maternal and child health home visits, infectious disease investigation, and health screenings. The department also licenses and inspects food, beverage, lodging, and recreational facilities under delegation from the Minnesota Department of Health.

In Lyon County, SWHHS plays a key role in public health education, prevention, and outreach. The department offers car seat safety programs, WIC nutrition services, family planning education, and lead testing. It also collaborates with local schools and healthcare providers to ensure that residents receive comprehensive, community-based care. Through its Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) program, SWHHS promotes long-term strategies for reducing chronic disease by encouraging healthier eating, physical activity, and tobacco-free environments. SHIP-supported initiatives include safe routes to school, workplace wellness planning, and partnerships with local food retailers and schools to increase access to nutritious foods and activity-friendly spaces.



PUBLIC HEALTH & LOCAL HEALTHCARE FACILITIES

Hospitals & Clinics

Avera Marshall Regional Medical Center (Level 3 Trama Center) is a 25-bed Critical Access Hospital that also includes a 76-bed nursing home and a 10-bed inpatient Behavioral Health Center. Founded in 1950 and part of the larger Avera Health system, the facility offers comprehensive services including emergency care, inpatient surgical and obstetrics services, rehabilitation, behavioral health, oncology treatments, pediatrics, and outpatient specialty clinics.

Access Health & Avera Medical Group Marshall is a federally qualified health center (FQHC). Operated by Rural Health Care, Inc., it provides comprehensive primary care to all ages including family medicine, OB/GYN, internal medicine, pediatric care, outpatient services, as well as evening and weekend urgent care. Overall, Access Health serves as a critical local health access point, ensuring accessible, affordable care for underserved and general populations of Lyon County.

Sanford Tracy Medical Center and Sanford Tracy Clinic operate together under one roof to provide comprehensive, community-oriented healthcare as part of the Sanford Health system. The 25-bed Critical Access Hospital maintains a 24/7 emergency department, inpatient care, diagnostics, surgery, obstetrics, and rehabilitation services, while the on-site clinic offers primary care, family medicine, pediatric and women's health, urgent care, and access to visiting specialists. Nursing Homes, Assisted Living, & Memory Care Facilities



Nursing Homes, Assisted Living, & Memory Care Facilities

Nursing homes, also known as skilled nursing facilities, offer comprehensive medical and personal care for individuals who require 24-hour supervision and assistance due to chronic illness, injury, or disabilities. These facilities provide skilled nursing care, including medication management, physical and occupational therapy, and rehabilitation services. Residents often have complex health needs that require regular monitoring by licensed nurses and access to physicians. Nursing homes also support activities of daily living (ADLs) such as bathing, dressing, eating, and mobility. They serve both short-term patients recovering from surgery or illness and long-term residents who need ongoing care.

- Prairie View Senior Living (Tracy) – Provides skilled nursing, transitional care, long-term stays, and respite care. Located conveniently next to the Sanford Tracy Clinic.
- Avera Morningside Heights Care Center (Marshall) – Part of the Avera Marshall facility, offering skilled nursing services and adult day programming.

Assisted living facilities serve individuals who need some help with daily activities but do not require the intensive medical care found in nursing homes. These communities provide a residential environment where seniors can maintain as much independence as possible while receiving assistance with tasks such as medication reminders, meal preparation, housekeeping, transportation, and personal hygiene. Assisted living often includes social and recreational activities, wellness programs, and communal dining, promoting quality of life and social engagement. Staff members are available around the clock to respond to residents' needs and emergencies, but medical services are generally less intensive than in nursing homes.

- Boulder Estates (601 Village Drive, Marshall) – An assisted living, and independent living community.
- Heritage Pointe Senior Living (207 N 4th St, Marshall) – Provides assisted living, independent living, and dedicated memory care units, emphasizing supportive social environments and personalized meals.
- Central Minnesota Senior Care (1232 Patricia Court, Marshall) – Offers 24/7 assisted living services, Alzheimer's/memory care support, and apartment-style living.
- Hill Street Place (401 S Hill St, Marshall) – Assisted living community.
- Fieldcrest Assisted Living (80 E Vermillion St, Cottonwood) – Residential care facility offering personalized plans, housekeeping, meals, and medication support.
- Lakeview Senior Housing (651 Highway 14 East, Balaton) – Offers supportive assisted living and memory care services with structured dementia-friendly programming.

Many assisted living communities also offer memory care services tailored to residents with Alzheimer's disease or other types of dementia. Memory care units provide specialized staff trained to manage cognitive impairments, secure environments to prevent wandering, and structured activities designed to stimulate memory and cognitive function. Both nursing homes and assisted living facilities emphasize a holistic approach to care, focusing not only on physical health but also emotional well-being, social connections, and maintaining dignity and independence for their residents.



PUBLIC HEALTH & LOCAL HEALTHCARE FACILITIES

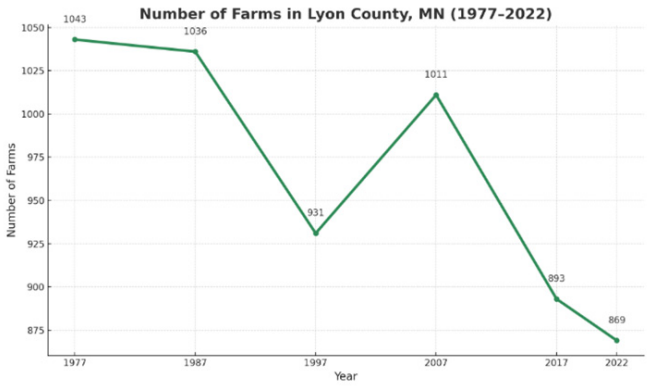
Mental Health & Addiction Recovery Services

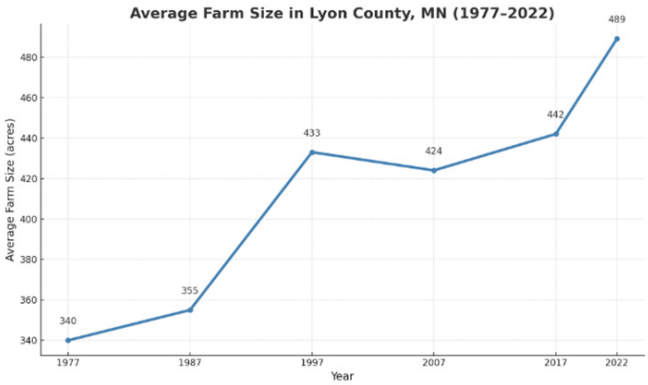
Western Mental Health Center, established in 1958 following the Minnesota Community Mental Health Act, is a nonprofit behavioral healthcare provider offering outpatient therapy, psychiatric care, medication management, substance-use services, mobile crisis intervention, and community-based programs throughout Lyon and surrounding counties. With an integrated, holistic care approach, it serves individuals of all ages via its Lyon County office in Marshall, collaborating closely with schools, courts, county services, and local health systems to support mental wellness across southwest Minnesota.

Project Turnabout -Marshall, part of a larger rural treatment network founded in 1970, operates a 24-bed transitional living/home facility for adult men recovering from chemical dependency. Located in Marshall and accredited by CARF, the site supports males aged 16 and older transitioning out of inpatient programs through structured therapy, life-skills training, 12-step support, psychiatric evaluations, outpatient care, and treatment for co-occurring mental health conditions. Serving as a bridge between inpatient care and independent living, the facility provides affordable, clinically supported recovery options tailored to rural communities in Lyon County



AGRICULTURE:Farms



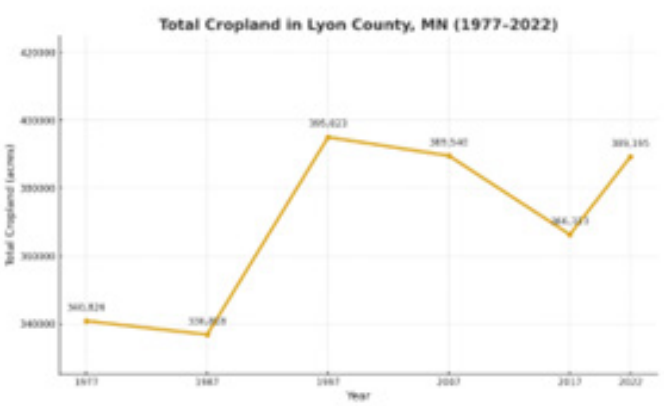


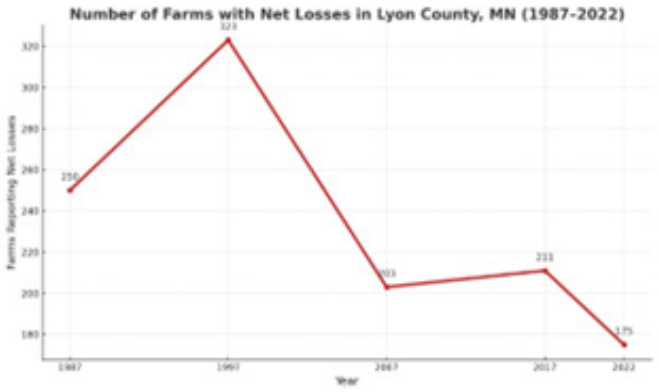
Between 1977 and 2022, Lyon County experienced a significant shift in the structure of its agricultural landscape, as shown in these charts. The number of farms declined from 1,043 to 869, a decrease of about 17%. This long-term trend reflects ongoing farm consolidation, where smaller farms either close or are absorbed into larger operations. The overall pattern shows fewer, but often more capital-intensive and technologically advanced farms operating in the county.

At the same time, the average size of farms in Lyon County increased steadily, growing from 340 acres in 1977 to 489 acres in 2022 (44% increase). This trend aligns with national and regional patterns, where larger farms are better positioned to take advantage of economies of scale, modern machinery, and global commodity markets. The combination of fewer farms and increased average size suggests a transition toward more concentrated and industrialized agricultural production, with implications for land use, economic development, and rural community dynamics.



AGRICULTURE:Farms





The Census of Agriculture data from 1987 to 2022 highlights a significant shift in the structure of agriculture in Lyon County. Over this period, both the total number of farms and the number of farms reporting net losses have declined, suggesting that the remaining farms are generally more financially stable. These trends reflect the ongoing consolidation of the agricultural economy; smaller or less profitable farms have been consolidated, while larger, more efficient operations have emerged in their place, better equipped to manage risk and maintain profitability.

Meanwhile, total cropland acreage in the county has remained relatively stable, even as the number of individual farms has declined. This indicates that farmland is not being lost but rather concentrated among fewer, larger operations. A key factor enabling this transition has been the increase in government payments to farms over time. Programs such as commodity subsidies, conservation incentives, and crop insurance have grown in scale and importance, providing a financial buffer against market volatility and adverse weather. These payments tend to favor larger farms with more acreage, reinforcing the trend toward consolidation. Collectively, these patterns illustrate how market forces, public policy, and operational scale have reshaped the agricultural landscape in Lyon County over the past several decades.



