

## **APPENDIX A - 2030 VISIONING PUBLIC INPUT**

### **CONTENTS**

SPRINGSTED, INC., Memo Summarizing Results from 2030 Visioning Workshops



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## MEMORANDUM

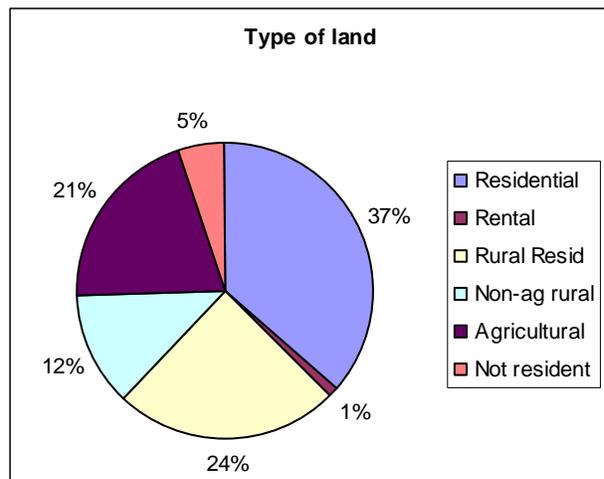
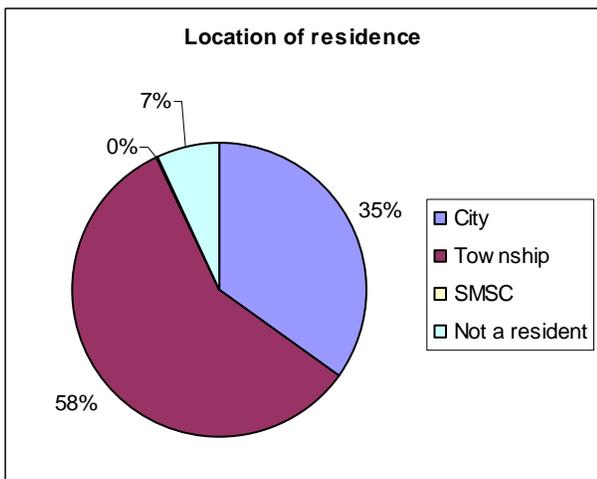
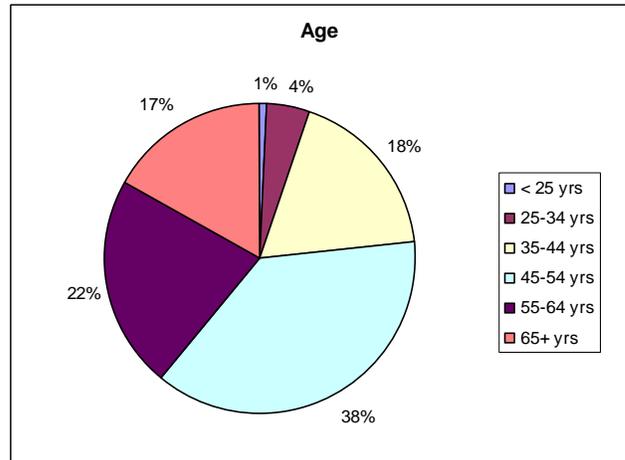
TO: Brad Davis, Scott County  
 FROM: Matt Stark  
 DATE: 18 May 2006  
 SUBJECT: Analysis of feedback meetings

On February 7, 15 and 23, Springsted assisted Scott County in the facilitation of a series of forums of community leaders designed to elicit their opinions about the way Scott County should look, feel and function in the year 2030. This round of meetings was followed by a series of forums open to all residents of Scott County. These meetings were held on the evenings of March 30 and April 6, 13, and 20. Over the course of the seven meetings, a total of 235 people participated in voting. Our analysis of the voting results follows.

### Demographics

Of the 235 people who participated in voting, 68% were male, and 32% were female. Respondents' age was centered around the 45-54 year group (38%), with the decades on each side representing another 40% of respondents. Seventeen percent were in the over-65 group, and the remainder (5%) were under the age of 35.

Almost three-fifths (58%) of participants lived in the County's townships, while close to a third (35%) lived in the cities. Of the remainder, 16 participants lived outside the county, and one lived in the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community. More than one-third of participants indicated that they lived on residential lots, while more than half lived on a variety of rural properties: 24% on rural residential, 12% on rural non-ag, and 21% on agricultural property.



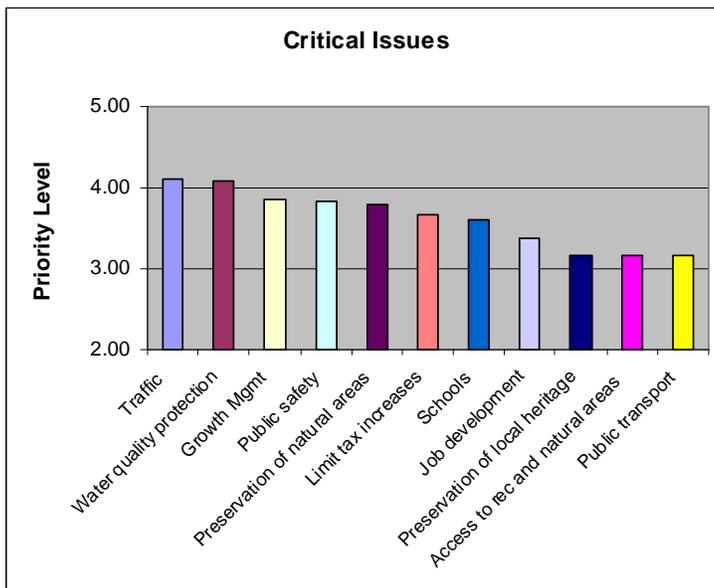
Almost three-quarters of attendees indicated that they were voting from the perspective of homeowners. Another 21% were land owners, and 3% were business owners. More than half (57%) of respondents living in Scott County indicated that they have lived in the county for more than twenty years. The other forty percent of the voting group was fairly evenly split among the remaining five-year category groups.

In terms of employment, almost half of the participants were employed in the private sector, and more than a quarter (28%) in the public sector. Four percent work in the non-profit field, and seventeen percent are retired. The remainder were students or not currently employed. Of the employed respondents, there was a nearly equal split between those working within Scott County (43%), and those employed outside the county (40%). Household incomes were fairly well spread out across the middle class, with three-quarters of respondents reporting annual income between \$50,000 and \$150,000. About 14% made more than \$150,000 a year, and another 14% made less than \$50,000.

