

City of Rice Comprehensive Plan



**Adopted by the
Rice City Council
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

In early summer, 2011, the City of Rice began the process of updating their Comprehensive Plan, last updated in 2004. After a kick-off meeting with the Rice City Council and Planning Commission in July, 2011, work on the project was undertaken in late-summer, fall, and early winter of 2011. A comprehensive plan ad-hoc task force was organized by the City, composed of members representing diverse backgrounds, to provide input for the creation of this planning tool. After input was garnered at multiple ad-hoc task force meetings, a draft comprehensive plan was developed, approved by the Rice Planning Commission and ordained by the Rice City Council.

Comprehensive Plan

A Comprehensive Plan, or Comp Plan for short, is a statement of what the community of Rice wants to become. It is a collection of principles-based on community defined vision; and an assembly of concepts which have been established to support the principles and the vision. These principles and concepts reflect the community's vision in its desires for growth, maintaining a small town atmosphere, and respect for the land and the environment. The "Master Plan", which demonstrates how the community can move forward, is somewhat broad in scope, recognizing that there are many factors influencing how and why the community will change. Therefore, it deals more with concepts, patterns and relationships than specific rules and ordinances.



Previous Plans

This document is a continuation of the ongoing planning process in the City of Rice. It legally amends the 2004 Comprehensive Plan, the latest official Comprehensive Plan for the City of Rice. The City has used this planning process as an opportunity to evaluate and reinforce the existing growth and development policies and to evaluate previous planning efforts in order to update and reinforce past decisions that are still valid. A major premise of this Plan, therefore, is to utilize portions of previous community plans whenever applicable.

Authority to Plan

Municipal planning is authorized under Minnesota State Statute 462.351—462.358 which include the authority to plan, the definition of planning terms, community-based planning, organization for planning, as well as the preparation, adoption and amendment of the comprehensive municipal plan and zoning and subdivision authority. The City of Rice complies with this legislature in its ability, authority and need to plan.

Methodology

This Comprehensive Plan is the product of several entities and systemic, ongoing, forward-looking processes including:

- An ad-hoc citizen Planning Task Force appointed by the Planning Commission & City Council composed of a cross section of the community.
- Input from the Rice City Council and Planning Commission.
- The gathering of demographic and historical data from a variety of sources including the City of Rice, Benton County, the State of Minnesota and the US Census. Review of City ordinances, prior planning documents, reports, studies, etc.
- The creation, distribution, and tabulation of a community survey specifically designed to provide widespread community input on a variety of topics specifically for this planning purpose, and,
- Assistance from City Staff.

Purpose

This document is the Comprehensive Plan for Rice, Minnesota. This Plan sets forth the basic guiding principles that have been embraced by Rice to shape its future. It evolved through the interchange of information, analysis and response between the citizens, community leaders, staff and public officials within the City and surrounding areas through a planning process undertaken in 2011.

Location

Rice is a City in central Benton County, Minnesota. It is approximately 132 miles from Minneapolis, and is 72 miles from the nearest Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) St. Cloud.

While the Table of Contents presents a clear listing of what is contained in this document, the reader will benefit from a brief overview of the organization of the Plan. This Introduction presents an abridged summary of the planning process and the framework within which the Plan was developed.



The Demographic Characteristics chapter provides an overview and assessment of demographic trends within the City and surrounding areas. An area's overall population characteristics such as age, household size, etc. are critical influences on its future. Population, household and other demographic information helps define existing conditions within the community. This information also provides a basis for future expectations with regard to growth, housing needs, economic development, land use needs and other important components of the Comprehensive Plan.

The subsequent several chapters focus on specific planning topics including:

- Parks & Open Spaces
- Recreation and Tourism
- Business and Industry
 - o Central Business District / Downtown
 - o Highway 10 Corridor
 - o Industrial
- Housing
- Public Services and Facilities
- Transportation
- Land Use
- Quality of Life



Each of these chapters contains an Inventory and Analysis of existing conditions related to the respective topic within and affecting the City of Rice. Existing conditions and patterns of development in the City and surrounding area have a great influence on its future. Thus, accurate, complete and up-to-date information on existing conditions is essential to a successful Comprehensive Plan.

Each of these chapters also contains an overview of the Issues identified by project participants relating to that chapter's specific topic. Following that is a Policy Plan, which includes a set of Goals and Strategies. A Goal is a general statement of community aspirations indicating a broad social, economic or physical state of conditions that the community officially agrees to strive to achieve in various ways, such as through the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. A Strategy is an officially adopted course of action, position, policy or strategy intended to be followed to implement the community Goals. The Goals and Strategies express in detail the City's aspirations for the future. Experience has shown that no system of land use designation, public facilities, transportation, etc. can survive strong economic pressures to change. Therefore, it is appropriate that such systems be periodically reevaluated in light of changing social and economic conditions.

Consequently, it is from precisely this inevitability of changing conditions that a community's Goals and Strategies derive their true value, because it is in the Goals and Strategies that the City has the opportunity to communicate its aspirations regarding the type of living environment that its citizens strive to achieve. Therefore, while external factors influencing land use, public facilities, transportation, etc. will change, the goals and strategies will continue to provide the best perspective from which to view proposed changes.

The Goals and Policies distilled from this process also contain suggested short and long term action items. These are more specific recommendations based on the input from

the community survey and Ad-Hoc Comprehensive land Use Plan Update Task Force related to the future growth and development of the City.

Project Participants

This project required the coordination of many participants. A group of citizens, staff, elected officials and other stakeholders whose members were appointed by the City made up the Ad-Hoc Comprehensive Plan Update Task Force. Members represented a broad cross section of interests and perspectives throughout the community, as shown below. This group reviewed and commented on all work products and focused on preparing and recommending a complete set of Goals, Strategies and Long Range Plan recommendations for inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan. The areas of interest represented on the Task Force included:

- City Council
- Planning Commission
- Businesses
- Residents at Large
- Service Organizations
- Schools
- Seniors
- Faith Community

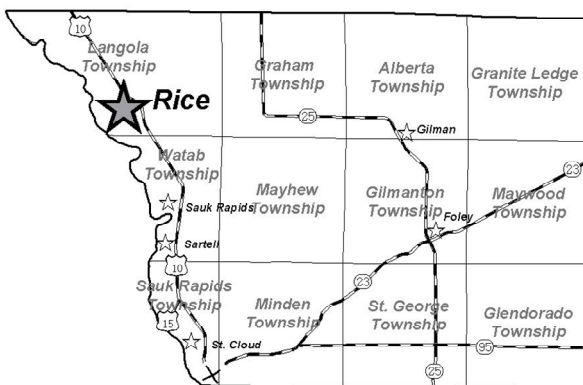


The City secured the services of planning consultant Jordan Zeller of JZP LLC to facilitate the development of this Plan.

Planning Process

The planning process began with a joint Rice City Council & Planning Commission meeting. At this meeting, these groups were briefed on historical and current demographics of the community and surround area, as well as demographic projections.

Figure 1, County Context



The purpose of this meeting was to refine a community survey designed to garner feedback from residents of Rice on a variety of development and land use topics, and solicit views on issues, problems and opportunities facing the Rice area.

The Council & Planning Commission also worked to refine a scope of work for the consultant to follow in undertaking the updating of the Rice Comprehensive Land Use Plan to achieve the desired outcomes and products.

Community surveys were mailed out based on a mailing list provided by the City of Rice. This list was created by their Municipal Utility billing list and other sources. 670 surveys were mailed out in late summer, with 58 surveys returned by early fall – an 11.55% response rate. Surveys were then tabulated and results were used to create the Rice Comprehensive Plan Update Community Survey Report.

This report was used by the Comprehensive Plan Update Ad-Hoc Task Force in creating goals and policies, as well as short and long term action items.

The project consultants lead task force members through a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis, and several visioning and issue identification and prioritization exercises which were also used in developing the Rice Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update goals, strategies & short and long term action items.



Figure 2, Regional Context

In fall, 2011, the draft Rice Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update was prepared. A Task Force review meeting was held that October, with a City Council public hearing in November. It was adopted by the City Council on December 5, 2011.

Plan Setting

Rice is a community of about 1,275 persons covering approximately 6.1 square mile, area in the northwestern region of Benton County. The City is bordered by two townships: Langola and Watab as shown in Figure 1, *County Context*, on the right.



The Mississippi River flows directly to the west of the City on its journey from northern Minnesota to the Twin Cities, and forms the border between Benton County and adjacent Stearns Counties.

Located on Highway 10, Rice lies approximately 85 miles north of Minneapolis and 15 miles north of St. Cloud. This is indicated on Figure 2, *Regional Context*.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

The identification of trends in population growth and other demographic data is a very important part of the comprehensive planning process. It can provide clues to future growth patterns and indicate what types of housing and public facilities may be needed in the future. For example, an increase in young couples with children would require starter housing, new parks and schools, and new or upgraded community facilities; whereas, an increase in the elderly population would lessen the need for schools and increase the need for specialized housing. This section of the Comprehensive Plan contains information on Rice’s population and household characteristics.

Population

Table 1 shows the changes in population taken place over the past two decades in the City of Rice, surrounding communities, Benton County, and the state of Minnesota. During the 1990’s the City of Rice and the surrounding townships saw sizable growth. The City of Rice grew 16.6 percent, while Watab Township grew 21.1 percent, and Langola Township grew 15.2 percent. The County as a whole grew 13.4 percent, while the state only grew 12.4 percent.

The 2000’s brought substantial growth in the City of Rice, surrounding townships and the county. Although the growth did slow in some areas, it still remained significant overall and was extremely high in the City of Rice which grew 79.3 percent. Watab Township grew 6.7 percent, Langola Township declined -1.1 percent, Benton County grew by 12.3 percent, and the State grew 7.8 percent in population.

Table 1

**Population Trends – Rice Area
1990 – 2010**

	1990	2000	% Change	2010	% Change
Rice	610	711	16.6	1,275	79.3
Watab Twp.	2,394	2,900	21.1	3,093	6.7
Langola Twp.	795	916	15.2	906	-1.1
Benton County	30,185	34,226	13.4	38,451	12.3
Minnesota	4,375,099	4,919,479	12.4	5,303,925	7.8

Source: US Census

Population Share

Rice and surrounding townships comprised 12.6 percent of the County’s total population in 1990 as shown on Table 2. Their share increased steadily through 2010.

In 1990, the population of Watab Township was over three times greater than the population of Rice. The population of Langola Township was just slightly greater than the City population. In 2000, some of the population share shifted even more to Watab Township. By 2010 Rice had grown dramatically and by then it contained 24.2% of the tri county community's population. This trend illustrates some of the land use and growth dynamics occurring in the community. These are discussed further in the Land Use Chapter.

Table 2

**Population Share
City of Rice and Surrounding Communities
1990 – 2010**

	1990	% of Tri-Community Area	% of County	2000	% of Tri-Community Area	% of County	2010	% of Tri-Community Area	% of County
Rice	610	16.1	2.0	711	15.6	2.1	1,275	24.2	3.3
Langola Twp.	795	20.9	2.6	916	20.1	2.7	906	17.2	2.4
Watab Twp.	2,394	63.0	7.9	2,920	64.2	8.5	3,093	58.6	8.0
Tri Community Total	3,799	100	12.6	4,547	100	13.3	5,274	100	13.7
	1990	Tri-Community % of County	% of County	2000	Tri-Community % of County	% of County	2010	Tri-Community % of County	% of County
Benton County	30,185	12.6	100	34,226	13.3	100	38,451	13.7	100

Source: US Census

Population By Age

Trends in age significantly impact a community's planning needs. It gives clues as to the types of housing, parks and community facilities and services that may be needed in the future. It also indicates what demands may be placed on the school system in the future.

The population in Minnesota and the nation is steadily aging as the baby boomer generation reaches maturity. There has also been a recent increase in the younger age groups in many communities – known as the baby boomer echo. This trend is replicated in Rice.



Table 3 shows the median age in Rice and surrounding communities from 1980 to 2010. The table shows that, consistent with national trends, Rice's population is getting older. The same is true of surrounding townships. However, in 2000 and 2010, Rice's median age was significantly lower than surrounding townships, the County and the state as a whole as shown in Table 3.

Table 3
Median Age – Rice and Surrounding Townships
1980 – 2010

	1980	1990	2000	2010
Rice	25.2	25.7	27.7	28.8
Langola Township	22.1	27.7	35.1	41.5
Watab Township	26.3	29.3	35.6	41.7

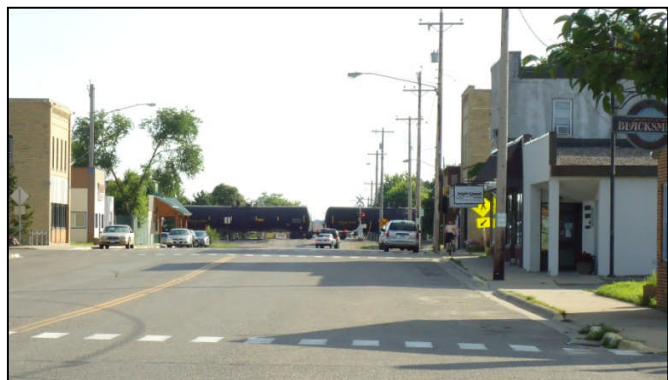
Source: US Census

The largest age group in Rice is the 25 to 34 year-old group, followed by the 35 to 44 year-olds. These groups, combined, comprise 39.6 percent of the City's population. From 2000 to 2010, Rice saw its largest population gain in the 35 to 44, 55 to 59, and 85+ year-old ranges. These age groups increased by 137%, 195%, and 600% respectively. During the same time period of time, other age groups experienced growth, but to a lower extent than these groups.

The 20 to 29 year old age group is typically the group that is starting out on its own and putting stakes into the community. Members of this age group, particularly in the upper end, are beginning to enter the family formation years, thus continued drops/increases in this age group may indicate declining/increasing school enrollments in the near future. The 25 to 29 year-old group, along with the 30 to 34 year olds, is also the typical first time homebuyer group while 20 to 24 year olds are typically renters.

In Rice, the smallest increases were in the 10 to 14, 15 to 19, and 20 to 24 year-old groups from 2000 to 2010. There are two factors that may have contributed to these declines. First, it could be related to the small 15 to 19 age group located within the City in the 1990's. Secondly, this is typically the age when many are seeking higher education and broader employment opportunities, and may leave the community to do so.

The 30 to 49 year old age groups tend to be looked at as the new generation of community leaders and business owners, and their children are found throughout the school system from preschool to 12th grade. These age groups also tend to be active in the community and demand high quality services for their children and



families. However, these age groups also tend to be highly mobile and may move away from a community to find better opportunities. Within this population range, the 30 to 34 year olds are typically first-time homebuyers while the 35 to 49 year olds are typically included in the move-up homebuyer market.

In Rice, there was a healthy growth rate within each of these groups. The 35 to 44 year-olds comprise the second largest age group in the City, and increased in population from 2000 to 2010 by 53 percent. The 25 to 34 year-olds comprise the largest age cohort in the City, and there was a large increase in the group from 2000 to 2010. The City's 45 to 54 year olds comprise only 9 percent of its population, but this group increased by 61 percent during the 1990's.

Persons in the 50 to 64 year age group statistically tend to be empty nesters and may move to smaller homes, while young seniors aged 65 to 74 often seek a variety of housing options. Empty nesters in these age groups begin to leave homes with several bedrooms and two or more stories for lower maintenance, two bedroom units, often on one story.

Forty-five to fifty-four year-olds comprise a modest share of the City's population and experienced a high rate of growth during the 2000's in Rice. The 55 to 59 and 60 to 64 year-old groups also saw high rates of growth, but still comprise a relatively small proportion of the City's population. The 65 to 74 year-old group comprises a small percentage of the City's population, yet doubled in size from 2000 to 2010.

There was a 600 percent increase in the 75+ population in Rice between 2000 and 2010. Although in 2000 this segment of the population only encompassed 1.4 percent of the total population in Rice, future growth of this segment will have several planning implications for a City. Park and recreational demands of this group tend to be for passive activities rather than ball fields and playgrounds. Social services, elderly housing and medical services will be in demand and will most likely need to be located near one another.



Table 4

**Population by Age – City of Rice
2000 – 2010**

Age Cohort	2000		2010		2000-2010	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Change	Percent Change
Under 5	78	11	150	12	72	92
5 – 9	68	10	133	10	65	96
10 – 14	67	9	85	7	18	27
15 – 19	54	8	71	6	17	31
20 – 24	54	8	69	5	15	28
25 – 34	144	20	341	27	197	137
35 – 44	107	15	164	13	57	53
45 – 54	70	10	113	9	43	61
55 – 59	20	3	59	5	39	195
60 – 64	19	3	29	2	10	53
65 – 74	20	3	40	3	20	100
75-84	9	1	14	1	5	56
85 +	1	0	7	1	6	600
Total	711	100	1275	100	564	79

Median Age:	2010
City of Rice	28.8
Watab Twp	41.7
Langola Twp	41.5
Benton County	34.1
Minnesota	37.4
Source: US Census	

Population Projections

According to Table 5, which shows population projections for Rice, the City is expected to have growth over the next 19 years.



Table 5

**Population Projections 2010 – 2030
City of Rice**

Projection Method	2010 Base	2020	2010 - 2020		2030	2020 - 2030	
			Change	% Change		Change	% Change
Exponential	1275	1887	612	48.0	2,793	906	48.0
Straight Line	1275	1608	333	26.1	1,941	333	20.7
Top Down	1275	1287	12	0.9	1424	137	10.6
Demographer's Rates	1275	1413	138	10.8	1491	78	5.5

*Source: US Census

Four formulas were used to calculate these projections. The first three methods were based on the actual population counts for the City of Rice for the years 1990 to 2010, and assume that growth will continue along these trends through 2030. The formulas are as follows:

Exponential: This method uses the average *rate of growth* the City saw per decade between 1990 and 2010. This calculation reveals that the City grew by 48.0 percent each decade. Thus, the City's 2020 and 2030 populations were calculated by increasing the population by 48.0 percent each decade beginning with the 2010 base.



Straight Line: This method uses the average *number* of people per decade that the City added to its population over the past 20 years. From 1990 to 2010, the City gained an average of 333 people per year. Thus, the City's 2020 and 2030 populations were calculated by adding 333 people each decade to its 2010 base population.

Top Down: This method combines population projections prepared by the State Demographer's Office with historic population trends. It first calculates the City's average share of the county's population from 1990 to 2010. During this period the City, on average, comprised 2.5 percent of the total population in Benton County. This method then looks at the Demographer's projections for Benton County through 2030 and allocates 2.5 percent of the projected population to Rice. Thus, the City's 2020 population is 2.5 percent the county's projected 2020 population, and the 2030 City population is 2.5 percent of the projected 2030 Benton County population.

Demographer's Rates: This method also uses the State Demographer's projections for Benton County through 2020, but it assumes that Rice will grow at the same rate as the county is expected to grow during each decade. For



example, the county is expected to grow by 10.8 percent from 2010 to 2020, so 10.8 percent was added to the City's 2010 population to estimate its 2020 population. From 2020 to 2030, Benton County is expected to grow by 5.5 percent, so the City's 2030 population is projected by adding 5.5 percent to its estimated 2020 population and so on.

As shown in Table 5, Rice is expected to have a population between 1,424 and 2,793 by 2030. This represents a 12 percent to 119 percent increase over the 2010 population that will add between 149 and 1518 new residents. However, it is important to note, that recent development trends indicate the City is likely to experience continued growth in the coming years although likely not at the same high levels as seen in the past decade.

Households

The character of households can change over time in two ways as it relates to a City's population growth: by number and by size. If over time population growth is coupled with an increase in both the number and size of households, it generally indicates a community is growing from within (i.e. a high birth rate). However, if population growth is reflected by an increase in the number of households and a decrease in the size of the household, then it may indicate that the community is growing due to an influx of new residents.

Tables 6 and 7 show the City of Rice growing in population and in the number of households, however there is a decrease in persons per household. This trend stays consistent from 1990 through 2010. This indicates Rice is growing due to an influx of new residents. Rice is not the only surrounding community dealing with this phenomenon. Watab Township and Langola Township have also seen the same trend from 1990 through 2010 indicating they too have an increase in new residents.

Table 6
Household Characteristics – Rice Area
1990 – 2000

	1990			2000		
	Households	Population	Persons per Household	Households	Population	Persons per Household
Rice	200	610	3.05	247	711	2.88
Watab Twp.	796	2,394	3.01	1,036	2,900	2.82
Langola Twp.	229	795	3.47	291	916	3.15
Benton County	10,935	30,185	2.76	13,065	33,457	2.56
Minnesota	1,647,853	4,375,099	2.66	1,895,127	4,789,596	2.52

Source: US Census

Table 7

**Household Characteristics – Rice Area
2010**

	Households	Population	Persons per Household
Rice	462	1275	2.76
Watab Twp.	1,149	3,093	2.69
Langola Twp.	333	906	2.72
Benton County	15,079	38,451	2.55
Minnesota	2,087,227	5,303,925	2.54

Source: US Census

Housing

Available, affordable and safe housing is necessary for a community to accommodate the growth of all segments of the population. It provides a vital link between the community's population growth, economic development goals and its land use priorities. In order to encourage growth in the population and economy, housing will be needed in Rice for residents of differing income levels, for multi-family and single-family units, and for purchase and rent.

Housing types in Rice are generally mixed, reflecting the period in which they were built. Most of the housing is in good condition, however as in most communities, some housing is in need of rehabilitation or maintenance. There is neither one area of exceptionally pristine housing nor decaying housing found in the City. Often times both types of housing are located near each other or on the same block, further emphasizing this mixture of housing.

Table 8 describes the total number of occupied housing units in the City for years 2000 and 2009. During this time period the City of Rice increased by 108 units. Single-family homes dominate the landscape in Rice comprising 86.8 percent of the total housing available.



Table 8**Housing Type (Total Units) – Rice Area
2000-2009**

Structure Type	2000*		2005-2009**		2000-2009	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Change	Percent Change
Single Family	209	84.3	317	86.8	108	51.7
2-9 Units	3	1.2	7	1.9	4	133.3
10+ Units	27	10.9	41	11.2	14	51.9
Manufactured Homes	5	2.0	0	0	-.5	-100
Total	244	100	365	100	121	49.6

*Source: US Census

**Source: 2005-2009 American Community Survey

Table 9 compares the housing types of Rice, the surrounding area, and the state. Rice is quite similar to that of the surrounding townships. They both have high percentages of single-family homes with very low percentages of other housing types. Though the state and the county are dominated by single-family homes, it is far less dramatic than in Rice and the surrounding townships.

Table 9**Housing Type - Rice Area
2005-2009**

Units in Structure	Rice		Watab Twp.		Langola Twp.		Benton County		Minnesota	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1, Attached	0	0	0	0	0	0	338	2.1	162,173	7.0
1, Detached	317	86.8	939	81.4	388	93.9	10,337	62.9	1,560,875	67.8
2	0	0	5	0.4	0	0	192	1.2	56,513	2.5
3 to 4	0	0	0	0	0	0	407	2.5	48,784	2.1
5 to 9	7	1.9	0	0	0	0	509	3.1	51,418	2.2
10 to 19	41	11.2	0	0	0	0	874	5.3	83,577	3.6

Source: 2005-2009 American Community Survey

Table 10 shows the low vacancy rate within the City of Rice of 5.7 percent. When compared to that of the state, there is a 5.4 percent deference in vacant housing. Benton County has a relatively high occupancy status as well. It only had a 6.6% vacancy rate in the year 2010.