AGRICULTURE: Crops

		1987	1997	2007	2017	2022
Corn						
	Farms	795	675	606	574	517
	Acres	107,532	154,986	191,161	177,305	180,786
Oats						
	Farms	317	76	48	12	23
	Acres	8,356	1,637	1,687	373	1,297
Soybeans						
	Farms	778	675	578	562	533
	Acres	114,841	163,984	151,513	154,568	165.332
Wheat						
	Farms	372	121	75	38	22
	Acres	16,003	5,140	3,614	2,859	1,363
Hemp *						
	Farms					2
	Acres					n/a

* Only Available in 2022

This data reveals several key trends in crop production and farm consolidation in Lyon County over the past four decades. Most notably, while the number of farms growing corn and soybeans has steadily declined since 1987, the total number of acres dedicated to these two major row crops has increased significantly. For example, corn acres rose from 107,532 in 1987 to over 180,000 in 2022, even as the number of corn farms dropped by more than one-third. Similarly, soybean acreage expanded from 114,841 to 165,332 acres during the same period, despite a reduction in the number of farms from 778 to 533. These patterns reflect a broader trend of farm consolidation in which fewer, larger operations are managing more land.

Conversely, small grain crops such as oats and wheat have seen sharp declines in both the number of farms and acres planted. Oat production dropped from over 8,000 acres in 1987 to just 1,297 acres by 2022. Wheat saw a similar drop, going from 16,003 acres in 1987 to just 1,363 acres in 2022. This reflects a shift away from traditional rotational grains toward more profitable and high-demand crops like corn and soybeans. The 2022 data also notes the emergence of hemp production, with two farms reporting the crop, signaling some interest in diversifying with specialty or niche crops. Altogether, these trends illustrate the increasing scale and specialization of crop farming in Lyon County.



AGRICULTURE: Livestock

Cattle & Calves						
	Farms	368	313	277	257	210
	Inventory	39,267	43,614	73,865	57,633	57,000
Hogs & Pigs						
	Farms	334	218	119	78	82
	Inventory	110,551	176,014	196,534	251,248	444,988
Sheep & Lambs						
	Farms	98	46	42	32	38
	Inventory	5,377	2,866	4,178	2,942	2,775
All Goats *						
	Farms	N/A	N/A	19	38	22
	Inventory	N/A	N/A	797	2,859	1,363
Any Poultry **						
	Farms	N/A	22	34	27	40
Farms by Inventory (1-49)		N/A	12	20	18	31

* All Goats Category began in the 2007 Ag Census

** Data Not Available by County in 1987 Ag Census

Livestock trends in Lyon County over the past several decades show a marked decline in the number of farms raising animals, accompanied by a shift toward fewer, larger-scale operations. This is especially evident in the hog and pig sector, where the number of farms dropped from 334 in 1987 to just 82 in 2022, while inventory skyrocketed from 110,551 to nearly 445,000 animals. A similar, though less dramatic, pattern is visible in cattle production: the number of cattle farms declined from 368 to 210, while total inventory remained relatively stable, peaking in 2007 before leveling off around 57,000 head. These trends reflect the industrialization and consolidation of livestock farming, with operations becoming more capital-intensive and production focused.

Smaller-scale livestock such as sheep, goats, and poultry remain relatively niche in Lyon County but show signs of gradual diversification. Sheep and lamb inventories have declined substantially from their 1987 levels, though the number of farms has slightly rebounded since 2017. Poultry farming has gradually increased, with 40 farms reporting in 2022. These smaller-scale and specialty livestock operations may indicate a growing interest in diversified or alternative agricultural markets, but they remain dwarfed by the scale of hog and cattle production. Overall, Lyon County's livestock sector mirrors national trends of consolidation, efficiency gains, and the emergence of niche markets.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Recreation Highlight

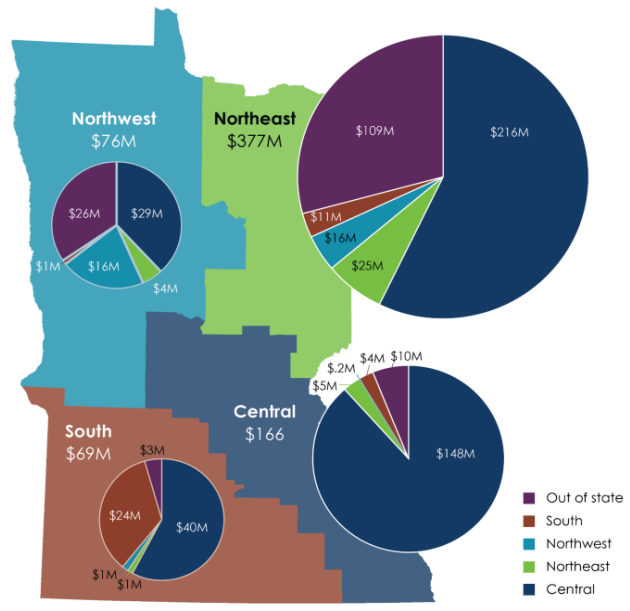
Camden State Park

The economic impact of Camden State Park extends beyond its boundaries, benefiting nearby communities and businesses in Lyon County. Tourists visiting the park often spend money at local gas stations, grocery stores, and restaurants, generating revenue for the area. Events such as interpretive programs and group activities at the park further draw participants who contribute to the regional economy. By serving as a gateway to southwest Minnesota's natural beauty, Camden State Park plays a vital role in promoting tourism and supporting sustainable economic growth in the county.

Camden State Park is a cornerstone of tourism in Lyon County, offering visitors a serene natural retreat and a variety of outdoor activities that draw both locals and travelers from across the region. Known for its rolling prairies, wooded ravines, and the picturesque Redwood River, the park provides year-round opportunities for hiking, camping, fishing, and birdwatching. During the summer, the park's spring-fed swimming pool and shaded picnic areas attract families, while its cross-country skiing and snowshoeing trails make it a destination for winter recreation. These amenities not only enhance the quality of life for area residents but also position the park as a key attraction for visitors seeking a connection with nature.

Camden State Park Yearly Attendance				
Year	**Vehicle Count**	**Day Use Visitors**	**Overnight Visitors**	**Total Visitors**
2020	33,066	106,159	15,034	121,193
2021	31,448	101,121	17,650	118,771
2022	28,702	93,052	16,332	109,384
2023	28,849	92,968	16,050	109,018
4 Year Average	30,516	98,325	16,267	114,592

Figure 50: Park visitor spending in each region, by region of visitor origin



2022 DNR STATE PARK VISITOR STUDY

Visitors to Minnesota state parks spend on average about $67 per person per day during their trips to state parks.

- **Overnight per visitors spend $71 per person per day**
- **Day-use visitors (traveling from home) spend $37 per person per day, and**
- **Day-use visitors on overnight trips spend $124 per person per day.**

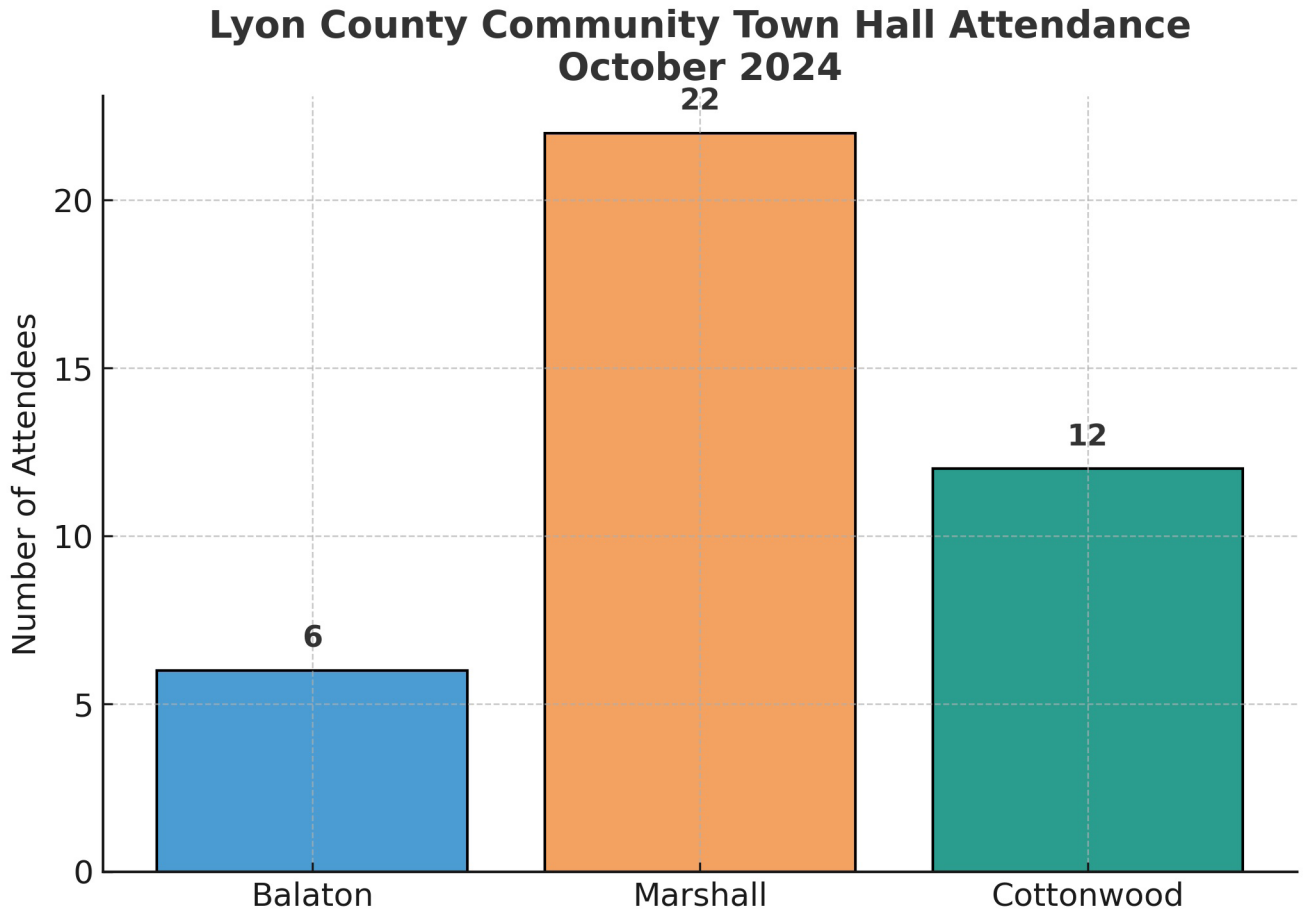


TOWNHALL MEETING SUMMARIES

Lyon County Planning and Zoning staff, along with staff from the Southwest Regional Development Commission (SRDC), hosted three community town hall meetings in October, 2024 to gather input on county planning initiatives. The meetings were held in Balaton on Monday, October 28 at 5:00 p.m., in Marshall on Monday, October 28 at 7:00 p.m., and in Cottonwood on Tuesday, October 29 at 5:00 p.m.

Attendance varied by location, with 6 participants in Balaton, 22 participants in Marshall, and 12 participants in Cottonwood. These sessions provided an opportunity for residents to share feedback, ask questions, and learn more about ongoing planning efforts in Lyon County.

To encourage participation, Lyon County mailed meeting invitations to all Planning & Zoning Newsletter addresses in the county and promoted the events through Facebook. This outreach helped ensure broad community awareness and opportunities for residents from across the county to attend and engage in the planning process.