Half of those voting had children at home. Just over one-third (38%) had children who were grown or otherwise outside of the home, while the remaining 12% were childless.

### Critical Issues

Participants were first asked to share what they considered to be the most critical issues facing the County, as related to growth and development. Four topics were given as examples to help spur the brainstorming: pace & location of growth; traffic, congestion & commuting; economic development; and access to recreational and natural areas. Six other topics were brought up in several forums. The areas of water quality and public safety/crime were brought up on five different nights, while preservation of natural areas, preservation of local heritage, and holding the line on tax levels were brought up four times. Schools and public transport each had three mentions. Thirty-four other topics were each brought up once or twice; many of these are slightly narrower ways of asking existing questions. All of these questions are listed in the data file accompanying this report.



After the lists were generated, each group was asked to indicate how much of a County priority each topic should be. Participants voted on a scale of 1 (lowest priority) to 5 (highest priority). As can be seen in the graph at left, traffic issues and water quality top the list of priorities. These are followed by pace & location of growth, public safety, and preservation of natural areas, which are followed closely by property tax burdens and school quality. Economic development/job creation, preservation of local heritage, access to recreational and natural areas, and public transport round out the list.

Agreement between the public forums and leadership forums was generally good, though a few differences emerge. The public groups put a higher priority on the issues of public safety, tax

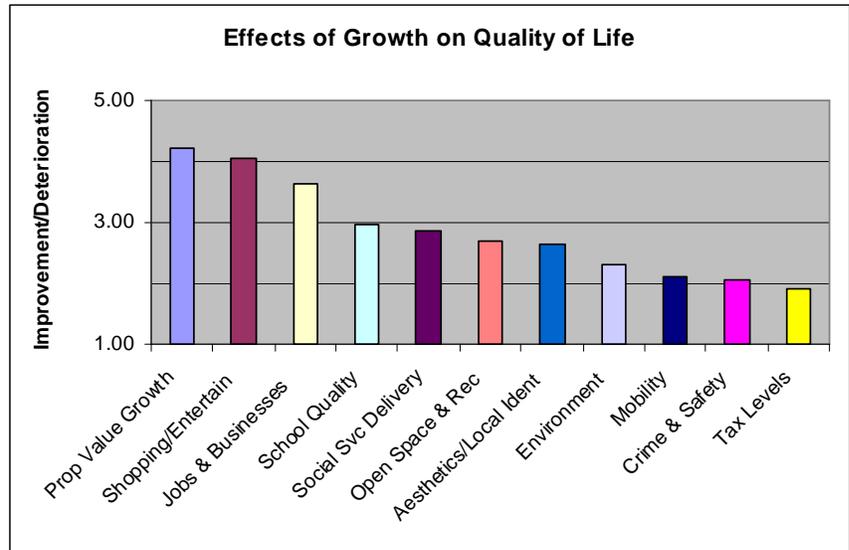
burden, and water quality. The leadership groups, on the other hand, rated access to recreation and natural areas much more highly than did the public. The public groups considered the idea of keeping density close to current cities a fairly high priority, while that specific topic did not come up in the earlier leadership forums.

Agreement between commuters and non-commuters was remarkably close. The one exception was in the area of access to recreational /natural areas, which commuters ranked as a higher priority by a significant margin. There

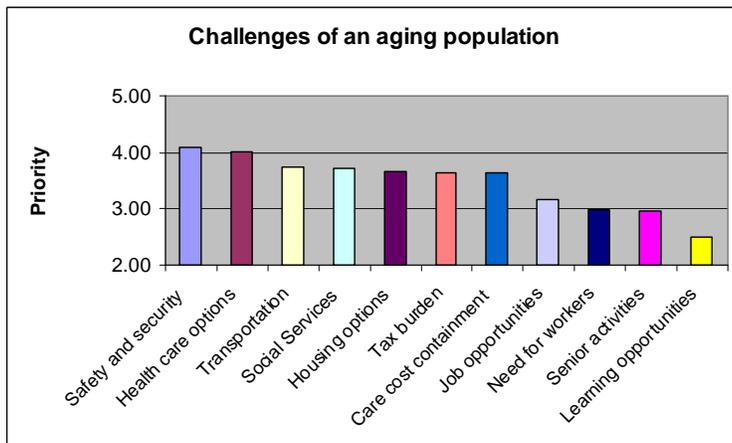
was also a good consensus between city and township residents on most issues. The exceptions were in keeping density close to cities and preserving farmland, which were rated higher priorities by townships, and access to recreational/natural areas, which was a higher priority for city dwellers.

Next, participants were asked to indicate whether recent development and growth had improved or degraded various aspects of their quality of life. This was rated on a five-point scale, from greatly improved to greatly worsened. Results are in the graph at right.

Property value appreciation, access to shopping and entertainment venues, and the creation of jobs and business opportunities were all rated as having been improved by recent development. Feelings were fairly neutral regarding school quality and social service delivery. The remainder were listed as being negatively impacted. This impact was fairly mild for open space/recreation and local identity/aesthetics, and more pronounced for environmental impacts, transportation/mobility issues, crime & public safety, and tax levels.



In general, the leadership forum participants ranked the various categories more positively than did public forum participants. This difference was especially noticeable in the areas of property values, jobs & businesses, local identity, and tax levels. Among commuters, access to open space and recreation was rated neutrally, while non-commuters thought it was more negatively impacted. Similarly, residents without children saw open space and recreation as more negatively impacted than did those with children. Township dwellers saw growth impacts as slightly more negative than did city residents on every category except for social service delivery. In most cases, the difference was very small, though the difference was more pronounced in the areas of job development, local identity, and tax levels.



