Fond du Lac Reservation Comprehensive Plan 2020-2040

Fond du Lac Reservation Comprehensive Plan 2020-2040

Prepared For The Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa

Adopted by the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Reservation Business Committee by Resolution 1/13/2021.

A coordinated effort between Fond du Lac Planning and Architectural Resources, Inc.

Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa

Reservation Business Committee

1720 Big Lake Rd.
Cloquet, MN 55720
Phone (218) 879-4593
Fax (218) 879-4146

RESOLUTION # 1114/21

Resolution to Adopt the Fond du Lac Reservation Comprehensive Plan 2020-2040

Chairman
Kevin R. Dupuis, Sr.

Secretary/Treasurer
Ferdinand Martineau, Jr.

Dist. I Representative
Wally J. Dupuis

Dist. II Representative
Bruce M. Savage

Dist. III Representative
Roger M. Smith, Sr.

Executive Director,
Tribal Programs
Miyah M. Danielson

Executive Director,
Tribal Enterprises
Terry Savage

The Fond du Lac Reservation Business Committee, on behalf of the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, hereby enact the following Resolution:

WHEREAS, the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa are a sovereign people, who occupy the Fond du Lac Reservation and retain their aboriginal rights of self-government and self-determination pursuant to the Treaty of LaPointe of September 30, 1854, 10 Stat. 1109; the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, 25 U.S.C. § 461 et seq.; the common law of the United States; and as recognized by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples of September 13, 2007; and

WHEREAS, it is the sovereign obligation of the Fond du Lac Reservation Business Committee, as the duly-constituted governing body of the Fond du Lac Band, to exercise the responsibilities of self-government and management over the Band's affairs; and

WHEREAS, the Fond du Lac Reservation Business Committee has developed the Fond du Lac Reservation Comprehensive Plan 2020-2040 as a guide to that will assist the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa in future development; and

WHEREAS, NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fond du Lac Reservation Business Committee hereby adopt the "Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Comprehensive Plan 2020-2040" as a guide for the future development of the Fond du Lac Reservation

We do hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was duly presented and acted upon by vote of 4 for, ___ against, 0 silent, with a quorum of 5 being present at a Special Meeting of the Fond du Lac Reservation Business Committee held on January 13, 2021 on the Fond du Lac Reservation.

Kevin R. Dupuis, Sr.
Chairman

Ferdinand Martineau, Jr.
Secretary/Treasurer

Table of Contents

ABOUT THIS PLAN.....4
Introduction.....4
Document Purpose.....4
Document Structure.....4
Planning Process.....5
Topics Addressed.....5
Keeping Relevant.....5
The Plan Drafters.....5
COMMUNITY INFORMATION.....6
Geographic Setting.....7
Community Statistics.....8
COMMUNITY THOUGHTS.....10
Who We Reached.....11
TOPIC 1: HOUSING.....12
Introduction.....13
Survey Results.....14
Summary Of Community Opinions.....16
Goals and Strategies.....17
TOPIC 2: ECONOMY & ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY..19
Introduction.....20
Survey Results.....21
Summary Of Community Opinions.....24
Economic Opportunity Index.....26
Goals and Strategies.....27
TOPIC 3: LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT PATTERN.....29
Introduction.....30
Survey Results.....31
Summary Of Community Opinions.....34
Goals and Strategies.....35
Development Matrix.....37
Land Use Determination.....38
Priority Land Use Overview.....39

TOPIC 4: TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE....40
Introduction.....41
Survey Results.....42
Summary Of Community Opinions.....45
Missing Links.....46
Goals and Strategies.....47
TOPIC 5: ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES...49
Introduction.....50
Survey Results.....51
Summary Of Community Opinions.....57
Potential Park Space.....58
Agricultural Lands.....59
Goals and Strategies.....60
TOPIC 6: QUALITY OF LIFE.....63
Introduction.....64
Survey Results.....65
Summary Of Community Opinions.....68
Goals and Strategies.....69
PLAN IMPLEMENTATION.....72
Implementation Strategies.....73
A Comprehensive Understanding.....73
A Guiding Document.....73
Prioritizing Implementation Goals & Strategies,,,,.....74
Short-Term Goals.....74
Mid-Term Goals.....74
Long-Term Goals.....74
Assessing Progress.....75
Updating The Document.....75
CONCLUSION.....76
APPENDIX.....77

About This Plan

Introduction
The Fond du Lac Band began the process of creating its first comprehensive plan in the fall of 2019. This document provides the road map to the future of the Fond du Lac Reservation, identifying community goals and providing steps to reach them. The comprehensive plan provides a big-picture view of where the reservation is and where the community wants it to go. It looks to anticipate future trends and helps keep the Fond du Lac Planning Division ahead of the curve on various issues. This document provides an overview of the key values of those within the Fond du Lac community and outlines the steps that will be taken to bring the reservation in line with those values. This document will be used to coordinate ongoing planning efforts and move the reservation forward into the coming years.

Document Purpose
This comprehensive plan will be used by members of the Tribal Government to help guide future growth, development, and policy on the reservation. It is meant to be used as a field guide for determining what projects to implement and where to implement them. This pertains to items related to the topics covered in this document, which includes housing, economy and economic opportunity, land use and development pattern, infrastructure, environment and natural resources, and quality of life.

Document Structure
The comprehensive plan is intended to be easy to navigate. The document begins by providing an inventory of various existing conditions which are relevant to the topics covered. Then, the document breaks down the individual topics, covering relevant information, community opinions, overall strengths and weaknesses in the topic area, and goals and strategies.

Planning Process

This is the first comprehensive plan to be completed on the Fond du Lac Reservation. However, the plan does draw on many existing documents, including the 2019 Strategic Plan, the 2017 Safety Plan, the 2016 Long-Range Transportation Plan, and many others. Building on the body of existing information, the plan incorporates community input in order to highlight and determine priorities for the reservation. This input was initially intended to be provided at both in-person and online events, but due to Covid-19, only one in-person meeting was held. The remainder of feedback was collected online via surveys and online reviews.

Topics Addressed

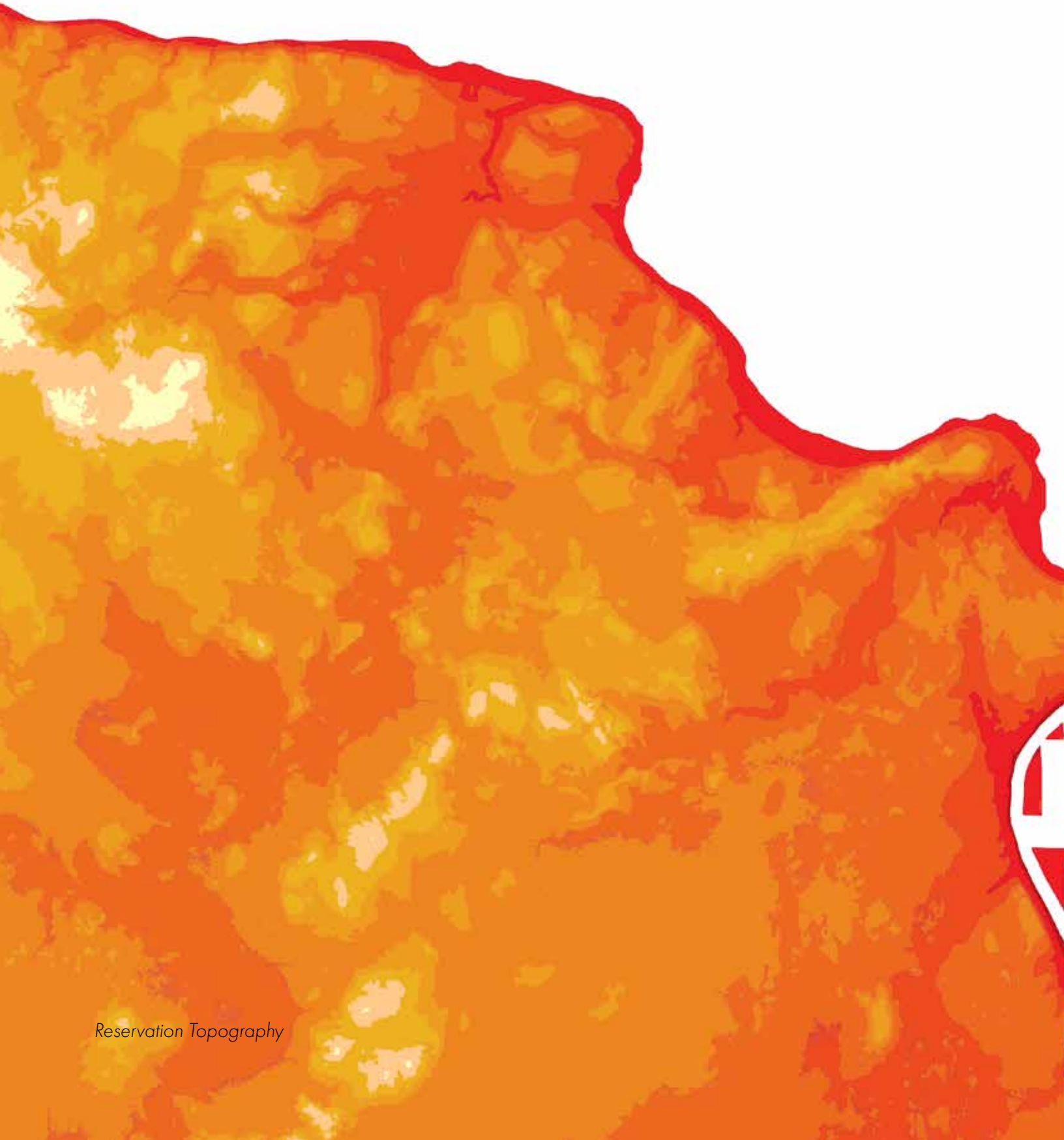
The Fond du Lac Planning Division determined the comprehensive plan will focus on the following topics: Land Use, Housing, Environment, Quality of Life, Public Facilities, Infrastructure, Transportation, and Economic Opportunity, provide the structural breakdown of this document. Each focus area is addressed in a broad sense and provides opportunity for the development of more specific plans related to individual topics in the future.