CITY OF BALATON PROFILE

QUICK FACTS

- 595 Population (2020 Census)
- 46.7 Median age
- 279 Housing Units
- 2.06 Average Household Size

Balaton, Minnesota, is a vibrant community in Lyon County, known for its strong sense of community, economic development, and cultural heritage. The city has been proactive in expanding housing options, with initiatives like the Eastbay housing development, which includes a multigenerational park, and infrastructure improvements such as fiber broadband and natural gas access. Economically, Balaton is home to Ralco, a company specializing in animal nutrition and aquaculture, including the Tru Shrimp division, which operates a shrimp farming facility in town. Culturally, Balaton hosts the annual Balaton Fun Fest during the first weekend of July, featuring fireworks, a parade, live music, and a BBQ contest, fostering community spirit and attracting visitors. With its commitment to growth, innovation, and community engagement, Balaton offers a welcoming environment for residents.







CITY OF COTTONWOOD PROFILE

QUICK FACTS

- 1,149 Population (2020 Census)
- 38.8 Median age
- 543 Housing Units
- 2.39 Average Household Size

Cottonwood, Minnesota, is a close-knit community in Lyon County, known for its strong educational foundation, and vibrant local events. The city is served by Lakeview Public Schools, which includes a modern pre-K-12 campus that opened in 2002, providing quality education to students in the area. Each year, Cottonwood hosts the "Coming Home Days" festival during the second weekend of July, featuring a variety of events such as a parade, live music, and family-friendly activities, fostering a sense of community pride and celebration. In recent years, the Cottonwood Economic Development Authority (EDA) actively working to attract and support new businesses, aiming to enhance the local economy and provide more opportunities for residents. With its commitment to education, community engagement, and economic development, Cottonwood offers a welcoming environment for families and individuals seeking a small-town lifestyle with access to modern amenities and a strong sense of community.





CITY OF FLORENCE PROFILE

QUICK FACTS

- 28 Population (2020 Census)
- 30.0 Median age
- 13 Housing Units
- 3.63 Average Household Size

Florence, Minnesota, is a quaint rural city in Lyon County, known for its tight-knit community. Established in 1888, Florence was named after Florence Sherman, the daughter of one of the town's first settlers. The city covers a modest area of 0.108 square miles and had a population of 28 as of the 2020 census. The city is served by the RTR School District, which includes a modern pre-K–12 campus, providing quality education to students in the area. While Florence itself is a small community, it benefits from its location along MN HWY 23, which provides residents easy access to Pipestone, Marshall and even Sioux Falls that offers additional amenities and services.





CITY OF GARVIN PROFILE

QUICK FACTS

- 124 Population (2020 Census)
- 55.0 Median age
- 43 Housing Units
- 2.14 Average Household Size

Garvin, Minnesota, is a charming rural community in Lyon County with a population of approximately 124 residents. The town is served by the Tracy Area Public School District, providing educational opportunities for local students. It offers a peaceful rural lifestyle, but it is located along US HWY 59, which allows access to nearby amenities including the City of Marshall, Lake Shetek, and Garvin County Park. Residents enjoy a close-knit community atmosphere, making it an appealing place for those seeking a tranquil setting with a strong sense of community.





CITY OF GHENT PROFILE

QUICK FACTS

- 376 Population (2020 Census)
- 34.3 Median age
- 184 Housing Units
- 2.68 Average Household Size

Ghent, Minnesota, is a picturesque small town in Lyon County, celebrated for its strong sense of community and rich Belgian heritage. The city is home to the Bluebird Court subdivision, a recent housing development that offers modern homes in a scenic setting, (including a new childcare center that serves families in the region) attracting young families and retirees alike. Each year, Ghent hosts the Belgian American Days festival during the first weekend of August, a vibrant celebration featuring a rolle bolle tournament, a car show, a grand parade, Belgian cookie-making demonstrations, and a lively street dance, all reflecting the town's cultural roots.





CITY OF LYND PROFILE

QUICK FACTS

- 436 Population (2020 Census)
- 26.5 Median age
- 193 Housing Units
- 3.33 Average Household Size

Lynd, Minnesota, is a close-knit community nestled in the Southwestern corner of Lyon County, offering a blend of small-town charm and natural beauty. The Lynd Public School District serves the community, providing education from preschool through eighth grade at Lynd Public School. Mere minutes from town, Camden State Park stands as one of southwestern Minnesota's most scenic outdoor destinations. Covering over 2,200 acres along the Redwood River, the park offers year-round recreation. Making Lynd a coveted location for residents that like the proximity of the State Park and the Economic Center of Marshall.







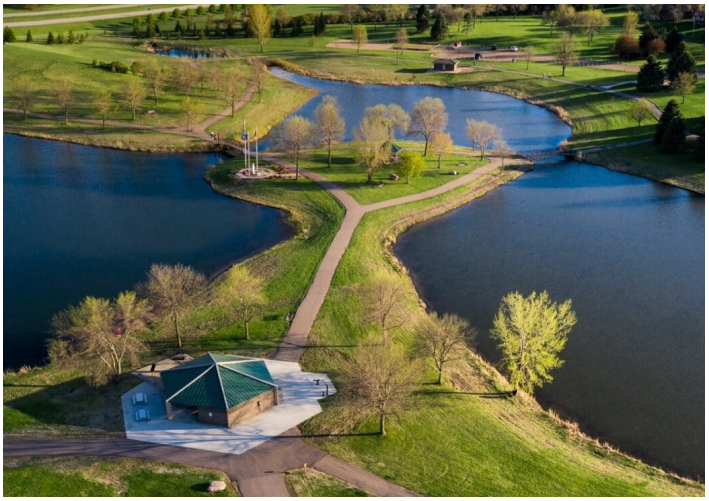
CITY OF MARSHALL PROFILE

QUICK FACTS

- 13,890 Population
  (2020 Census)
- 35.0 Median age
- 6,253 Housing Units
- 2.36 Average Household Size

Marshall, Minnesota, is a vibrant community, known for its strong educational institutions, lively festivals, and diverse employment opportunities. The city is served by Marshall Public Schools, as well as Southwest Minnesota State University (SMSU) which contributes to the region's educational landscape. In terms of employment, major employers in Marshall include Avera Marshall Regional Medical Center, Schwan's Company, Turkey Valley Farms, U.S. Bancorp, and SMSU, offering a range of job opportunities across various sectors. The community comes together annually for the "Sounds of Summer" festival, a four-day celebration featuring music, food, and family-friendly activities, fostering a strong sense of community spirit.







CITY OF MINNEOTA PROFILE

QUICK FACTS

- 1,366 Population (2020 Census)
- 34.6 Median age
- 677 Housing Units
- 3.27 Average Household Size

Minneota, Minnesota is a welcoming community in Lyon County known for its strong school system and rich cultural traditions. Minneota Public Schools serve as a centerpiece of the community, providing quality education and opportunities that bring families together and support the city's youth. Each summer, the town celebrates its heritage with the annual Boxelder Bug Days festival, which features parades, live music, food, and activities that highlight local pride and community spirit. Surrounded by productive farmland and offering a small-town atmosphere with modern amenities, Minneota combines educational excellence, lively traditions, and a strong sense of identity that make it a vibrant place to live and visit.







CITY OF RUSSELL PROFILE

QUICK FACTS

- 348 Population (2020 Census)
- 51.4 Median age
- 178 Housing Units
- 2.07 Average Household Size

Russell, Minnesota is a close-knit community in Lyon County that takes pride in both its rural character and strong sense of tradition. The city is home to Band Wagon Days, an annual summer festival that features a parade, live entertainment, food, and family-friendly activities that bring residents and visitors together to celebrate local spirit. Russell is also fortunate to be located on the shores of Clear Lake, which offers fishing, boating, and outdoor recreation, while its close proximity to Camden State Park provides additional opportunities for camping, hiking, and enjoying the area's natural beauty. In recent years, the city has invested in major infrastructure upgrades, including improvements to its water and sewer systems, ensuring reliable services and preparing the community for the future. With its mix of hometown pride, natural resources, and forward-looking projects, Russell remains a vibrant small town in southwest Minnesota.







CITY OF TAUNTON PROFILE

QUICK FACTS

- 136 Population (2020 Census)
- 38.5 Median age
- 69 Housing Units
- 2.09 Average Household Size

Taunton is a small rural community located in the northwestern part of Lyon County, near the South Dakota border. With a population of just over 100 residents, Taunton is characterized by its close-knit community atmosphere, agricultural roots, and quiet small-town setting. The city provides a peaceful lifestyle surrounded by farmland, while still being within driving distance of larger towns like Canby and Marshall via Mn HWY 67. While the town does not host a traditional town festival every year, the Heritage Center, located outside Taunton has held an "Annual Taunton Family Festival" in recent years.







CITY OF TRACY PROFILE

QUICK FACTS

- 2,076 Population (2020 Census)
- 44.1 Median age
- 861 Housing Units
- 2.51 Average Household Size

Tracy, Minnesota is a small but vibrant community in Lyon County with a strong sense of tradition and pride. The city is home to Tracy Area Public Schools, which serve as an important educational and community hub for local families. Tracy is also well known for its annual Box Car Days celebration, one of the region's largest and longest-running festivals, featuring parades, entertainment, and community activities that highlight the city's railroad heritage. Surrounded by rich agricultural land and offering a welcoming small-town atmosphere, Tracy combines strong community values with events and institutions that bring residents together year after year.