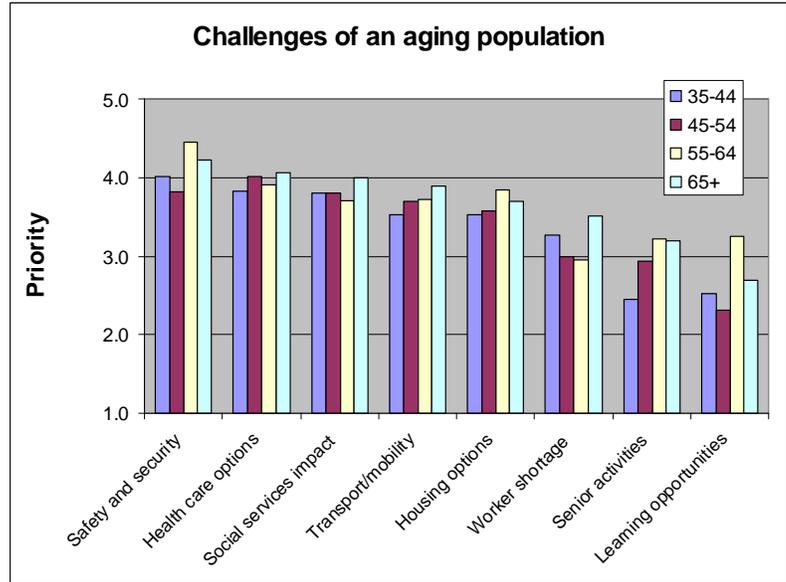
The next exercise asked participants to list and rank the major challenges they saw coming for the county as related to an aging population, given that Scott County’s over-60 population is expected to quadruple over the next 25 years. Transportation, housing, and health care options were given as examples. In addition to these three, the issues of safety/security, social services impacts, tax burden, cost of care, the need for workers, and social and educational activities for seniors were mentioned in several forums. Thirteen other issues were mentioned; as before, many of these were distinctions of existing categories.

The relative priority of these issues is shown in the accompanying graph. Safety and health care options were clearly the highest priority among respondents, while transportation, social services, housing options, tax levels

and the cost of care followed somewhat behind. Job opportunities for seniors, the need for workers and the provision of social and educational activities were rated as lower priority items.

Agreement between residents of various age groups was somewhat mixed, as shown in the graph at right. In general, older residents put a higher priority on nearly all age-related categories. This was especially pronounced in the areas of safety/security and social/educational opportunities for seniors.

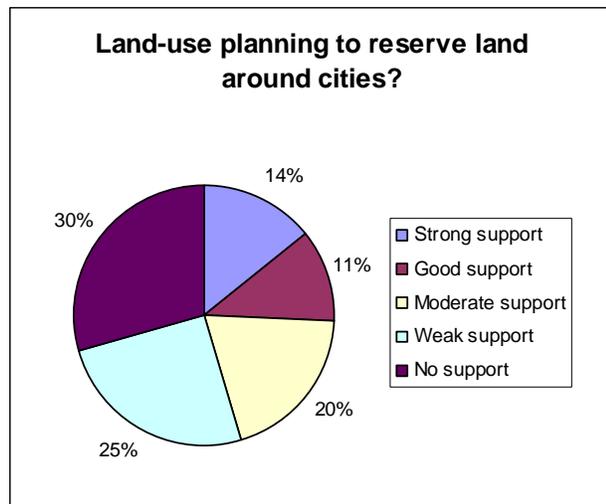
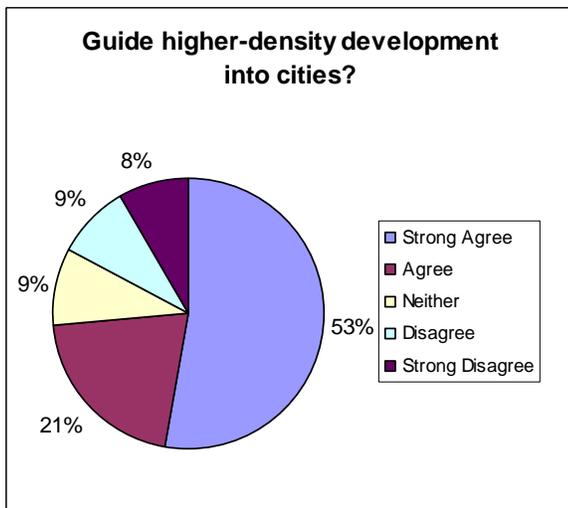
There was an excellent consensus between the general public and community leaders on these challenges.



### Planning for Urban Expansion

The next set of questions measured the participants’ support for a variety of means by which to manage the growth of urban-scale development in the county. Specifically, respondents were asked their level of support for two related proposals:

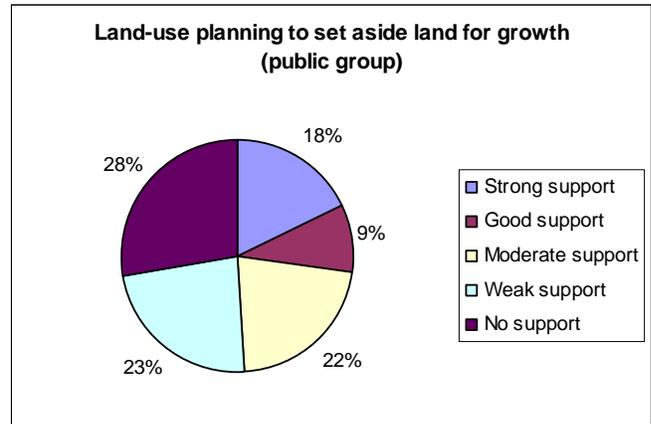
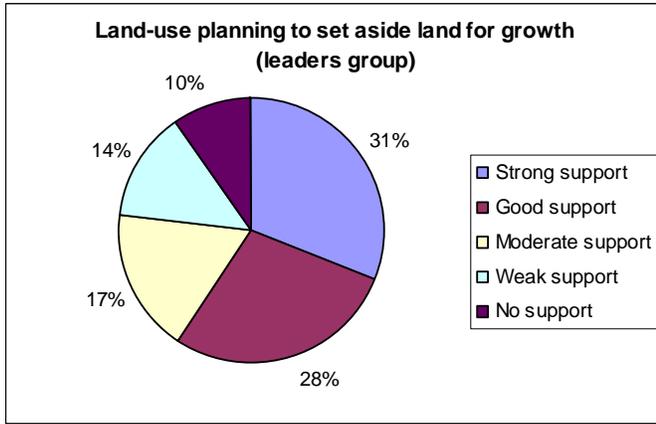
1. How do you feel about guiding most higher-density development into cities and areas where water and sewer service is available?
2. Would you support a planning approach that would designate land adjacent to cities to accommodate this urban-scale development?