Keeping Relevant

If there's one thing to learn from 2020, its that our lives are prone to change. This document acknowledges this, and should be updated occasionally throughout its life to better reflect changes taking place on the reservation.

The Plan Drafters

The Fond du Lac Planning Division coordinated a team of professionals to put together this plan. During the creation of this document, they served as the primary coordinator for all efforts. From organizing public meetings, to administering surveys, to collecting existing documents and data, they have ensured that the Fond du Lac Comprehensive Plan is in line with ongoing efforts and future plans. The planning division was assisted by Architectural Resources, Inc. and John Powers of Applied Insights North in their efforts. On behalf of the Fond du Lac Band, the Planning Division maintains ownership of this document and will be responsible for any questions, updates, or additions.



Reservation Topography

Community Information

Geographic Setting

The Fond du Lac Reservation was established in 1854 under a treaty with the United States Government. Fond du Lac is a sovereign nation governed by the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa.The Reservation is the geographic area governed by the Band, and is one out of six organized under the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, Section 16 of the Act of June 18, 1934 (48 Stat. 984). There is also the Red Lake Band of Chippewa to the northwest, and the four Dakota Communities to the south.

The Fond du Lac Reservation consists of just under 154 square miles of land. It is bordered just to the east by the City of Cloquet, with the regional center of Duluth located 20 miles further east. The large metropolitan area of Minneapolis-St. Paul lies 130 miles south. Both of these areas are directly connected to the Fond du Lac Reservation via Interstate 35, which runs roughly along its southeast border. The reservation is bounded to the north and east by the Saint Louis River and includes a number of pristine lakes, streams, and wetlands within its bounds. Much of the reservation consists of rural areas, but notable settlement areas include Sawyer, Cloquet, and Brookston.

Topographically, the reservation consists of largely flat expanses with varying soil types. There are notable topographic changes along the northern border of the reservation where the Saint Louis River has carved out a valley.

The entirety of land within the reservation border is not under direct ownership of the Fond du Lac Band. The actual reservation consists of a patchwork of different parcels which fall under different classifications such as Trust Land, Fee Land, and others. Other lands within the boundary are owned by

Reservation Location

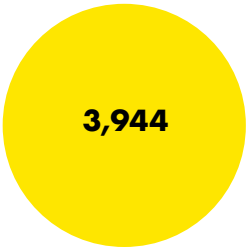
Reservation Boundary

Actual Band-Owned Lands

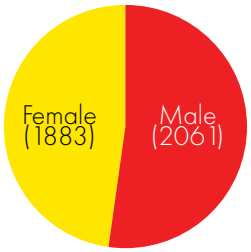
Community Statistics

	Fond du Lac	Carlton County	State of MN
Median Income Per Household	$26,000	$60,390	$68,411
% In Poverty	12.6%	10.1%	9.0%
% High School Graduate	89.8%	94.1%	93.0%
% Bachelor's Degree or More	16.7%	35.4%	22.5%
% Unemployment	9.9%	10.1%	9.0%
Median Home Value	$165,800	$166,200	$211,800

Total Population



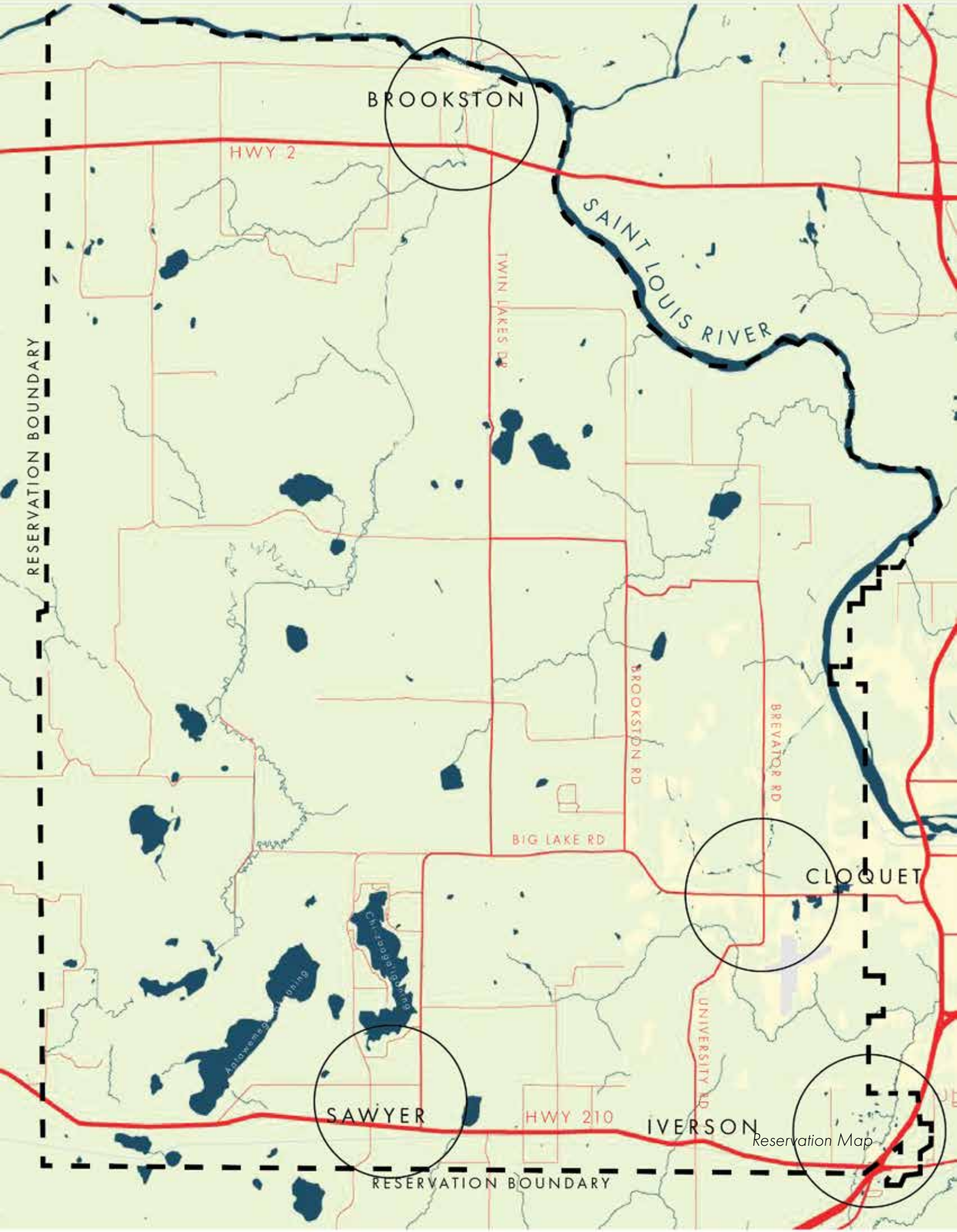
Sex



Age

Home Occupancy

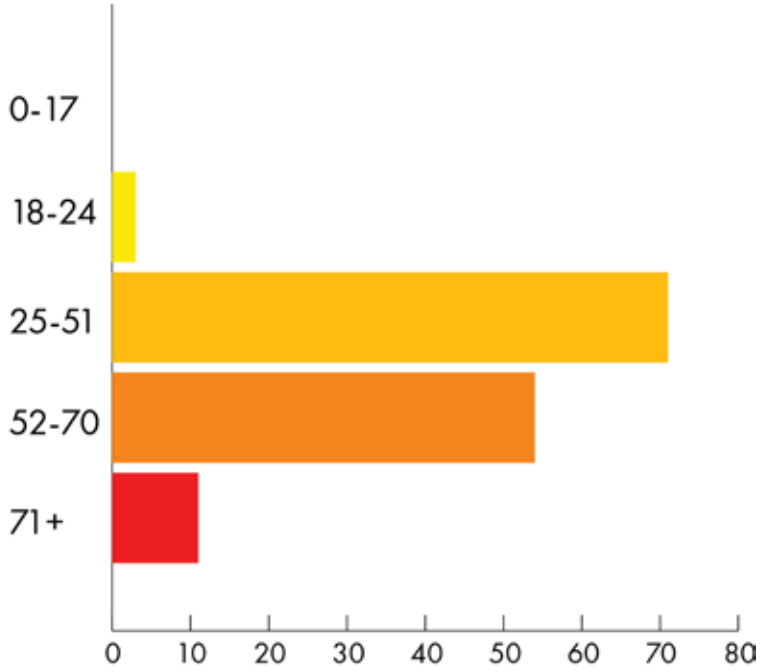
Workforce



Reservation Map

Community Thoughts
Who We Reached

Age of Respondents

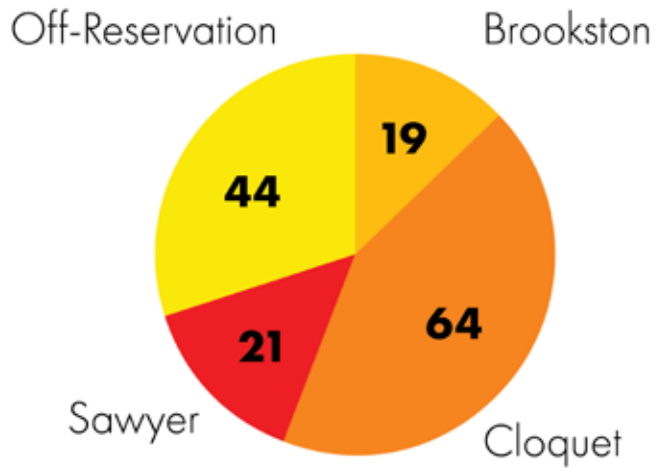


Interpretation

Band members were surveyed to gain their insights into the future of Fond du Lac. A broad age-range of members responsed with the majority being elder members. It is important for the wisdom of elders to be considered. The lack of the youth perspective, though, was noted. In the future better methods must be used to reach younger band members.