Table 10**Occupancy Status – Rice Area
2010**

Housing Units	Rice City		Watab Twp.		Langola Twp.		Benton County		Minnesota	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Total	490	100	1,302	100	382	100	16,140	100	2,347,201	100
Occupancy	462	94.3	1,149	88.2	333	87.2	15,079	93.4	2,087,227	88.9
Vacancy	28	5.7	153	11.8	49	12.8	1,061	6.6	259,974	11.1

Source: US Census

Table 11 shows Rice's housing age. The majority of housing was constructed after 1970. In 2009, only about 22 percent of the existing housing was constructed less than twenty years prior. 42 percent of the housing stock was built before 1939, adding to the diversity in housing types.

Table 11
Age of Housing
City of Rice
2005-2009

Year Built	Number	Percent
2005 or later	0	0.00
2000 to 2004	22	6.00
1990 to 1999	58	15.90
1980 to 1989	46	12.60
1970 to 1979	65	17.80
1960 to 1969	14	3.80
1940 to 1959	6	1.60
1939 or earlier	154	42.20

Source: 2005-2009 American Community Survey

Table 12
Year Householder Moved Into Unit
City of Rice
2005-2009

Year Householder Moved into Unit	Number	Percent
2005 or later	71	19.90
2000 to 2004	164	46.10
1990 to 1999	86	24.20
1980 to 1989	17	4.80
1970 to 1979	12	3.40
1969 or earlier	6	1.70

Source: 2005-2009 American Community Survey

Table 12 shows that in 2009, 19.9 percent of the households in Rice had only been occupied for 5 years or less. This further indicates an influx of new residents from outside the City limits of Rice. Only 5 percent of the population has occupied their residence longer than 30 years.

Table 13 illustrates the housing values for the years 2000 and 2009 in the City of Rice. The median value of homes in Rice for 2000 was \$91,500 and in 2005 rose to \$151,800. This represents a 65.9 percent increase in housing values. The consumer price index (rate of inflation) for the same period rose 23 percent in the United States (US Department of Labor), indicating the cost of housing increased well beyond just the average inflationary increase.



Although the cost of housing in Rice has increased more than other goods, this is not unique to Rice. The housing price index in Minnesota rose 53 percent from 2000 to 2005.



The largest group of home values within the City falls in the \$100,000 to \$149,999 range. In addition to this range, the \$150,000 to \$199,000 range went from 4 units in 2000 to 67 units in 2005. This emphasizes the increasing value of housing in the City during that period of time.

Affordable housing is an important issue to keep in mind when considering quality of life for a community's residents. Housing is often considered affordable if a household doesn't

have to spend more than 30% of its income on housing. In 2009 the City of Rice's median income was \$73,472. With this income, \$1,837 would be considered the cut off point for the monthly cost of housing in order for it to be affordable. With this said, Table 14 shows the largest range of monthly owner costs for owner-occupied housing for the City of Rice was \$1,000 to \$1,499. The median dollars spent on housing in 2000 was \$1,248. This median average cost falls well within the City's median average income available for housing.

However, Table 15 points out that 14.4 percent of homeowners in Rice are still paying over 30 percent of their monthly income toward housing. Table 3-9 shows rental units are more affordable to the median Rice household than owner-occupied units. Every rental unit in the 2000 census was affordable when compared to the median income of Rice. Though many of the renters are below the median income, the table still indicates rental units remain affordable. The median monthly rent in Rice of \$417 is well below both Benton County and that of the state.

Table 13

Owner Occupied Housing Values – 2000-2009

Value	2000*		2005-2009*	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than \$50,000	10	5.7	0	0
\$50,000-\$99,000	109	62.3	18	9.2
\$100,000 - \$149,999	48	27.4	77	39.3
\$150,000 - \$199,000	4	2.3	67	34.2
\$200,000 - \$299,999	4	2.3	25	12.8
\$300,000 or More	0	0.0	9	4.6
Total	175	100	196	100

	2000	2005
Median Value – City of Rice	\$91,500	\$151,800
Median Value - Minnesota	\$122,400	\$207,000
Median Value – Benton County	\$99,100	\$169,500

*Source: U.S Census

**Source: 2005-2009 American Community Survey

Table 14

**Mortgage Status and Selected Monthly Owner Costs
City of Rice
2000**

Mortgage Status	Number	Percent
With a mortgage	163	83.2
Less than \$300	0	0.00
\$300 to \$499	0	0.00
\$500 to \$699	3	1.80
\$700 to \$999	29	17.80
\$1,000 to \$1,499	94	57.70
\$1,500 to \$1,999	29	17.80
\$2,000 or more	8	4.90
Median (dollars)	1,248	N/A
Not mortgaged	33	16.8
Median (dollars)	405	N/A

Source: 2005-2009 American Community Survey

Table 15

**Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income in 2005-2009
City of Rice**

Percent of Income Spent on Housing	Number	Percent
Less than 15 %	105	65.60
15 to 19 percent	0	0.00
20 to 24 percent	22	13.80
25 to 29 percent	10	6.30
30 to 34 percent	3	1.90
35 percent or more	20	12.50
Not computed	0	0

**Table 16 Gross Monthly Rent - City of Rice
2005-2009**

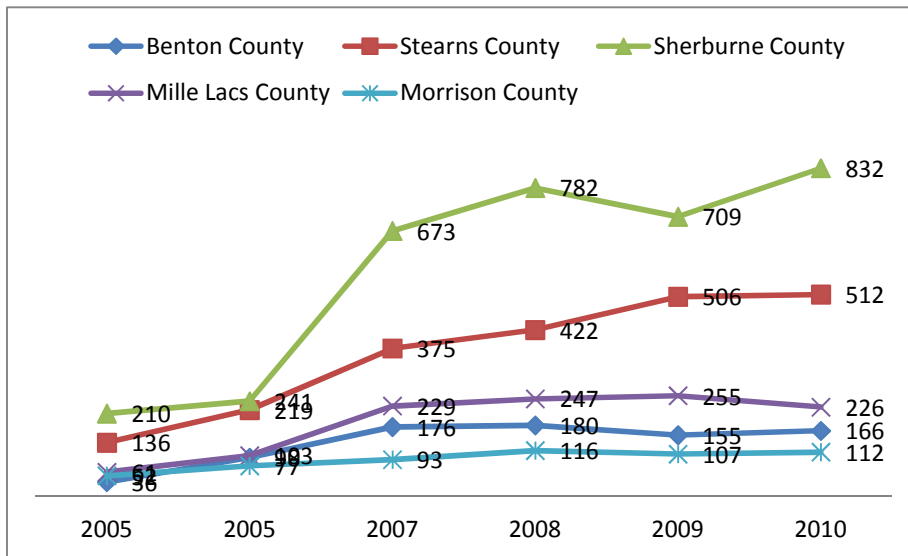
Gross Rent	Units	Percent
Less than \$200	0	0.00
\$200 - \$299	4	2.50
\$300 - \$499	8	5.00
\$500 - \$749	42	26.30
\$750 - \$999	102	63.80
\$1,000+	4	2.5
No cash rent	0	0
Total	160	100

Source: 2005-2009 American Comm. Survey



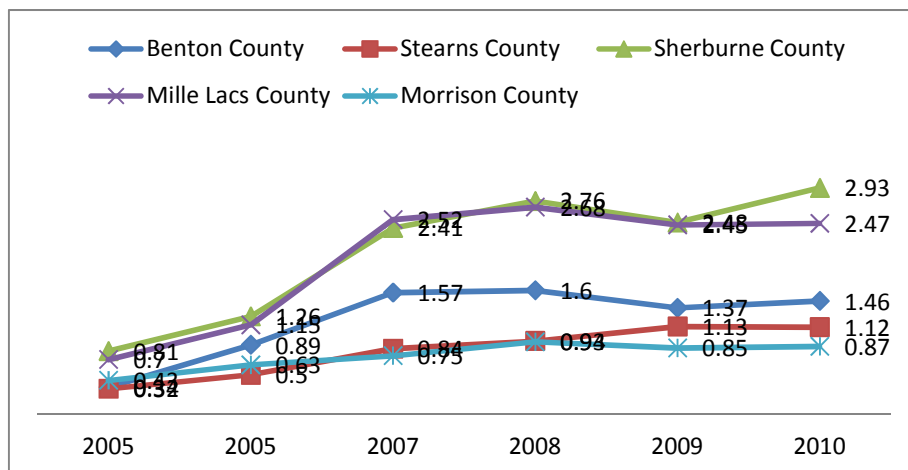
Table 17 shows the pure number of foreclosures for Benton County and a number of surrounding areas. Table 18 is a bit better in comparing foreclosures in specific geographic areas, as foreclosures are shown as a percentage of housing stock.

Table 17
Number of Home Foreclosures per County for Benton County and Surrounding Counties 2005-2010



Source: Sheriff's Sale Data – Minnesota Home Ownership Center

Table 18
Homes Foreclosed on as a Percentage of Housing Stock by County 2005-2010



Source: Sheriff's Sale Data – Minnesota Home Ownership Center

Economics

Economic health is an important component of a healthy and thriving community. A strong commercial and industrial base provides jobs to community residents, contributes to a community's tax base, and can be a source of psychological strength to a community. One can measure the economic health of a community by taking a look into a community's education, employment, household income and other relevant statistics. However, it must be mentioned that just looking at statistics will not give the "clear picture" of economic health. New construction of housing and businesses in the community tend to show growth and vitality. By analyzing the City of Rice's Economic Indicators, it will show the community a glimpse of the economic condition of the area.

Education

The City of Rice and surrounding area provides a wide variety of educational opportunities, including elementary, high school and secondary education. The residents of Rice are within the Sauk Rapids-Rice School District, which provides the community with preschool – 12th grade education. With a strong elementary system, the school district added the new Sauk Rapids-Rice High School to its facilities in 2002. The following table shows the school enrollment of those living in the community, including post-secondary education.



Table 19

School Enrollment City of Rice 2005-2009

	Number	Percent
Nursery School, Preschool	12	6.70
Kindergarten	12	6.70
Elementary School (grades 1-8)	113	63.50
High School (grades 9-12)	16	9.00
College or Graduate School	25	14.00
Total	178	100

Source: 2005-2009 American Community Survey

Table 20

**PK - 12 School Enrollment Trends
Sauk Rapids-Rice School District
1995 - 2011**

Grade	1995	1999	2002	2011
Pk	25	37	34	25
K	243	218	217	316
1	258	232	264	272
2	232	214	234	285
3	271	215	227	299
4	258	254	239	278
5	246	260	246	285
6	229	242	262	314
7	258	305	294	290
8	279	293	329	310
9	268	299	280	321
10	239	277	323	276
11	199	248	295	309
12	217	241	251	317
Total	3,222	3,335	3,495	3,897

Source: MN Dept. of Children, Families and Learning & Sauk Rapids – Rice Public Schools

Table 21

**Rice Elementary School Enrollment Trends
Sauk Rapids-Rice School District**

Year	Enrollment
1995	468
1999	385
2002	330
2011	317

Source: MN Dept. of Children Families and Learning
And Sauk Rapids-Rice Public Schools

As Table 19 indicates, the City of Rice has a number of young people attending public school systems in the area. The population of school-aged individuals account for 32 percent of the total population of Rice. The City and businesses in the community should work with the school district on such programs as school to work and mentoring to tap into a growing employment base. The City should use this data to identify potential workforce and provide employment opportunities that enable graduates to remain in the community. Table 22 below identified the educational attainment of residents living in the community and over 25 years of age.

Table 22**Educational Attainment* - City of Rice
2005-2009**

	Number	Percent
Less than 9 th grade	11	1.70
9 th to 12 th grade, no diploma	114	17.90
High school graduate or equivalent	244	38.30
Some college, no degree	106	16.60
Associate degree	85	13.30
Bachelor's degree	60	9.40
Graduate or professional degree	17	2.70
Percent high school graduate or higher	N/A	80.4
Percent of Bachelor's degree or higher	N/A	12.1

Source: 2005-2009 American Community Survey

*Persons 25 years of age and older

Employment

Table 23 shows the major employers in Rice and the products or services they provide. Vistar of Rice is the City's largest employer with 350 employees followed by Ferche Millwork and the Rice Elementary School. Of the top 12 employers, many are industrial in nature.

Table 23**Major Employers – City of Rice
2011**

Employer	Product/Service	# of Employees
Vistar of Rice/Performance	Food Distribution	350
Ferche Millwork	Millwork	128
Rice Elementary	Elementary School	53
Lake State Industries	Food Product Industry	38
JR Ferche	Excavating Contractors	30 – 50*
Gopher State Contractors	Construction	25
Central Marble	Cut Stone and Stone Products	21
Creative Catering/Old Creamery	Food Services	12**
Virnig Manufacturing	Manu. Of Skid Loader Attachments	41
Benton Cooperative Telephone Company	Telephone/Cable Communication Services	16
Burski Excavating	Excavating	14
Multiload Trasnport, Inc.	Truck Dealers	5
Hardware Hanks	Hardware Store	9

* High end includes seasonal workers

** Mostly part time workers

Source: MN Department of Employment & Economic Development.

Table 24 indicates in what industries Rice residents work. The construction industry employs more of Rice's citizens, 141, than any other industry. This industry provides 24 percent of the jobs for City's employed residents. Distribution, Construction, Manufacturing and Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services provide a large number of jobs for Rice residents as well.



Table 24

**Employment by Industry
City of Rice
2005-2009**

Industry	Number of Workers	Percent of Workers
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	3	0.50
Construction	141	24.40
Manufacturing	106	18.40
Wholesale trade	24	4.20
Retail trade	35	6.10
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	17	2.90
Information	8	1.40
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	13	2.30
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	20	3.50
Educational, health and social services	64	11.10
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	117	20.30
Other services (except public administration)	27	4.70
Public administration	2	0.30
Total	577	100

Source: 2005-2009 American Community Survey

Table 25 shows in what occupations Rice residents are employed. The greatest number, 29.5 percent, of Rice’s working residents are employed in Construction, Extraction, and Maintenance occupations, followed closely by Service occupations and sales and Office occupations. Very few people work in farming, forestry or fishing.

Table 25
Occupation by Type – City of Rice
2005-2009

Occupation	Number of Workers	Percent of Workers
Management, professional, and related occupations	68	11.80
Service occupations	131	22.70
Sales and office occupations	104	18.00
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	3	0.50
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations	170	29.50
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	101	17.50
Total	577	100

Source: 2005-2009 American Community Survey

Household and Family Income

Table 26 shows that Rice has a higher proportion of residents in the upper income brackets than the state as a whole. The 2009 median household income in the City of Rice was \$73,472 compared to \$57,007 for the state as a whole. It is also important to note the change in household income status within the community. Most of this can be contributed to new residents entering the community and the resulting increase in wealth during the 2000’s.



However, with the increase in household incomes, the City will experience a demand for increased services and opportunities in the areas of retail, employment and entertainment. The household income figures may indicate that a large majority of the workforce in the City of Rice commutes to Little Falls, St. Cloud and the Twin Cities and surrounding suburbs for work or business.

Table 26

**Household Income – City of Rice
2000 – 2009**

Income	2000		2005-2009	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than \$10,000	9	3.8%	9	3.8%
\$10,000 - \$14,999	9	3.8%	9	3.8%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	19	8.0%	19	8.0%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	33	13.9%	33	13.9%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	58	24.5%	58	24.5%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	88	37.1%	88	37.1%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	15	6.3%	15	6.3%
\$100,000 - \$149,000	6	2.5%	6	2.5%
\$150,000 – more	0	N/A	0	N/A
Total	237		237	
Median Household Income:	\$48,173		\$73,472	

Source: 2005-2009 American Community Survey

Further analysis of the income characteristics in the City of Rice shows that the class of worker in the community varies greatly. 75.2% of the working class community is in a private wage or salaried position, 4.7% of the working class is in a government related field and 20.1% are self-employed. According to the 2005-2009 ACS, the median family income was \$70,536 and the per capita income was \$26,463.

Work Force

In order to create a strong economic development program, communities must first have an understanding of the current labor force, identify deficiencies and develop goals to meet those deficiencies.

Table 27

**Commuting to Location of Employment
2009**

Location	Worked in County of Res.	Worked Outside Co. of Res	Worked outside St. of Res.
Benton Co.	37.3%	62.0%	0.7%
Mille Lacs Co.	56.2%	43.1%	0.7%
Sherburne Co.	30.7%	68.5%	0.9%
Stearns Co.	79.1%	20.3%	0.6%
Wright Co.	42.0%	57.6%	0.5%
Minnesota	64.0%	33.7%	2.4%
United States	72.6%	23.6%	3.8%

Source: American Community Survey, 2005 – 2009



Table 27 indicates that just under 2/3 of Benton County residents commute out of the county for employment, a significantly higher rate than surrounding counties, or State and National averages. A variety of factors can cause this outmigration of workers, including availability of jobs, pay rates, and other factors.

Table 28

Commuting Times – 2009

State Rank	Location	Avg. Travel Time One-Way (Minutes)	Avg. Annual Commute (Days)
1 st	Isanti Co.	33.2	12
4 th	Sherburne Co.	31.1	11.2
5 th	Wright Co.	29.6	10.7
6 th	Mille Lacs Co.	28.1	10.1
	United States	25.2	9.1
24 th	Benton Co.	22.6	8.2
	Minnesota	22.2	8
42 nd	Stearns Co.	20.3	7.3

Source: American Community Survey, 2005 – 2009

Table 28 shows that the average commute time for workers in Benton County is 22.6 minutes one-way. This is shorter period of time than many neighboring counties. Annualized, that comes to approximately 8.2 days per year in a vehicle commuting for the purposes of unemployment.

Table 29

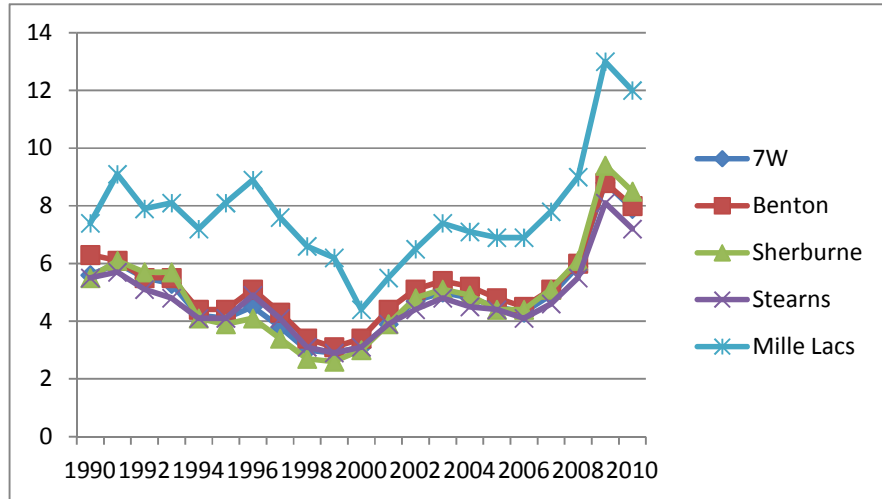
**Employment Status
City of Rice
2005-2009**

	Number of Persons	Percent of Total
Population 16 years and over	745	
Employed	577	77.4
Unemployed	83	11.1
Not in labor force	85	11.4
Females 16 years and over	245	
Employed	186	75.9
Have children under 6 years	74	

Source: 2005-2009 American Community Survey

Table 30

**Annual Unemployment Rate
1990-2010**

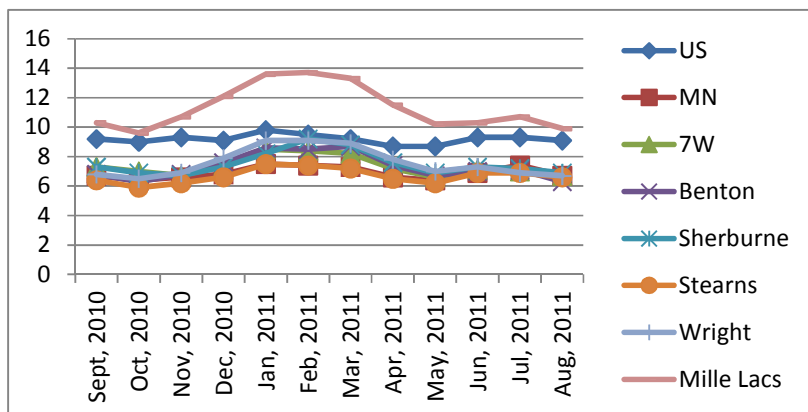


Source: Minnesota Department of Employment & Economic Development (DEED)

Table 30 shows the annualized unemployment rate for Benton County, along with neighboring counties and Minnesota Economic Development Region 7W (Benton, Sherburne, Stearns & Wright Counties) over the twenty year period of 1990 – 2010. This graph shows the period of economic slowdown in the early and mid 1990s, as well as the early and late 2000s. Conversely, it shows the period of extreme economic growth in the late 1990s / early 2000s where the annual unemployment rate dropped into the low 3% range.

Table 31

**Unemployment Rates by Month
September, 2010 – August, 2011**



Source: Minnesota Department of Employment & Economic Development (DEED)

Table 31 shows the annual monthly variation in unemployment rates over the period of twelve months. This annual fluctuation can be attributed to a variety of attributes, most commonly the weather and seasonal employment in industries such as construction, agriculture, and natural resources.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Planning Assumptions

There are many assumptions in the goals formulation process and it is necessary that they be articulated. This Comprehensive Plan attempts to, at least generally, take into account all possible factors affecting future development.

There are a number of things, however, which cannot be known and certain assumptions need to be made in order to qualify the basis on which planning proposals are made.



Every plan conceived is based on both implicit and explicit assumptions. An implicit assumption, for example, would be that there will be no war or other catastrophe which precludes effective planning for the future. A number of similar assumptions could be stated, but they should not be belabored. There is, however, a need to express the explicit assumptions on which this plan is based. These assumptions need to be carefully reviewed from time to time, in order to test their validity in the light of future events and experience.

Assumptions

The explicit assumptions made for this Plan include the following:

1. Rice's long range role in the region will continue to gradually change from an agricultural trade area to a "full service balanced community" providing housing and employment opportunities for an expanding local labor force.
2. By attracting new industries, its geographic location along Highway 10, demographics, and proximity to St. Cloud, Rice will continue to increase its population and economic standing within the county & region.
3. The basic life style and housing tastes of the general population will slowly change including acceptance of higher density of living; and, social attitudes regarding family size, consumption of goods and energy and pollution control will continue to change to reflect an awareness of and a concern for the natural environment.

4. The percent of middle age residents, 25-59 years of age, in Rice's population (currently 48.5%) will increase indicating that Rice will continue to be an attractive place to raise a family.
5. Any revolutionary technological changes during the next 10 years are not expected to radically change or influence the land use pattern or life style of Rice residents.
6. Major means of transportation will continue to be the private automobile for at least the next 10 + years.

Planning Goals and Policies

The formulation of set goals and policies involves a significant thought process for any planning study. These goals and policies were produced by the Rice Ad-Hoc Comprehensive Plan Update Task Force to provide the foundation upon which the implementation tools reside to guide land use and planning decisions.