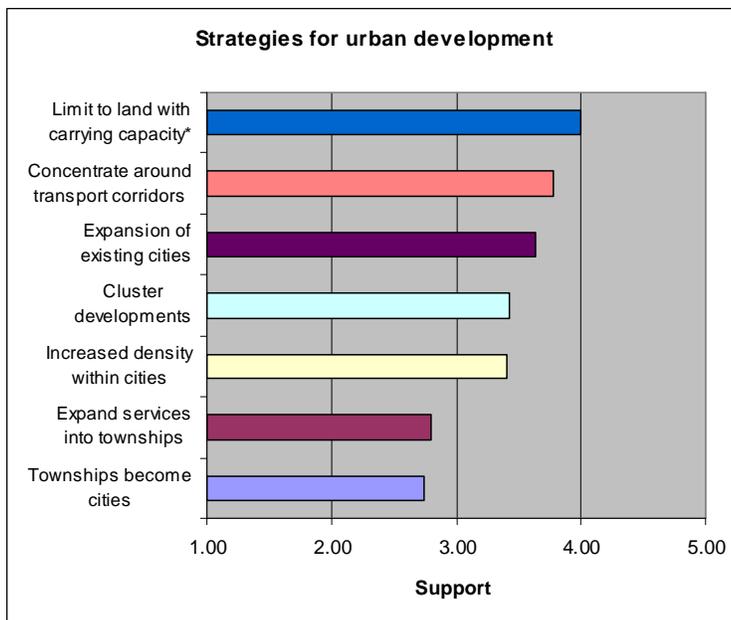
As can be seen in the graphs, support for the concept of guiding urban development toward existing urban areas was very high; however, support for specific steps to guide such development was much more muted.

For the first, more abstract question, almost three-quarters of respondents agreed with the general idea, and more than half indicated strong agreement. By contrast, when asked about their level of support for County planning

action to set aside land to accommodate such growth, more than half of respondents showed only weak support or no support at all for such action. Those expressing strong (14%) or good (11%) levels of support made up just a quarter of participants.



Agreement between leaders and the general public was good on the first question, though on the second, there was considerably higher support for planning action than was seen in the public group. Strong or good support was expressed by nearly 60% of community leaders, compared to just 27% of residents. Responses of city and township residents were generally in agreement, though city dwellers were somewhat more supportive of the idea of planning action to reserve land. Rural residential and rural non-ag landowners were slightly more supportive of both ideas than were urban residential and agricultural residents.



Voters were next asked to think about ways in which urban-scale growth could be accommodated by the county, and then each method was ranked by level of support on a five-point scale.

The options enjoying the most support among respondents were limiting development to land with carrying capacity; development along existing & future transportation corridors; expansion of existing cities. (We must note that the carrying capacity votes were taken after a long discussion of the virtues of such a strategy, and feel that this option shows a high bias as a result.)

The development of cluster homes, and the encouragement of existing cities to increase the development density within their current

boundaries each enjoyed moderate to high support. Low to moderate support was given to expanding utilities into existing townships to allow higher densities, and letting one or more townships incorporate to become new cities.

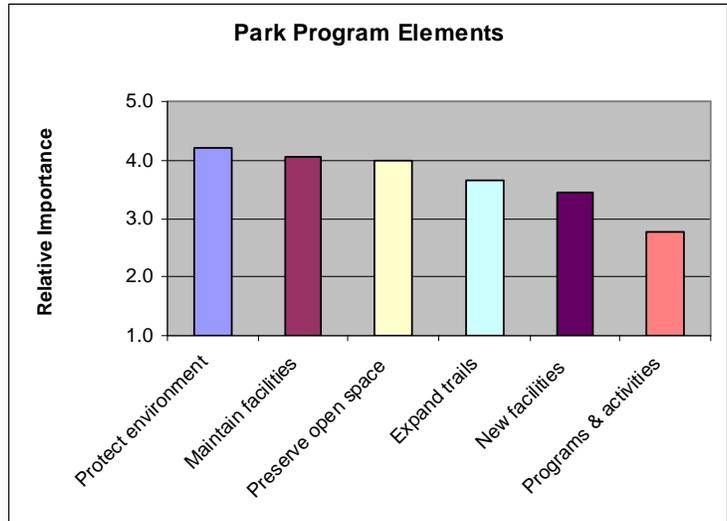
Among community leaders, there was higher support for running services to townships and for allowing them to incorporate. Concentrating development along transportation corridors enjoyed higher support among participants from the general public.

City residents were more supportive of expansion-related strategies, whether they involved annexation or incorporation of townships, extension of services to townships, or development along transportation corridors. Conversely, township residents were more supportive of strategies giving flexibility to current rural landowners, and much more supportive of increasing density within existing cities.

### Planning for Parks, Trails and Open Space

The next series of votes dealt with various aspects of the County’s Parks and Recreation program. Six elements of the program were identified, and participants were asked to rate the importance of each program element. The list consisted of:

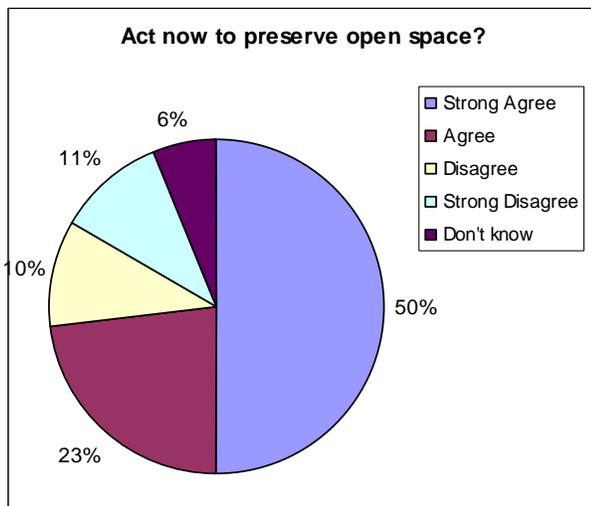
- Purchasing and opening new facilities
- Providing programs and activities
- Maintaining existing facilities
- Expanding system of trails
- Preserving open spaces
- Protecting environment and wetlands



The relative ranking of each element is shown above. The preservation of open space and the environment were rated very highly, along with maintenance of current property and facilities. A more moderate level of importance was assigned to the expansion of the County’s trail system and the purchase of new facilities. Provision of recreational programs and activities was rated lowest.

This preference for the preservation or maintenance of existing amenities over expansion and implementation of new facilities and activities was a pattern that remained remarkably consistent between the different forums on a variety of subjects, as shall be seen.