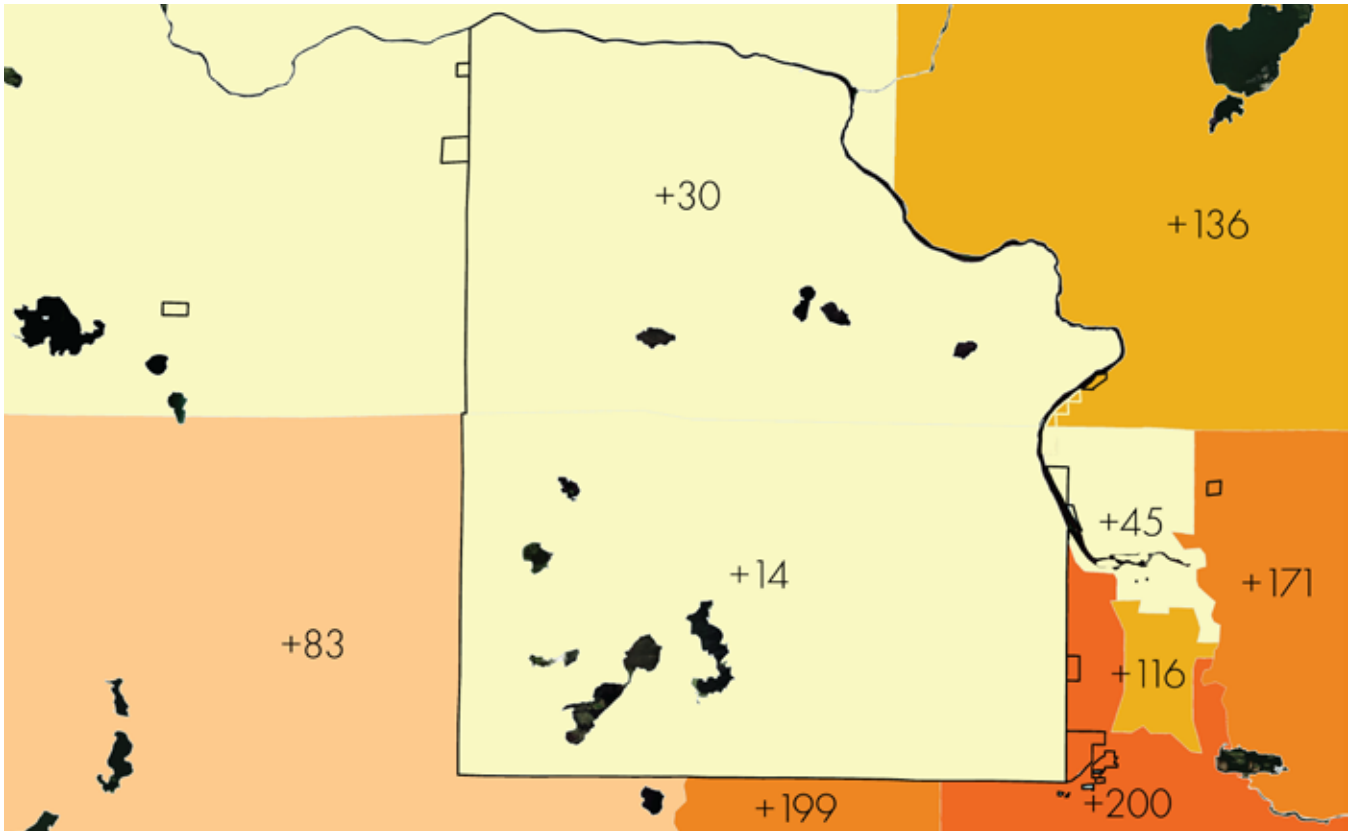
In addition to the survey, meetings were conducted with the Fond du Lac Planning and Economic Development Divisions, the Fond du Lac Elders group, and the public at large.

Location of Respondents



The results here indicate the geographic location people identified as the area of their primary residence. Who was reached is generally representative of the community.

Topic 1: Housing



Anticipated increase in population per tract, 2020-2025

Introduction

People need places to live. As simple as it sounds, its not always easy to accomplish housing every person who needs a home. Providing high-quality and affordable housing will be of utmost importance.

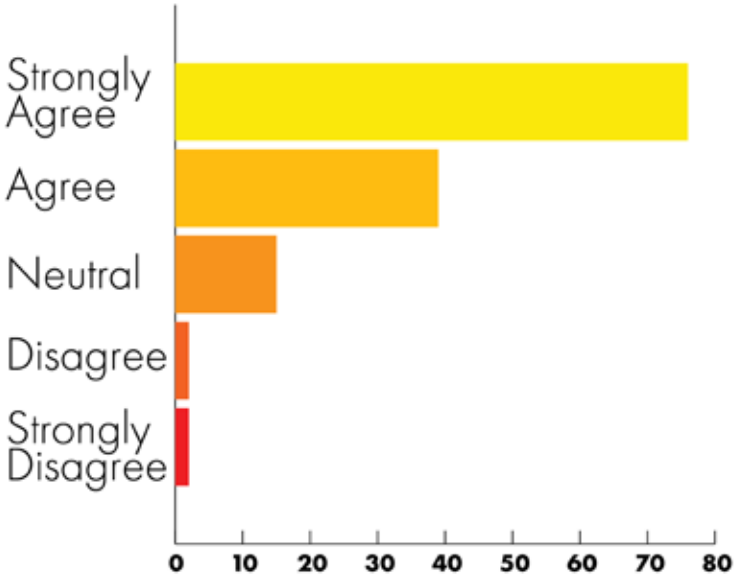
At present housing on the reservation is spread over a wide geographic area. Housing condition varies widely from highly satisfactory to needing imrovement. There is a strong demand from band members to see more affordable housing become available for them and their families. Population trends suggest continued growth on the reservation.

The Fond du Lac Band can position itself to accommodate this new growth by getting creative with its housing options. Diversifying the types of homes available to residents and looking at both historic and contemporary examples of community living will provide examples of how to acheive this. Housing not only accomplishes the goal of getting an affordable roof over every person's head but also can contribute to fostering a greater sense of community amongst residents.

Community Thoughts

What People Said About Housing

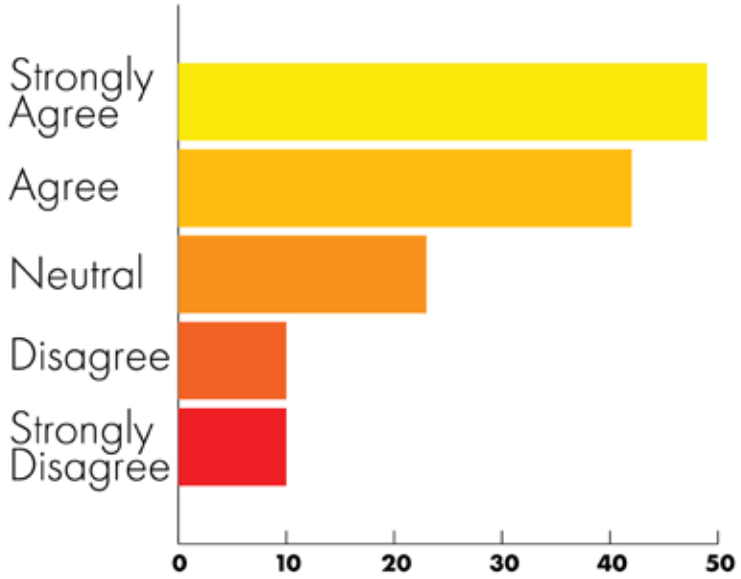
The Reservation Should Develop More Single Family Housing



Interpretation

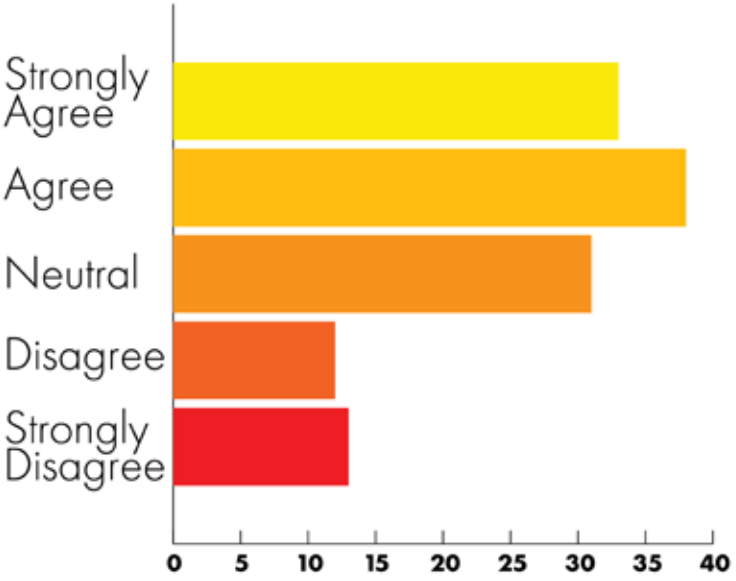
The creation of new single-family housing is broadly popular amongst the population. Specific comments expressed a strong desire to not only see new homes, but also the rehabilitation of existing homes on the reservation. Additionally, there is a desire to see more diversity in the housing stock to reflect varying family sizes among band members.

