

July 10, 2006

TO: Swift County Households

FROM: Swift County Board of Commissioners, Planning Commission and
Comprehensive Planning Task Force

**PLEASE READ THIS LETTER AND COMPLETE THE
ENCLOSED SURVEY!!**

**YOUR PARTICIPATION IN COMPLETING THIS SURVEY IS VERY IMPORTANT
TO SWIFT COUNTY'S COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROCESS!!!**

Swift County has started the process of developing a comprehensive plan. A comprehensive plan is a planning document used to help guide official controls, policies and decisions made by the county both in the present and 20 years into the future. The plan will look at topics such as housing, agriculture, transportation, economic development, natural resources, recreation and county services and will develop a vision statement, goals, objectives and strategies for each of these topic areas.

In order to collect public input for this planning process, a comprehensive plan survey was mailed on July 10 to each township household and a random sample of households in each city located in Swift County. **If your household did not receive a survey in the mail and would like to complete one, please do one the following:**

- **Print and complete the survey found on the following pages. Mail the completed survey to Swift County, P.O. Box 288, Benson, MN 56215 or drop the survey off at the Swift County Courthouse – Auditor's Office, 301 14th Street North, Benson, MN.**
- **A copy of the survey may also be picked up at the Swift County Auditor's Office located on the main floor of the Swift County Courthouse.**

Please do not exceed one survey per household. Only Swift County residents should complete a survey.

Return the survey by July 20, 2006.

Your individual survey answers will be kept completely confidential. The Upper Minnesota Valley Regional Development Commission has been contracted to tabulate the surveys and prepare the comprehensive plan. Only the total results of the survey questions will be used in the comprehensive plan.

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Swift County Comprehensive Plan Survey

Please take a few minutes to complete and return this survey to **Swift County, Box 288, 301 14th St. N, Benson, MN 56215**. Please complete only one survey per household.

Return by July 20th

Your individual survey answers will be kept completely confidential!

GENERAL

1. Which city or township do you reside in?
City: _____
Township: _____
2. How many people in your house are between the ages of: 0 - 19 _____ 20 - 24 _____
25 - 44 _____ 45 - 64 _____ 65 and over _____
3. How many in your house are part of the "Baby Boom Generation" (born between 1946 and 1964)?

4. How long have you lived in Swift County?
_____ (Years)
5. How many people in your household (excluding children in school/college) have completed as their highest level of education the following:
_____ Less than a high school graduate
_____ High school graduate or GED
_____ Some technical or vocational training
_____ Some college
_____ Associate degree
_____ Bachelor degree
_____ Graduate degree
_____ Doctoral degree
_____ Other: _____
6. Do you currently have Internet service in your home?
 Yes No

EMPLOYMENT & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

7. How many people in your household (excluding children and students) are:
_____ Employed full-time
_____ Employed part-time
_____ Homemaker
_____ Retired
_____ Unemployed
8. Does anyone in your household work at a second job in addition to their primary occupation?
 Yes No

If yes, what is the primary reason for having the second job? (*Check one*)

- College expenses Health insurance
 Low wages with primary job
 Single income household
 Other: _____

9. How many people in your household work:
_____ Within 2 miles of your home
_____ 3 - 10 miles from your home
_____ 11 - 20 miles from your home
_____ 21 - 30 miles from your home
_____ More than 30 miles from your home
10. What do you believe are the most common obstacles individuals encounter when seeking employment in Swift County? (*Check no more than three choices.*)
 Lack of employment opportunities in general
 Lack of jobs matching education level
 Lack of jobs matching experience
 Lack of professional jobs
 Poor health benefits offered with jobs
 Poor retirement benefits offered with jobs
 Travel long distance for adequate work/pay
 Wages are low for profession/occupation
 Wages are not adequate for cost-of-living
 Wages do not match education/experience
 Other: _____
 There are no employment obstacles
11. Which types of business or industry would you most like to see more of in Swift County? (*Check no more than three choices*)
 Agriculture
 Commercial services
 Government/public sector
 Health/medical
 High technology
 Manufacturing
 Renewable energy/value-added agriculture
 Retail businesses
 Tourism businesses
 Other: _____
12. Identify the most important roles you think the County should play in business and economic development? (*Check no more than three choices.*)
 Assist with new business start-up
 Assist existing businesses with retention/growth
 Build relationships between businesses and government
 Develop favorable land use regulations for business development
 Educate the public on economic and business issues
 Incentives (such as tax breaks) to businesses and industries
 Technical assistance for businesses
 Other: _____
 Not sure
 None of the above

HOUSING

13. Approximately how old is your home?

_____ (Years old)

14. Swift County has a need for more:

Single-family housing

Yes No Maybe No Opinion

Townhomes/condominiums

Yes No Maybe No Opinion

Apartments

Yes No Maybe No Opinion

Senior housing

Yes No Maybe No Opinion

Group homes

Yes No Maybe No Opinion

Assisted living facilities

Yes No Maybe No Opinion

Subsidized/income based public housing

Yes No Maybe No Opinion

Housing rehabilitation assistance programs

Yes No Maybe No Opinion

Other: _____

Yes No Maybe No Opinion

15. Which type of new housing is most needed in Swift County? (Check one)

Apartments

Senior housing

Single-family housing

Townhomes/condominiums

Other: _____

TRANSPORTATION

16. How would you rate the following transportation services and infrastructure provided by Swift County? (N.O. = No opinion)

County gravel road maintenance

Excellent Good Average Poor N.O.