Planning goals are broad general statements of value concerning the long range future of the community. Goals are the desired objectives as expressed by the planning participants. They are meant to ultimately result in the kind of living, working and playing environments desired by the residents of the community. The primary goal of this planning process is to create quality environment which will enhance the quality of life of residents.

Goals and policies must be considered collectively. While an individual goal or policy may dictate a course, it is more likely that several policies should be considered in determining a course of action.

The policy and goals topics are as follows:

Housing

Over the past two decades, the population of Rice has nearly doubled, with the housing stock growing at approximately the same rate. With that tremendous rate of growth come some growing pains, and the future must be planned for very carefully.

Demographics currently show a bulge of middle aged residents in Rice. People aged 25-59 years currently compose 48.5% of Rice's population. These residents, largely in their middle of their child-raising years, overwhelmingly choose to live in single family homes. As this generation ages and their children leave home, this generation will increasingly look for smaller, more maintenance-free homes.

Rice must be careful when considering future housing needs and potential development not to one day find itself with the ‘wrong’ type of housing to meet its resident’s needs – a lack of low maintenance, senior accessible homes, and an abundance of single family homes.

Foreclosure has become a problem in many other quick growing communities across the nation. Homeowners often find themselves “under water”, owing more on a house that it is worth on the open market. Recent spikes in the unemployment rate tend to compound this problem. To date, Rice has, for the most part, not seen the wave of foreclosures that other similar communities have. To that end, every effort should be made to watch the situation, and make preparations in the event of a spike in foreclosures.



Foreclosures have a large impact on a community. Population shifts affect local government aid and services used, and a large number of vacant homes can not only effect property values in a community, but may impact the local crime rate.

GOALS AND POLICIES

Formulation of Goals, Policies and Action Items

An ad-hoc Rice Comprehensive Plan Update Task Force was created by the Rice City Council & Planning Commission and met on August 25th to begin the City’s comprehensive planning process. Members of this ad-hoc task force represented a cross section of the Rice community.

To help formulate a City vision, goals and strategies, several exercises were conducted at this meeting to elicit ad-hoc task force member’s views on Rice’s strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities, as well as their view of the future of Rice and reasons for making this community their home.

Outcomes from this meeting were combined with the results of the Rice Community Survey conducted in late summer, 2011. This input was then distilled down into draft goals and policies, as well as short-term and long-term suggested actions items, reflecting the community’s input from these two sources.

The ad-hoc Rice Comprehensive Plan Update Task Force then met again on October 18th. At this meeting ad-hoc task force members review the results of the Rice Community Survey, as well as reviewed the draft goals and policies, and well as short-term and long-term action items. Ad-hoc task force members reviewed these items as a group, and edited them to reflect the sentiment of the community.



The following are a list of suggested goals, policies and short-term and long-term action items garnered from the previously mentioned community input:

POLICY: Maintain and enhance existing residential areas of predominantly single family housing and encourage new residential development.

GOALS:

1. Plan adequate and appropriate areas for residential land uses and allow only progressive development to insure the economical extension of utilities.
2. Allow flexibility in residential design and development through such control methods as planned unit development and cluster housing.
3. Upgrade older residential areas by eliminating substandard housing and conditions of blight.
4. Protect residential areas from industrial encroachment and other incompatible land uses.
5. Garner input from, and be responsive to the private sector (home builders / owners) in regard to future planning and zoning controls.
6. Work to maintain an adequate supply of available, developable residential land with respect to annexation issues, environmental concerns and transportation needs.
7. Support infrastructure improvements such as utility improvement and street repair and replacement that contribute to healthy and strong neighborhoods.
8. Promote development that will strengthen the sustainability of the community over the long term through tax base, jobs, and new dollars brought into the community.
9. Promote sustainable housing opportunities within the community through grant opportunities for housing rehabilitation, foreclosure prevention, and first time home owner programs, etc.



POLICY: Enhance the livability attributes of the City of Rice.



1. Ensure a safe and neat community by enforcing zoning controls mitigating occurrences of blight within the community.

2. Actively encourage tree planning programs within the City for both aesthetic and environmental reasons.

3. Enforce Rice's Zoning Ordinance relating to future development and rehabilitation.
4. Encourage architectural design and site review that protects the existing characteristics of the natural environment and the neighborhood.
5. Require new development to be suitably landscaped and encourage new private development.

POLICY: Encourage lifelong residency within the City of Rice.

GOALS:

1. Use housing to encourage life-long residency in the City of Rice. This includes encouraging the development of low maintenance – one level apartments and assisted living facilities to allow long time residents to remain in the community while at the same time keeping their independence and quality of life.
2. Promote land use that places housing designed for older residents within in close proximity to shopping, socialization, churches and healthcare.
3. Consider walkways and lighting needs around developments as applicable.

Short Term Action Items:

1. Revisit Rice's subdivision and planned unit development ordinances on a regular basis. Pay particular attention to infrastructure, public and amenity requirements – items such as parks, sidewalks, and streets, etc. to ensure new developments and develop adequate public infrastructure that cannot easily be mitigated after implementation.





2. Revisit Rice's zoning districts / maps on a regular basis to ensure that future development is compatible with neighboring uses.

3. Revisit Rice's zoning ordinance provisions and other regulatory tools on a regular basis to ensure that they do not restrict redevelopment or infill to the point of creating barriers to the development of affordable housing. (These regulations include minimum floor areas, minimum lot sizes and standards, permit fees and others.)

4. Make referrals to organizations that promote sustainable housing options in light of the current foreclosure crisis. Organizations such as the Minnesota Home Ownership Center, Central Minnesota Housing Partnership, TriCap, and others are available to assist in counseling would-be homeowners, and homeowners struggling with foreclosure related issues.

Long Term Action Items:

1. Conduct a housing study and develop a housing plan for the City of Rice that is forward-thinking; that takes into effect the needs and desire of the aging baby boomers and following generations, and promotes a sustainable, affordable, and maintainable housing stock that will help Rice be the type of community its residents want it to be for long into the future.
2. Consider retaining a Community Development staff person for the City of Rice that will focus on not only housing, but the economic development needs of the community in an effort to retain existing residents by improving their quality of life, as well as assisting the community with growth in a desirable and sustainable manor.

Public Services and Facilities

Rice recognizes the importance of providing quality community facilities in a cost effective manner to serve the residents of the City. Over the past decade, numerous upgrades have been made to municipal infrastructure to serve current and accommodate future growth.





With the City of Rice anticipated to continue growing into the foreseeable future, every effort should be made to ensure that all future growth is undertaken with careful consideration of long term impacts and obligations on the community.

Creating a capital improvement plan for the City of Rice would be a good way to plan for the future, and if carefully undertaken, eliminate surprises and dramatic increases in fees and taxes in the future.

This plan will encapsulate projections of future growth, current capital and equipment inventories and other attributes, and provide a balanced and managed roadmap for the future of Rice's infrastructure and assets.

Formulation of Goals, Policies and Action Items

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The ad-hoc Rice Comprehensive Plan Update Task Force then met again on October 18th. At this meeting ad-hoc task force members review the results of the Rice Community Survey, as well as reviewed the draft goals and policies, and well as short-term and long-term action items. Ad-hoc task force members reviewed these items as a group, and edited them to reflect the sentiment of the community.

The following are a list of suggested goals, policies and short-term and long-term action items garnered from the previously mentioned community input:

POLICY: Maintain a high level of public services and still minimize the tax assessment burden on Rice residents, businesses and industries.

GOALS:

1. Encourage a balanced land use pattern, recognizing that public service costs and requirements vary substantially among land uses and are not necessarily directly proportioned to the taxes generated.



2. Recognize that certain public costs, such as education and pollution control, represent an essential investment in the future.

3. Use the Comprehensive Plan as the basis for capital improvement programming in order to insure that the City's available revenues are spent wisely.

4. Enact and enforce appropriate regulations controlling water, land, air and noise pollution, as well as visual blight.

5. Use the Comprehensive Plan as the primary document to communicate the desired direction of Rice's future growth to other governmental units.

6. Take positive, proactive steps to actively participate in finding solutions to County and other area-wide problems which have a direct effect upon Rice residents and the effective funding of local government.

7. Consider establishing an intergovernmental coordination committee represented by all governmental units affecting Rice and Benton County which would meet on a regular basis for the purpose of discussing common goals and mutual problems.



Short Term Action Items:

- 1 Revisit Rice's Comprehensive Land Use Plan on a regular basis to ensure it accurate reflects the changing attitudes of the residents of the community. Update as needed.

2. Begin the process of creating a capital improvement plan for future municipal infrastructure, equipment and facility needs.



Long Term Action Items:

1. Update Comp Plan as the sentiments and priorities of the community changes over time.
2. Work with MNDOT District #3, Benton County, Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad, and others regarding noise pollution, safety, and other concerns at the community's railroad crossings.
3. Consider retaining a Community Development staff person for the City of Rice that will focus on improving their quality of life, as well as assisting the community with growth in a desirable and sustainable manor.

Quality of Life

As the demographics and community surveys show, Rice has a large population of younger and middle-aged families (25-59 years: 48.5% of population) with children (birth – 19 years: 34.4% of population). These residents have moved to Rice in recent years for affordable single-family homes and the small-town environment.

Many of these residents are employed outside of Rice, and frequently see the community as a “bedroom community”. Often, these residents look towards lifestyle amenities when choosing where to live. Parks, trails and recreation centers are often top of mind and strong selling points in a community.



Also, the City must keep a watchful eye on the community's demographics, specifically relating to age. While Rice currently has a rather low number of senior citizens (ages 65+: 5% of residents), there are a substantial number of middle age residents now (ages 45-64: 16% of residents) behind them. Efforts will need to be made to accommodate these

generations of residents in an effort to keep them in the community, and provide them opportunities to live a quality life.

GOALS AND POLICIES

Formulation of Goals, Policies and Action Items

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The following are a list of suggested goals, policies and short-term and long-term action items garnered from the previously mentioned community input:

POLICY: Encourage a moderate rate of population growth and work to maintain a small town feel.

GOALS:

1. Attract businesses which provide employment opportunities.
2. Allow for a variety of affordable housing opportunities.



3. Allow for broad range of public services and facilities and nurture local institutions such as schools, churches, medical and social services, and police and fire protection.
4. Promote recreational and social opportunities for residents.

POLICY: Improve the overall environmental quality and insure the general welfare of Rice residents (present and future) as a whole, while protecting their individual choice.



GOALS:

1. Balance the interests of the individual and community.
2. Inject long range consideration into the determination of short term actions.
3. Facilitate the democratic process in development decision making.

POLICY: Encourage senior living developments and services in order to help seniors remain in the community.

GOALS:

1. Consider creating a Rice Housing & Redevelopment Authority (HRA) and / or other similar agencies to encourage and create additional senior living developments and services in the community.

Short Term Action Plan:

1. Review Comprehensive Plan on a regular basis to ensure it accurately reflects the values and goals of the community, updating as necessary.

Long Term Action Plan:

1. Consider creating a Rice Housing & Redevelopment Authority (HRA) and / or other similar agencies to encourage and create additional senior living developments and services in the community.



2. Consider retaining a Community Development staff person for the City of Rice that will focus on the development needs of the community in an effort to retain existing residents by improving their quality of life, as well as assisting the community with growth in a desirable and sustainable manor.

Transportation

A City's transportation system has a great influence on its future growth and development, as the network of streets in a community determines land use configurations. It is a challenging task for cities to provide access for shoppers and employees to local businesses and industries, provide efficient through transportation



for regional travelers, and provide for recreational transportation opportunities. These challenges are further complicated by the need to balance the conflicting needs of pedestrians and the automobile.

Rice has a transportation system typically found in older communities, which is a grid-like pattern of streets in the older core area of the City with some "suburban-type" street layouts in the newer subdivisions of the City consisting of cul-de-sacs and curvilinear designs. Highway

10 runs through the City connecting Rice with the rest of the region. North-south access through and into/out of the City is generally good; however, there are some barriers to east-west access. This is due to the presence of the Mississippi River, the BNSF railway corridor and Highway 10, all of which run north-south through or adjacent to the City.

Transportation Planning Jurisdiction

Many jurisdictions, including federal, state and regional and local agencies are involved in planning the transportation system of Rice and the surrounding areas. Many of the agencies described within this section have and will continue to play a critical role in developing transportation strategies, approvals and funding at the local and regional level.

- Federal – The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are involved in providing funding and review of transportation projects. Generally, the corresponding state agencies are given the primary responsibilities for overseeing the federal programs.



- State – Both the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT) and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) are involved with assessing state concerns with planned transportation projects. MNDOT oversees the Interstate Highway and Truck Highway system and provides secondary support assistance to cities, metropolitan planning efforts and transit planning activities. MNDOT maintains a 3-year STIP (State Transportation Improvement Program), which identifies funding for programmed projects within the 3-year time frame. Each Mn/DOT District is required to develop a Project Work Plan (which identifies projects 4, 5, and 6 years in the future) and a Project Studies Plan (which identifies projects in future years 7 through 10). Projects between 10 and 20 years in the future are in a Long Range Plan. The MPCA’s responsibilities include monitoring developments and projects having potential environmental impacts. The MPCA also becomes involved in large development or roadway projects that require Environmental Assessment Worksheets (EWA), Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) or Indirect Source Permits (ISP).



- County - The City of Rice lies within Benton County. Collaboration between the county, as well as townships, and the City will be crucial as the City expands within these jurisdictions.

Functional Classification

Rice’s thoroughfare system consists of all the various streets and highways designed to accommodate vehicular movement within its corporate limits. A typical City thoroughfare system serves the needs of two general types of traffic:

Through-Traffic. Traffic that has its origin and destination outside the community and merely travels through it, typically on arterial roadways.

Local Traffic. This is traffic that has its origin and destinations inside the community and utilizes the local street system.

To aid in the understanding of Rice’s thoroughfare system, all of the City’s roadways have been classified by function and are summarized below in Table 32 and illustrated on Figure 32, *Existing Roadway Functional Classification*. The function and basic characteristics of each of these types of roadways are as follows.



Principal or Major Arterial. These roadways serve moderate to long trip lengths and provide a system to distribute traffic making external trips. Turning movements are often handled with channelized turn lanes or signal systems. Their very nature causes them to divide neighborhoods and to have negative effects on adjacent residential land use. Principal arterials are characterized by an emphasis on traffic mobility rather than land access, typically with traffic counts in excess

of 8,000 cars per day. Typical speeds are often 50 miles per hour or more.

Principal arterial typically have access to minor arterials and collectors, which are described below. Typically there is no direct land access to these arterials with the exception of major traffic generators.

Minor Arterial. These thoroughfares either augment the arterial system in more densely or intensively developed areas or provide service in lieu of principal arterials in less densely or intensively developed areas where trip lengths are relatively short. Minor arterials provide a somewhat lower level of mobility than that proved by principal arterials, but should not penetrate identifiable neighborhoods.

They may, however, provide slightly greater direct access to abutting properties than a principal arterial. Traffic volumes on minor arterials are generally in excess of 3,000 cars per day. Access to these arterials should be limited to principal and other minor arterials and collectors.

Direct land access to minor arterials is typically restricted. However, in an urban setting like Rice, where speeds are posted at 35 MPH or less, local streets typically access a minor arterial.

Collectors. These streets serve as connections between local streets and minor arterials. Their principal function is to carry short trip lengths and to serve adjacent land. At the same time, they must be capable of moving relatively large traffic volumes for limited distances. They may also carry traffic to and from dispersed major traffic generators. Access to collectors includes other collectors, minor arterials, local streets, and direct access



from/to abutting lands.

Local Streets. Residential streets that carry less than 100 vehicles per day and have average speeds of less than 30 MPH are the best example of local streets. They serve almost exclusively to collect and distribute traffic by connecting blocks within neighborhoods and specific activities within similar land uses. Access to local streets is provided by collectors, other local streets, and direct access to abutting properties.

With each step upward in the street hierarchy comes an increase in the size and carrying capacity of the roadway. For example, large trucks would soon destroy local streets if they were allowed to use them and that it would be counter-productive to build major thoroughfares in front of every house. Therefore, properly determining the size, location and timing of roadway construction are important aspects of transportation planning.

One basic principle of land use planning, tied directly to traffic, is that land uses that generate heavy traffic loads and require efficient access to function properly, such as industrial facilities, should be located near major thoroughfares. Conversely, land uses that generate very little traffic and that would not be benefited by through-traffic, such as residential neighborhoods, should be located away from the noise, pollution and bustle of busy arterials.

In summary, Rice’s existing street hierarchy is as follows:

Table 32
Existing Functional Classification of Roadways – City of Rice
2011

Major Arterials	
Route	Jurisdiction
Trunk Highway 10	State
Minor Arterials	
Route	Jurisdiction
County Road 2, West of TH 10	County
Major Collectors	
Route	Jurisdiction
County Road 2, East of TH 10	County
County Road 55	County
County Road 31	County
County Road 73	County
County Road 12	County
County Road 21	County

Source: Benton County Engineering Department, Stearns County Engineering Department

Access Management

A key element to providing a safe, efficient roadway system is access management. Access management attempts to balance the need to maintain the mobility of the roadway system while allowing reasonable access to adjacent land uses. Generally speaking, with each step upward in the roadway functional classification system, the greater is the need for mobility and thus more limited access. Traffic conflicts may involve merging, diverging, stopping, weaving or crossing movements between uses of the roadway system.

As the number of potential conflict points increases, driving conditions become more complex and drivers are more likely to make mistakes. Access management aims to reduce conflicts between vehicles, vehicles and pedestrians, and vehicles and bicycles. The benefits of access control on roadways have been demonstrated through many studies. These studies have consistently indicated that a reduction in access reduces conflicts, which in turn reduces crashes, as well as increases capacity and smoothes the flow of traffic.



The best example of access control is the interstate freeway system, which has no access except through limited and controlled interchanges. These roadways have consistently had significantly lower accident rates than any type of roadway.

Other roadways also have restricted or limited access. On some, access is limited primarily to intersections with other roadways, while on others there are also limited private access points between intersections. This often occurs on state or county roadway systems, and the agencies owning the roadway have often purchased the right of access from adjacent landowners. This restricted access is important in lowering crash rates. Where numerous driveways exist and turning movements can occur virtually anywhere along the roadway, the number of conflicts, and thus the number of crashes, is generally higher.



Many conflicts also exist between turning traffic at intersections that are close together. Traffic from one intersection may backup through the adjacent intersection creating problems for traffic turning at the second intersection.

Driveways located very close to an intersection create additional conflicts. A left turn to a driveway just beyond an intersection is often unexpected by drivers behind the vehicle making the turn and often results in abrupt braking or lane changes. Left turns to driveways immediately in front of an intersection are also unexpected and lead to erratic maneuvers on the part of many drivers.

Offsetting the desirability of limited access is the need for access to properties and commercial areas. Over-controlling of access can lead to problems. In many communities, a major barrier to transportation flow is a freeway with no access. A lack of access to an expressway can often result in increased traffic on other roadways parallel to the expressway or leading to the access points. Residential traffic from a neighborhood that is forced to use a single access point often creates problems for the residents along the street that serves as the access. Also, as motorists seek to find alternate routes, many will choose local streets creating other types of problems.

A major concern of businesses is reasonable access to the roadway system. While some businesses desire unlimited immediate access, the access only needs to be convenient for both the motorist and the customer, and consistent with the onsite circulation patterns.

Traffic Counts

Average daily traffic counts are used in planning for expansions and improvements within a transportation system. Traffic counts are also important in creating and maintaining well-functioning roadways. Highway 10 serves as the major north-south traffic route through Rice. Table 33 shows traffic counts along this roadway from 1998 to 2009.

Highway 10 Improvements

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT) plans to construct a new Highway 10 interchange within the City of Rice. This improvement is part of the state's effort to study and improve its Interregional Corridor system. Interregional Corridors include key transportation corridors in Minnesota that connect regional trade centers. It is anticipated this project will begin in 2013.



Table 33

**Average Daily Traffic Counts – City of Rice
1998 - 2009**

Trunk Highway 10 Segment	1998	2000	2002	2003	2004	2006	2007	2009
CR 2 to Royalton	17,100	18,400	19,500	19,500	20,400	20,400	20,400	20,400
CR 4 to CR 2	19,300	21,800	22,800	22,800	25,000	25,200	25,200	24,500

Source: MNDOT

Pedestrian and Bicycle Ways

A discussion of the City’s trail system is included in the Natural Resources, Parks and Other Community Facilities chapter.

Transit

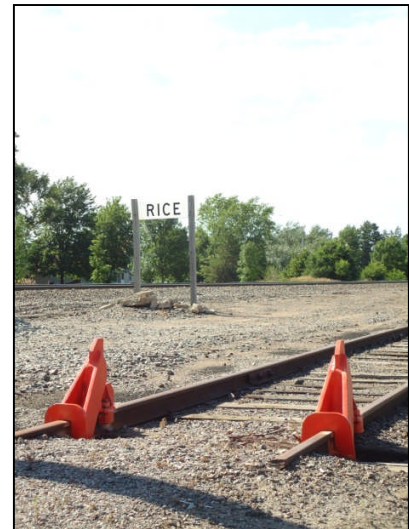
There is currently no public transit service in Rice. There is a move underway to attempt to have the Northstar commuter rail line, currently running from Minneapolis to Big Lake, MN, be expanded through St. Cloud to Rice. The expansion of Northstar to Rice is currently in the planning phase, and would likely be several years before commuter rails service comes to Rice, if ever.

Railroads

The Burlington Northern Santa Fe rail runs freight through Rice. They do not provide passenger service in Rice.

Air Service

Rice is served by the St. Cloud municipal airport. It provides charter, commercial, freight and jet service to the area and accommodates most light air craft. The nearest major airport is the Minneapolis/St. Paul International airport.



GOALS AND POLICIES

Formulation of Goals, Policies and Action Items

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To help formulate a City vision, goals and strategies, several exercises were conducted at this meeting to elicit ad-hoc task force member's views on Rice's strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities, as well as their view of the future of Rice and reasons for making this community their home.

Outcomes from this meeting were combined with the results of the Rice Community Survey conducted in late summer, 2011. This input was then distilled down into draft goals and policies, as well as short-term and long-term suggested actions items, reflecting the community's input from these two sources.

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The following are a list of suggested goals, policies and short-term and long-term action items garnered from the previously mentioned community input:

POLICY: Find a faster, safe, more convenient way of routing traffic through the community, while at the same time integrating alternative modes of transportation and aesthetics into the mix.

GOALS:

1. Establish a logical vehicular circulation pattern based on a hierarchy of streets, appropriate for different traffic speeds, volumes and purposes, to move traffic to, through and within the City.
2. Control land use and development adjacent to major thoroughfares in order to safeguard the routes traffic carrying capacity.
3. Work with MNDOT on creating a plan to not only improve the frontage road system and access onto US Highway 10, but also beautify and make more aesthetically pleasing, as well as integrate the City and area's trail system into these plans.

4. Develop a plan that defines a clearly marked system for the circulation of pedestrians which includes sidewalks, trails and paths linking together major pedestrian destinations in the community.
5. Work with other units of government to promote more opportunities for public transit including gaining access to an intermodal transportation system.
6. Explore opportunities, resources and partnerships regarding safe pedestrian traffic related to crossing the railroad, County Road 2, and Highway 10.