The Reservation Should Develop More Duplexes and Townhomes



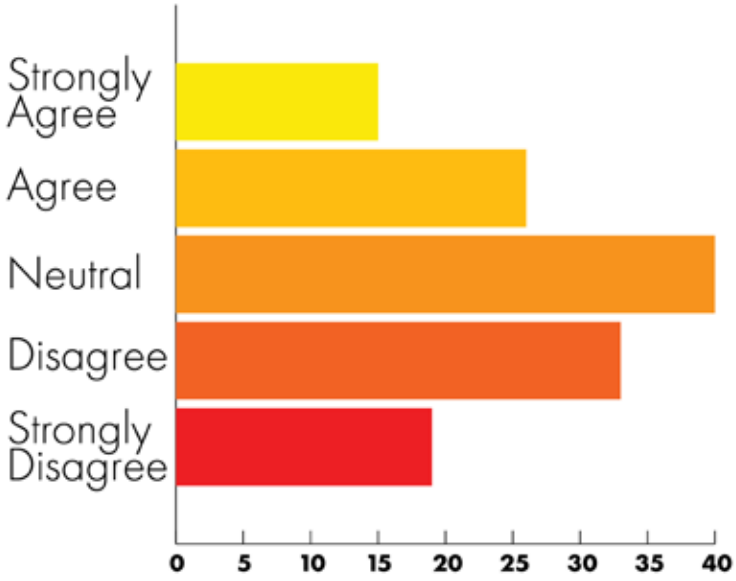
While not as popular as single-family housing, the development of new multi-unit housing projects is also broadly favorable to band members.

The Quality of My Home Suits My Needs



Generally people are satisfied with the quality of their home, but a small group of people feel otherwise.

There Are Affordable Housing Options on the Reservation



Affordability isn't a consistent measurement and varies based on a person's situation. There is general disagreement on this topic but a sizeable portion of the population finds on-reservation housing to be unaffordable.

Summary of Community Thoughts On Housing

There are essentially three prevailing attitudes related to housing: those who are currently housed on the reservation are generally satisfied with their housing and enjoy living there, those who are currently housed on the reservation and are not satisfied, and those who are not housed on the reservation and are frustrated by the lack of available housing.

The first group consists of individuals who live on the reservation and are satisfied with their homes. These people appreciate life on the reservation and enjoy being a part of the community.

The second group is made up of individuals who live on the reservation but are not satisfied with their housing situation. Some expressed that their home is not appropriate for their family size (either too big or too small) and that maintenance issues are becoming problematic for them.

The third group consists of individuals who are either not currently housed on the reservation or not currently housed at all. They are frustrated by the lack of available housing and are confused by the process of how housing is assigned. They strongly wish to live on the reservation, but have been unsuccesful up to this point in acquiring housing there.

Housing: Goals And Strategies

Overall Vision: The Fond du Lac Band provides a diverse array of quality affordable housing options meeting the needs of band members.

Goals:

- **Provide needed maintenance to salvageable existing homes.**
    - Conduct a housing inventory, compiling data on all housing units on the reservation. Take note of current services available, number of bedrooms, and other relevant features. Make note of any maintenance required.
    - Establish a skills training program which uses home construction and rehabilitation projects as field experience for training.

- **Provide more diversity in housing types on new development projects.**
    - Look into communal modes of housing. Create four-plexes with a 3-to-1 mix of elder housing and youth housing, wherein the younger person gets a stipend to be a caretaker for the elders.
    - Utilize multi-family housing units as a means of providing studio, one, and two-bedroom housing options.
    - Create housing for larger families.
    - Ensure single-level housing is available to elder populations.

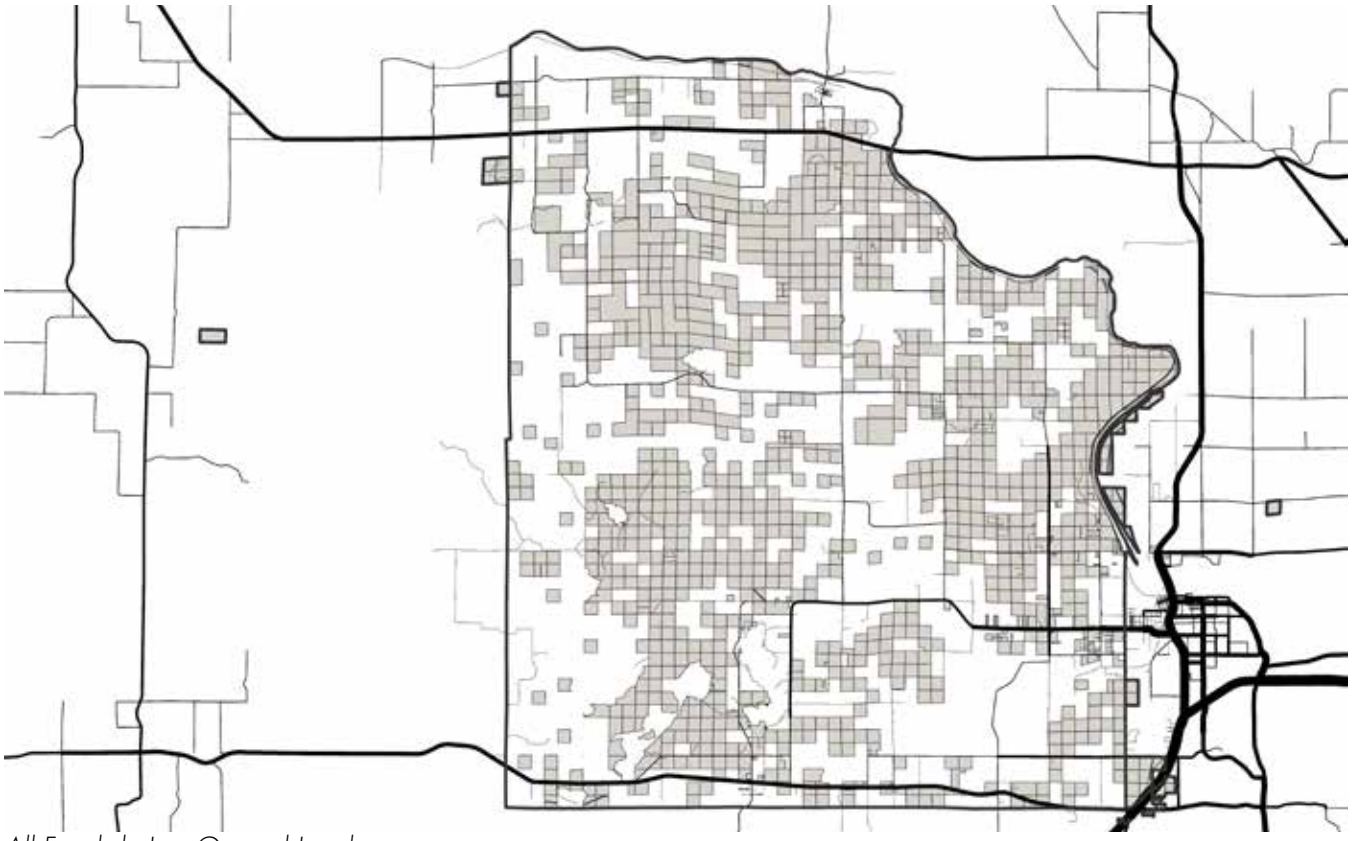
- **Develop an elder housing facility in Brookston.**

- **Provide educational programming geared towards teaching general home maintenance to residents and fostering sense of ownership.**
  - Expand program to include other topics such as auto, machinery, and other relevant fields.
  - Look into starting a "half-house" program where primary components are pre-built and owners can finish the job themselves.

- **Incorporate environmental desires into new housing projects.**
  - Prepare garden plots as part of new housing construction projects.
  - Utilize tree cover for energy savings and aesthetic value.
  - Use native seed mixes for areas disturbed during construction.
  - Minimize use of resource-intense lawn areas.

- **Focus housing development efforts near existing major employers.**
  - Focus multi-family housing efforts within Cloquet core development area.
  - Focus single-family housing efforts within Sawyer and Brookston core development areas.
  - Include housing in future retail/commercial developments on second or third story.

Topic 2: Economy and Economic Opportunity



All Fond du Lac Owned Lands

Introduction

Four geographic areas are noted for key investment. These are the existing settlement areas of Sawyer, Cloquet and Brookston along with the I-35 / Highway 210 interchange area.

The Fond du Lac Band has adopted a "catch up" and "look ahead" strategy in order to create an economically resilient community. This essentially splits economic development efforts into two key categories, with one focused on providing missing services to residents, and one focused on taking advantage of future opportunities for growth.

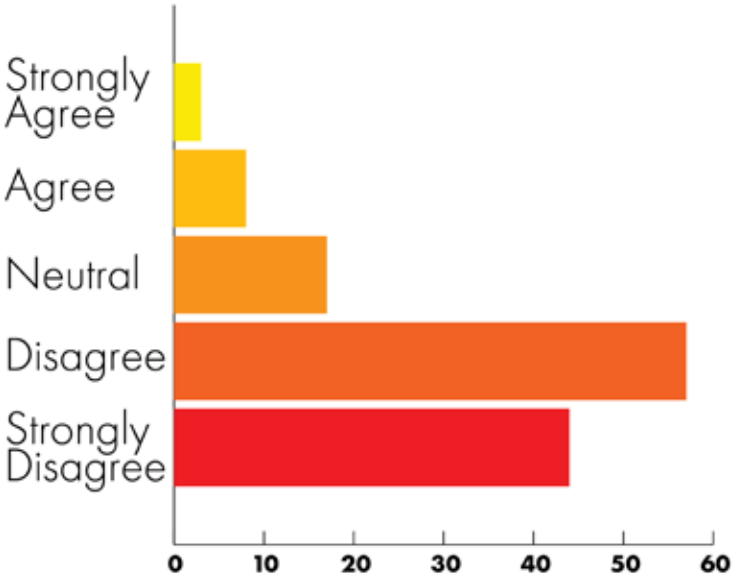
"Catch up" economic development efforts will focus on providing essential services to areas that are already developed. These include community staples such as grocery stores, banks, restaurants, recreation areas, laundry services, healthcare options, quality education facilities, utility hookups, and diverse transportation options. Lesser utilized services (such as a bank) will only exist in Cloquet along the Big Lake Road corridor, while frequently used services (such as a grocery store) will exist in all three community centers.