County paved road maintenance

Excellent Good Average Poor N.O.

County snow plowing service

Excellent Good Average Poor N.O.

County bridge maintenance

Excellent Good Average Poor N.O.

Overall condition of County maintained roads and bridges

Excellent Good Average Poor N.O.

17. Swift County has a need for more:

Transportation services for seniors

Yes No Maybe No Opinion

Bus service within Swift County

Yes No Maybe No Opinion

Other: _____

Yes No Maybe No Opinion

AGRICULTURE

18. Choose what best describes your source of total household income. (Check one choice.)

100% of income from agriculture production

75-99% of income from agriculture production

50-74% of income from agriculture production

25-49% of income from agriculture production

Less than 25% of income from agriculture production

No income comes from agriculture production

19. If 50% or more of your household income is generated by agricultural production activities, check all those activities that apply.

Raise hay/grain/vegetables (crop farming)

Raise livestock

Organic/alternative farming practices

20. If you plan to stop farming within the next ten years, what do you plan to do with your farmland after you stop farming? (Check all that apply.)

Rent out some or all of the land for farming

Sell some or all of the land for farming

Sell all or some of the land for recreational use

Transfer some or all of the land to non-agricultural uses (CRP, CREP, RIM, other development, etc.)

Other: _____

Not sure

I plan to farm more than 10 years

I do not farm

NATURAL RESOURCES

21. Please select the most important environmental and natural resource issues in Swift County. (Check no more than three choices.)

Animal feedlot runoff Drainage

Farmland loss Fertilizer/pesticide runoff

Flooding Gravel mining

Groundwater quality Septic issues

Soil erosion Surface water quality

Wildlife habitat loss

Other: _____

22. Which of the following sensitive environmental areas do you support being protected by additional regulations that would limit development occurring within them?

Floodplains

Additional protection needed

No additional protection needed

Not sure/No opinion

Lakeshores

Additional protection needed

No additional protection needed

Not sure/No opinion

River shorelines

Additional protection needed

No additional protection needed

Not sure/No opinion

Wetlands

- Additional protection needed
- No additional protection needed
- Not sure/No opinion

Wooded areas

- Additional protection needed
- No additional protection needed
- Not sure/No opinion

Other: _____

- Additional protection needed
- No additional protection needed
- Not sure/No opinion

23. Do you feel the water ditching system in Swift County is adequate?

- Yes
- No
- Somewhat
- No Opinion

GENERAL LAND USE

24. Of the following types of development which would you like to see occur more, less, about the same as now or not at all in Swift County:

Animal livestock operations

- More
- Less
- Same as now
- Not at all
- No Opinion

Housing development in rural/unincorporated areas

- More
- Less
- Same as now
- Not at all
- No Opinion

Parks (County owned)

- More
- Less
- Same as now
- Not at all
- No Opinion

Recreational trails

- More
- Less
- Same as now
- Not at all
- No Opinion

Wind farms with multiple wind turbines

- More
- Less
- Same as now
- Not at all
- No Opinion

Wind turbines for individual use

- More
- Less
- Same as now
- Not at all
- No Opinion

Other: _____

- More
- Less
- Same as now
- Not at all
- No Opinion

25. Should land use policies and regulations steer new housing development away from agricultural activities/areas and toward urban areas/cities?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe
- No Opinion

COUNTY SERVICES

26. Should Swift County provide more County services and information (such as tax and property information, mapping services, county applications and forms, etc.) over the Internet?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe
- No Opinion

27. How would you rate the following as they relate to Swift County? (N.O. = No opinion)

Public safety/county law enforcement

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- N.O.

Swift County Government addressing the needs and concerns of its residents

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- N.O.

MISCELLANEOUS

28. Would you like to see Swift County's population:

- Grow a lot
- Grow a little bit
- Stay the same as it is now
- Decline
- No Opinion

29. Which of the following issues are the most important to Swift County's future. (Check no more than three choices.)

- Attract/develop high paying jobs
- Attract/develop new business and industry
- Develop/maintain agricultural friendly land use policies
- Grow in population
- Manage the location of new development
- Market the County's assets
- Preserve its history
- Protect the natural environment
- Provide/enhance recreational opportunities
- Quality healthcare services in the County
- Quality telecommunication and Internet services
- Quality transportation system
- Retain a rural character
- Retain or bring back our youth to live here
- Variety of housing types for all ages/incomes
- Other: _____

30. Which of the following are the most important reasons you choose to live in Swift County? (Check no more than three choices.)

- Close to family members
- Cost of housing
- Employment opportunities
- Geographic location
- Outdoor activities
- Quality of life
- Rural character
- Safe atmosphere
- Schools
- Social opportunities
- Other: _____

Thank you for participating in this survey! Your input is very valuable to the County's planning process. Please return this survey to Swift County, Box 288, 301 14th St. N., Benson, MN 56215 by JULY 20th.