Short Term Action Items:

1. Work with strategic partners such as Benton County and MNDOT District #3 in regards to future development of Rice’s US Highway 10 interchange, as well as funneling a manageable amount of traffic through Rice’s downtown area.

Long Term Action Items:

1. Consider retaining a Community Development staff person for the City of Rice that will focus on not only transpiration, but also on other development needs of the community in an effort to retain existing residents by improving their quality of life, as well as assisting the community with growth in a desirable and sustainable manor.



2. Develop a community transportation plan that is sustainable, reflective of Rice's zoning and future land use, and integrates transportation planning efforts made by partners such as MNDOT District #3 and Benton County, amongst others.

BUSINESS

The vitality of the business community is tied directly to the vitality of a community. Not only do businesses provide jobs to residents of Rice, residents also purchase goods and services from businesses – a complementary cycle of business growth.

A vibrant business community selling their numerous goods and services will not only aid in retaining residents to Rice, but also aid in attracting new ones. The jobs these businesses provide will also aid in growing Rice’s population base.

Statistics show that a majority of residents leave the County for employment. With higher gas prices in recent years, one could reasonably draw the conclusion that

recruiting new and expanding existing businesses in Rice could be a win-win proposition for businesses and potential employees. Businesses would find a skilled, experienced and educated workforce, and workers could lessen commuting costs and times by working in Rice.



Rice has an abundance of land available for commercial and industrial development, as well as infrastructure (water / sewer capacity, internet / communications) and transportation opportunities between US Highway 10, and proximity to Interstate 94, MSP International Airport and the Port of Duluth.

Scarce resources of the community should be wisely and deliberately invested in the growth of the business community for the above mentioned reasons.

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Formulation of Goals, Policies and Action Items

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The following are a list of suggested goals, policies and short-term and long-term action items garnered from the previously mentioned community input:

POLICY: To promote the growth and diversification of Rice's economy making it a "full service" community with a broad economic base.

GOALS:

1. Promote Rice as a progressive expanding community willing to cooperate with business and industry seeking new sites and stressing the natural amenities of the Rice area to attract a wide range of industries in a small town environment.
2. Encourage a steady rate of industrial growth providing employment opportunities for a broad range of skills.
3. Require new development to be suitably constructed and landscaped.
4. Encourage new private development.
5. Capitalize on opportunities provided by being located on the US Highway 10 corridor.
6. Foster the growth and expansion of broadband internet service & fiber infrastructure for business, education and private use in the community and surrounding area.
7. Promote development that will strengthen the sustainability of the community over the long term through tax base, jobs, and new dollars brought into the community.



8. Partner with local and regional business development organizations such as the Benton County EDA, the Greater St. Cloud Development Corporation, University of MN Extension Business/Retention & Expansion Program, Region 7W CEDS / EDA Program, and others to explore new business assistance programs and learn from best practices.

9. Encourage and provide resources to the Rice Economic

Development Committee to enable them to utilize local business community technical skills, local colleges, Rice Area Chamber of Commerce, Benton County EDA, etc., to strengthen the local business environment.

Central Business District / Downtown Goals:



central business district.

1. Work to promote and grow existing businesses in the central business district.
2. Strive to preserve and restore historic buildings in the central business district.
3. Ensure that future development in the central business district fits with the historic look and feel of the downtown area.
4. Work to locate resources to assist with preservation and restoration of buildings in the

5. Consider enacting a facade ordinance for the central business district that builds on Rice's downtown area's historic look and feel.
6. Capitalize on opportunities provided by being located on Benton Co. Highway #2 and proximity to US Highway 10 corridor.

Highway 10 Corridor Goals:

1. Capitalize on opportunities provided by being located on the US Highway 10 corridor including the large volume of traffic passing by daily, to bring new dollars into the community.
2. Work to promote and grow existing businesses in the US Highway 10 corridor.
3. Explore opportunities for the development of additional retail areas along the US Highway 10 corridor through Rice.
4. Consider a design standard for the US Highway 10 Corridor.



Industrial Area Goals:

1. Capitalize on Rice's location on the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railway, and availability of undeveloped land along the rail line to explore opportunities for creation of a rail based industrial park.



along the US Highway 10 corridor through Rice.

2. Work to promote and grow existing businesses in Rice's industrial areas.

3. Take advantage of Rice's geographic attributes such as proximity to St. Cloud, Brainerd, the Twin Cities Metro Area, Port of Duluth and other attributes to expand existing businesses and attract new ones.

4. Explore opportunities for the development of additional Industrial areas

Short Term Action Items:

1. Consider undertaking a feasibility study for creating a rail industrial park for retaining and attracting new businesses to Rice.
2. Work to create a "toolbox" of economic development tools to assist with business retention, expansion, creation and attraction. Some examples of this may include business subsidy policies, loan funds, and technical assistance programs.
3. Revisit Rice's zoning districts / maps on a regular basis to ensure that future development is compatible with neighboring uses.

4. Revisit Rice's zoning ordinance provisions and other regulatory tools on a regular basis to ensure that they do not restrict business development to the point of creating barriers to growth and expansion, and promote healthy growth of the community.



5. Revisit Rice's commercial and industrial land use ordinances on a regular basis. Pay particular attention to the needs of business.

Long Term Action Items:

1. Consider retaining an Economic Development staff person for the City of Rice that will focus on developing and strengthening existing businesses in Rice, as well as recruiting new businesses to the community.



Parks & Open Spaces

The Rice area is blessed with an abundance of natural beauty and environmentally sensitive areas. The Mississippi River creates the City's western boundary and Little Rock Creek passes on the northeast. Little Rock Lake is located just east of the City. These features are the area's primary source of natural beauty. The area also provides home to a variety of plant and animal life, and is a source of recreation and enjoyment for residents and visitors alike.

Inventory and Analysis

The City is continually challenged to keep pace with growing demands for parks and other community facilities. Protection of environmentally sensitive areas not only allows them to be enjoyed for generations to come, but also contributes to the quality of life for Rice area residents today. In addition to the ecological and aesthetic benefits of preserving and/or enhancing natural resources, communities are increasingly recognizing the economic benefits of such resources. Rice's parks and other community facilities are important assets to residents, businesses and visitors.

While there is a substantial portion of the Rice area that is inherently suitable for urban development, other areas have intrinsic natural value. These areas function best if left in a natural state, or are protected from urban development. Preservation of significant natural resources is a legitimate goal for any local government and through preservation, recreational opportunities and a high quality of life, can be maintained for Rice area residents.





Open Water

The Mississippi River is the primary water feature in Rice, forming the City's western edge. Nearby Little Rock Lake is also a significant water feature in the area. Both of these provide opportunities for fishing, boating and other water sports as well as natural beauty.

Historically, communities have “turned their backs” on rivers and streams. However, communities are increasingly recognizing the natural beauty and economic value of these amenities.

Shoreland Regulation

The DNR's shoreland management program provides for the orderly development of shoreland and protects lakes and rivers from pollution by individual sewage treatment systems and non-point sources. The intent of this program is to encourage development of shorelands in ways that enhance water quality and preserve scenic resources. The program implements the Shoreland Management Act, which regulates all land within 1,000 feet of a lake and 300 feet of a river.

The standards for any given lake or river varies depending on its classification. The DNR provides for three classifications of lakes: Natural Environment, Recreational Development and General Development. Rivers have six primary classifications: Remote, Forested, Transition, Agriculture, Urban and Tributary. In addition, some rivers have special classifications other than those listed above. These include: state or federal Wild and Scenic rivers, Critical Area rivers, trout streams and special river management districts.



The City of Rice has adopted shoreland regulations to comply with the DNR model.



Floodplains

Floodplains often determine land use around a water body. The DNR administered Floodplain Management Program is intended to minimize the threat to life and property resulting from flooding. This program restricts development in floodplains by preventing structures from being built at too low an elevation in areas that have a high risk of flooding. It also controls encroachment so that the floodplain's capacity

to hold water will not be reduced, which could lead to flooding of even properly located structures. The City of Rice has not adopted the DNR's floodplain management regulations through a floodplain management ordinance.

Floodplains in Rice are located along the Mississippi River. There are approximately 48 acres of 100-year floodplain in Rice comprising just over 1 percent of the City's total area.

Wetlands

In the past, wetlands were generally regarded solely as obstacles to development. Only recently have public attitudes changed and brought the destruction of these productive areas to an end. Most wetlands are valuable for storing and stabilizing surface waters to alleviate the danger of droughts and floods and support wildlife habitat areas. They also serve as the primary method of recharging aquifers to ensure a continued supply of water to serve an area's needs. Wetlands also serve to cleanse and purify the water by removing nutrients and other contaminants in storm water runoff.

Wetland regulations depend upon what a landowner intends to do with the wetland. Two of the regulatory bodies having jurisdiction over wetlands, the Army Corps of Engineers and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, regulate them differently.



There are very few wetland areas within Rice. They are located in the upper northeast portion of the City and on the southern edge. Wetlands comprise less than 1 percent of the City's area covering about 33 acres of land.

Existing Parks, Trails and Other Community Facilities

Parks

There are three parks within the City. Some of the planned amenities include ball fields, playground equipment, skating rinks, a warming house, picnic facilities and trails. In addition, there is a state wildlife management area in the southern portion of Rice. Bend In The River County Park is located south of Rice.

In an effort to provide adequate parks and open space to residents, efforts should be made to designate land as parks or open space when new areas are developed, as it is easier to do so then, rather than after the fact.

GOALS AND POLICIES

Formulation of Goals, Policies and Action Items

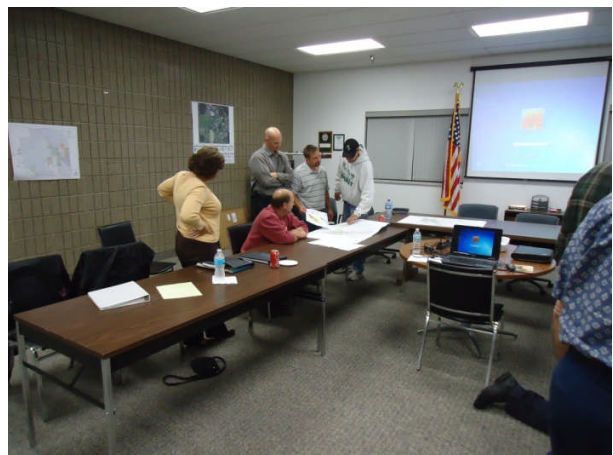
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Parks and Open Spaces:

POLICY: Improve and protect the physical environment of Rice as a setting for human activities, making it more attractive, healthful and efficient.



GOALS:

1. Protect and enhance the natural resources and amenities to preserve Rice's outdoor environment.
2. Create, retain and promote attributes that will add to the fabric of the community and create an environment that will help attract new and retain existing residents.
3. Maintain and grow Rice's open space system for recreation and other uses, taking advantage of natural features, and using land not suitable for intensive development whenever possible.
4. Expand, promote and integrate Rice's network of trails and paths separated from the street system for use by pedestrians, bicycles, etc., which would further link together many of the community's public facilities such as schools, community center, churches, parks, river, ball fields and downtown, into an existing trail system found in our region.
5. Develop the area surrounding the Mississippi River, partnering with the private business community to find the highest and best use for the property.
6. Promote and explore the sustainability of Rice's parks, open spaces and related business community by exploring grant opportunities, marketing initiatives, and strategic partnerships with like minded groups and organizations.



Short Term Action Items:

1. Develop a parks plan for the City of Rice. This plan would outline development of both new and existing parks, as well as capital improvements, sustainability, and connectivity within neighborhoods, the community, and trails, etc.
2. Partner with other organizations such as Benton County, the MN Department of Natural Resources, and others to develop a series of interconnected trails and parks, and promote this trail and park system.

Long Term Action Items:

Revisit Rice's Parks Plan, Comprehensive Land Use Plan and land use ordinances and update as needed to ensure they are in line with the goals and values of the Community.

Recreation and Tourism



A City's recreation and tourism infrastructure has a great influence on its future growth and development. In assessing the recreation and tourism attributed of Rice and the surrounding area, one sees a variety of resources including an existing series of trails and paths, parks, and waterways including lakes and the Mississippi River.

At the same time, one also sees huge potential and opportunities for future development of these attributes.

Through feedback garnered through the Rice Community Survey and the ad-hoc Comprehensive Plan Update Task Force, Rice is seen, through the eyes of its residents, as a housing based community. There is a strong desire to see more recreational opportunities for residents – these will not only assist in retaining residents of Rice, but also aid in attracting new residents to the community.

Tourism also has a strong potential for aiding in the growth and sustainability of the City of Rice. It too is seen as a potential asset for the community and a source of new revenue and jobs, when one considers Rice's geographical location near St. Cloud, Brainerd and Twin Cities Metro Area, the volume of traffic that goes through Rice daily on Highway 10, and the natural resources in the community and surrounding area.

GOALS AND POLICIES

Formulation of Goals, Policies and Action Items

An ad-hoc Rice Comprehensive Plan Update Task Force was created by the Rice City Council & Planning Commission and met on August 25th to begin the City's comprehensive planning process. Members of this ad-hoc task force represented a cross section of the Rice community.

To help formulate a City vision, goals and strategies, several exercises were conducted at this meeting to elicit ad-hoc task force member's views on Rice's strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities, as well as their view of the future of Rice and reasons for making this community their home.



Outcomes from this meeting were combined with the results of the Rice Community Survey conducted in late summer, 2011. This input was then distilled down into draft goals and policies, as well as short-term and long-term suggested actions items, reflecting the community's input from these two sources.

The ad-hoc Rice Comprehensive Plan Update Task Force then met again on October 18th. At this meeting ad-hoc task force members review the results of the Rice Community Survey, as well as reviewed the draft goals and policies, and well as short-term and long-term action items. Ad-hoc task force members reviewed these items as a group, and edited them to reflect the sentiment of the community.

The following are a list of suggested goals, policies and short-term and long-term action items garnered from the previously mentioned community input:

Recreation and Tourism

POLICY: Capitalize on the many advantages of Rice's location in the State and the amenities of its setting.

GOALS:

1. Promote its location attribute of being in close proximity to Minneapolis /St. Paul and St. Cloud for the purpose of promoting tourism and business.
2. Promote the improvement, expansion, beautification, promotion and maintenance of transportation systems including highways and trails.

3. Work with stakeholders, including Benton County, the Rice Area Chamber of Commerce and the MN Department of Natural Resources to develop a branding and marketing campaign for the community and use it to not only promote tourism in our area, but also tout it as a great place to live.



4. Capitalize on location on US Highway 10, and the large amount of traffic that passes through the City on a daily basis.
5. Capitalize on Rice's proximity to recreational amenities such as the Mississippi River, parks, trails and the like.
6. Consider exploring resources to expand trails and walking paths to interconnect parks, trails, and the community, etc.
7. Consider creating recreational amenities such as a pool, splash pad, community center, etc. to improve the quality of life for residents.

Short Term Action Items:

1. Consider creating a Rice marketing and branding campaign in conjunction with strategic partners such as Benton County and the Rice Area Chamber of Commerce.
2. Develop a parks plan for the City of Rice. This plan would outline development of both new and existing parks, as well as capital improvements, sustainability, and connectivity within neighborhoods, the community, and trails, etc.
3. Partner with other organizations such as Benton County, the MN Department of Natural Resources, MNDOT, and others to develop a series of interconnected trails and parks, and promote this trail and park system.

Long Term Action Items:

1. Revisit Rice's Comprehensive Land Use Plan and land use ordinances and update as needed to ensure they are in line with the goals and values of the community.

Review and Revision

Comprehensive planning is a continuous process and thus this Comprehensive Plan should be monitored and updated when necessary. The Planning Commission and City Council should carefully review proposed changes and their implications and actively seek citizen comment on such proposals. If changes are found to be appropriate, they should be formally added to the Plan by legal amendment. In addition, every five years, the entire Comprehensive Plan should be reviewed and modified to ensure that it is an up-to-date expression of community goals and intentions.



Implementation Steps

- Each year, City staff should brief the Planning Commission and provide a report to the City Council on the “state of the Comprehensive Plan.” This briefing should acquaint the Planning Commission and City Council with the content of the Plan, discuss emerging facts that have a bearing on the accuracy of the Plan projections, discuss land use and development activities within the last year and those on the docket for the upcoming year, and suggest an annual agenda of planning activities to assist in the implementation of the Plan.
- Review the Plan in five years and again in ten years to determine whether the Plan recommendations are still current. Revise those sections that are determined to be in need of an update.

Land Use

Planning Framework

Due to the City’s small town atmosphere, proximity to the St. Cloud Metropolitan Area, and the presence of Highway 10, Rice has experienced steady growth over the past two decades. This makes careful consideration of the City’s future land use very important. Continued urban growth in Rice will pose many land use challenges. The ability of the City to provide suitable land to accommodate growth while maintaining its unique character and providing an adequate level of urban services will be at the forefront of this struggle. The strain between the demands of an urban community and the agricultural character of the surrounding townships will also become increasingly challenging. Although the area surrounding the City is predominantly agricultural, as vacant developable land in the City decreases, urban land uses will continue to extend into the neighboring townships, putting development pressure on the surrounding agricultural areas.

GOALS AND POLICIES

Formulation of Goals, Policies and Action Items

An ad-hoc Rice Comprehensive Plan Update Task Force was created by the Rice City Council & Planning Commission and met on August 25th to begin the City's comprehensive planning process. Members of this ad-hoc task force represented a cross section of the Rice community.



To help formulate a City vision, goals and strategies, several exercises were conducted at this meeting to elicit ad-hoc task force member's views on Rice's strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities, as well as their view of the future of Rice and reasons for making this community their home.

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The following are a list of suggested goals, policies and short-term and long-term action items garnered from the previously mentioned community input:

POLICY: Guide development in logical groupings according to their functions, thereby insuring against land use conflicts and development inefficiencies while maintaining property values.

GOALS:

1. Define areas of the community for commercial, industrial, transportation, residential, public and open space uses.
2. Correct land use conflicts where they now occur through redevelopment, landscape buffering and other means.
3. Ensure that all the major public and private decisions reflect the spirit of the Comprehensive Plan.

4. Plan adequate and appropriate areas for residential land uses and allow only progressive development to insure the economical extension of utilities & infrastructure.
5. Revisit Rice's zoning districts / maps on a regular basis to ensure that future development is compatible with neighboring uses.

Short Term Action Plan:

1. Review Comprehensive Plan on a regular basis to ensure it accurately reflects the values and goals of the community, updating as necessary.
2. Review Rice's zoning ordinances on a regular basis to ensure it accurately reflects the vision, goals and needs of the community, updating as necessary.
3. Continue to support the City of Rice's Planning Commission.



Long Term Action Plan:

1. Consider retaining a Community Development staff person for the City of Rice that will focus on the development needs of the community in an effort to retain existing residents by improving their quality of life, as well as assisting the community with growth in a desirable and sustainable manor.

Implementation

Use and flexibility is required for a Comprehensive Land Use Plan to be an effective tool. Things will no doubt change dramatically in the City of Rice over the next 10 years. This plan needs to have the flexibility to react to these changes.

Providing suggested implementation strategies is one of the best ways to implement a comprehensive land use plan. Focusing on these strategies allows the use of many tools over time to achieve your desired results and outcomes. The methods and ways of today may be outdated in ten years. Elected Officials, Appointed Commission members and City Staff will need a current working knowledge of all of the means in which the goals, policies and action items presented in the plan can be attained.

This plan for implementation lists a number of strategies that, when combined, have the potential to positively impact the future of Rice. The City's resources are typically scarce, so it is not realistic to assume that Rice can implement all of them at once. Therefore, it's necessary to focus the City's resources on those that have the most potential to have the biggest impact.

Potential implementation strategies have been identified and include:

1. Periodically revisit and review Rice's Comprehensive Land Use Plan, Zoning and other land use regulations to ensure they are in line with the community's goals and values.
2. Update Comprehensive Land Use Plan, Zoning and other land use regulations as needed. The land use plan provides the basis for guiding zoning decisions under Minnesota State Statutes Section 462.356 Subd. 1. Coordinate growth and future land use strategies with the surrounding Townships and Benton County. Open the dialog for transportation and other developmental needs, cooperation of services, and other topics. Also, while Rice has adequate development land inside City limits for the next several years, there may be need to expand its municipal boundaries to accommodate future growth down the road.
3. Continue to coordinate with MNDOT District #3 and Benton County on Highway 10 development and upgrades, as well as other transportation related issues. Work to resolve noise and safety issues with Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad, and carefully monitor developments regarding the potential expansion of Northstar to Rice.
4. Maintain and improve the existing roadway system - The City should coordinate with MNDOT District #3 and with Benton County to improve and expand existing roadway systems. Rice should continue to maintain and improve local roadways.



5. Begin the process of creating and regularly updating a Capital Improvement Program (CIP). A CIP provides the City with an inventory infrastructure improvements needed to accommodate development through an analysis of existing funds and specified needs for future equipment and facilities. The City should continue to use the CIP format to establish priorities for the allocation of funds and the initiation of purchases and projects.

6. Begin the process of creating and regularly updating a Parks Plan. As new neighborhoods develop parks sites will need to be dedicated to meet the needs of residents. Upgrades and investment in existing park lands may also be needed. Careful consideration should be made in regards to trail connectivity. This plan should complement the Capital Improvement Plan.

7. Work with the development community to insure local housing needs are being satisfied. As the community and needs of residents change, consider undertaking a housing study to ensure the housing of the community accurately reflects future need.
8. Promote Rice as a great place to do business, live, work and play.



EFFECTUATION

Sec.1 On November 1, 2011, the Rice Planning Commission reviewed a draft of this Comprehensive Land Use Plan and forwarded it to the Rice City Council for Review and consideration for a public hearing.

Sec.2 On November 7, 2011, a public hearing was called by the Rice City Council for the purpose of garnering public comment on the proposed Rice Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

Sec.3 Notice of this public hearing was published in the November 12, 2011 and November 19, 2011 editions of the Morrison County Record, the newspaper of record for the City of Rice. This notice gave reason for this public hearing; location, date and time of the hearing, and advertised availability of copies of this 2011-2012 Rice Comprehensive Land Use Plan for inspection and review by the public.

Sec.3 Copies of the proposed 2011-2012 Rice Comprehensive Land Use Plan were made available to the public for review at Rice City Hall during their normal business hours.

Sec.4 This public hearing was held by the City of Rice on November 21, 2011.

Sec. 5 On November 28, 2011, the Planning Commission of the Rice City considered the 2011-2012 Rice Comprehensive Land Use Plan and voted to approve and forward it to the Rice City Council for their consideration.

Sec. 6 Rice City Council reviewed the 2011-2012 Rice Comprehensive Plan, and updates were made to the Potential Future Land Use Map. A second public hearing was called for January 23, 2012, and proper notice made in the Morrison County Record, the newspaper of record for the City of Rice, and copies of the 2011-2012 Rice Comprehensive Plan were made available for public review at the Rice City Hall.

Sec. 7 On January 23, 2012, the City of Rice held a public hearing to receive input from the community on the proposed 2011-2012 Rice Comprehensive Land Use Plan. Additional changes to the Potential Future Land Use Map were ordered.

Sec. 8 On January 30, 2012, the Planning Commission of the Rice City considered the 2011-2012 Rice Comprehensive Land Use Plan, and voted to approve and forward it to the Rice City Council for their consideration.