"Look ahead" economic development strategies involve utilizing undeveloped areas which are in close proximity to existing roadways and utilities to provide space for anticipated demands. These can be categorized into two specific areas and two intended customer bases. Services intended to be utilized by reservation residents will be developed along the Big Lake Road corridor. This was indicated to be the favored "potential downtown" in the community survey. The newly acquired lands near I-35/Highway 210 will become the focus for efforts aimed at bringing capital onto the reservation, with the intended customer base being off-reservation populations.

Community Thoughts

What People Said About Economy

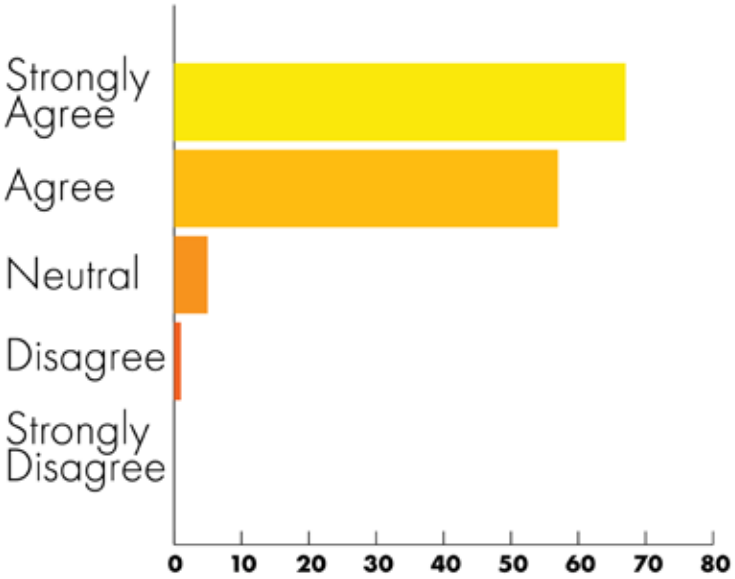
I Can Buy All The Day-To-Day Necessities I Need On The Reservation



Interpretation

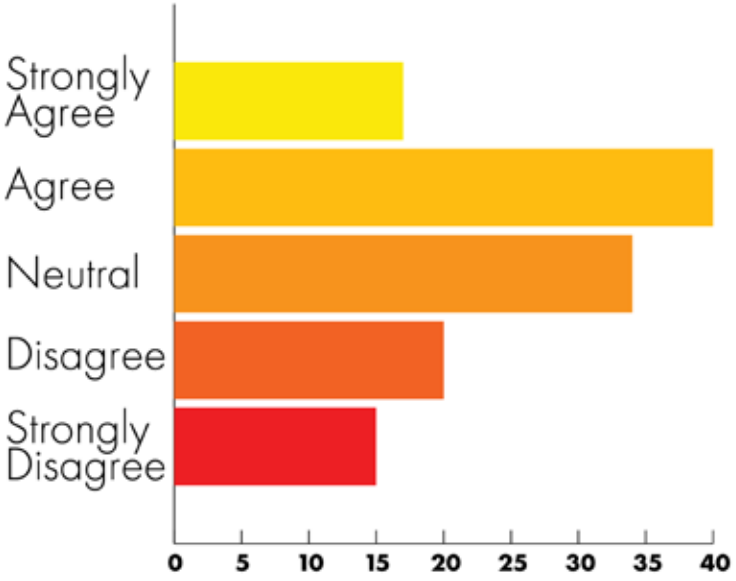
Basic goods and services are not available on the reservation, though there is a strong desire to see them implemented.

It Is Imporant To Support Small Local Businesses



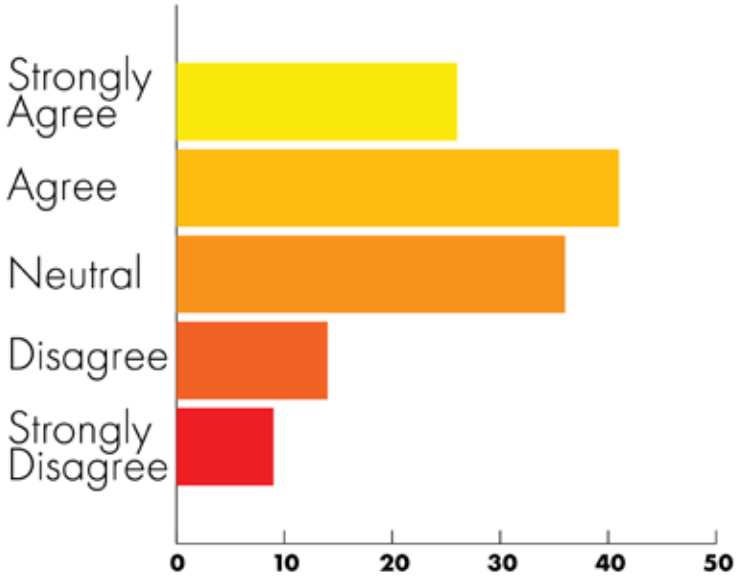
Many members express a willingness to support small local businesses over larger commercial chains.

Our Household Income Allows Us To Live Comfortably



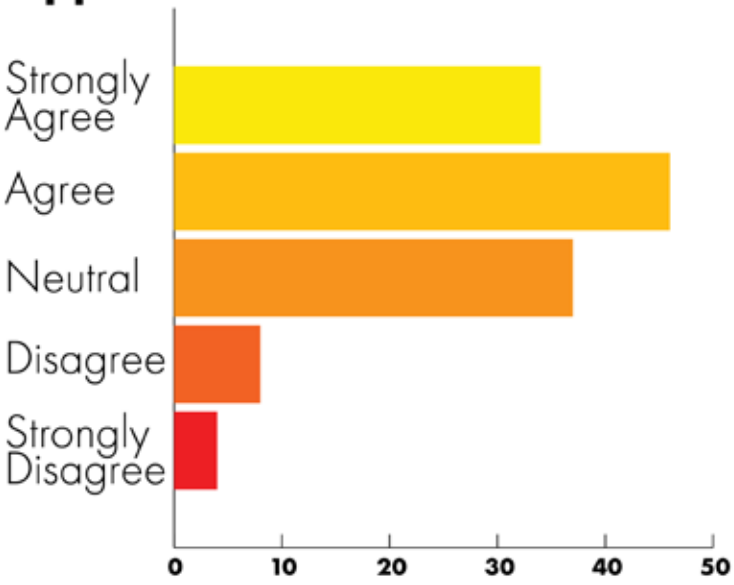
A majority of individuals feel they are able to live comfortably, while a sizeable group does not.

I Would Be Interested In Starting A Business



There is a strong entrepreneurial spirit on the reservation. Over half of respondents indicated that they were interested in starting a business.

The Fond du Lac Band Should Explore Cultural Tourism Opportunities



While many expressed a willingness to explore cultural tourism opportunities, there should be emphasis on doing so in a sensitive manner.

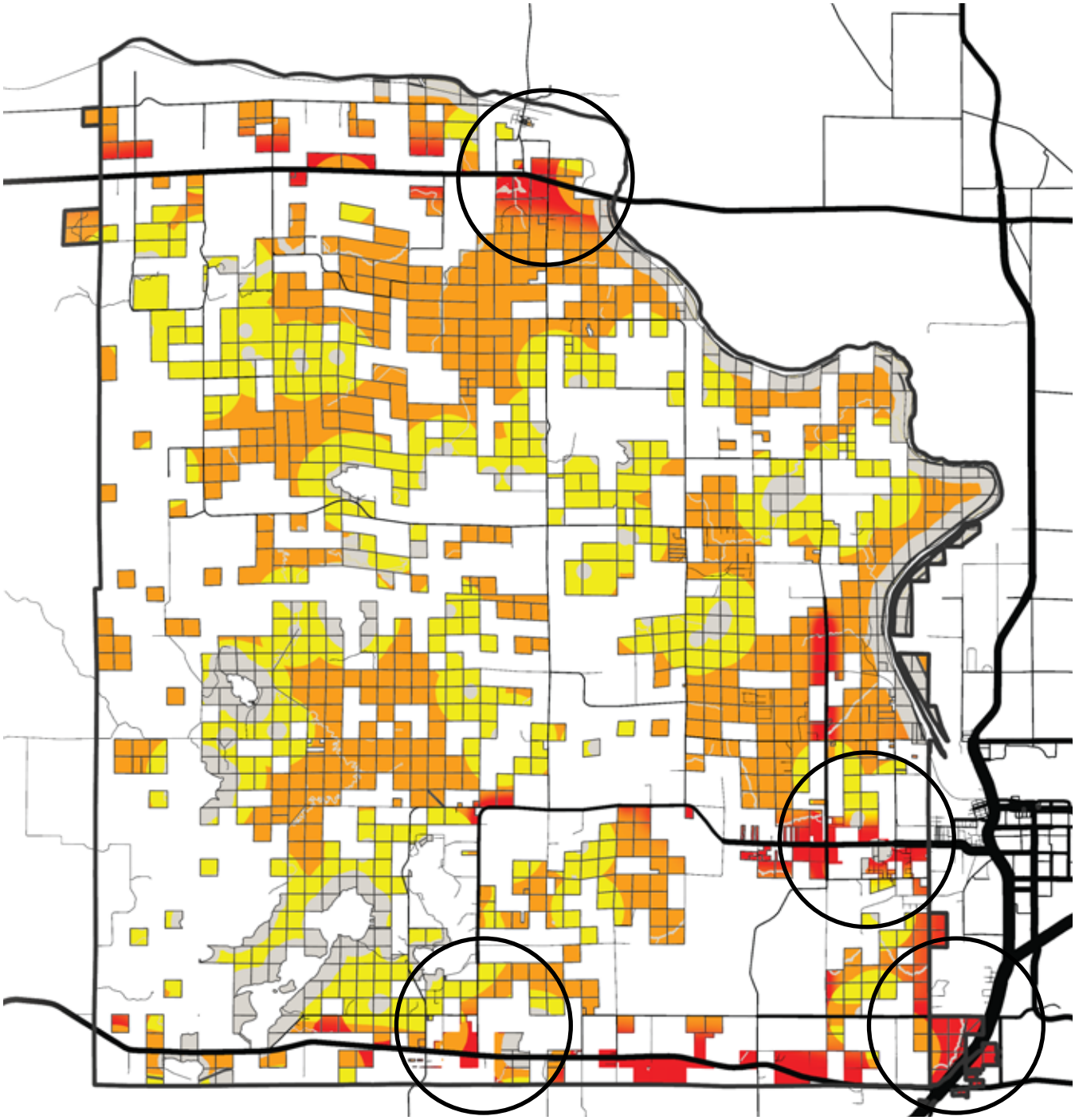
Summary of Community Thoughts On Economy and Economic Opportunity