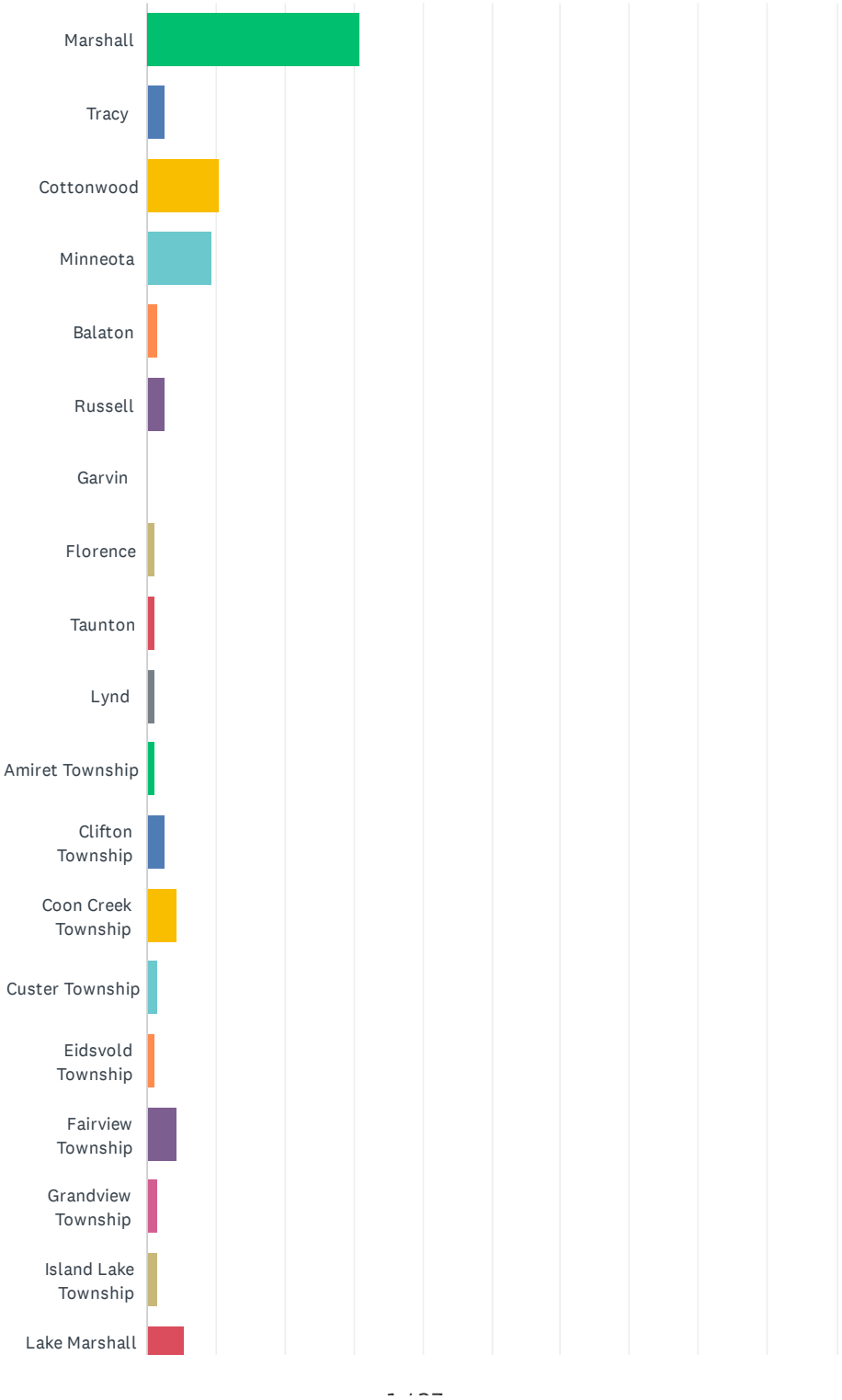


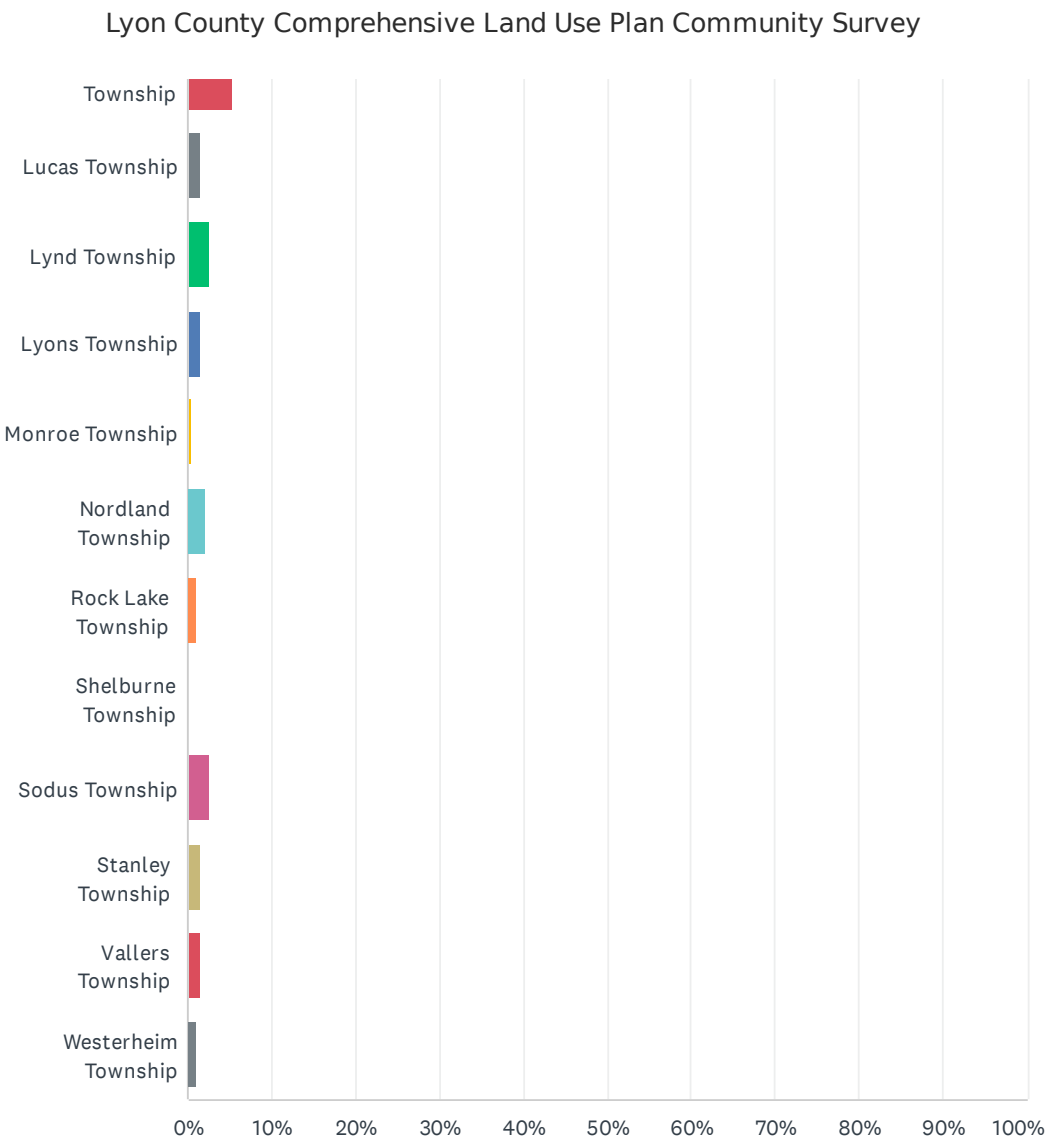


Lyon County Comprehensive Land Use Plan
COMMUNITY SURVEY

Q1 Where Do You Live?

Answered: 191 Skipped: 4

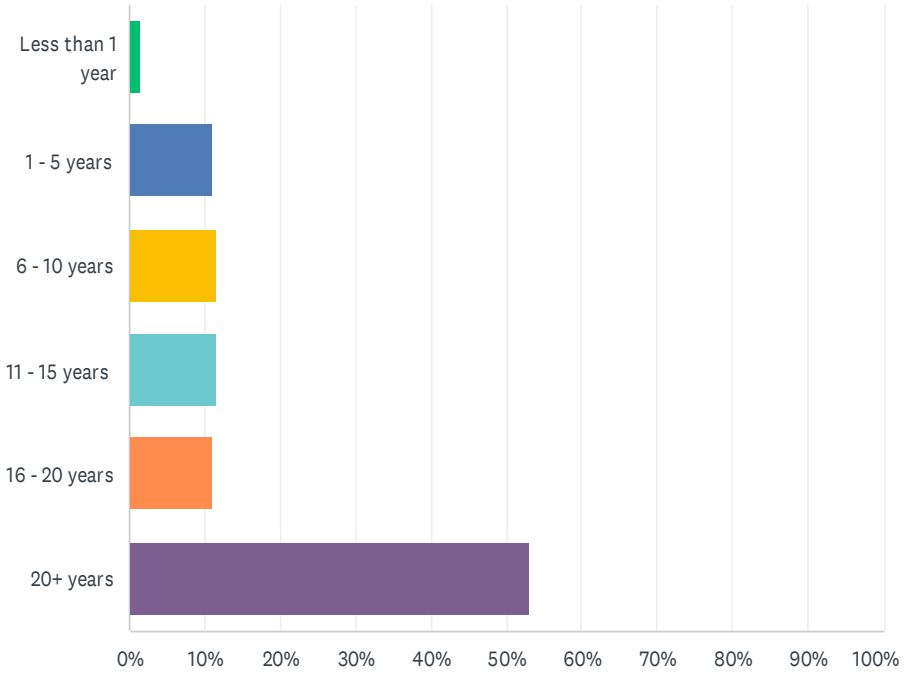



Lyon County Comprehensive Land Use Plan Community Survey
Township
Lucas Township
Lynd Township
Lyons Township
Monroe Township
Nordland Township
Rock Lake Township
Shelburne Township
Sodus Township
Stanley Township
Vallers Township
Westerheim Township
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%
70%
80%
90%
100%

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Marshall	30.89%	59
Tracy	2.62%	5
Cottonwood	10.47%	20
Minneota	9.42%	18
Balaton	1.57%	3
Russell	2.62%	5
Garvin	0.00%	0
Florence	1.05%	2
Taunton	1.05%	2
Lynd	1.05%	2
Amiret Township	1.05%	2
Clifton Township	2.62%	5
Coon Creek Township	4.19%	8
Custer Township	1.57%	3
Eidsvold Township	1.05%	2
Fairview Township	4.19%	8
Grandview Township	1.57%	3
Island Lake Township	1.57%	3
Lake Marshall Township	5.24%	10
Lucas Township	1.57%	3
Lynd Township	2.62%	5
Lyons Township	1.57%	3
Monroe Township	0.52%	1
Nordland Township	2.09%	4
Rock Lake Township	1.05%	2
Shelburne Township	0.00%	0
Sodus Township	2.62%	5
Stanley Township	1.57%	3
Vallers Township	1.57%	3
Westerheim Township	1.05%	2
TOTAL		191

Q2 How long have you lived or owned land in Lyon County?

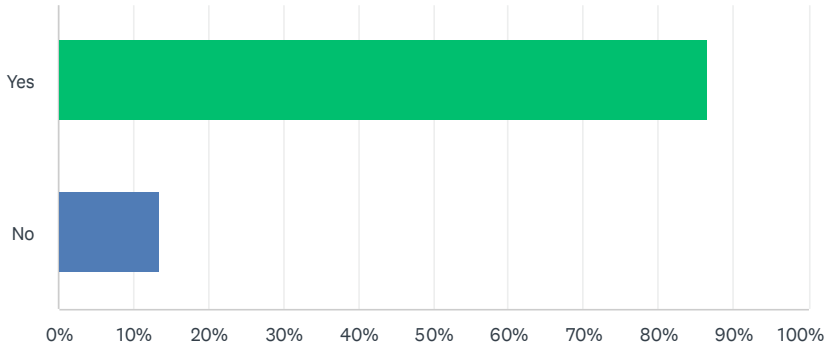
Answered: 190 Skipped: 5



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Less than 1 year	1.58%	3
1 - 5 years	11.05%	21
6 - 10 years	11.58%	22
11 - 15 years	11.58%	22
16 - 20 years	11.05%	21
20+ years	53.16%	101
TOTAL		190

Q3 Do you work in Lyon County?

