

# Saint Louis County Comprehensive Land Use Plan

St. Louis County is in the process of developing a new Comprehensive Land Use Plan that will guide land use development and planning efforts through 2035. Through a series of in-person and online engagement activities, the county invited the public to learn more about existing land use conditions and provide insight on issues of concern and areas of opportunities for the future. Below is a recap.

## Agency Focus Group Meetings



### Infrastructure Services

Representatives present:

- Vermilion Lake Fire Department
- Arrowhead Regional Development Corporation
- Great River Energy
- Lake Country Power
- Town of White
- Minnesota Department of Transportation

Others invited: all local fire departments, utility providers, and airports



### Tourism & Recreation

Representatives present:

- DNR - Trails
- Iron Range Tourism Bureau
- Minnesota Department of Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation
- St. Louis-Lake County Regional Railroad Authority

Others invited: recreational clubs (snowmobile, ATV, bicycling), trail organizations



### Natural Resource-based Economy

Representatives present:

- Minnesota Department of Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) – Forestry, Land & Minerals
- Cleveland-Cliffs, Inc.
- RGGGS Land & Minerals
- Iron Mining Association

Others invited: mining companies and associations present in the county, forestry associations providers, and airports



### Natural Environment

Representatives present:

- DNR – Fisheries, Ecological & Water Resources
- Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources
- Voyageurs National Park
- Soil and Water Conservation District (North and South St. Louis)
- Minnesota Power – Environmental Division

Others invited: USDA-NRCS, Army Corps of Engineers, local tribal governments, USFS-BWCAW & Superior National Forest, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

## Public Participation



### First Series of Public Workshops

Public meetings were held in Virginia, Ely, Orr, and Pike Lake August 21-24, 2017. Each meeting was held in the afternoon and into the early evening, lasting for at least 6 hours to best accommodate community members. Invitations were sent to all local city governments, township leaders, environmental interest groups, lake associations, and development-related entities. The consultant and county team presented the following information:

- What the comprehensive land use plan is
- Why a plan is being developed
- Overview of existing land use and related conditions in the county
- Different mapping assessments regarding the natural environment, and rural residential, commercial and industrial development.

Participation:

Attendees asked questions of the consultant and county staff, and provided input on maps provided regarding land use and development-related concerns and opportunities throughout the county.

## Public Participation



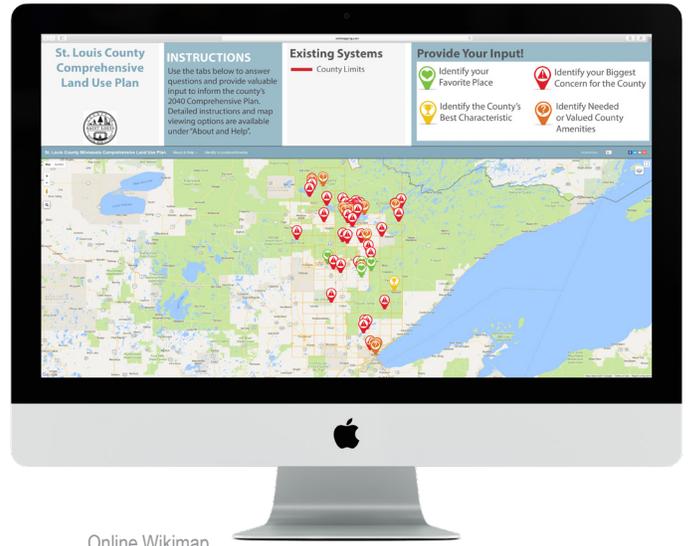
### Online Wikimap

From August 21 until November 15, 2017, an online mapping input opportunity was made available. Participants were able to select a “pin” to identify and provide detail on a land use related concern, valued amenity, favorite characteristic, or favorite place. **66 different pins were provided.**



### Public Outreach

In addition to invites to known organizations, email blasts were sent to all of those on the county’s email address database to provide notice of the workshops and Wikimap opportunity. A press release was also provided to all local papers regarding the workshops.



Online Wikimap

## Land Use Report - Notable Findings



### Undeveloped Platted Land

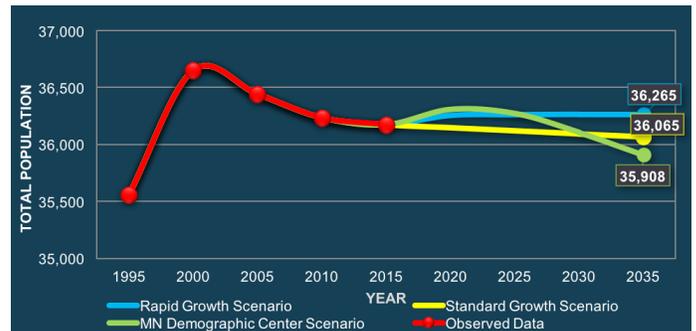
Approximately 5,044 lots are currently platted in areas of county zoning jurisdiction, yet are undeveloped. The majority of these lots were platted with the intention of residential development. As of 2017, approximately 33% of all lots platted primarily for residential use remained undeveloped. These largely undeveloped areas could be recognized for their potential to absorb future growth and moderate the demand for future residential land use. It should be noted that infrastructure servicing the 5,044 undeveloped lots may be limited or absent—some of the undeveloped areas may be represented by “paper lots” that do not have streets, electricity, and other critical infrastructure.

### Projected Population and Land Use Demand

The county’s rural population is projected to stagnate at best over the long term. At the same time, the percentage of seniors will continue to increase. Will seniors stay in lakeside areas and other rural areas or go to local cities?

Over 1 million acres is zoned to primarily allow residential use. Only approximately 20,000 acres are needed through 2037. Residential zoning has been used to such a great extent because it has been the only tool available to protect certain areas from gravel pit development or other types of development deemed “undesirable” by the local community.

The [Land Use Report](#) provides foundational information for creation of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. This report is available online at [planslcmn.com](http://planslcmn.com).



County Zoning Jurisdiction Population Projection

### Next Steps

Alternative land use maps are under development from GIS analysis and comments received at August focus group meetings and public workshops. New and revised plan goals and objectives are also under development. A second round of outreach will be held in the late spring/early summer of 2018. Dates and times are forthcoming.

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