Economic empowerment is important to the people of the Fond du Lac Band, and they are driven by a spirit of perseverance.

Many essential goods and services are currently unavailable on the reservation, which results in a great deal of financial capital leaving the reservation as people spend their money elsewhere. While many cited having to shop in Cloquet and beyond, there was a strong preference for supporting local, native-owned businesses. Many hope to see more of these become established on the reservation in coming years, and plenty of people are willing to step up to make that happen.

Presently, a large number of people on the reservation are living in poverty, but there is an incredibly strong entrepreneurial spirit amongst residents. Many individuals felt that the Band could do more to support entrepreneurial growth on the reservation, and doing so would help to encourage greater self-sufficiency amongst residents.

Lastly, residents expressed being in favor of using growing interest in Native American Culture as a means of driving economic growth, provided it is done is a sensitive manner which places an emphasis on education.



Economic Opportunity Index

Highest Opportunity

Lowest Opportunity

The above map uses existing information about transportation access, potential customer exposure, environmental impact, availability of land, and other items to highlight Band-owned lands where developmental efforts will be focused. Grey areas are less favorable, while red areas are most favorable. Circled land indicates key investment areas.

Economy & Opportunity: Goals And Strategies

Overall Vision: The Fond du Lac Reservation will provide a diverse array of employment opportunities through providing essential services and fostering the entrepreneurial spirit of its people.

Goals:

- **Create a proper "downtown" for the reservation.**
  - Create a business incubator space in close proximity to Aaniin HQ to foster entrepreneurial growth and idea generation.
  - Change zoning requirements and parcel delineations to encourage a "main street" business district along Big Lake Road to accommodate businesses which grow out of incubator space.
  - Develop housing above street level business spaces within "main street" business district.

- **Encourage growth in the Brookston area by taking advantage of environmental recreation.**
  - Create a destination aquatic recreation facility on the Saint Louis River in Brookston. Offer canoe building courses, paddling lessons, fishing opportunities, and other river-oriented activities. Potential for lodging/camping services.
  - Develop a network of trails along the riverfront.

- **Implement missing essential services on the reservation**
  - Create a bank/credit union to provide financial services/business loans to band members.
  - Promote the creation of small-scale grocery/general stores in Sawyer, Brookston, and Cloquet.
  - Create an auto mechanic shop.

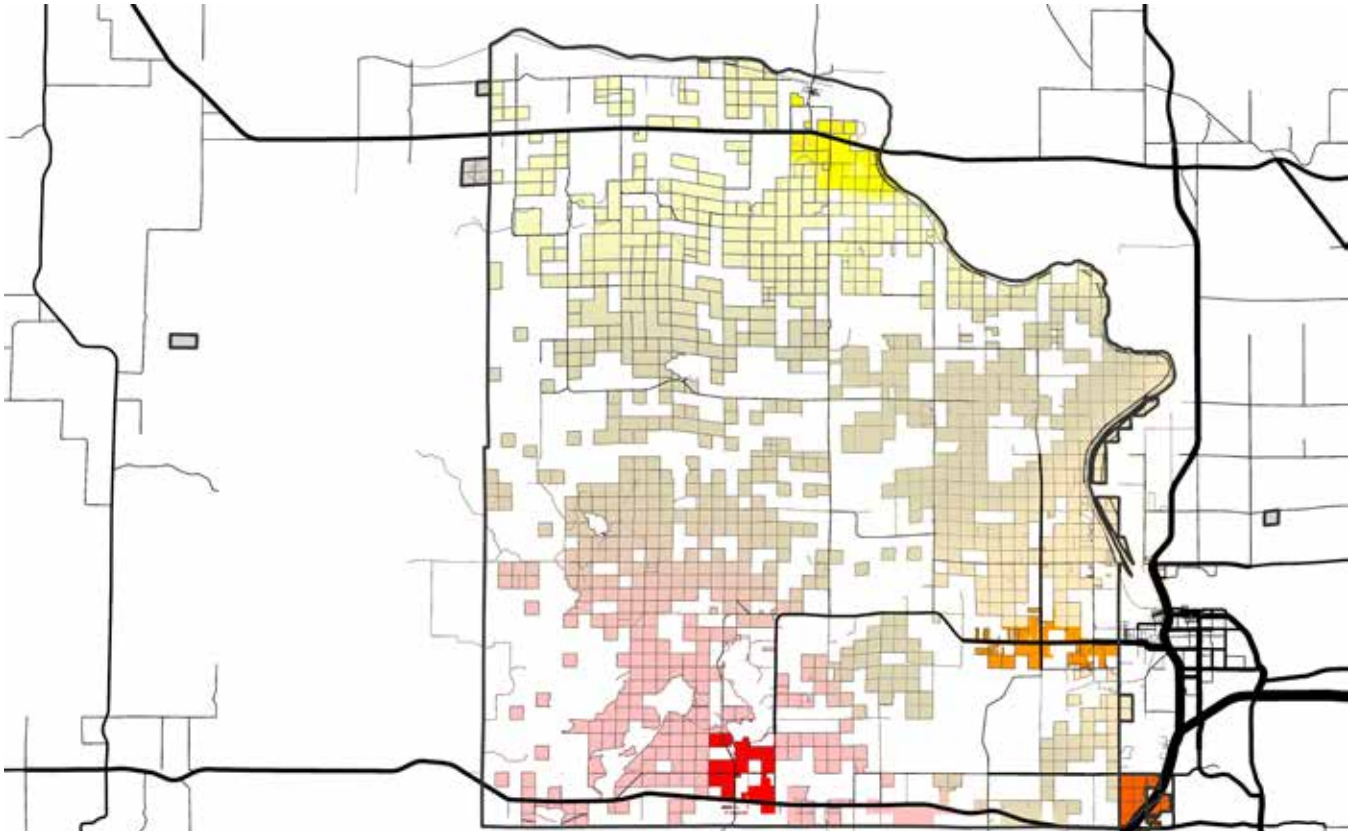
- **Utilize cultural resources as a means of economic growth.**
  - Establish a permanent farmer's market near Gitigaaning to be an outlet for local food producers. This facility will also provide spaces for food-oriented classes related to growing, preserving, and preparing food. Potential to expand to other locations if proven successful.
  - Encourage the creation of a farm-to-table restaurant near I-35/Hwy 210 geared towards introducing non-native people to indigenous foods.
  - Encourage the creation of a store near I-35/Hwy 210 geared towards introducing non-native people to products produced by band members.
  - Establish a highly recognizable "Fond du Lac Foods" brand under which locally produced foods can be sold at local stores.

- **Encourage skills development and self-sufficiency.**
  - Create a makerspace for creators and tradespeople.
  - Utilize makerspace for workforce development courses.
  - Have workforce training/apprenticeship programs built-in to programming of new business ventures.
  - Utilize business incubator in tandem with Aaniin for IT related skills-development courses.

- **Take advantage of rail and interstate access to encourage the development of manufacturing jobs in industries that align with the values of residents.**
  - Attract jobs in the fields that have an environmental scope to them, specifically renewables manufacturing and sustainable agriculture.

- **Develop a private business sector**
  - Work with the economic development division to establish business resources for entrepreneurs.
  - Create a variety of places of business to meet the needs of different levels of business, from incubators to storefronts to offices.

Topic 3: Land Use and Development Patterns



Development Matrix

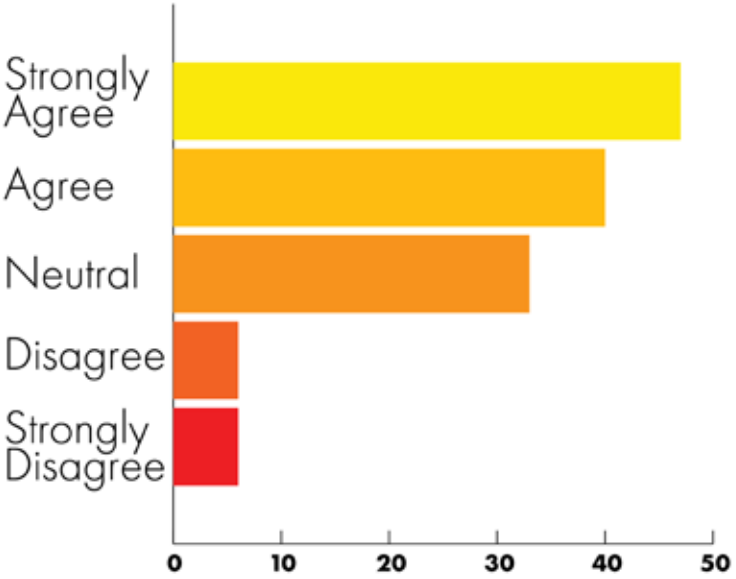
Introduction

While the first two topics dealt with the "what" related to new development initiatives, this section deals with the "where". Land use guidelines determine how a piece of land can be used. Each piece of land has its own strengths and weaknesses, and will be developed accordingly. While this plan provides a broad overview, it will be important to ensure each site is appropriate as specific projects are explored.