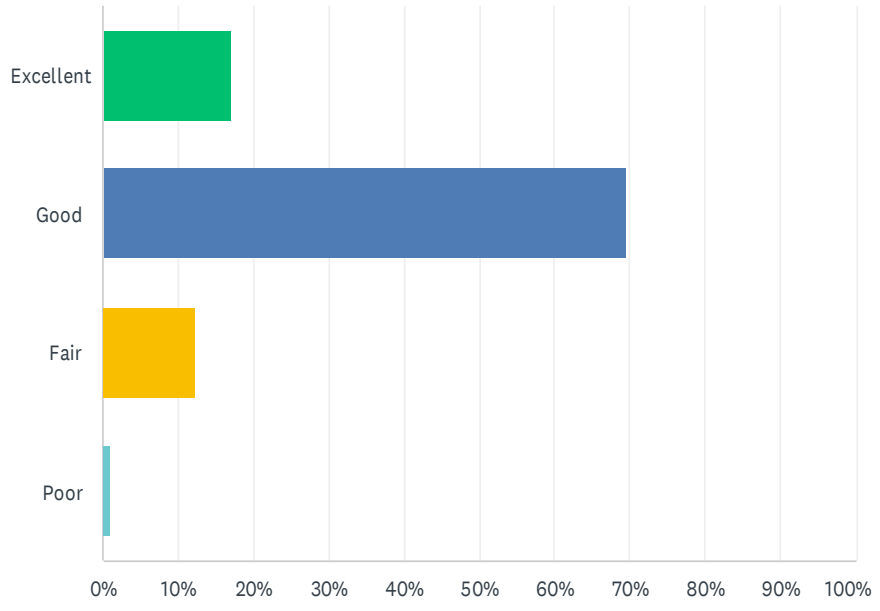
Answered: 193 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	86.53%	167
No	13.47%	26
TOTAL		193

Q4 How would you rate the quality of life in Lyon County?

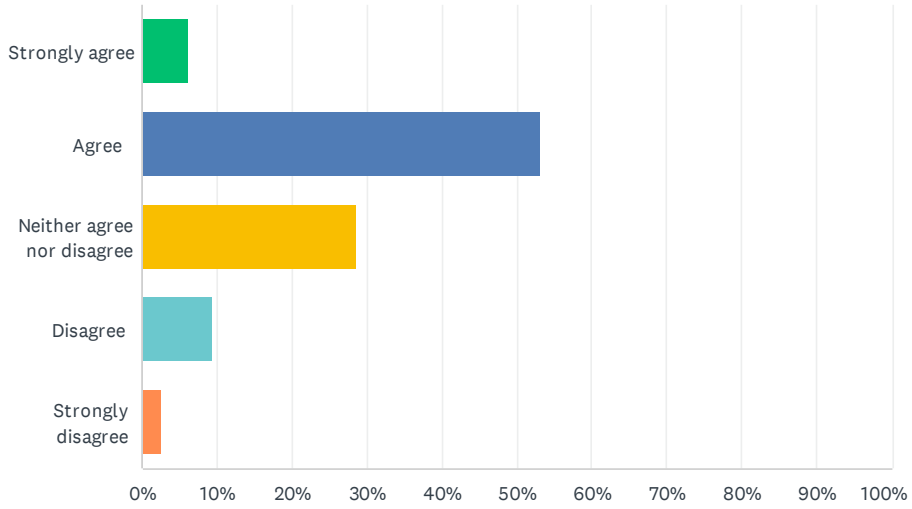
Answered: 194 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Excellent	17.01%	33
Good	69.59%	135
Fair	12.37%	24
Poor	1.03%	2
TOTAL		194

Q5 Living in Lyon County is affordable

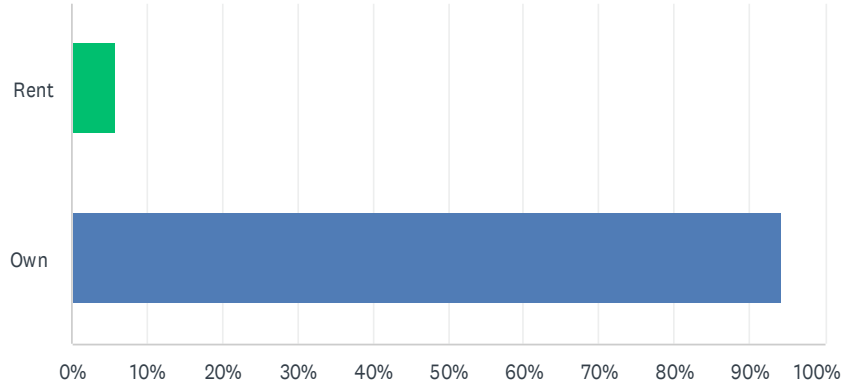
Answered: 192 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	6.25%	12
Agree	53.13%	102
Neither agree nor disagree	28.65%	55
Disagree	9.38%	18
Strongly disagree	2.60%	5
TOTAL		192

Q6 Does your family rent or own your housing?

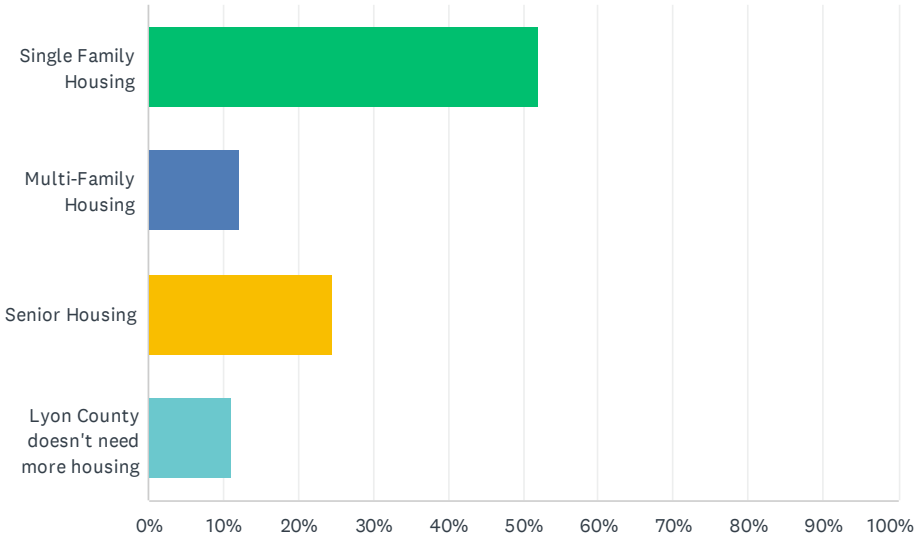
Answered: 192 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Rent	5.73%	11
Own	94.27%	181
TOTAL		192

Q7 Lyon County needs what kind of additional housing?

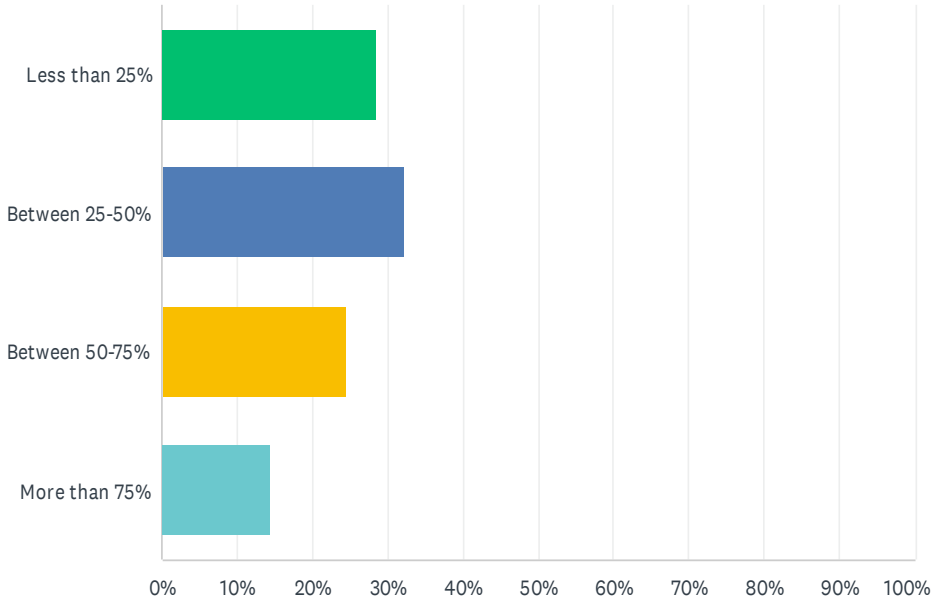
Answered: 188 Skipped: 7



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Single Family Housing	52.13%	98
Multi-Family Housing	12.23%	23
Senior Housing	24.47%	46
Lyon County doesn't need more housing	11.17%	21
TOTAL		188

Q8 What percentage of your disposable/entertainment money do you spend in Lyon County?

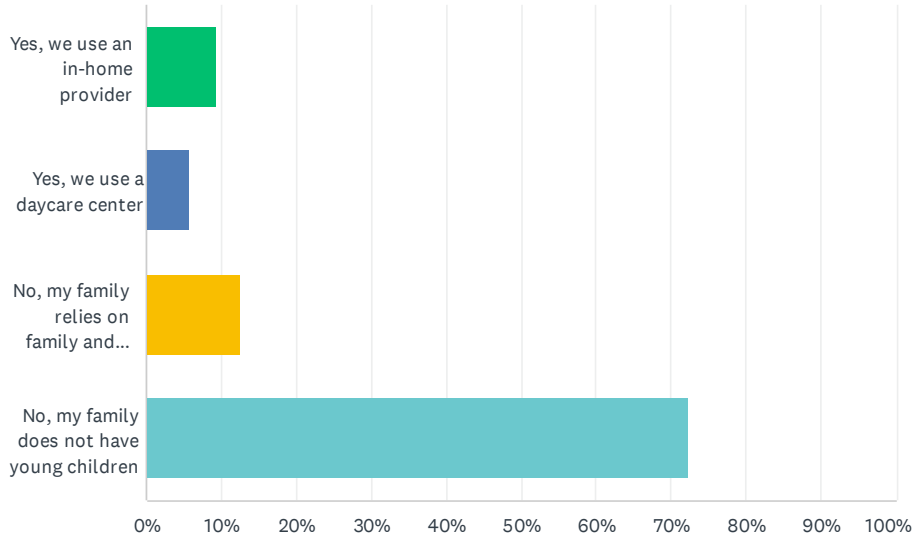
Answered: 192 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Less than 25%	28.65%	55
Between 25-50%	32.29%	62
Between 50-75%	24.48%	47
More than 75%	14.58%	28
TOTAL		192

Q9 Does your family utilize childcare services?

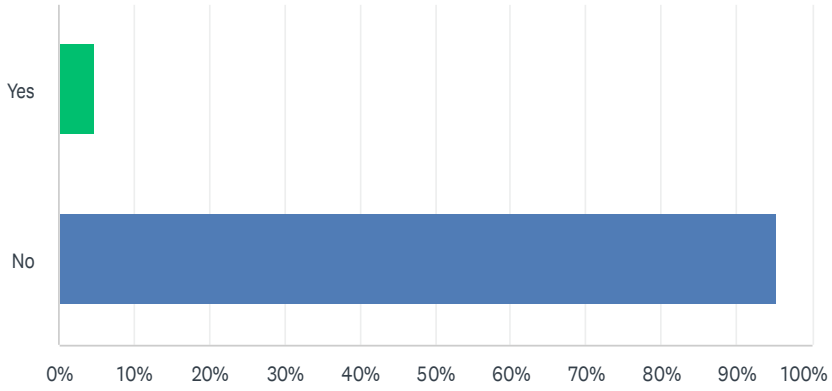
Answered: 191 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes, we use an in-home provider	9.42%	18
Yes, we use a daycare center	5.76%	11
No, my family relies on family and friends	12.57%	24
No, my family does not have young children	72.25%	138
TOTAL		191

Q10 Do you think there is enough childcare services available in Lyon County?