Agreement among various age groups was very strong, except that younger residents did not place as high an importance on preserving open space. Whether or not residents had children had no discernable effect on their voting. City residents and community leaders placed more importance on new facilities and programs than did their counterparts.



When asked whether the County should work now to preserve open space, in light of rising land costs and development pressures, almost three-quarters of participants agreed, and half agreed strongly. Residents with children, whether at home or away, expressed more agreement than did childless participants. Agreement was not quite as strong among community leaders (74%) as with the general public (80%).

The last question in the Parks and Open Space section asked participants for their understanding of the term “greenway corridor” as used in parks and recreation planning. Possible meanings included:

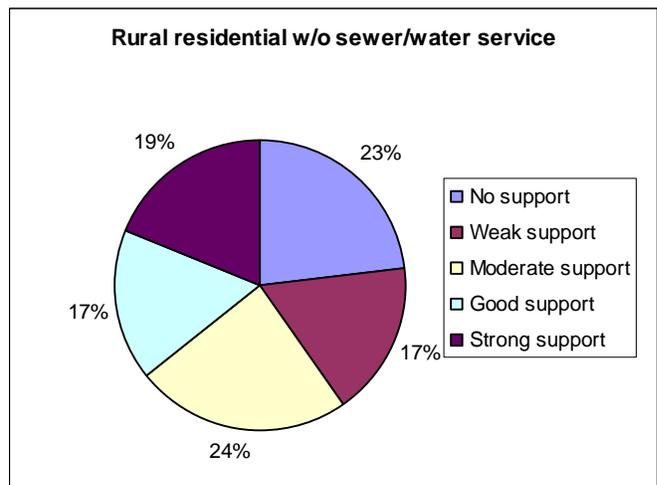
- Hiking and walking trails
- Linear system of open space with or without trails
- Rivers, streams and wetlands
- Wildlife trails and habitat areas

Nearly two-thirds (66%) responded with “all of the above,” with the remaining fraction split fairly evenly among the other possible definitions. This proportion was generally consistent among the various demographic sub-groups, though agricultural landowners were much more likely to answer “none of the above.”

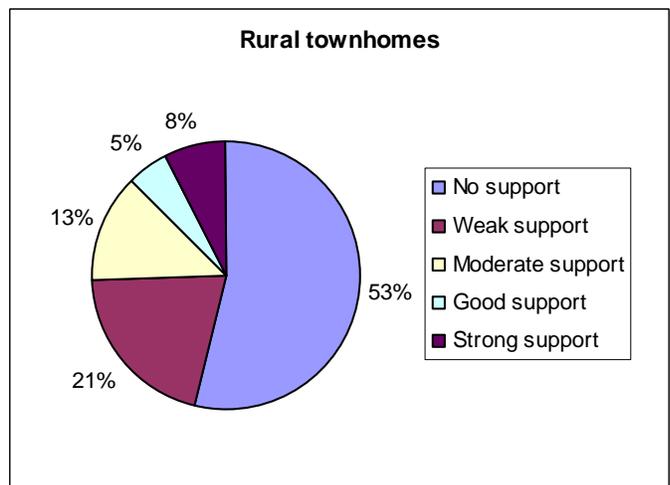
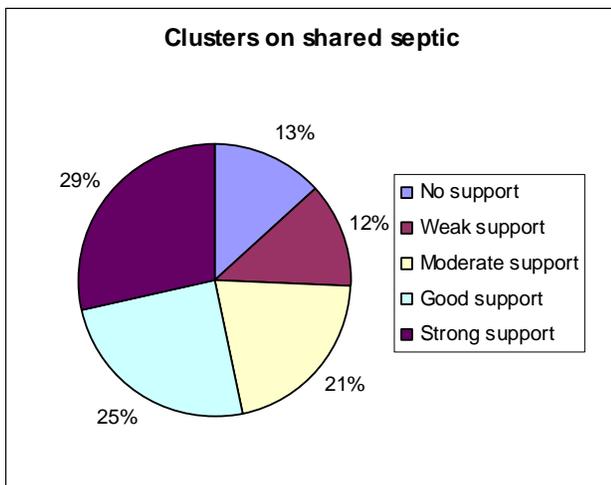
### Planning for Rural Areas

This section asked participants to express opinions about a variety of potential rural development options.

The first option was rural residential development in areas where municipal water and sewer service is unlikely ever to be available. Support for this development was mixed; 23% had no support and another 17% had weak support. Just under a quarter (24%) expressed moderate support, while another 36% had good or strong support. Community leaders showed considerably more support (47% good or strong) than did the general public (26%).



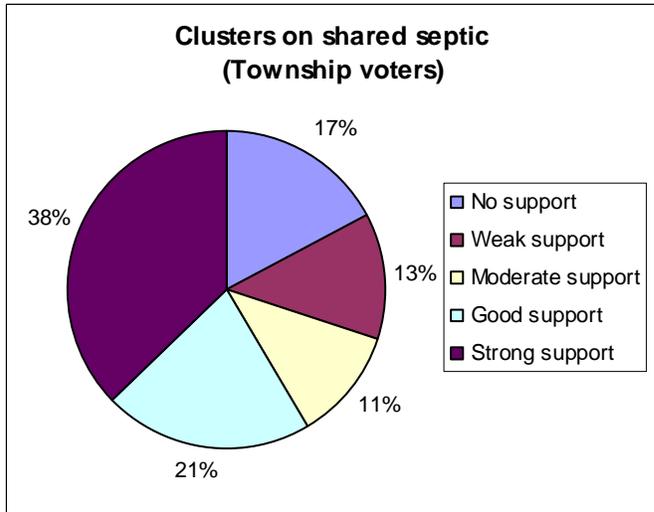
The next option was for clustered developments, with houses on smaller lots sharing a communal septic system. Support for this option was better, with one quarter expressing weak or no support, 21% showing moderate support, and the remainder (54%) expressing good or strong support. There was good agreement between the leadership and public forum participants on this question.



The third option measured was for townhome development in rural areas. Reaction to this possibility was decidedly negative, with more than half of respondents expressing no support at all, and another 21% showing only weak support. Strong or good support was shown by only 13% of participants. Support was consistent between the public and leadership groups.