At present, the development pattern on the Fond du Lac Reservation is predominantly rural, characterized by expansive sections of undeveloped land and large distances between places. The settlements of Sawyer, Brookston, and Cloquet are the exceptions to this overall development form, as the first two exhibit small-town development patterns, while the Cloquet settlement area has a semi-suburban development pattern.

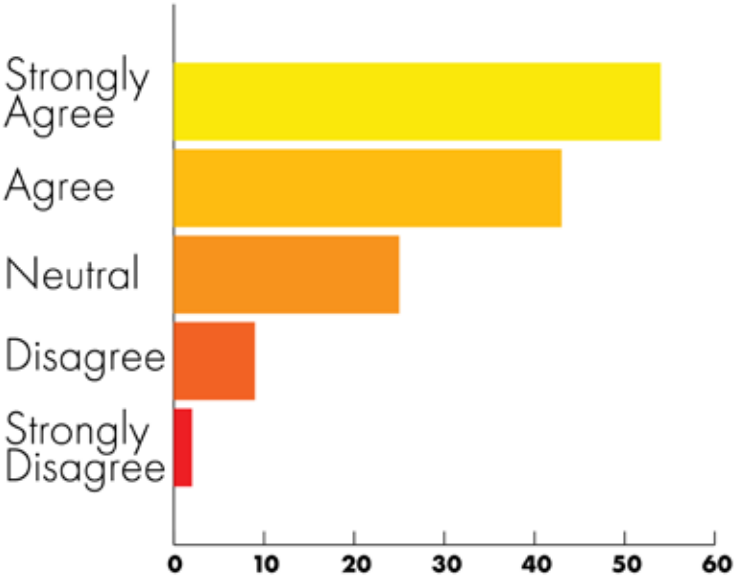
Moving forward, development projects will be assessed on how they interact with their surrounding neighborhood. Is the use compatible with existing areas? Is it close to the homes of the people who will be working there? If not, is there space to create this housing nearby? New development will focus on the three existing settlement areas as well as a core area centered on recent land purchases near I-35 and Highway 210.

The Reservation Should Develop More Business Parks



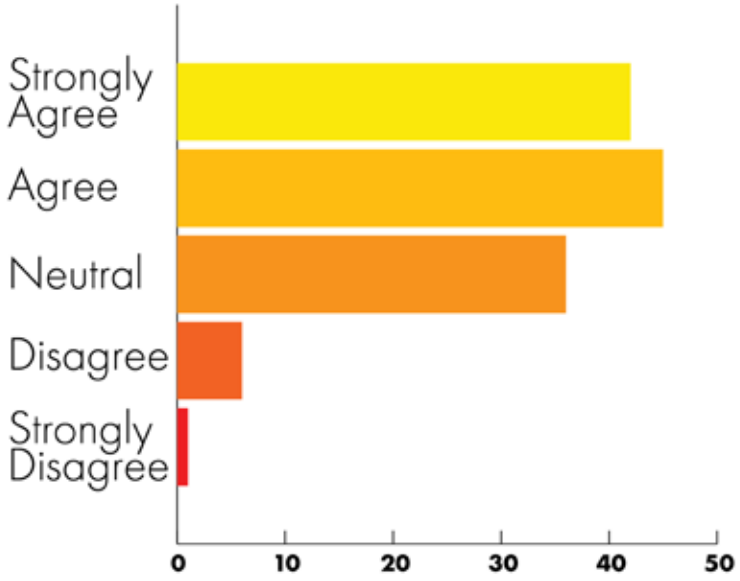
The majority of band members are in favor of developing more business parks. Many voiced a preference for businesses to be native-owned vs owned by an off-reservation entity.

The Reservation Should Develop More Retail Shops



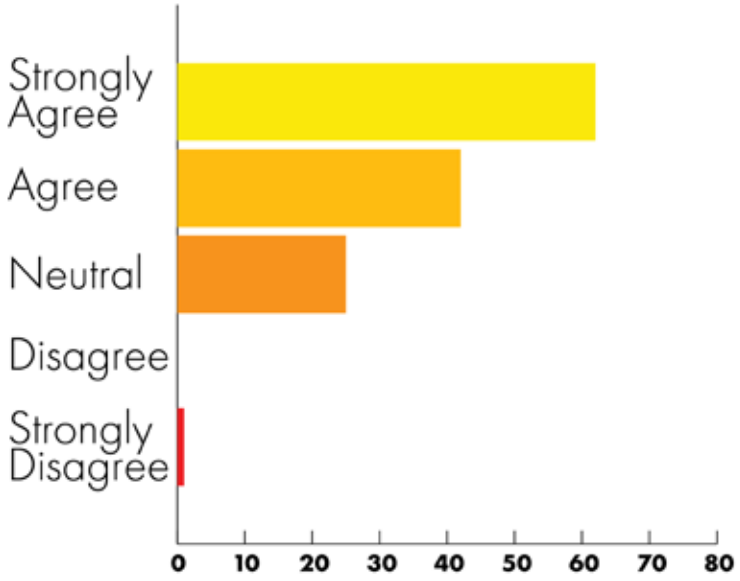
The majority of band members are in favor of developing more retail shops. There was a strong desire expressed in the comments to support native-owned businesses.

The Reservation Should Develop More Mixed-Use Areas



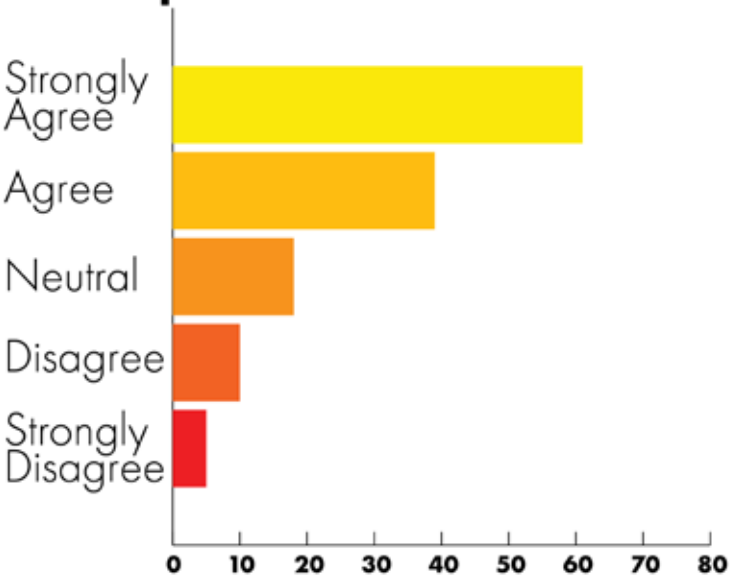
Again, exploring this type of development is broadly popular amongst band members.

Living Close To Where I Work Is Important To Me



The population on the reservation sees living in close proximity to their job to be especially important. This was one of the most agreed upon items surveyed.

The Reservation Should Identify Key Areas For Higher Density Development



Many expressed interest in seeing key areas increase in density while leaving larger tracts of land preserved as they are.

Summary of Community Thoughts On Land Use

The survey indicated that members of the Fond du Lac Band are willing and open to seeing new development take place on the reservation. Band members supported all the development types identified in the survey.

There is a strong desire to see new jobs on the reservation that are close to where people live. The Big Lake Road corridor and the area near Black Bear Casino were identified for the development of new business centers. Housing, jobs, and important services on the reservation should all be in close proximity to each other.

There was support for both developing higher density areas and maintaining the rural nature of the reservation. Providing the services residents want to see will take up land, but by focusing these development efforts in specific areas, the rural character which so many residents enjoy can be maintained for years to come.

Land Use & Development Pattern: Goals And Strategies

Overall Vision: Focused development within key areas creates a sustainable and healthy community, meets the needs of band members, and preserves the reservation's rural character.

- **Promote higher density development in core areas.**
  - Establish a "downtown" centered on the intersection of Big Lake and Brevator Road. Ensure it has essential services and quality indoor and outdoor spaces.
  - Designate a "downtown corridor" designation in the land use plan which allows for greater density development, with buildings allowed to extend to property line, minimal on-site parking requirements, and other traditional downtown qualities.
  - Focus on the Sawyer, Brookston, and Cloquet cores for the development of jobs and services geared towards community members. Surround employment areas with housing.
  - Utilize newly acquired land near Black Bear Casino and the I-35 corridor for businesses in which non-band members are the target customer base to bring in capital from outside the reservation.
  - Develop a highly walkable envrionment within core areas. Keep jobs close to housing. Provide appropriate transportation facilities to serve more local-level uses.
  - Create a master plan for each core area.