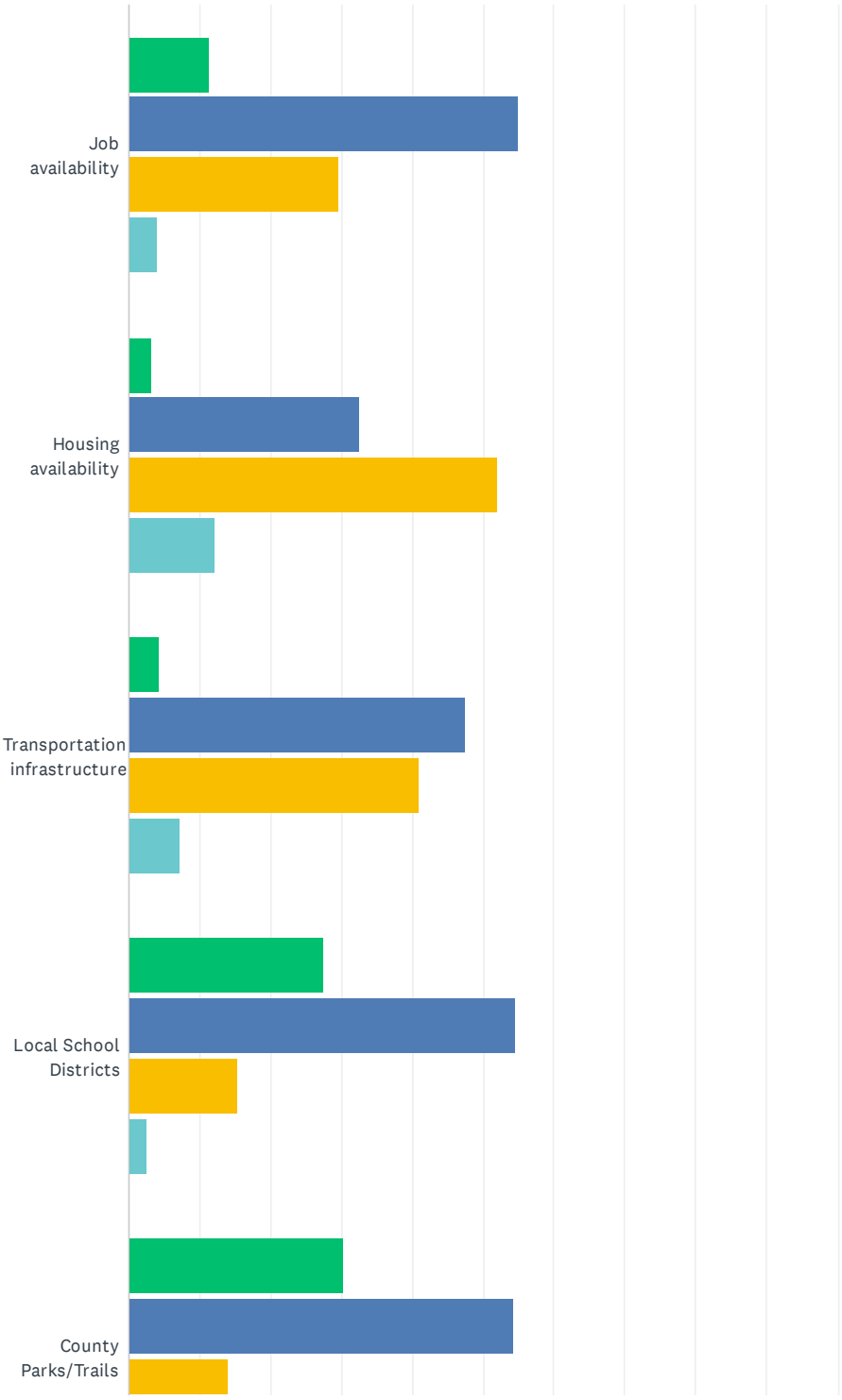
Answered: 188 Skipped: 7

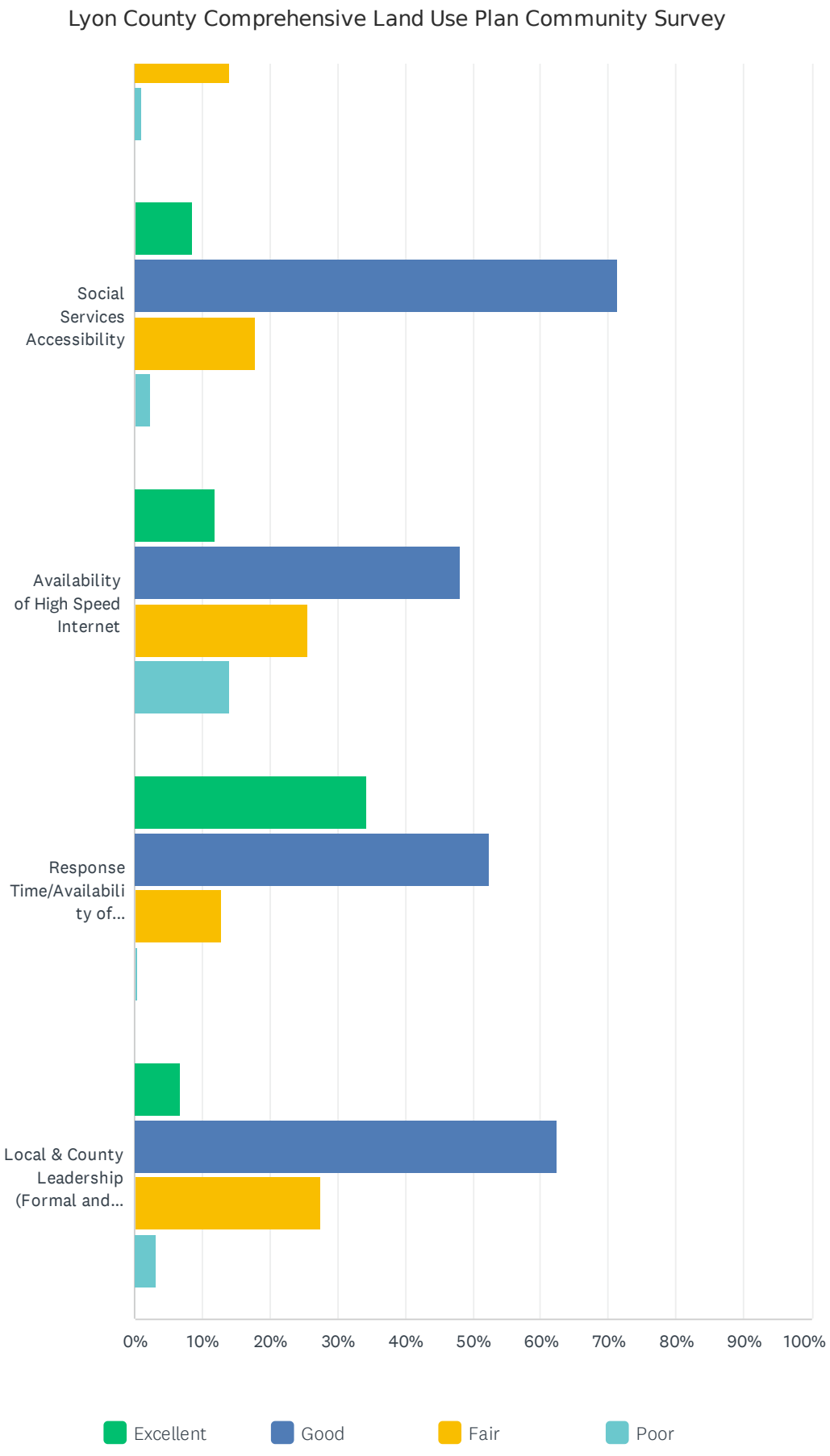


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	4.79%	9
No	95.21%	179
TOTAL		188

Q11 Please rank Lyon County in the following areas

Answered: 194 Skipped: 1

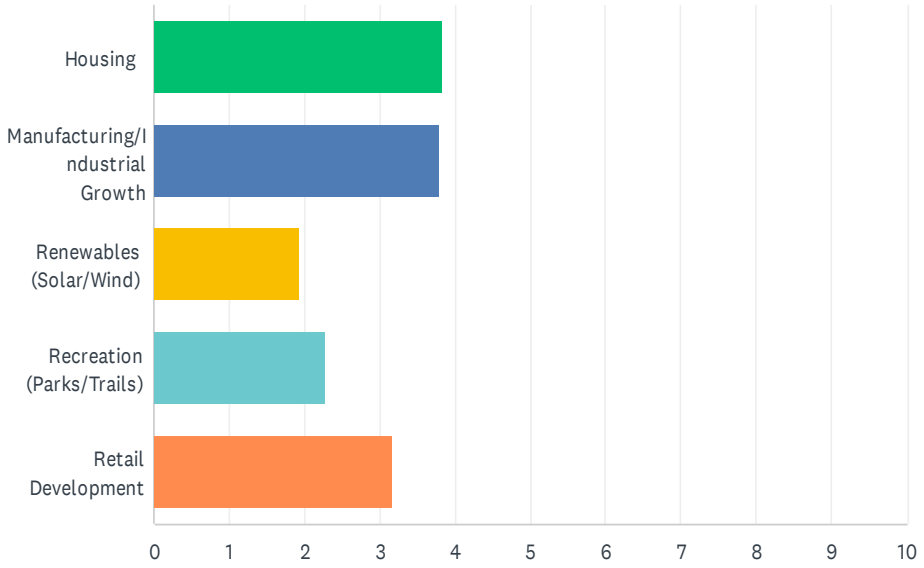



Lyon County Comprehensive Land Use Plan Community Survey
Social Services Accessibility
Availability of High Speed Internet
Response Time/Availability of...
Local & County Leadership (Formal and...
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%
70%
80%
90%
100%
Excellent
Good
Fair
Poor

	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Job availability	11.40% 22	54.92% 106	29.53% 57	4.15% 8	193	2.26
Housing availability	3.16% 6	32.63% 62	52.11% 99	12.11% 23	190	2.73
Transportation infrastructure	4.19% 8	47.64% 91	40.84% 78	7.33% 14	191	2.51
Local School Districts	27.51% 52	54.50% 103	15.34% 29	2.65% 5	189	1.93
County Parks/Trails	30.37% 58	54.45% 104	14.14% 27	1.05% 2	191	1.86
Social Services Accessibility	8.43% 15	71.35% 127	17.98% 32	2.25% 4	178	2.14
Availability of High Speed Internet	12.04% 23	48.17% 92	25.65% 49	14.14% 27	191	2.42
Response Time/Availability of EMS/Fire/Police Services	34.39% 65	52.38% 99	12.70% 24	0.53% 1	189	1.79
Local & County Leadership (Formal and Informal)	6.88% 13	62.43% 118	27.51% 52	3.17% 6	189	2.27

Q12 Development in Urban areas should focus on the following (Please rank)