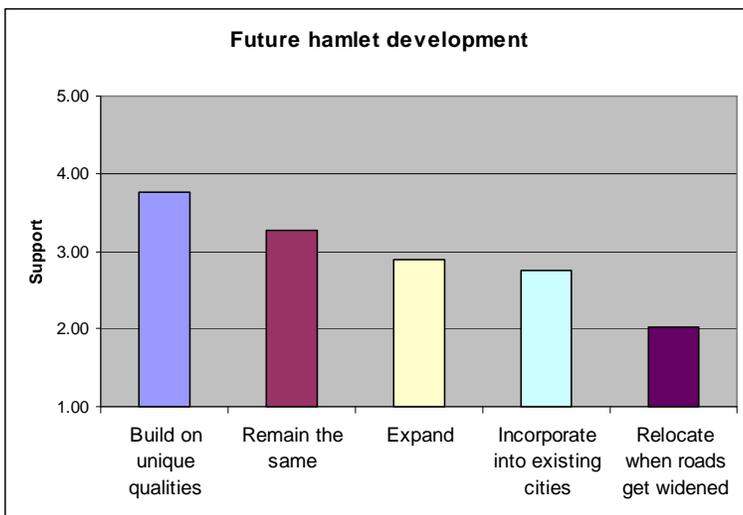
Further discussion at the various forums determined that participants’ opinion of this option had been strongly affected by the recent townhome development in Shakopee, which was not viewed with much favor by those participating in the discussions.

Some significant differences of opinion exist between city and township residents in regards to these development questions. Township residents expressed much less support for rural residential without water and sewer service, with more than half expressing no support or weak support. They were also much less supportive of townhome development. Regarding clustered rural developments, township voters were very polarized, with a high proportion of responses at the highest and lowest ends; just 11% expressed moderate support. City dwellers were more moderate in their support of all three development ideas.



Discussion next turned to the role of hamlets in the county. Asked whether these small rural communities were an important part of Scott County’s future, 35% responded that hamlets were very important. Another 41% felt that hamlets were somewhat important, and the remaining 24% felt hamlets were not an important of the county’s future identity.

Participants were next asked about a variety of methods by which the county might plan for future development around hamlets. Given three basic options for dealing with future development, the most preferred was to allow hamlets to remain as they currently are. This was followed by encouraging hamlets to expand, with more residential and commercial development, as well as open space. There was little support for the idea of encouraging hamlets to move, or encouraging new hamlets to form elsewhere, when roads are widened and intersections are no longer conducive to hamlets as they currently exist.



Discussions about other ways to address future hamlet development elicited a handful of suggestions. These included the encouragement of development that would build on the social and physical aspects that make a hamlet unique. Another option that was mentioned more than once was simply to allow hamlets to be incorporated into existing cities as they expand.

Other ideas mentioned on various nights included linking existing hamlets into the county’s trail system to help support and maintain commercial activity related to trail activities. Some said that hamlets might be considered as a modified form of cluster

development, and treated accordingly. Finally, it was suggested that the county might look to the example provided by the hamlet of Jonathan.

Generally, city and township residents were in agreement on hamlet development ideas, though township residents were less supportive of ideas involving the relocation of hamlets or their absorption by cities. There was some disconnect between the community leader and general public groups. The former was much more supportive of expanding hamlets, while the latter supported their remaining the same.

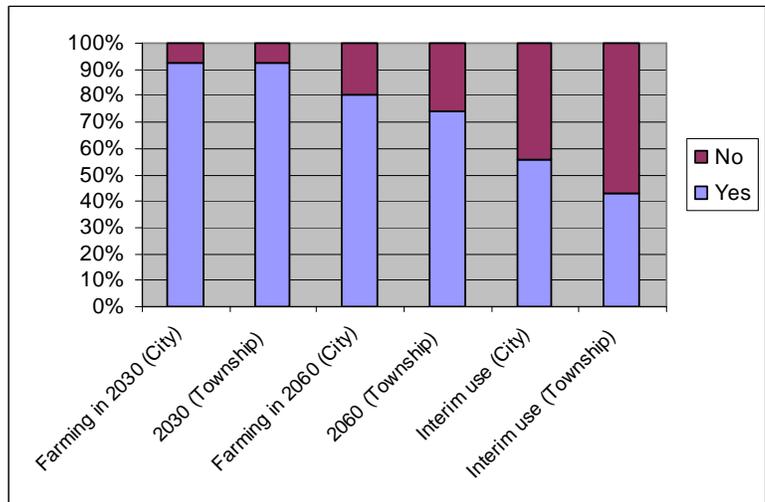
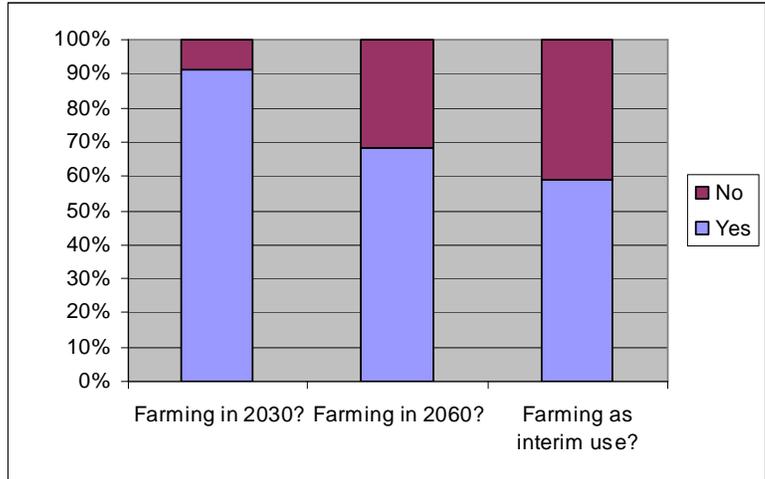
### Planning for Agricultural Areas

The next area to be discussed was the county’s agricultural areas. Participants were first asked to consider whether farming should be part of Scott County in 2030; then they were asked the same thing for 2060. Participants were also asked whether it was appropriate to consider agriculture as an interim use until development reaches a given area. Results of these three votes are shown at right.

Participants obviously feel that farming will remain part of Scott County’s identity well into the future, though not all felt that this would continue all the way to 2060. They were split 3 to 2 on whether agriculture as an interim use is appropriate for consideration. Community leaders were less likely to see farming in the county in 2060, and far more likely to see farming as an acceptable interim land use.

An interesting result appears when we look at a comparison of city and township responses to these questions. Generally, all are in agreement that farming will remain until 2030; the difference shows in the other two questions. Somewhat surprisingly, city dwellers are more optimistic about keeping active farms until 2060. However, even though township residents don’t see farming as part of the county’s makeup in 2060, they show very little support for looking at farms as an interim use. This result seems counterintuitive, and may warrant further examination.