Sec. 9 On February 6, 2012, the Rice City Council considered the 2011-2012 Rice Comprehensive Land Use Plan, with the following action being taken:

Councilor Brian Skroch moved the adoption of this 2011-2012 Rice Comprehensive Land Use Plan. Counselor Wayne Maen duly seconded the motion and it was adopted with the following vote:

Yeas: 5
Nays: 0
Absent: 0
Abstaining: 0

Sec. 10 This 2011-2012 Comprehensive Land Use Plan shall take effect and be in full force on the 6th day of February, 2012, upon adoption by the City Council of the City of Rice, Minnesota.

Sec. 11 The City Clerk of the City of Rice is hereby instructed to record this adopted and signed document with the Benton County Recorder.

This 2011-2012 Comprehensive Land Use Plan was declared adopted by the Rice City Council on the 6th day of February, 2012.

Mitch Fiedler
Mitch Fiedler
Honorable Mayor, City of Rice

Marie Weinand
Attest: Marie Weinand
City Clerk, City of Rice

STATE OF MINNESOTA)
) ss.
COUNTY OF Benton)

This instrument was acknowledged before me, a notary public, by Mitch Fiedler, the Mayor of the City of Rice, Minnesota, and Marie Weinand, the City Clerk of the City of Rice, Minnesota this 6th day of February, 2012.



Jordan Zeller
Signature of Notary

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF RICE, MINNESOTA,
APPROVING THE ADOPTION OF THE 2012 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

WHEREAS, the City Council has designated as one of the duties of the Planning Commission to write and revise its Comprehensive Plan when it finds need to do so; and

WHEREAS, the current Comprehensive Plan for the City of Rice was adopted by the City Council in 2004; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission determined in 2011 that the 2004 Comprehensive Plan was out-dated, and it would be in the interest of the City and its residents to provide and update; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission, with the assistance from Staff, the Benton County EDA, planning consultant Jordan Zeller of JZP LLC, and an Ad Hoc Comprehensive Plan Update Task Force, began the process of updating the Comprehensive Plan in Summer 2011; and

WHEREAS, after reviewing the proposed document and taking public testimony, the Planning Commission recommended approval of the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan with suggested changes pertaining to adding Commercial areas on both the north and south side of County Highway 2 on the west side of the City.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Rice City Council has reviewed the proposed 2012 Comprehensive Plan on February 6th, 2012 and does hereby approve its adoption.

Adopted by the City Council of the City of Rice, Minnesota, this 6th day of February, 2012.

Mitch Fiedler 

Wayne Moen 

Dave Thene 

Allen Voigt 

Brian Skroch 



Mitch Fiedler, Mayor

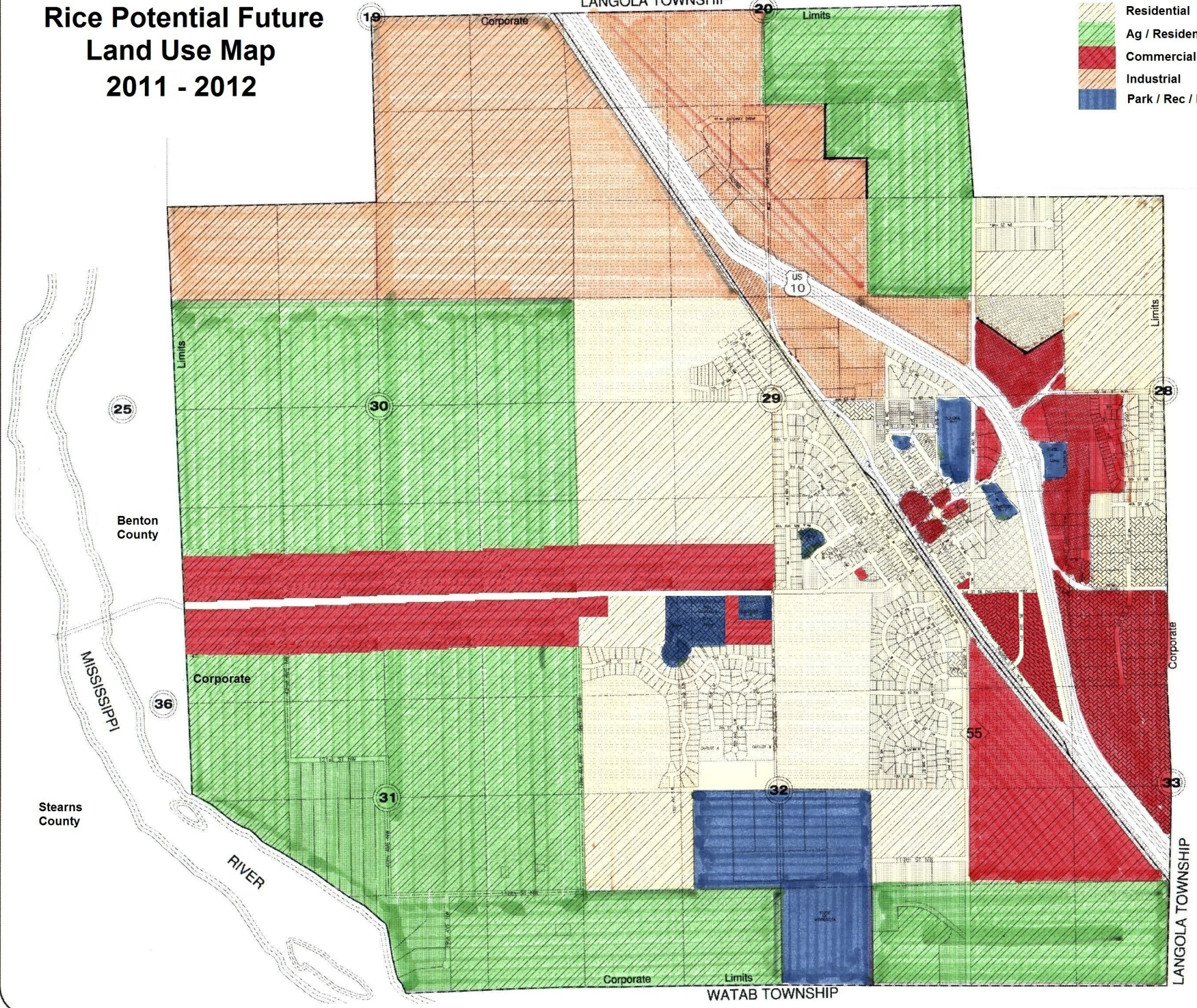


ATTEST: Marie Weinand, City Clerk

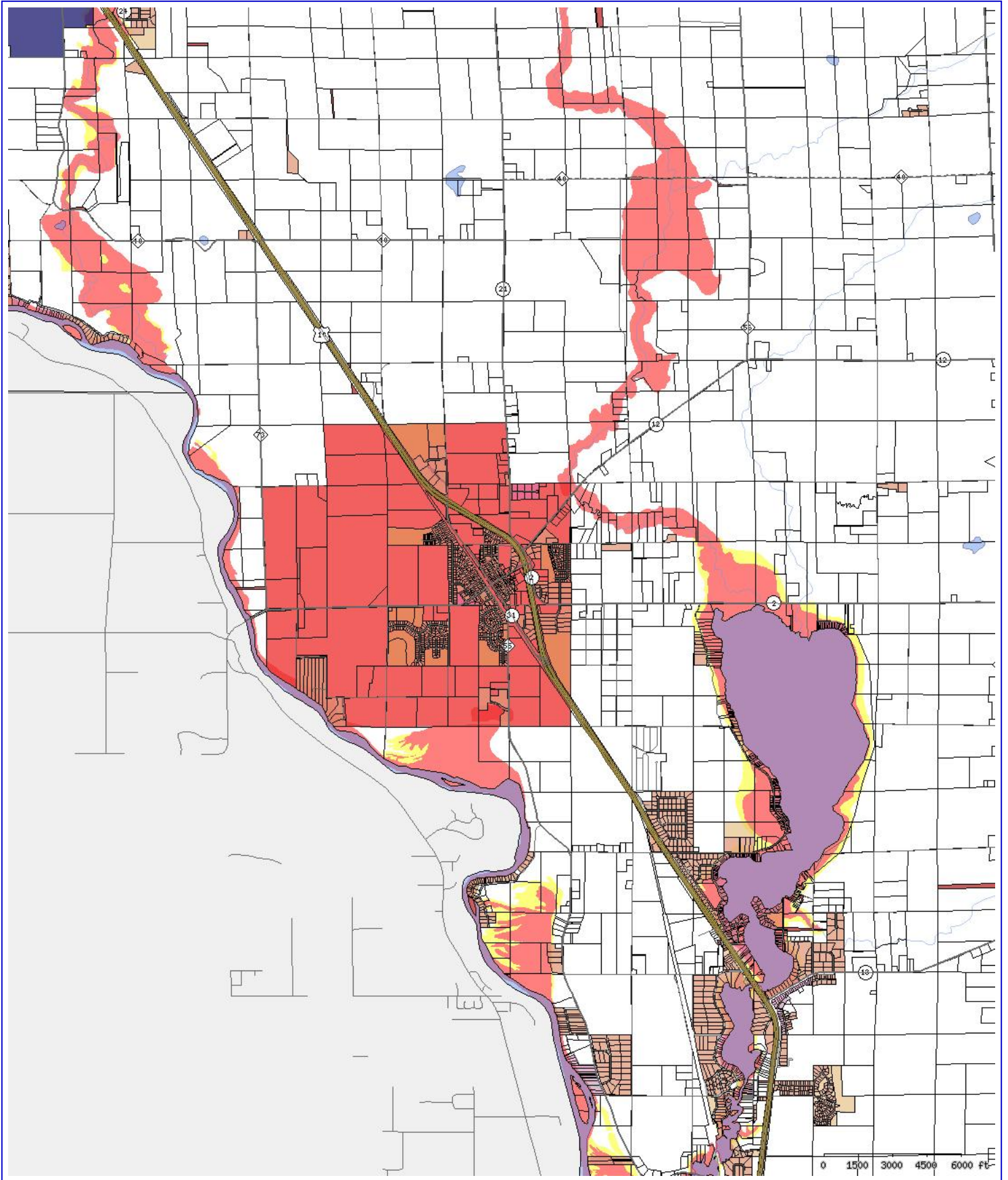
Rice Potential Future Land Use Map 2011 - 2012

LANGOLA TOWNSHIP

-  Residential
-  Ag / Residential
-  Commercial
-  Industrial
-  Park / Rec / Public / Church / State



Benton County GIS



Use of this map implies agreement with the disclaimer found here: <http://gis.co.benton.mn.us/index.html>
Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes §466.03, subd. 21, Benton County does not guarantee the accuracy of the material herein contained and is not responsible for any misuse or misrepresentation of the information.

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Rice Comprehensive Plan Update Community Survey Report



Summer 2011

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COMMUNITY SURVEY A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE FOR THE CITY OF RICE

City Council Members

Mitch Fiedler - Mayor
Wayne Moen
Dave Thene
Allen Voigt
Brian Skroch

Planning Commission Members

Mark Brixius Kristi O'Brien Joe Voigt
Dave Thene Marie Weinand

City Clerk / Office Manager

Marie Weinand

Planning Consultants

Benton County EDA

Nancy Hoffman- Director
Anthony Nowak – Intern



-and-

JZP LLC

Jordan Zeller – Planner



Background

In summer 2011 a multifaceted community survey was developed by the Rice Planning Commission, City Council, and City Staff, with the assistance of Nancy Hoffman and Intern Anthony Nowak of the Benton County EDA and consultant Jordan Zeller of JZP LLC.

This survey was mailed out to 670 households within the City of Rice. Address lists were compiled from customers of Rice Municipal Utilities, and other sources for the purpose of garnering feedback and input on a variety of issues from not only residents of Rice, but also those who do not reside within the City limits, but have a vested interest in our community. 58 surveys were returned to the City, which gives us a response rate of 11.55%

This document is a culmination of the survey process and is meant to be a usable resource for the data collected to provide guidance to the City Council, Planning Commission, Economic Development Committee and Staff of the City of Rice.



RICE COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING SURVEY

The City of Rice is in the process of updating their Comprehensive Plan, which will guide development and land use planning for the next 7-10 years. The Comprehensive Plan is a tool for the City to use to plan for the future of our community. It contains the core values of the residents and provides a vision for future growth and development. The Planning Commission is seeking citizen input on Goals and Policies for the Plan over the next 3-6 months.

A Comprehensive Plan will assist in long term planning efforts, keep the core community values in place despite outside forces, control growth to areas that can sustain growth, create and encourage community and economic development and can focus the various groups in the City on sustainable and achievable goals. In addition, it will provide a "blueprint" for the City Council, City staff and the Planning Commission on how to achieve the long-term goals created for the community.

Please take a moment to complete this survey giving us your opinion on the future of Rice. When you have completed it, please mail it back in the enclosed postage paid envelope, or drop it off at the Rice City Hall. You can also return it to one of the Planning Commission Members listed on the back of the survey. Each individual can complete a survey -- extra copies are available at City Hall.

Please return your completed survey by August 19, 2011. Thank you!!

1) Do you currently live in the City of Rice?

Yes _____ (If YES, please continue to question # 2)
No _____ (If NO, please skip ahead to question # 6)

2) How long have you lived in the City of Rice?

1-5	years	_____	21-30	years	_____
6-10	years	_____	31-40	years	_____
11-15	years	_____	41-50	years	_____
16-20	years	_____	50+	years	_____

3) Please indicate the total number of persons in your household, by the following age groups:

0-5	years old	_____	36-45	years old	_____
6-10	years old	_____	46-55	years old	_____
11-18	years old	_____	56-65	years old	_____
19-25	years old	_____	66-75	years old	_____
26-35	years old	_____	76+	years old	_____

4) In what type of housing do you live?

Single-Family Home	_____	Manufactured Home	_____
Duplex	_____	Other	_____
Apartment Building	_____	Please Specify	_____

5) Do you rent or own your own home?

Rent _____ Own _____ Other _____



6) Do you own a business in Rice?

Yes _____ No _____

7) What do you think Rice most closely resembles? (check up to two response)

Small Town	_____	Regional Center	_____
Rural Area	_____	Bedroom Community	_____
Suburb of the St. Cloud	_____	Other	_____
City	_____	Please Specify	_____

8) Please indicate where your place of work is located: (check only one response)

Rice	_____	Within 5 miles of Rice	_____
St. Cloud	_____	Not Applicable	_____
Royalton	_____	Other	_____
Little Falls	_____	Please Specify	_____
Brainerd	_____		

9) What do you feel is the most important type of housing needed in Rice? (check up to three responses)

Single Family Homes	_____	Duplexes (2 units)	_____
Townhomes (3 or more units)	_____	Senior Assisted Living	_____
Small Apt. Bldg	_____	Nursing Homes	_____
Med/Large Apt. Bldg	_____	Other	_____
Manufactured Homes	_____	Please Specify	_____

10) Do you feel there is a need for more: (check up to five responses)

Commercial Hwy 10 area	_____	Commercial downtown	_____
Industrial Developments	_____	More open space	_____
Rail Industrial Park	_____	Bike paths and trails	_____
Eating Establishments	_____	Other	_____
Single family homes	_____	None of the Above	_____
Tourism /commercial recreation	_____	Mixed Use Buildings	_____
Apartments	_____	Please specify	_____

11) What should the City of Rice's first priority be when focusing on growth? (check only one response)

Commercial / Business	_____	Residential	_____
Industrial / manufacturing	_____	Other	_____
		Please Specify	_____



12) Are you in favor of expanding/developing additional areas for commercial/retail use? Is so, where? (check up to two responses)

Expand current Hwy 10 retail corridor	_____	Expand current downtown retail corridor	_____
Develop additional commercial area	_____	Against any expansion/development	_____

Other Comments on this issue _____

13) If you feel growth should be encouraged, which of the following do you think would help most in bringing about growth? (check up to two responses)

Rail Industrial Park	_____	Improved public transit	_____
Improved roads and highways	_____	Other	_____
Park, Recreation & Entertainment	_____	Please Specify	_____

14) To pay for future public improvements in Rice, which of the following alternatives would you prefer? (check only one response)

General property taxes	_____	All of the above	_____
Property Assessments	_____	None of the above	_____
User Fees	_____	Even if I benefit from the improvements, I choose not to support any tax increase.	_____

15) What would you improve upon the most in Rice? (check up to three responses)

Traffic	_____	Parks/Recreation	_____	Highway 10 Interchange	_____
Visual appearance	_____	Entertainment	_____	Property maintenance	_____
Road maintenance	_____	Shopping	_____	Quality of municipal services	_____
Bike trails and paths	_____	Work places	_____	Schools	_____

16) If public transportation was available (bus), how often would you use it?

Never _____ 1-3 times per week _____ 4 or more times per week _____

17) What kind of Rice do you want to see in 20 years from now? For each of the following traits and characteristics, circle the number on the scale that represents the community characteristic's consistency with your vision or expectations for Rice.

	Least Important-----
Most Important	
a.) Well-maintained homes and yards	0 1 2 3 4 5
b.) Tree-lined streets	0 1 2 3 4 5
c.) Well-designed and landscaped development	0 1 2 3 4 5
d.) Expanding locally owned business is a priority for economic development	0 1 2 3 4 5



e.) Central business district with storefronts along the sidewalk	0	1	2	3	4	5
f.) Residents have the ability to walk or have easy access from their homes to shops, work, schools, parks, etc.	0	1	2	3	4	5
g.) Citizen participation in all levels of community decision-making	0	1	2	3	4	5
h.) The design of housing, commercial and industrial development is in keeping with the character of the City	0	1	2	3	4	5
i.) Well-design public buildings and projects	0	1	2	3	4	5
j.) Road network is easy to understand and composed of an interconnected system of streets that is attractive and functional, and safe for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists	0	1	2	3	4	5
k.) Being able to work in Rice	0	1	2	3	4	5
l.) A Small town atmosphere	0	1	2	3	4	5

18) During the past few years, Rice, generally.... (check only one response)

- Has continued to be the type of community in which I want to live _____
- Has changed to be less of the community in which I want to live _____
- Has changed to be more of the community in which I want to live _____

19) What do you see as Rice's best assets that should be maintained?

20) If you could change one thing about Rice, what would it be?

21) Please describe your vision of Rice ten years from now:

22) Other Comments

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your input is greatly appreciated!

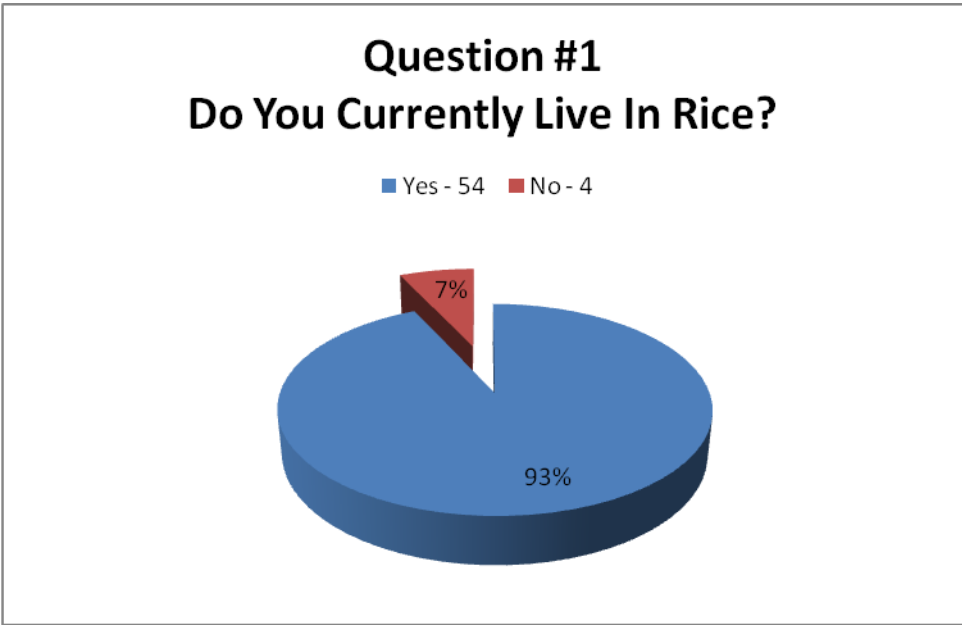
City of Rice Mayor, Council & Planning Commission

Mayor Mitch Fiedler, Council Dave Thene, Allen Voigt, Brian Skroch, and Wayne Moen
 Planning Commission Marie Weinand, Mark Brixius, Joe Voigt, and Kristi O'Brien

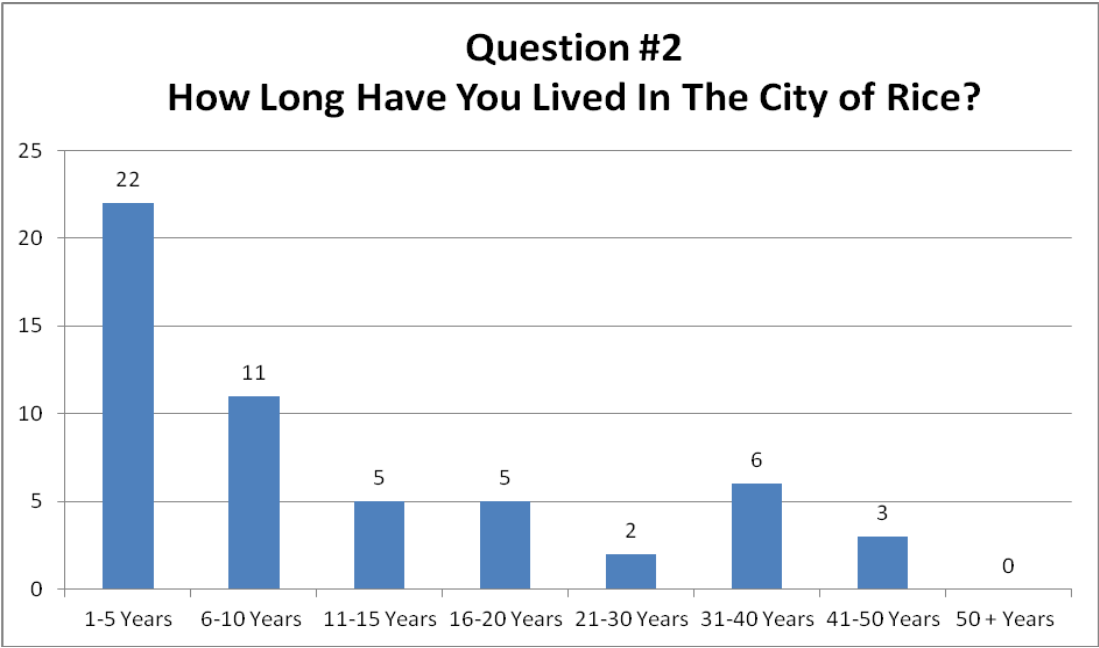
All survey responses will be kept confidential and results will be anonymously aggregated.