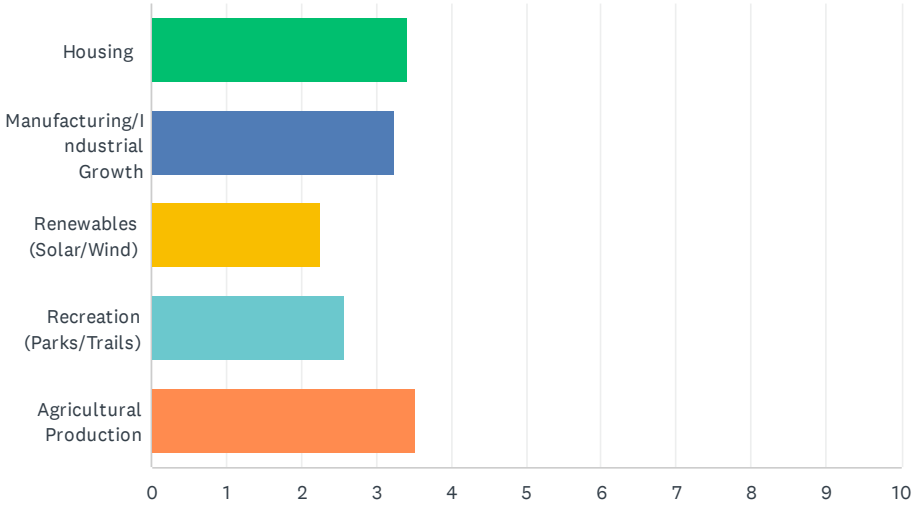
Answered: 191 Skipped: 4



	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL	SCORE
Housing	37.70% 72	24.08% 46	24.08% 46	11.52% 22	2.62% 5	191	3.83
Manufacturing/Industrial Growth	32.46% 62	35.08% 67	16.23% 31	10.99% 21	5.24% 10	191	3.79
Renewables (Solar/Wind)	6.28% 12	6.81% 13	16.23% 31	14.66% 28	56.02% 107	191	1.93
Recreation (Parks/Trails)	5.76% 11	9.95% 19	13.09% 25	50.26% 96	20.94% 40	191	2.29
Retail Development	17.80% 34	24.08% 46	30.37% 58	12.57% 24	15.18% 29	191	3.17

Q13 Development in Rural areas should focus on the following (Please rank)

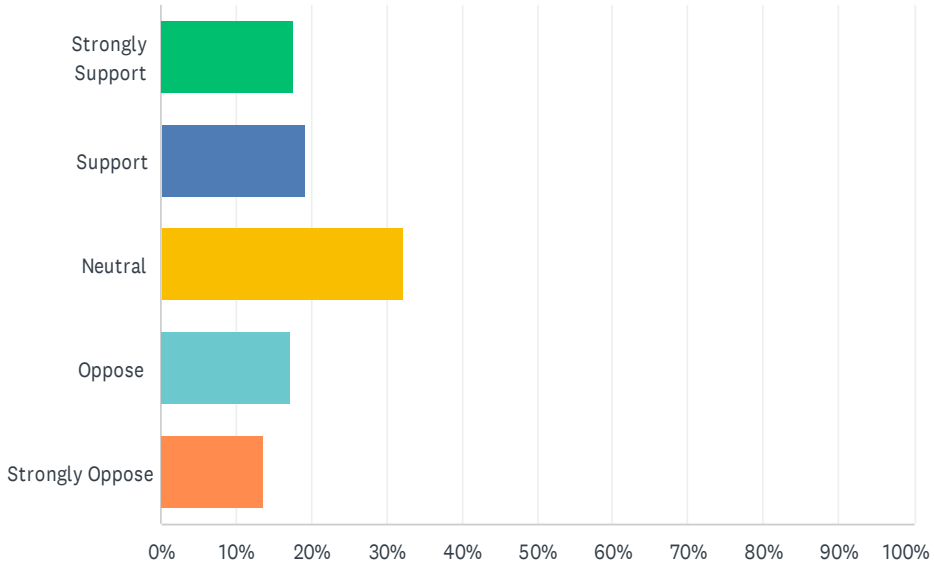
Answered: 185 Skipped: 10



	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL	SCORE
Housing	29.73% 55	17.84% 33	27.57% 51	14.05% 26	10.81% 20	185	3.42
Manufacturing/Industrial Growth	16.76% 31	31.35% 58	22.70% 42	18.38% 34	10.81% 20	185	3.25
Renewables (Solar/Wind)	9.19% 17	14.05% 26	14.59% 27	17.30% 32	44.86% 83	185	2.25
Recreation (Parks/Trails)	8.11% 15	15.68% 29	20.54% 38	36.22% 67	19.46% 36	185	2.57
Agricultural Production	36.22% 67	21.08% 39	14.59% 27	14.05% 26	14.05% 26	185	3.51

Q14 How would you rate your support for renewable projects in Lyon County (Wind/Solar/Battery Storage)

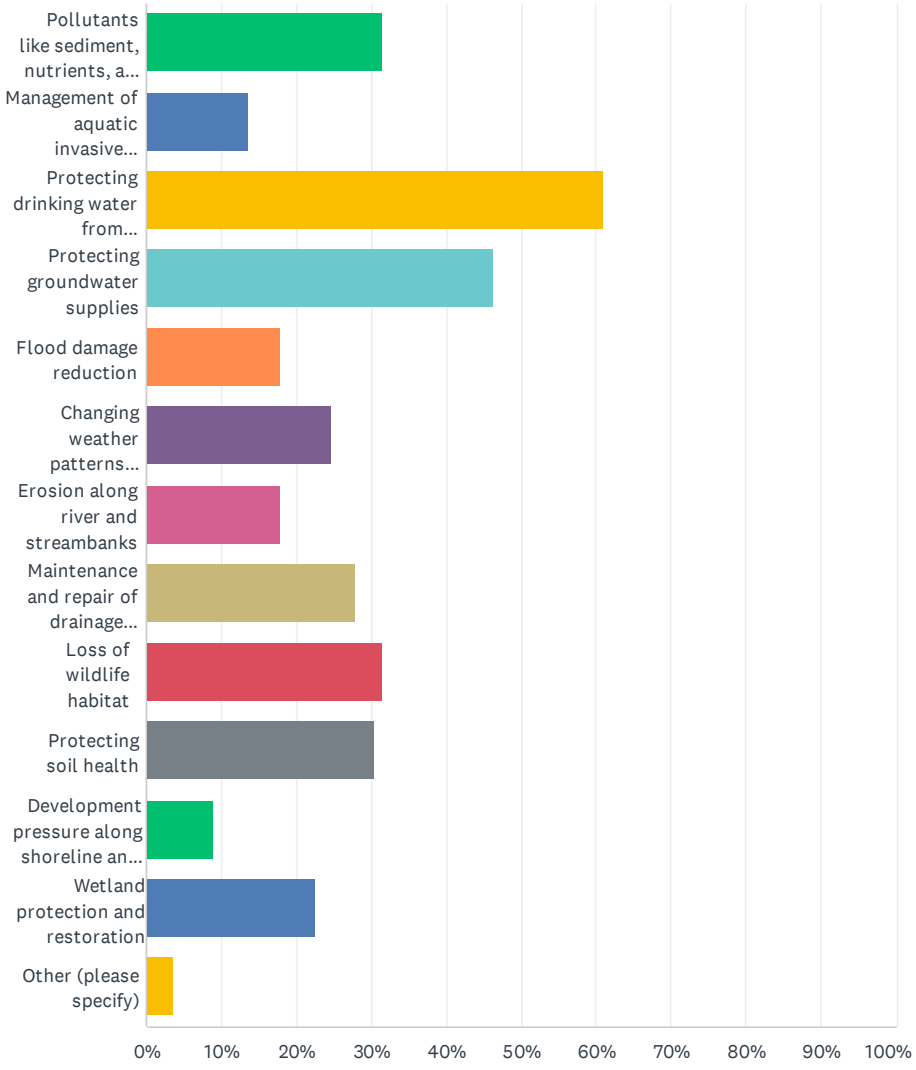
Answered: 192 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Support	17.71%	34
Support	19.27%	37
Neutral	32.29%	62
Oppose	17.19%	33
Strongly Oppose	13.54%	26
TOTAL		192

Q15 What do you see as the most important issues facing natural resources in the area? (Please choose up to 4)

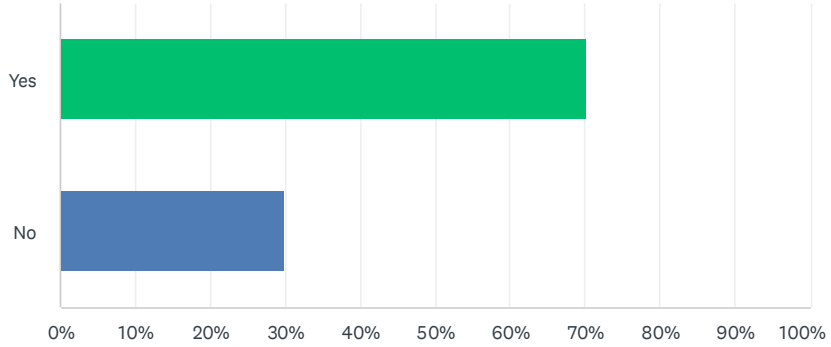
Answered: 190 Skipped: 5



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Pollutants like sediment, nutrients, and bacteria impacting aquatic life and recreation	31.58%	60
Management of aquatic invasive species	13.68%	26
Protecting drinking water from contamination	61.05%	116
Protecting groundwater supplies	46.32%	88
Flood damage reduction	17.89%	34
Changing weather patterns creating heavier rains and periods of drought	24.74%	47
Erosion along river and streambanks	17.89%	34
Maintenance and repair of drainage systems	27.89%	53
Loss of wildlife habitat	31.58%	60
Protecting soil health	30.53%	58
Development pressure along shoreline and streambanks	8.95%	17
Wetland protection and restoration	22.63%	43
Other (please specify)	3.68%	7
Total Respondents: 190		

Q16 Should Lyon County, along with other local communities, use local tax dollars to recruit and retain business?