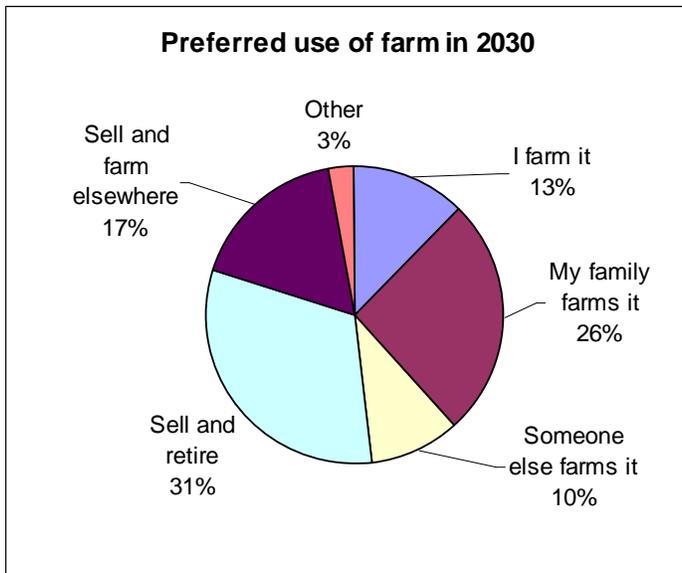
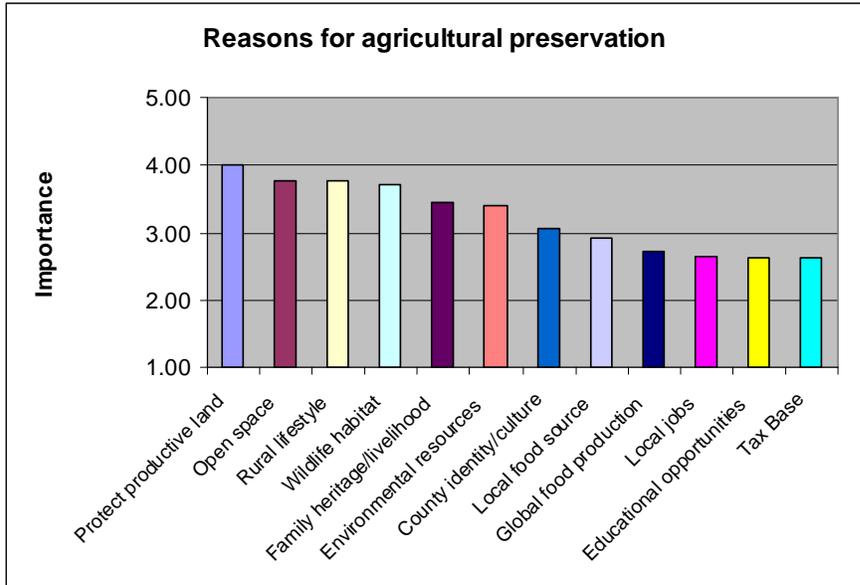
Next, participants were asked to brainstorm and rank various reasons why the preservation of agricultural land is important to Scott County’s future. Four reasons were given as examples: open space, local food source, local jobs, and rural lifestyle. A number of other reasons were given by more than one of the four groups.



As shown below, the most important reasons among participants for preserving agricultural land are for the protection of the county’s most productive land, preservation of open space, preservation of the county’s rural lifestyle and character, and the preservation of wildlife habitat. Preserving the farming lifestyle of families and environmental resources were also considered fairly important. Moderate importance was given to the preservation of the county’s historical agricultural identity and its role in local food production. Lower importance was assigned to food production for the national/global market, local employment and tax base, and to providing agricultural education opportunities to urban residents and students.

Township residents placed a higher importance on maintenance of the county’s rural character and its tax base. Otherwise, city and township residents were in consensus on the various reasons for preservation.

Other reasons given a good level of importance by a single forum included providing environmental balance, providing an energy source (in the form of ethanol or other biofuels), and providing a buffer zone between the cities and the countryside. Less important reasons included the provision of state agribusiness jobs, providing a unique metropolitan agricultural setting, providing tourism opportunities, and knowing where one’s food comes from.

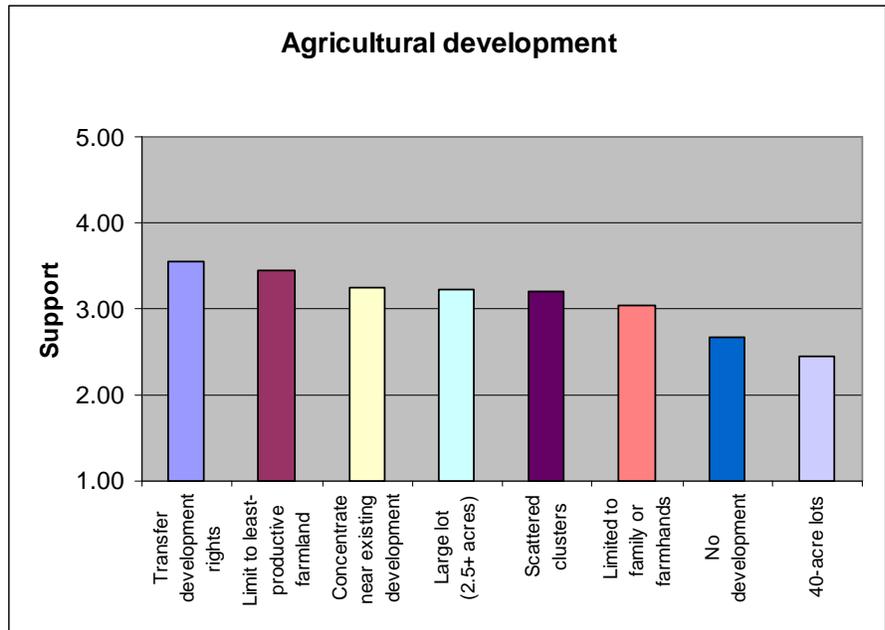


Next, farmers were asked what fate they preferred for their farms between the present time and 2030. Approximately half of participants responded that they were not farmers; the breakdown of responses by the remaining participants is shown in the pie chart at left.

The response was split roughly evenly between those wishing to see their land continue as a farm, and those who preferred to sell their property for retirement or for acreage farther from the urban area.