Community Survey Questions and Responses

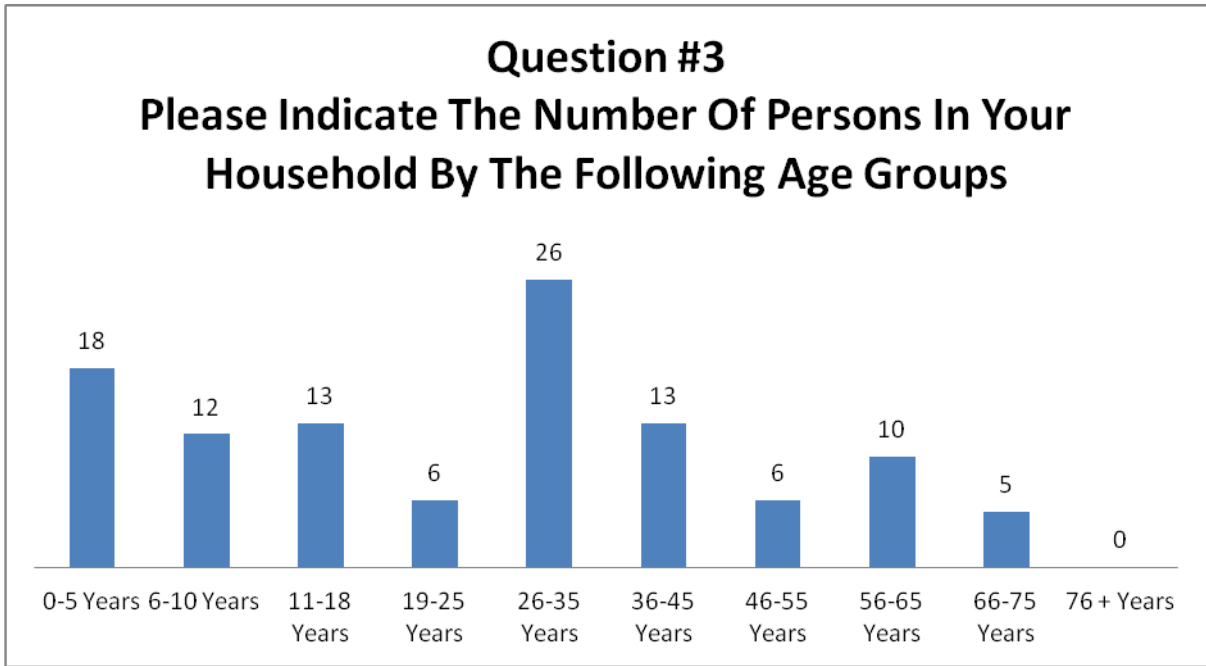


The responses from question 1 are in line with the population sampled by the survey.

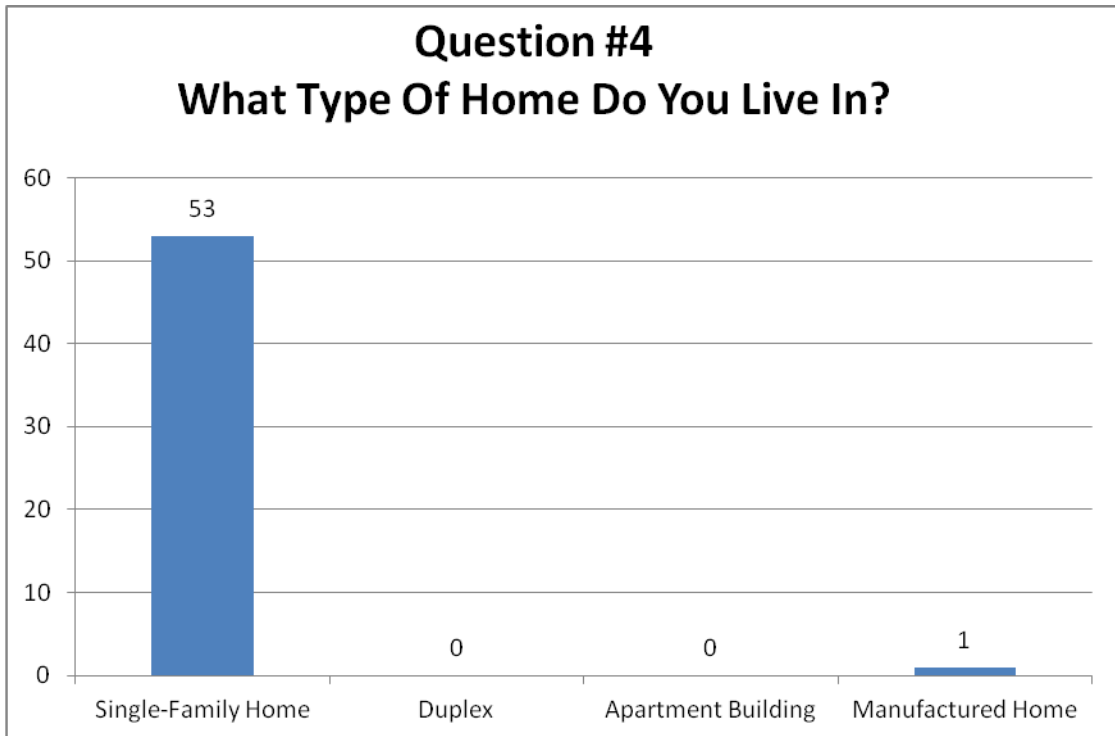


The results from question 2 are consistent with the recent population boom within the City of Rice.



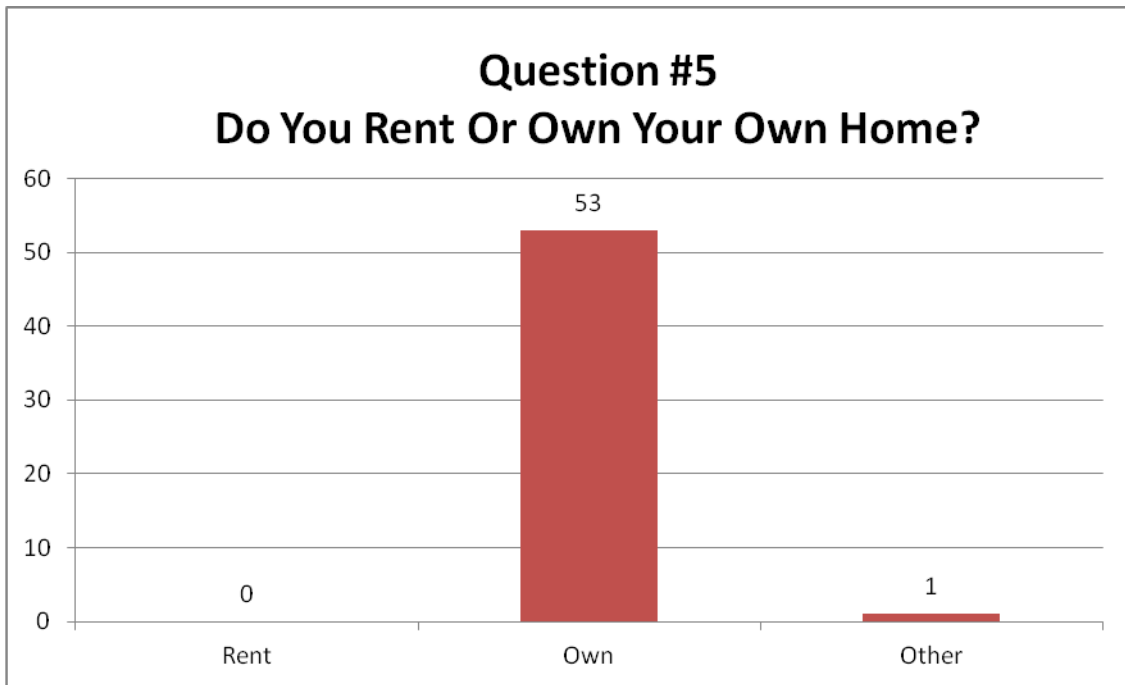


The results from question 3 nicely mirror census and other data relating to the age of residents of the City of Rice. We see a large percentage of respondents in early-middle-age.

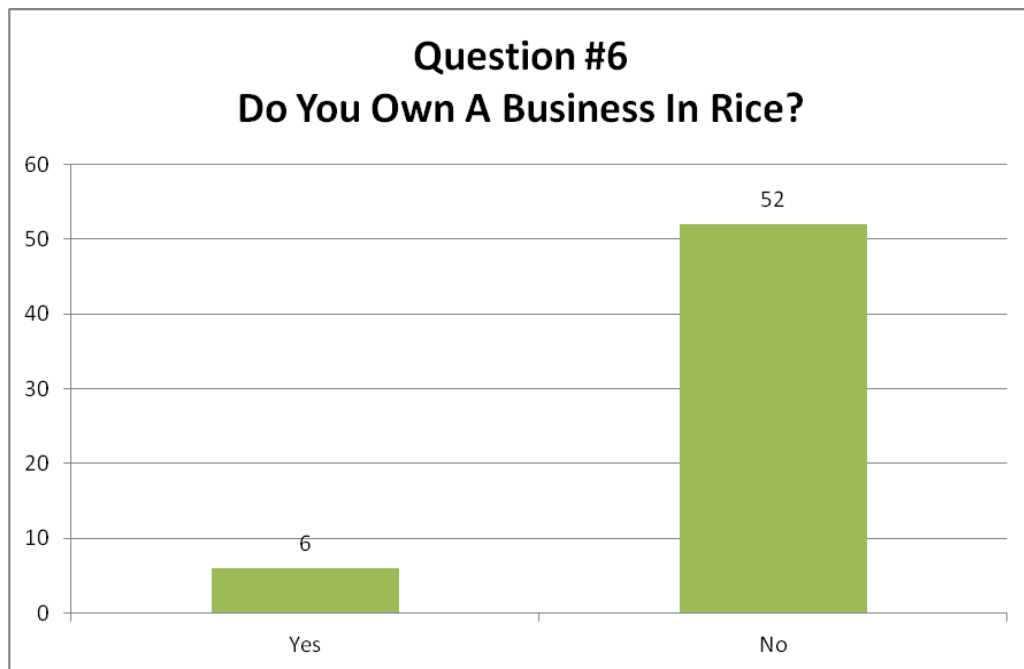


The results from question 4 are telling of the recent boom in single family home construction in Rice.



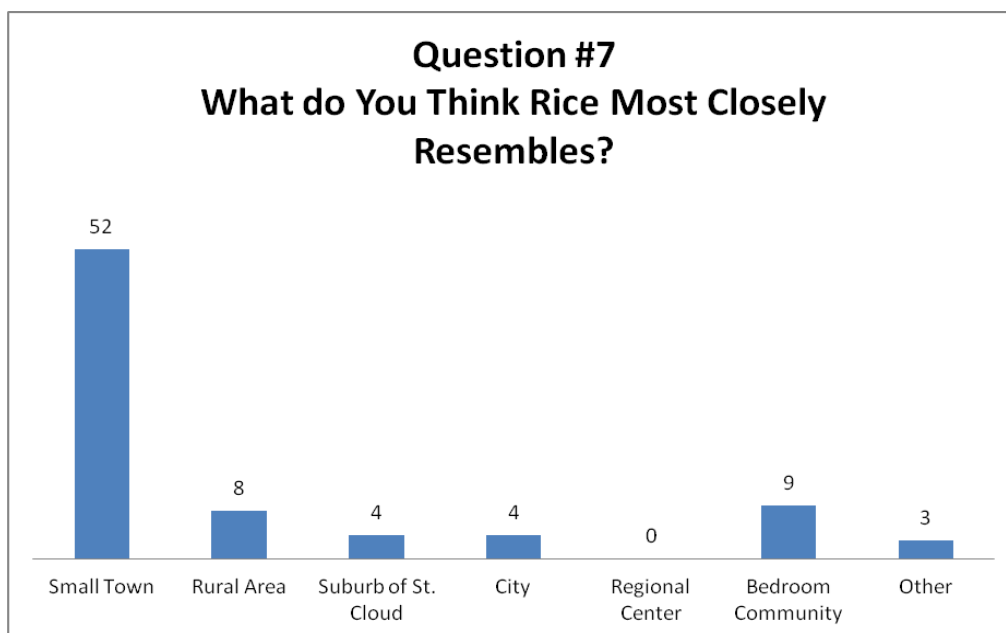


The results from question 5 show a large percentage of homestead properties in the community.



The results from this question can be a tad confusing in that surveys were sent to both residential and business addresses. Respondents may own a business in Rice, but reside outside the City.

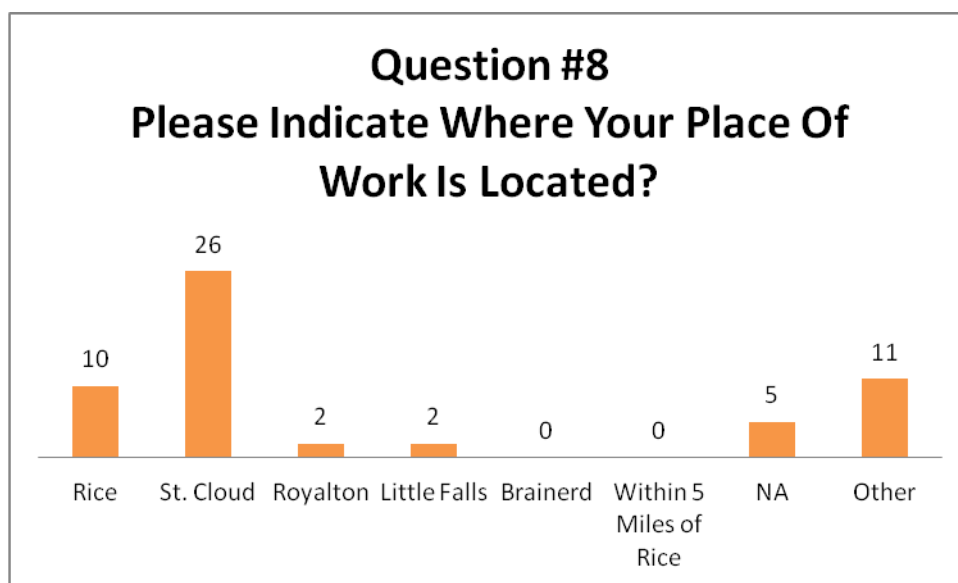




Other Comments:

Rural small community, working community, 7 miles St. Stephen

The results from question 7 mirror comments later in this survey that point to respondents feelings that Rice has a small town feel, and with some additions, should be preserved.



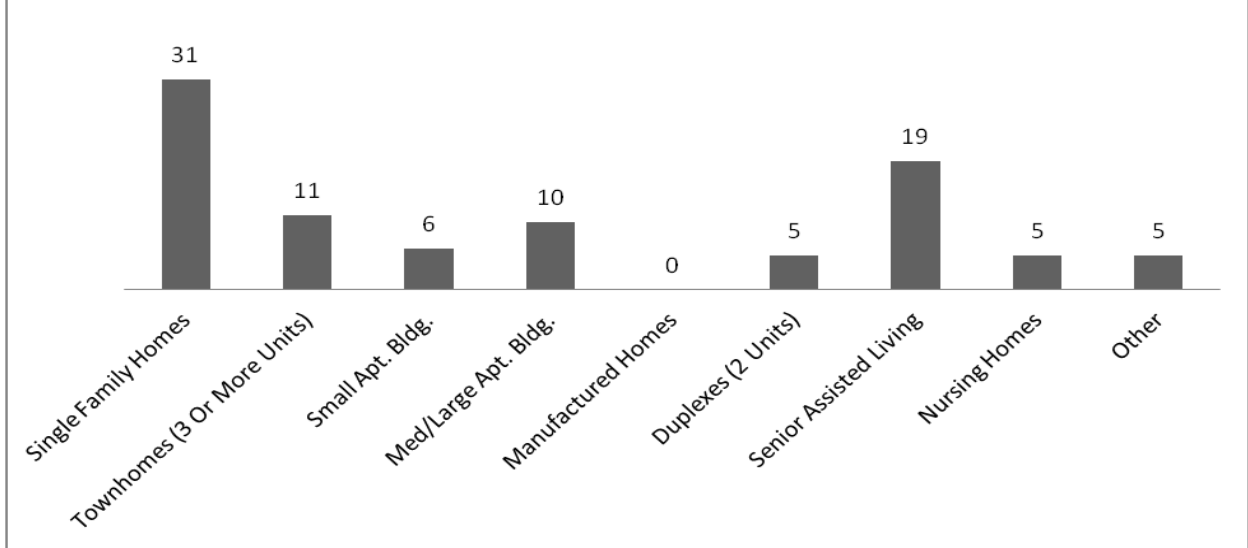
Other Comments:

On the road, Rice & within 5 miles of Rice, Waite Park, Sauk Rapids, Sartell (3), @ 5-6 miles and wife in Pierz, Holdingford, St. Cloud & Foley, Not listed.

The results from question 8 support the responses of question 9 indicating the respondents' opinions that Rice is a small town and bedroom community.



Question # 9
What do You Feel Is The Most Important Type Of Housing Needed In Rice?

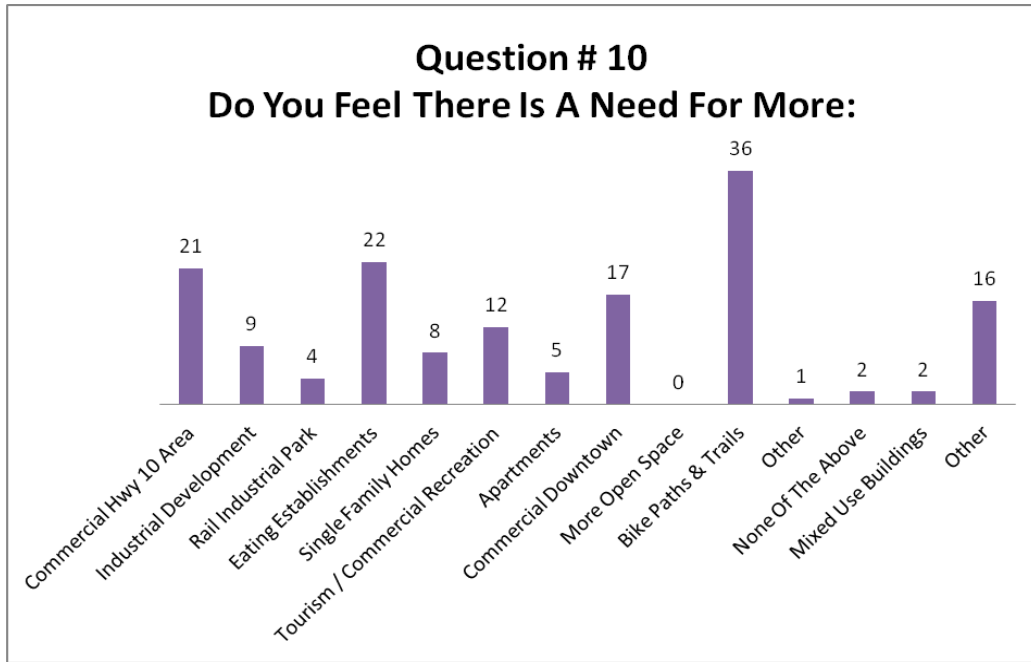


Other Comments:

None - fill up empty housing first, None-sell foreclosures first to help market get better, Play area for kids / splash pad! Skate park or more snowmobile trails, Patio homes – about 1300-1500, Too many empty homes / foreclosures.

The results from question 9 show the perceived need for additional single family homes, as well as assisted living facilities to encourage life-long residency in Rice.





Other Comments:

Gym, Need something for teens to do – a place for dances, pinball, games, etc., Splash Pad!, Children’s rec / water park, Parks, Walgreens (drug store, pictures developed), Splash pad / skate park also snowmobile trail update, Single family in Walnut Ridge, Mall, Grocery store, Playground / park area for children, Tennis courts & splash park, Grocery store with fair prices, Bigger / nicer bldg. grocery store exercise gym, Splash pad.

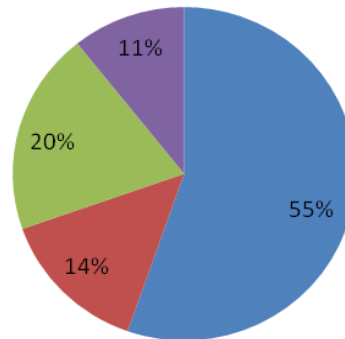
The results from question 10 show the respondents belief in the need for lifestyle amenities.



Question # 11

What Do You Think The City Of Rice's First Priority Be When Focusing On Growth?

■ Commercial / Business -31 ■ Industrial / Manufacturing -8 ■ Residential -11 ■ Other -6



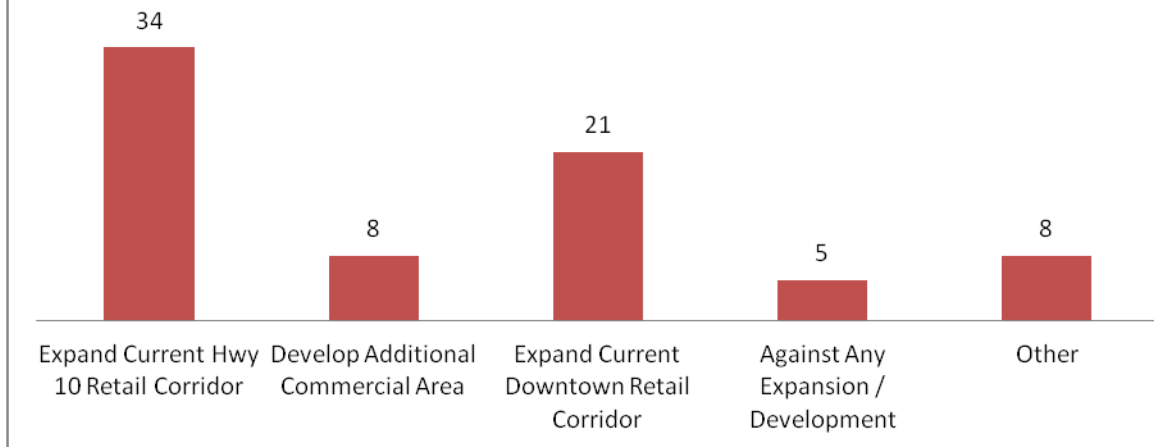
Other Comments:

Keep growth under control don't get to hs and let persay crime or a good atmosphere go, Creating jobs, Train noise! also more trees on North side!!, Family friendly areas – crosswalk over railroad - safe crossing, Local business growth, why ask this when you don't want more business or is it none family business you want.

The results from question 11 contradict the results of question 10 in regards to the need for more commercial and business growth in the community.



Question #12
Are You In Favor Of Expanding / Developing
Additional Areas For Commercial / Retail Use?
If So, Where?