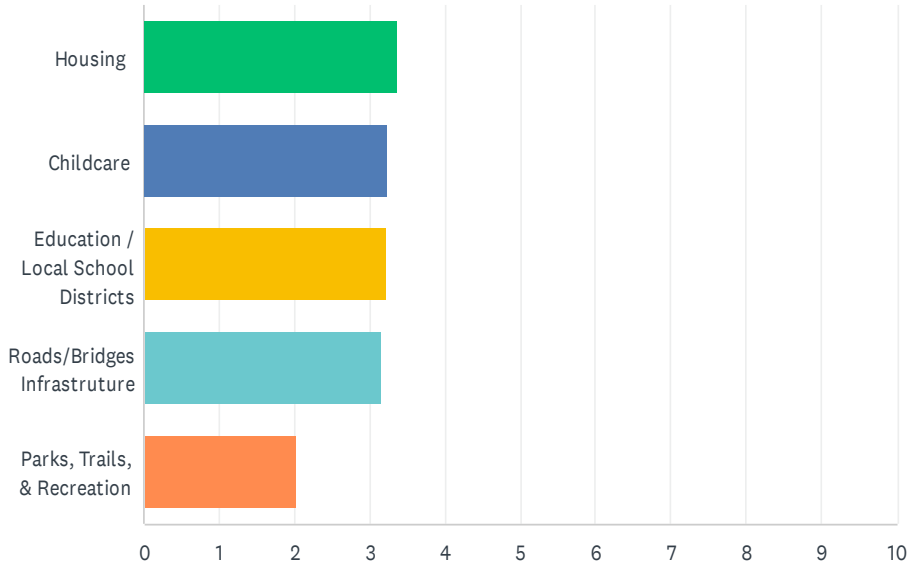
Answered: 188 Skipped: 7



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	70.21%	132
No	29.79%	56
TOTAL		188

Q17 Where should Lyon County, along with other local communities, invest in the future to maintain a good quality of life for its residents? (Please rank)

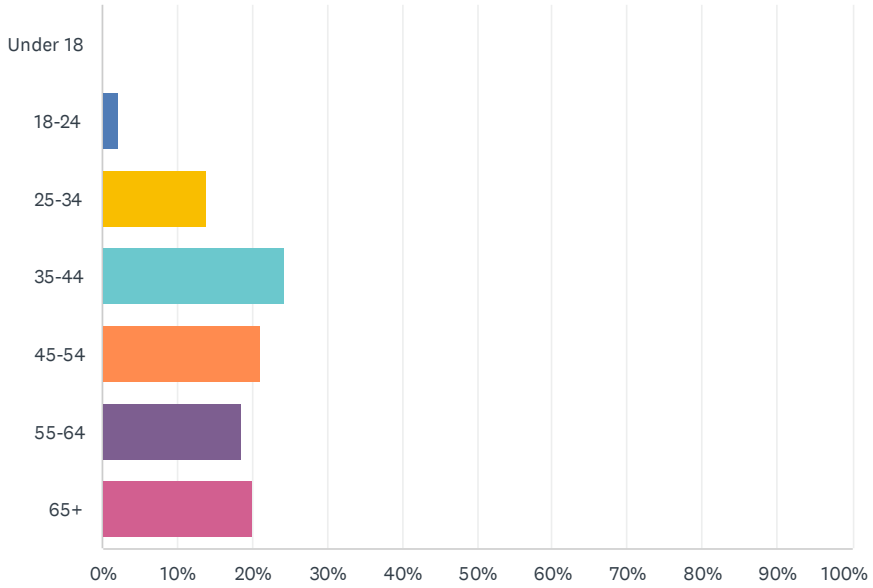
Answered: 189 Skipped: 6



	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL	SCORE
Housing	24.87% 47	24.34% 46	22.22% 42	19.05% 36	9.52% 18	189	3.36
Childcare	24.34% 46	24.87% 47	21.16% 40	10.58% 20	19.05% 36	189	3.25
Education / Local School Districts	20.63% 39	23.81% 45	25.40% 48	17.46% 33	12.70% 24	189	3.22
Roads/Bridges Infrastruture	22.22% 42	21.16% 40	18.52% 35	25.93% 49	12.17% 23	189	3.15
Parks, Trails, & Recreation	7.94% 15	5.82% 11	12.70% 24	26.98% 51	46.56% 88	189	2.02

Q18 What is your age?

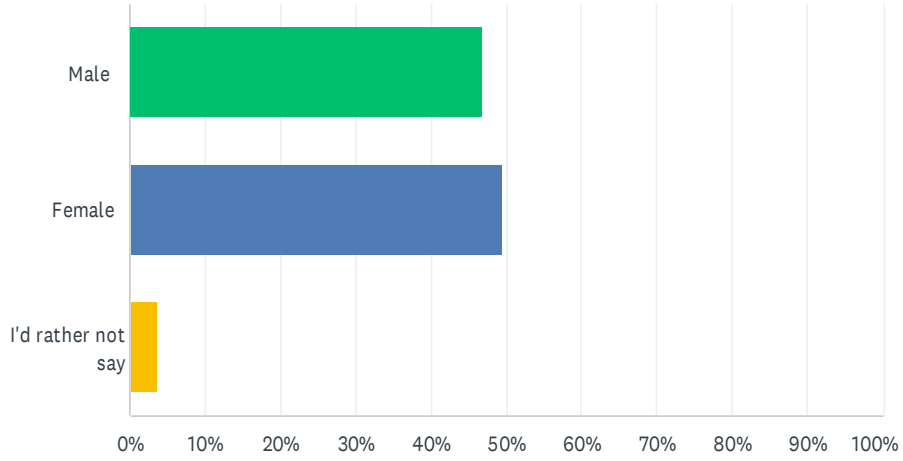
Answered: 194 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Under 18	0.00%	0
18-24	2.06%	4
25-34	13.92%	27
35-44	24.23%	47
45-54	21.13%	41
55-64	18.56%	36
65+	20.10%	39
TOTAL		194

Q19 What is your gender?

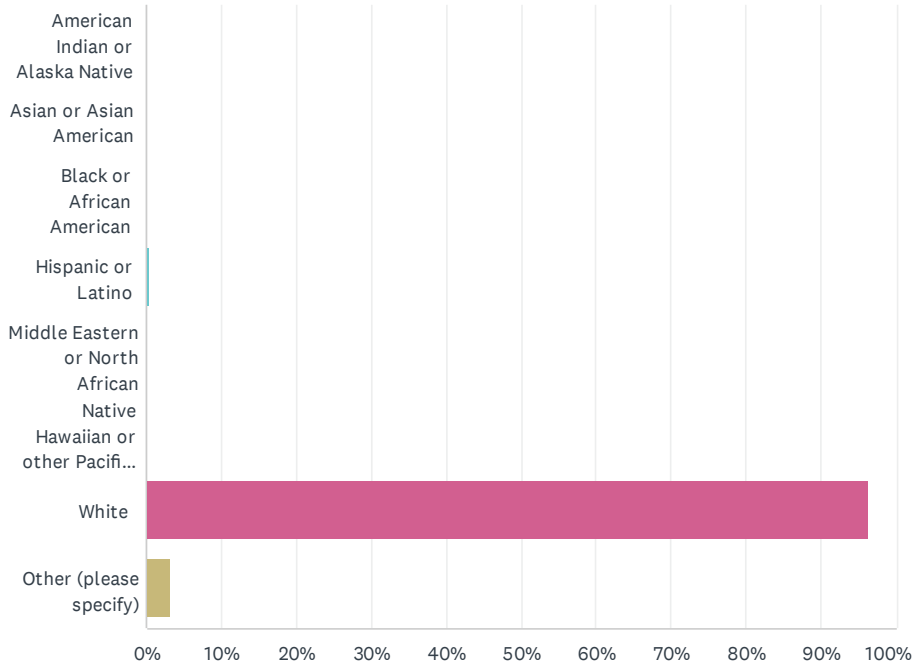
Answered: 194 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Male	46.91%	91
Female	49.48%	96
I'd rather not say	3.61%	7
TOTAL		194

Q20 What race or ethnicity do you identify with most?

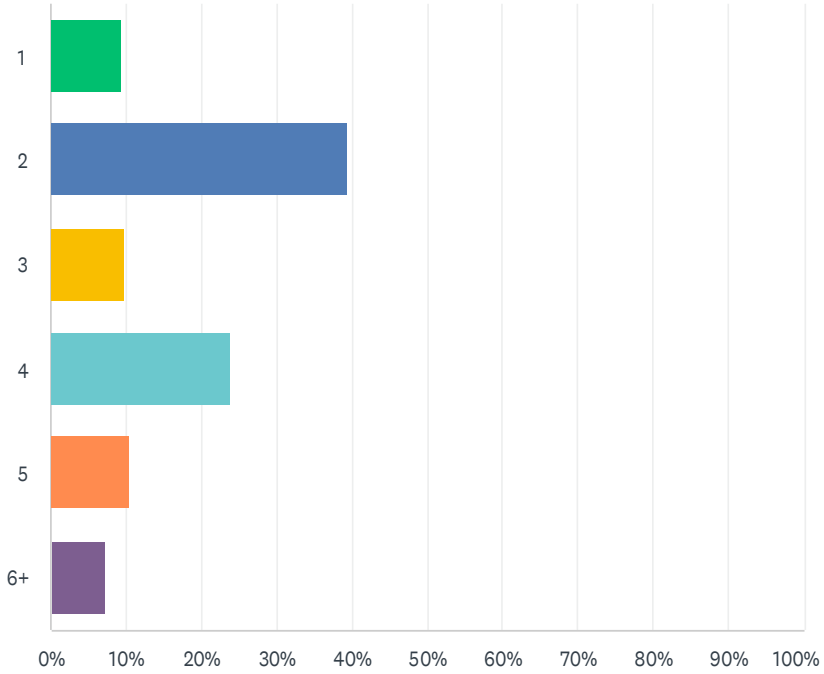
Answered: 192 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.00%	0
Asian or Asian American	0.00%	0
Black or African American	0.00%	0
Hispanic or Latino	0.52%	1
Middle Eastern or North African	0.00%	0
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0.00%	0
White	96.35%	185
Other (please specify)	3.13%	6
TOTAL		192

Q21 How many people live in your household?

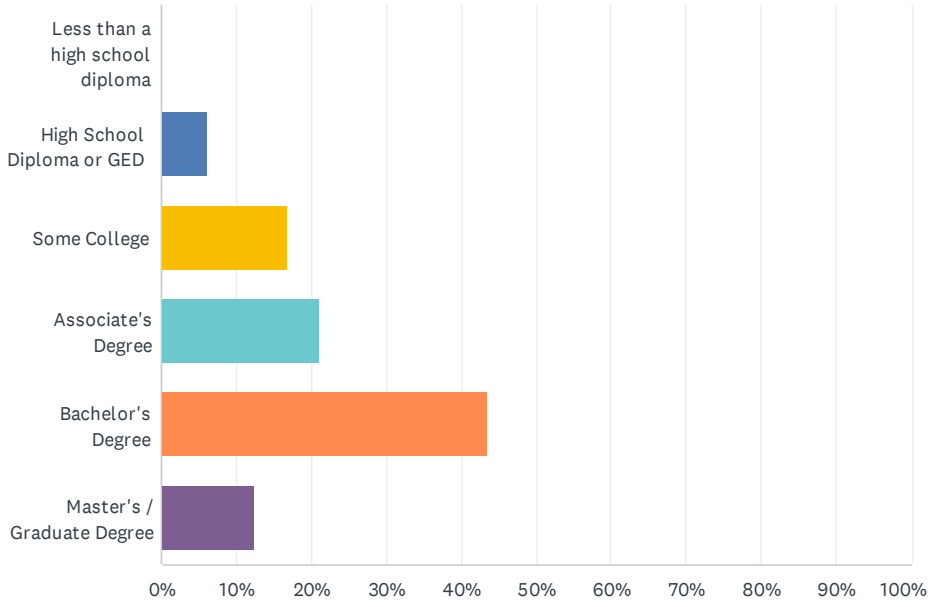
Answered: 193 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1	9.33%	18
2	39.38%	76
3	9.84%	19
4	23.83%	46
5	10.36%	20
6+	7.25%	14
TOTAL		193

Q22 What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Answered: 195 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Less than a high school diploma	0.00%	0
High School Diploma or GED	6.15%	12
Some College	16.92%	33
Associate's Degree	21.03%	41
Bachelor's Degree	43.59%	85
Master's / Graduate Degree	12.31%	24
TOTAL		195