All participants were then asked to consider a variety of possible development patterns in the county’s agricultural areas.

Support overall for agricultural development was lower than support for development in other areas of the county. Allowing the transfer of development rights by farmers and limiting development to the least productive farmland enjoyed a decent amount of support. Respondents were generally neutral on concentrating growth near existing development, making 2.5-acre lots, cluster developments, and development limited to family and farmhands. Prohibiting development and putting homes on 40-acre lots found mild to moderate opposition.

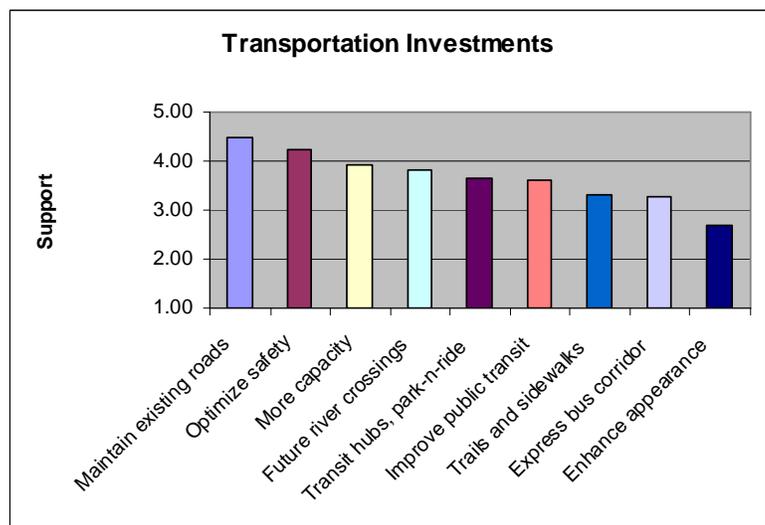


In general, city dwellers were somewhat more supportive of residential development on 2.5-acre or 40-acre lots, while township residents were more supportive of restricting agricultural development. Different types of landowners were generally in agreement regarding development, with the notable exception of 2.5-acre lots, which enjoyed much higher support among residential and agricultural residents than with rural residential participants.

### Planning for Transportation

The final set of questions at each night’s forum involved the County’s transportation priorities. Participants were first given a set of transportation categories, and asked their level of support for County investment in each area. The investment categories included:

1. Develop express bus corridor
2. Enhance appearance of existing corridors
3. Expand roadway system for more capacity
4. Increased trails and sidewalks
5. Improve existing public transit
6. Maintain existing roads
7. Optimize safety of existing roads
8. Provide for future interchanges and river crossings
9. Provide more transit hubs, park-n-rides and bus lanes



A pattern similar to that seen in earlier exercises appears again here: respondents show more support for investments to maintain existing transportation assets than for new construction or expansion. Roads were consistently supported more highly than other transit options. Trails and sidewalks, express bus corridors, and aesthetics along roadsides were each ranked fairly low by comparison.

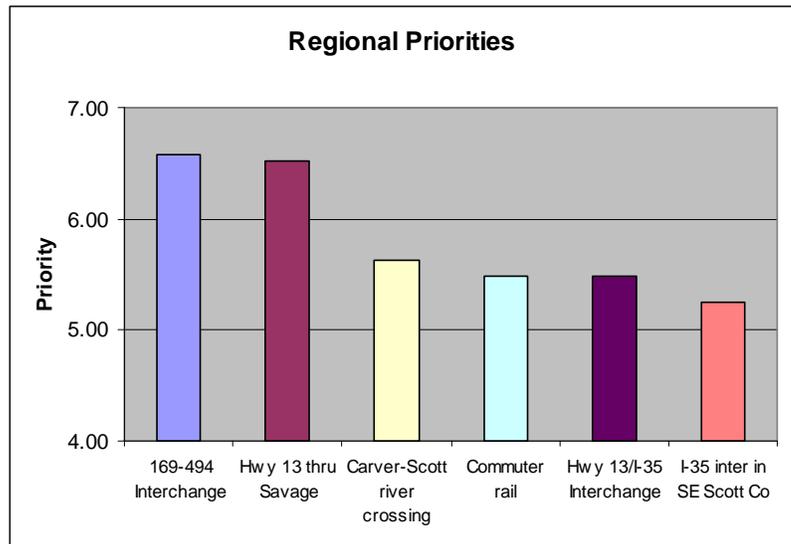
Commuters and non-commuters were in agreement generally, though commuters did show more support for increasing road capacity.

The next question to be raised involved the planning and purchase of land in the rural agricultural areas of the county, in anticipation of future highway needs. By a margin of almost three to one, respondents supported this sort of planning and acquisition. There was some disagreement between city and township residents on this question. While city dwellers supported it by four to one, township residents voted just 56% to 44% in favor. A similar pattern was seen with community leaders, who supported planning and acquisition by more than four to one, while the general public was split two to one.

A number of regional transportation projects were ranked next. This list was primarily concentrated around projects that affect the ability to get into and out of the County to the north and east. The list included:

- River crossing between Scott and Carver County
- Commuter rail line into Scott County
- I-35 interchange in SE Scott County
- Improvements to Hwy 13 through Savage
- Improvements to Hwy 13/I-35 interchange
- Improvements to Hwy 169/I-494 interchange

Participants were asked to rank on a 1-9 scale how much of a priority the County should put on each project as it moves forward with its transportation plans.



As shown in the chart, responses were generally clustered in the middle of the scale, though there is some differentiation between them. The highest priority was given to improvements to the Hwy 169/I-494 interchange and to Highway 13 through Savage. A potential new river crossing between Scott County and Carver County stood in the middle of the pack with a commuter rail line, and the interchange at Hwy 13 and I-35. The I-35 interchange near Elko New Market rounded out the voting. Not surprisingly, commuters ranked the 169/494 interchange as a very high priority (7.6 out of 9); commuters also rated commuter rail and the Elko New Market interchange higher than did non-commuters.

The final exercise involved a head-to-head comparison of three abstract types of transportation projects. Participants were asked to choose between projects that moved traffic within the county (i.e. departure and destination points both within the county), projects to move traffic in and out of the county (i.e. one end of journey within the county), and projects to move traffic through the county (neither departure nor destination within the county).

The results of this head-to-head comparison show that most participants value projects to move traffic in and out of the county most highly. This result is consistent with the number of residents who commute out of the county each workday, as well as the amount of goods that travel to and from the county.