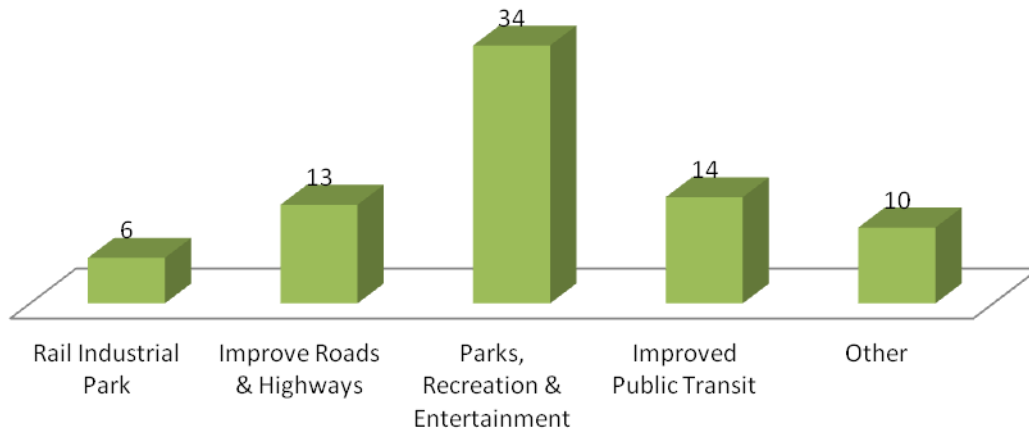
Other Comments:

Do a over under Hwy off ramps! Ex: Hwy 10 ramp, except for rail industrial - eating establishments or bike paths and trails, Use open buildings first, New grocery store / meat market / pharmacy, I would like it to stay as a small town feeling, keep commercial out of residential developments, The Northstar rail would be nice expansion, Fill the empty buildings.

The results from question 12 show support for expanding existing commercial / retail areas of the City over creating new areas for these purposes.



**Question 13:
If You Feel Growth Should Be Encouraged, Which
Of The Following Do You Think Would Help Most
In Bringing About Growth?**

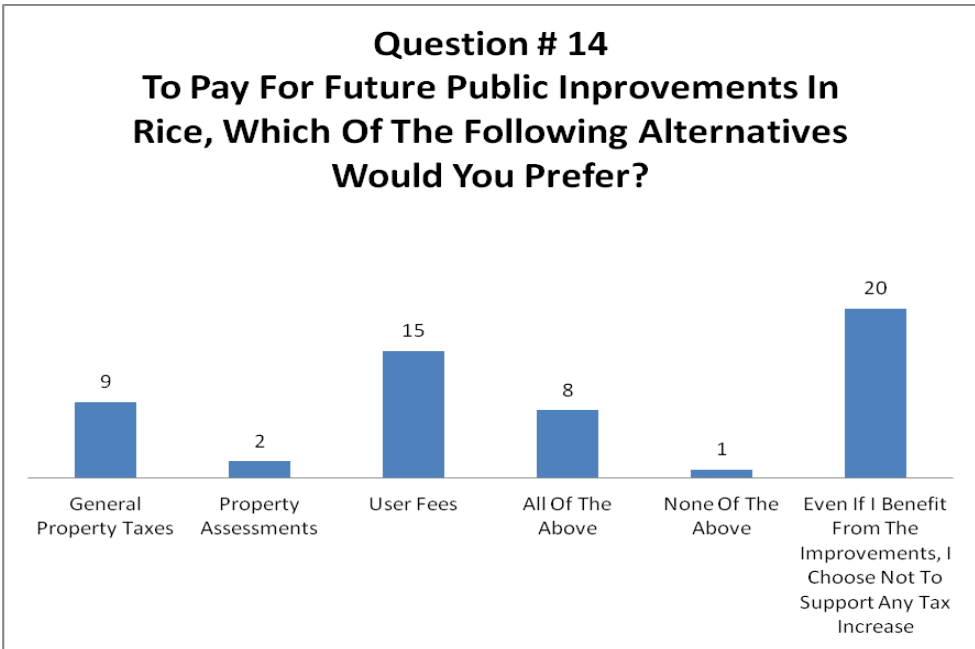


Other comments:

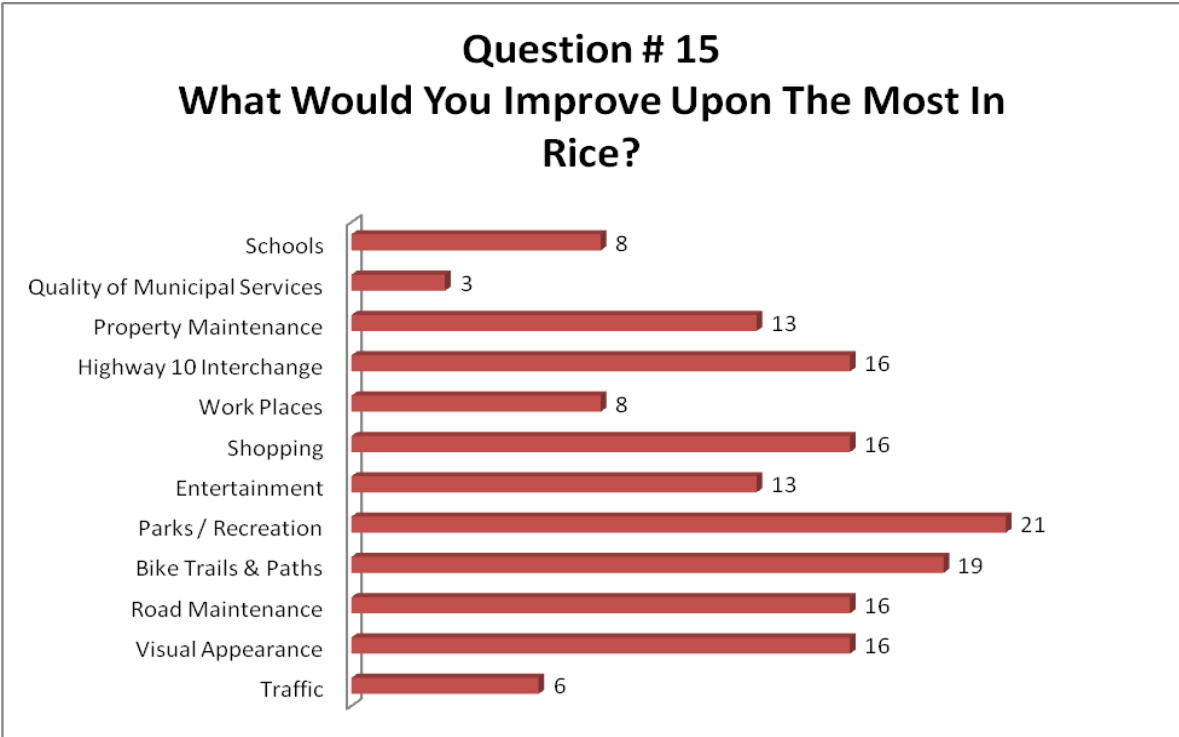
Spalsh pad & Skate park, Industry / manufacturing, Clean up the City, Jobs, lights, Stronger chamber, Encourage health care expansion, An new City council and mayor, good & economically gov't services, lower taxes and make it easier for businesses to grow.

The results from question 13 show an overwhelmingly support of residential amenities, such as parks, recreation, entertainment, as well as transportation. Respondents have lower priorities for industrial type development.



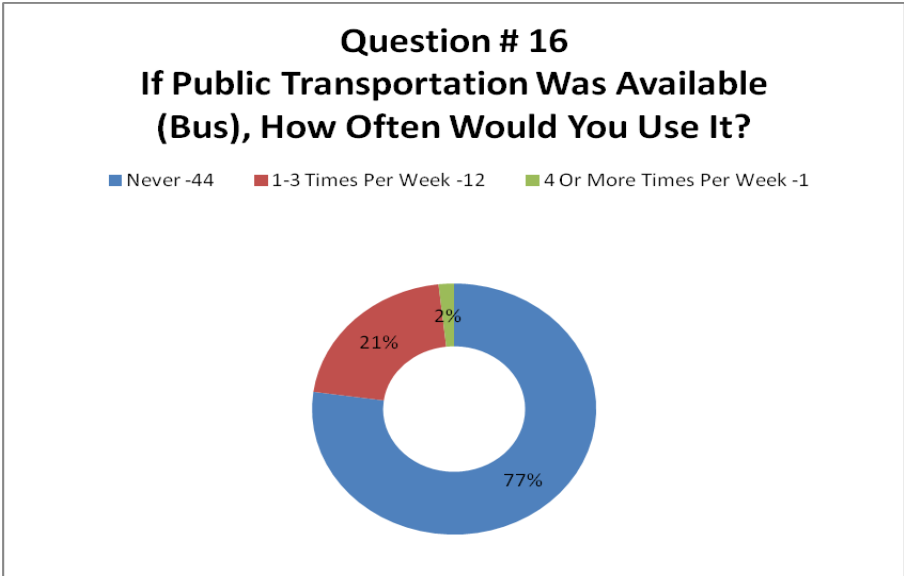


The results from question 14 show the majority of respondents do not wish to pay for services that benefit them, followed by direct fees for services, with a less sharing of costs.



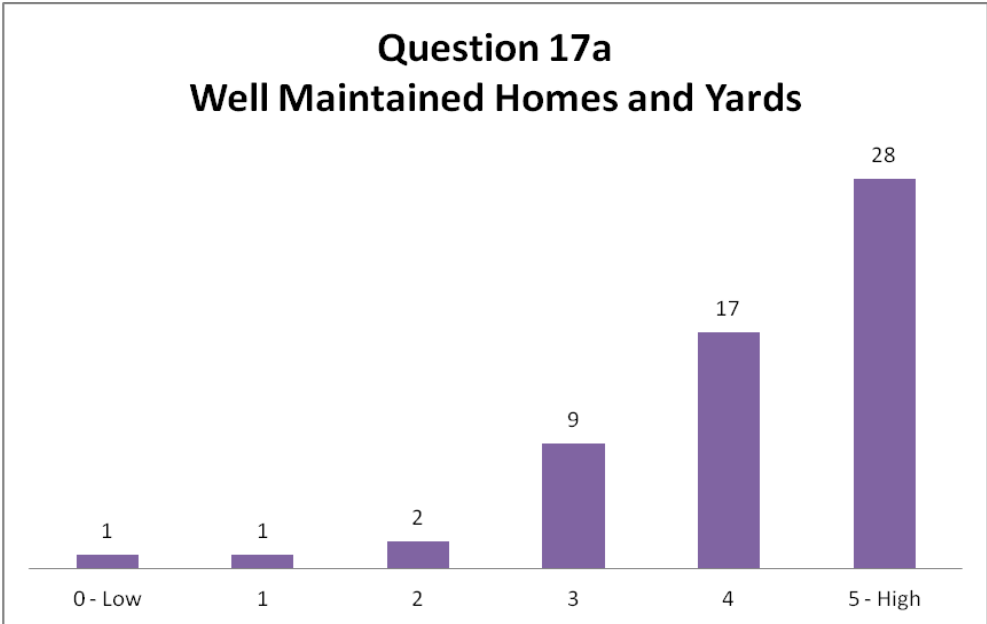
The results from question 15 are consistent with other questions in this survey, in that they show the most desire for residential related improvements over local business development.

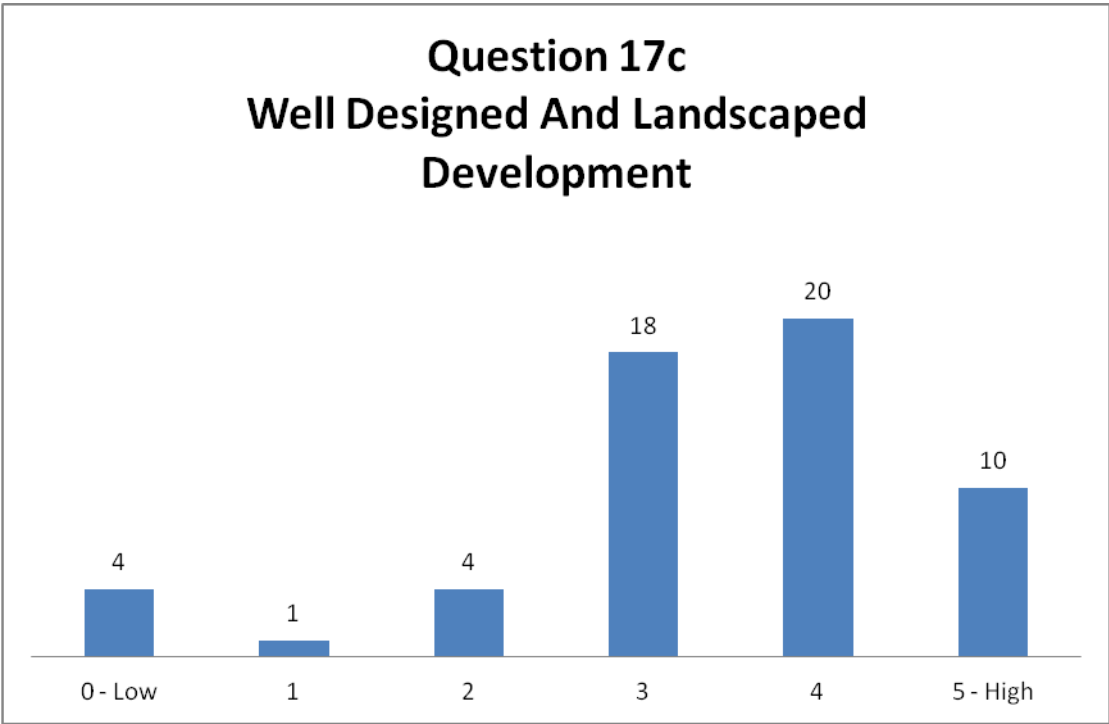
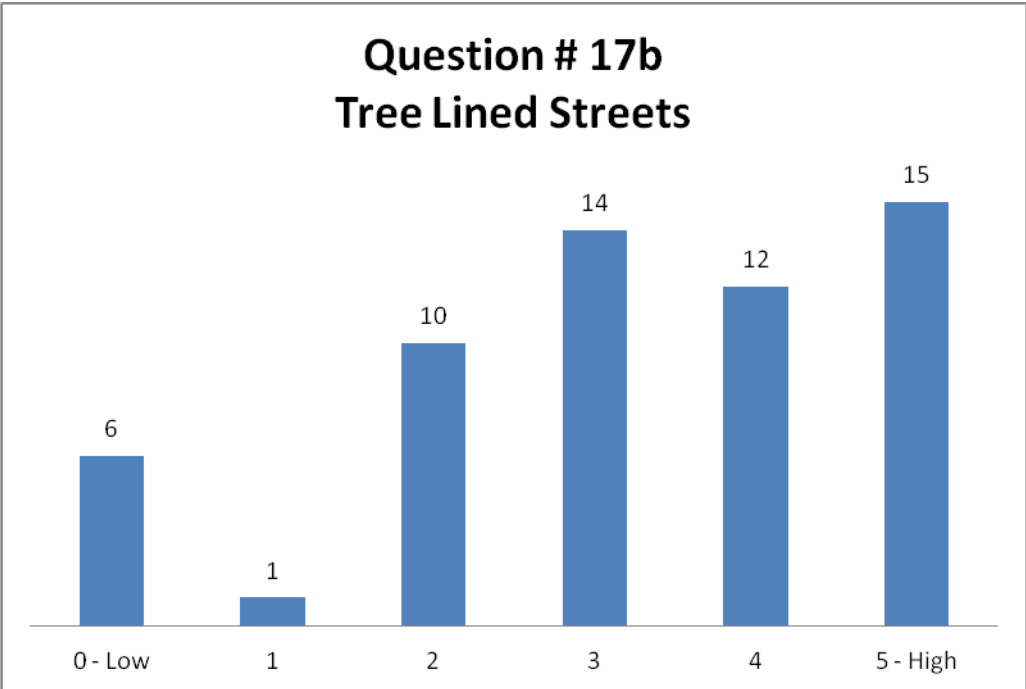




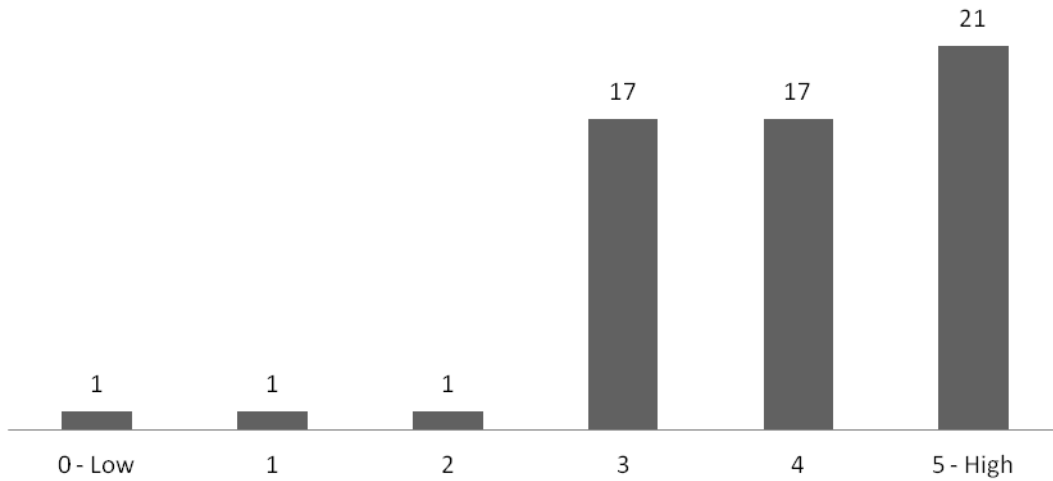
The results from question 16 indicate that public transportation via bus would not be well used.

Question 17 is a 13 part question asking respondents to rank the importance of a variety of attributes of the community from 0 to 5 with 0 being low, and 5 being high.

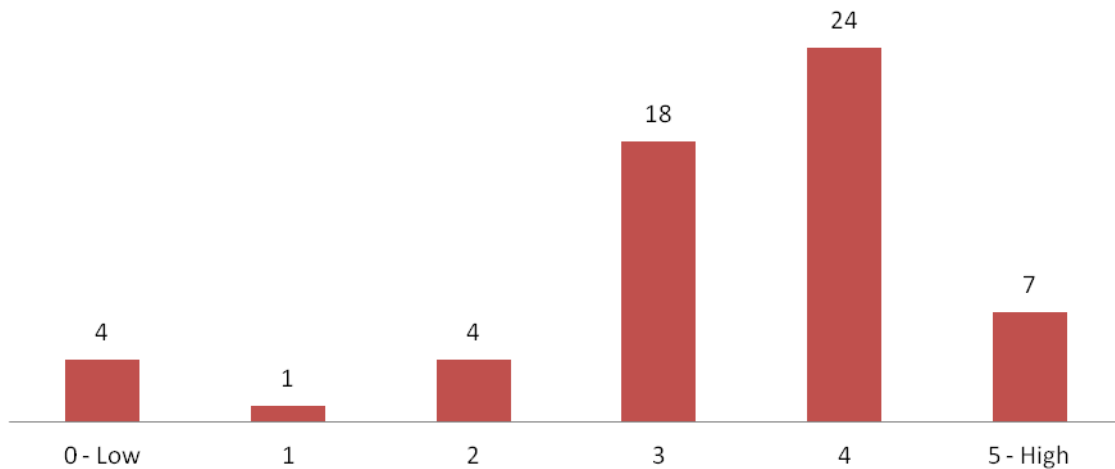




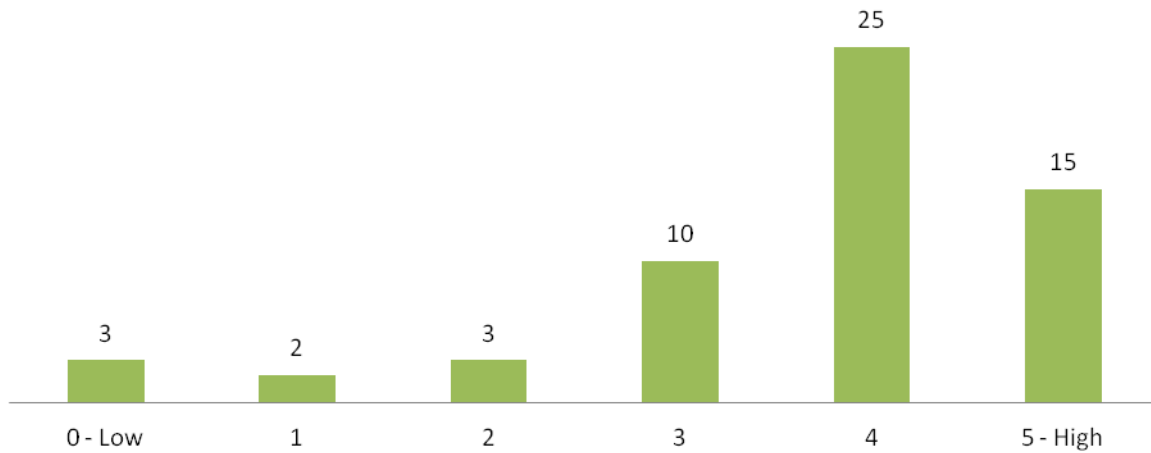
Question # 17d
Expanding Locally Owned Businesses Is A
Priority For Economic Development



Question #17e
Central Business District With Storefronts
Along The Sidewalk.



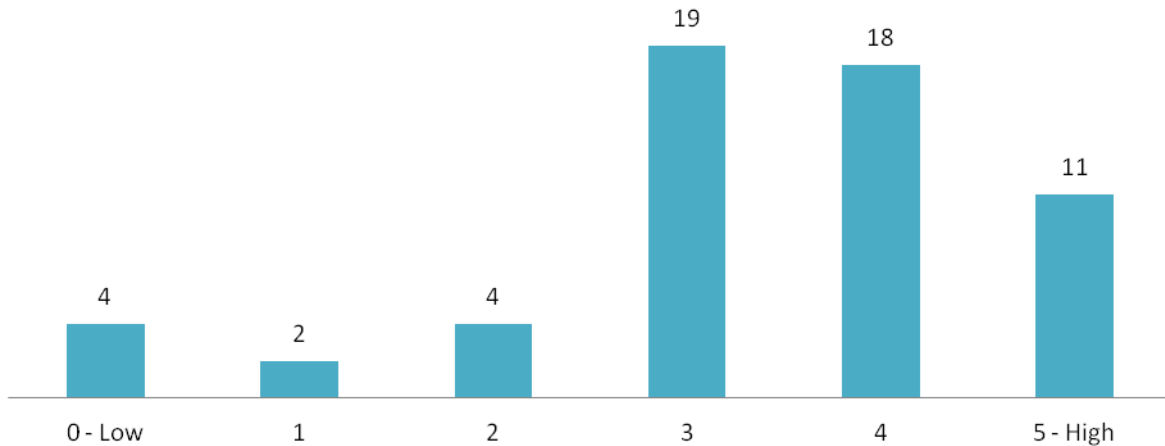
Question #17f
Residents Have The Ability To Walk Or Have Easy Access From Their Homes To Shops, Work School, and Parks, Etc.



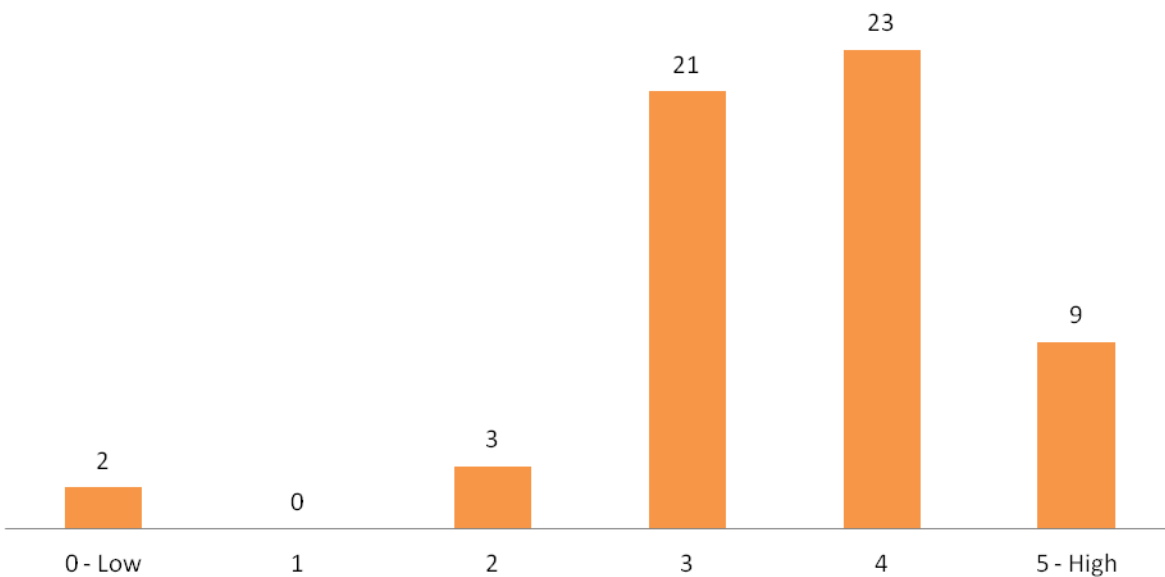
Question # 17g
Citizen Participation In All Levels Of Community Decision Making



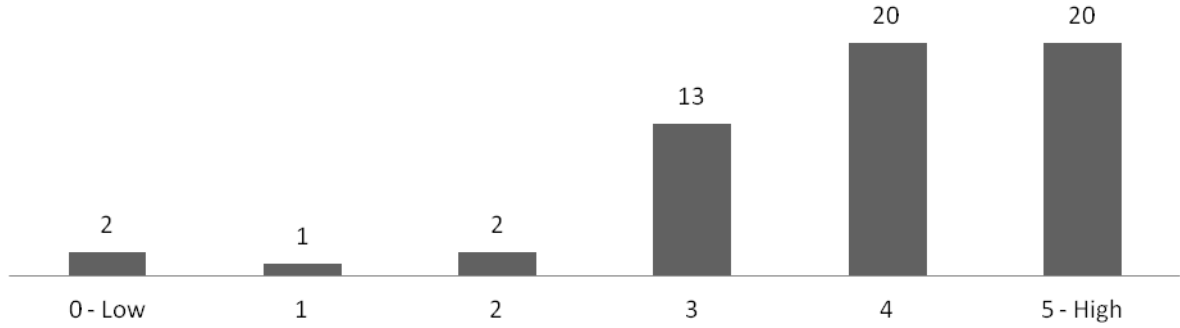
Question 17h
The Design Of Housing, Commercial, And Industrial Development Is In Keeping With The Character Of The City.



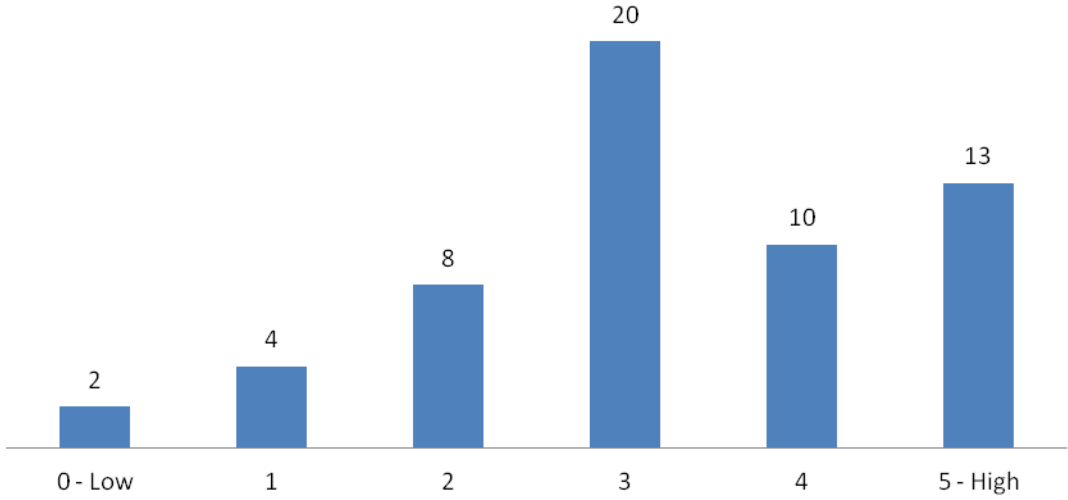
Question # 17i
Well Designed Public Buildings And Projects



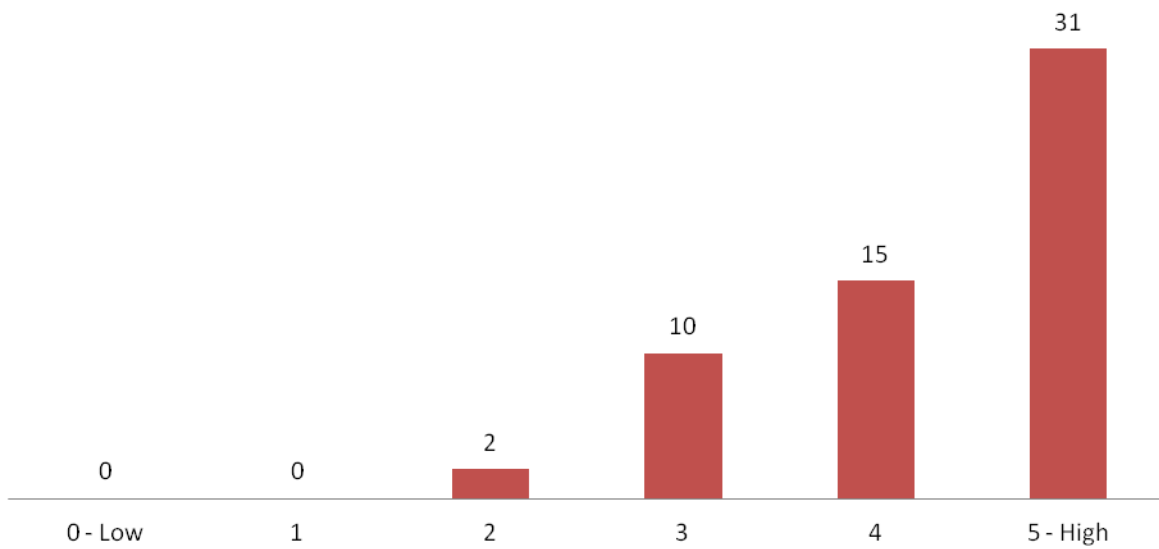
Question #17j
**Road Network Is Easy To Understand And
Composed Of An Interconnected System Of
Streets That Is Attractive And Functional, And
Safe For Pedestrians, Bicyclists And Motorists**



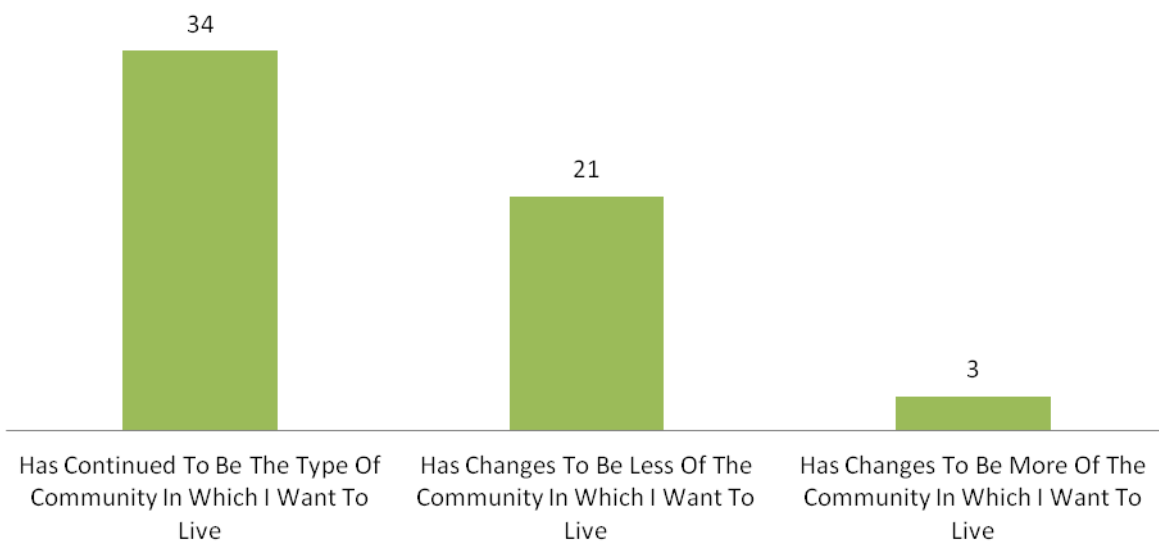
Question #17k
Being Able To Work In Rice



Question #17 A Small Town Atmosphere



Question #18 During The Past Few Years, Rice, generally...



The results from question 18 show that respondents feel that for the most part the City of Rice has, in recent years, moved in the right direction.



Comprehensive Plan Survey Comments

19. What do you see as Rice's best assets that should be maintained?

- Keep it a small town.
- Parks, adding to parks because there are so many families in town now.
- Sidewalks /streets / property owners yards kept up.
- I like the small town environment -still think it grew too fast with all the housing the last years that remain empty.
- The small town feel.
- Friendly people. Small town feel.
- Small town atmosphere
- Safe, small town feel.
- Small town atmosphere
- Small town feel
- Small town
- The small town feeling.
- Small town atmosphere
- Neighborly residents and friendly business owners doing their best to serve needs of the community
- Fire Department's new truck. Police Department assistant clerk position kept
- Bremer Bank, Veterinary Janski's Grocery Hardware Hank
- The local Lions Park, bars, roads
- That small town feel with good police protection.
- small town, close enough to bigger town
- Old look of downtown
- Roads and nice quiet area to live
- The school
- The way Rice has tried to keep control of its growth, not letting things get out of hand, and then having a big problem to fix.
- I like the small town feel.
- Hardware store -gas stations
- Keep roads good and accessible. Community needs to be family friendly -need recreation for young adults and children.
- The railroad
- Small town feel
- New highway off of 10,and some Splash Pad & skate park!
- Good sense of community
- Small town feel. Community involvement
- Close knit community
- Small town feel with country setting
- Small town feel
- Small town atmosphere, family friendly and a safe place to live
- Priority Street/road repairs-need to be updated/maintained



- Police protection definitely I have notified the police on 4 occasions and found them very helpful
- Main street should be well maintained, keep sidewalks building and yards looking good
- Craft fair type of people that like live here. Generally great neighbors a few bad "seeds"
- Single family homes and no multi-family homes
- The housing additions. Keeping them kept up and inviting to all people in Rice. Basic rules and regulations for all property owners.
- Small town atmosphere
- The big industrial businesses
- Small town atmosphere. Friendly, easy to work with
- Small town

20. If you could change one thing about Rice, what would it be?

- Welcome new people to the community, but don't give in to the demands of I want this, and I want that. You give it to them and they move out of the community and leave us to pay for their wants. Taxed enough.
- The stoplight
- Nothing that I can think of.
- It is time to start cleaning up the City and encourage downtown businesses to take pride in their businesses and store fronts. It has gone downhill in the last 5years. When you come into Rice the back way from Hwy 10 everything on the right side until O'Briens is a disgrace. Problem buildings, weeds,(unreadable).Some of the buildings are a hazard for the kids with no walls on the back of it.
- Other areas in town include broken fences at businesses Since last year there has not been repainted. Trees that the City planted have died and not been replaced. There are many more examples - Clean up and take pride in the City!
- Cleanliness!!! Stop trains horn!
- Each development would have its own park!
- City needs to be more child-family friendly. More activities, parks, trails for families. We need a safe crossing over the railroad especially for school children crossing because of no busing before /after school
- There needs to be something for families to do-like a bowling alley, movie theatre or something like that.
- Businesses that compete with St. Cloud /Little Falls prices. We drive to other towns for all our needs due to markups here and greater supplies to choose from.
- More parks, splash-pad (would draw people here) trails, sidewalks and remodeled main street (to also draw people) with shops.
- Better maintain parks, businesses, and personal yards
- A nice public park w/ playground, tennis/basketball courts, (ball fields?), walking and biking path
- Bike paths, walking paths, sidewalks
- Clean up the empty/old buildings in the City.



- Enforce ordinances to keep yards cleaned up (boots) do not allow junk cars to sit in yards
- Improved maintenance of City streets, including curb-and-gutter and better snow removal
- More kid activities including splash PAD
- Add a wading pool or swimming pool or recreation for our youth's and family's
- Update the downtown storefronts shopping have a larger grocery store. I can't hardly fit my stroller in the current location.
- All the buildings that are an eyesight and in particular two homes that are an eyesore and should be condemned. And you know which ones they are. All the buildings along the tracks should go. Clean up this town.
- No more train whistles
- Fix the railroad so the road stays smooth year to year, pave the road to the compost site, put signs up that say "speed limit", post it
- Hwy 10 interchange -gets too congestive.
- Get rid of the current council and mayor and get people in that care about the people living here
- The development of housing and commercial. We need to have more businesses in Rice.(of all kinds)
- Train blow zone. We need!-train horns blow excessively
- PLEASE-put in a "No Blow" zone for the trains coming thru. They blow your ear-drums out. You have one crossing of "no blow" but it makes no difference.
- Make it easier for new business to come to Rice
- Pedestrian crossing and no blow at the railroad -county Rd 2
- Splash pad – something more for kids. This is a young town. I also think more enforcement should be on keeping lawns and yards up. Its embarrassing when you live by slob!
- Roads need repairing
- More places to eat
- More businesses (examples: Coborn's Grocery Store, Bike paths / trails, a Gym-number 1!)
- More trees and houses!
- Government (City) needs to control development. Residential developers did sloppy job of layering out early additions and now City is expected to fix
- Have commercial Bldgs across from O'Brians and to south clean up there properties. It is a huge eye sore everyday to see this.
- Railroad tracks intersection is so bumpy (main street) and sometimes very hard to see at the intersection by O'Brians.
- Have a Walgreens so I don't have to go to St. Cloud to develop my pictures and pickup my prescriptions No train horn after 9/10pm
- More recreation such as bike trails, movie rental / theater, gym
- An all star clean up and kept up City-property (homes, businesses, and junkyard and old buildings.
- Clean up unused or sloppy areas



- Have the train horn stop. Make this a "no blow zone" -make property owners maintain their yards. Better police enforcement. Speeders, children out after curfew
- More businesses and the opportunity to work in Rice.
- A good cleanup or knockdown of the old buildings along the tracks-also the area with the old beat up boats.(ugly to see).
- Stop putting money in the park by the RR tracks
- Get rid of all the "old" and replace with the "new" –to many "eye sores". No plans to improve the "old".
- Don't bring in so many foreigners. Or the City will be like East Side St. Cloud. Slum
- Streamline the process of accepting new business Streamline the process of acquiring building permits
- Possible strip mall

21. Please describe your vision of Rice ten years from now:

- Small town turning itself into a bigger community. Let people pay for their own entertainment, recreation, etc.
- Hopefully it will grow as much but yet hopefully we will get more small businesses to move into Rice.
- Beautiful City with great store fronts, junk around the buildings removed and flowers and benches to enjoy. Still a small town.
- A park or play area in newly developed areas. Parks were promised in our development almost 9years ago when we moved in with nothing happening. Maybe a public library for families. More \$ to school which is overcrowded with too many children per classroom.
- Would like to see businesses cleaned up. Division street coming off hwy from south(?) is an embarrassment! My family has commented often that our main / Division is an eyesore! Cleaning / tearing down along tracks would be a major improvement! (it is even in our ordinance and nothing is done!)
- Small town feel, growing population, safe for families and having something to offer general public(to draw them in)
- Same
- Hopefully still have the small town feeling.
- About the same as now
- Light rail to Rice. Make it a destination so people want to visit on the train, not just use it to leave for games, errands
- Trees replanted, better roads -please fix pot holes on main Street by then
- A family oriented place maybe with even a larger grocery store. I have to always go to St. Cloud or Little Falls for my larger grocery
- needs and to a movie or to bowl.
- Busier downtown shopping, grocery store and fitness center. Small town atmosphere with sidewalks throughout. Well lit downtown "quaint" area!
- Small town feel but with more shopping opportunities. People come here for that feel and in a lot of cases their children live here also. Keep that feel.



- Kid friendly events. and growing jobs, manufacturing buildings
- A "family" place, nice yards, trees in outer developments, the train coming to Rice
- More families moving into Rice as more Houses being built and more family oriented
- I would hope the City would take care of the Westside Parkas they agreed to with the DNR before a child is hurt or killed get rid of the homemade swing set before someone is hurt
- A City with everything you need in Rice: Churches, schools, commercial, industrial, recreational, park and housing. Hopefully we will have commuter rail service (NorthStar) to Rice and beyond.
- Same
- A better grocery store
- More businesses, cleaned up railroad area and encourage appropriate businesses in these areas
- The crime rate will be up. More houses sitting empty to be sold
- Many families live in Rice. Many sorts of businesses that families can use such as a gym or larger grocery store so you don't have to go to St. Cloud or other surrounding town to use.
- A well rounded community that people want to live in so they don't have the busy life of Saint Cloud.
- Need office complex for professionals like accountants, lawyers, real estate etc. Definitely need drugstore and fitness place.
- It would be nice to have the same atmosphere as Sauk Rapids. Streets. Nice Bldgs. We need to have more small retail outlets.
- Pharmacy Have train Intersection changed to a quiet zone.
- Small town feel -school still open and thriving-parks available for use and nicely up kept -biking/walking paths
- Continuing to grow and having a small school district (including high school) of its own
- I would like to see it remain generally unchanged -local business should expand, but not big box retail -people like living in a small town that is still close enough to a big City for shopping, work etc...but away from the busyness
- Booming!
- It will still be here, they survived the good/bad times, It's people that are in Rice that keep it going cause small towns are becoming rare.
- Small town atmosphere a place to live not to be full of businesses and congestion
- To be a small town community like we are currently
- A cute small City that looks well maintained to all people who pass through or live in the City. Inviting for people who may like to move here.
- A nice family park. Play ground, tennis courts, ice skating, picnic shelter etc.
- I don't see any new development. Currently the City has some commercial lots/lot for sale. Very over-priced. East of Hwy 10we have a lot of commercial lots that have been developed and are just sitting there. The City should not be competition with local developers. We also have large inventory of residential lots.



22. Other comments:

- Let individuals pay for their own parks, recreation and entertainment. We all have different interests each pay for their own. It's not the communities responsibility. First support the businesses and people of the community, then think about changes. There are bigger communities if people don't like it here. Fix roads and street lighting. Have police more patrolling at night. There needs to be more street lighting in the current business district -mostly division street, the north side parking lot by the park as well as the older residential housing section of town.
- During the summer, something needs to be done about the bugs (potato beetes (sic) I was told they were) and the spiders. There are more spiders in my house than on the farm I grew up on.
- You report teen crime has gone up. This town has never had much for teens to do. Lets start by providing jobs to keep them out of trouble.
- Hate the idea of \$ going to a park right along the railway on main. Please get a safe crossing over railway for pedestrians. Get some parks and public areas developed in our neighborhoods where they are safely away from traffic of trains and cars.
- Areal pool would be nice -not a splash pad or wading pool (kids do not learn how to swim).What happened to the idea of a gym in town?
- We want to spend our money here and support our community but our community needs to be able to support us. We need stores and entertainment.
- Need to move 55 mph on River Road to start after Walnut Ridge neighborhood, not before. It is not safe. That should be an immediate change.
- I feel people move to Rice to escape from the big City
- Ordinances are not being enforced -some lawns and yards look like junkyards!
- Snow removal is inadequate. It can be days after a snowfall before streets are plowed. At times, the snowmelts / slushes before it gets plowed just to freeze over to create slippery streets that don't get sanded.
- Nice to see an active police dept. and clerks that do their jobs :)
- It would be nice to have a larger grocery store like Coborn's, Cub, etc in the area and more choice for eating establishments. Along with bike / walking trails that are safe to use and easy to get to.
- You could get business from Royalton or St. Stephen or surrounding towns if we had these types of businesses
- In most cases people wouldn't care about a small tax increase but not if it will help the rich prosper. Keep our wonderful police dept. and fire dept. up to date. We need something for our children in town to do to keep them out of trouble. We need someone
- else on our rec dept. OB is a joke. Find someone who cares about our kids. We deserve as much as S.R. since we still part of the school district. It was nice to see Ross patrolling the school this year.
- Who needs more business like the one in the old elevator what an eyesore
- Rice offers 0 for activity for young people except bars
- We need more tornado sirens! I live in Royal Pines Development and CANNOT hear it! I do daycare and needs to keep the children safe, and can't do that when I don't hear the sirens. The 9:00 pm siren I can not hear, only when everything is absolute quiet.



- I think the area over by Hytinnen Dental would be an excellent spot for a grocery store or gym or other stores that would bring big City living to a small town
- Need to get the trains to no sound crossings!- biggest no sale prob! More trees in newly developments!
- Please consider no train horn after a certain hour of the night. We are unable to sleep with windows open causing us to use excess energy from our A/C
- Mayor, council member whom actually put the City first! Too many relatives involved in City decisions. Too many "good old boys."
- More frequent patrolling on neighborhoods especially the west side across the tracks
2)Keep small/family owned businesses here example Janskis, Creamery, Arnies they make the town. Fireworks after midnight 3-4 nights a week? Isn't that a noise violation.4)Curfews kids are out after 9:00. Prime...drugs &sex in the parking lot. Follow some of the people that are regulars, they are drunk! Used to go about a year ago. It seems like a drug hangout I've seen them. I don't visit the establishment.
- I feel Rice is for the most part a good place to be and live and good on the eyes, but I think there are a few places that could change. Most all the business look good but the old rice farm supply is addressed. Also the junkyard next to the Legion should be blocked in better and keep all the used tires inside the gate! These roads are traveled a lot and should be kept looking good.
- Make the train horn stop
- There is no need for public transit, curb and gutter, bike trails and other cash sinkholes that taxpayers have to eat. Leave individuals to their business and gov't small including local gov't. No need to over-regulate.
- We would like a sign erected on lach addition. Like "The field of dreams addition. It kind of makes you feel like you are home. A sign would be nice by the cemetery west of Town and a sign for the "Rice Ballpark."
- I would like the City to take a close look at how they deal with any one that is considering moving to Rice. Put yourselves in that newcomer's shoe. As people involved in local government, lets look at how restrictive we are and what we impose fees/taxes for.
- Long needed path for people to walk / bike across the tracks, near the park that we are trying to fix up. Put the \$ into the path 1st!! No one sits by the tracks anyway –who cares about new arborvitaes and sprinkler system-make a nice crossing for people to walk or bike across



Conclusions

Over the course of this survey, several themes have emerged in the responses. They include:

- A desire to keep Rice a housing centered community with a small town feel.
- A desire to beautify the community
- A desire to develop and expand amenities and conveniences relating to a housing centered community, items such as trails, parks, stores, restaurants and service type businesses.
- Relatively low support for increased general taxes for improvements / development.
- A focus on improving transportation infrastructure (highways and streets), as well as desire to remedy issues caused by rail through town.
- A focus on developing existing businesses and bringing in new ones.