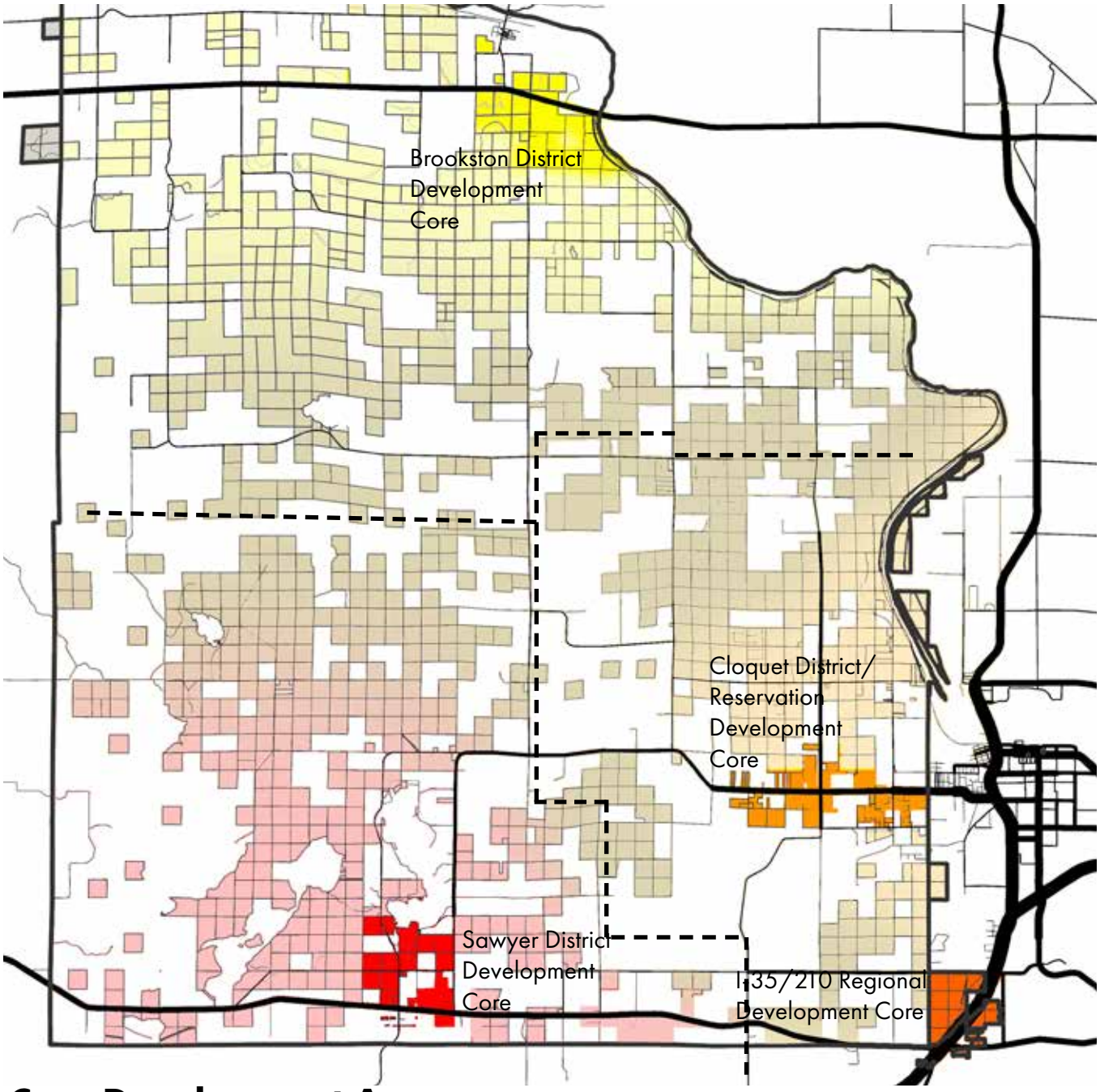
- **Promote preservation of rural character outside of core development areas.**
  - Limit development efforts outside of core development areas as specified on the Development Matrix.
  - Development efforts intended to serve populations living in rural areas will be built in the nearest core development area.
  - Ensure needs of residents living in service areas are met within nearest core area.
  - Keep development efforts in service areas focused on efforts that enhance the land (agriculture, forestry, recreation, preservation and protection).
  - Include an agriculture designation in the land use code and map.

- **Maintain character of land through development process.**
  - Focus on preserving natural features of site as much as possible during development.
  - Mandate funding for relevant site restoration as part of project budget. Development in wooded areas will include tree planting in budget, etc.

- **Continue to acquire land for development purposes.**
  - Create a framework for valuing land and real estate purchases outside reservation boundaries.
  - Continue the acquisition of lands within the reservation boundary, with an emphasis on lands near core development areas.

- **Work with other land owners within Reservation boundary (counties, cities, states,etc.) to ensure consistent land-uses.**

- **Ensure each parcel of tribally owned land is serving one of the goals outlined within this document.**



Core Development Areas

The above map denotes planned core development areas where development efforts will be targeted moving forward. District-level development cores (Sawyer and Brookston) will be geared towards providing neighborhood-level services. The Cloquet Reservation Development Core will provide both neighborhood and reservation-wide-level services. The I-35/210 Development Core will emphasize regional development uses geared towards bringing in capital from outside the reservation.

I-35/210 Development Core
Cloquet Development Core
Sawyer Development Core
Brookston Development Core

Land Use Determination

The following sequence of questions will be used to help determine the appropriate use for any given piece of land within the reservation. This will be used as a starting point, not a final decision maker.

Does the parcel contain protected cultural resources?

No — Yes → Preserve land under Cultural Preservation Designation.

↓

Is the parcel within a wetland or environmental buffer?

No — Yes → Preserve land under Cultural Preservation Designation.

↓

Does the land contain a designated agricultural soils area?

No — Yes → Develop the land for agricultural use.

↓

Is the parcel within a designated service area?

No — Yes →

↓

Is the parcel along a major traffic corridor?

No — Yes → Designate as mixed use.

↓

Is the parcel within a residential neighborhood?

No — Yes → Designate as residential.

↓

Does the parcel lack good access to a major highway?

No — Yes → Designate as residential.

↓

Is the parcel located a fair distance from housing?

No — Yes → Designate as light industrial.

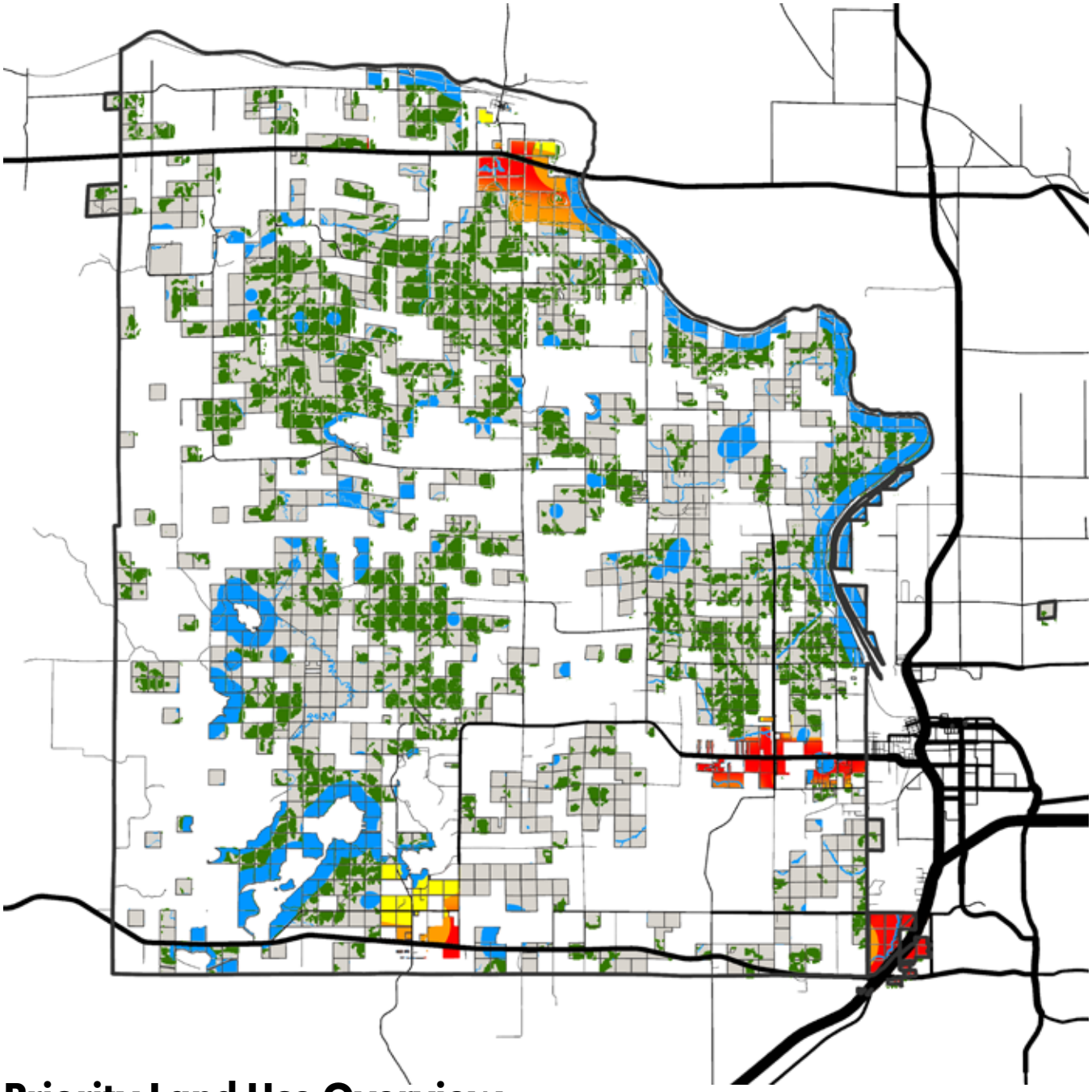
↓

Designate as commercial.

Is the parcel currently used for residential purposes?

No → Develop for forestry/recreation purposes.

Yes → Maintain current use.

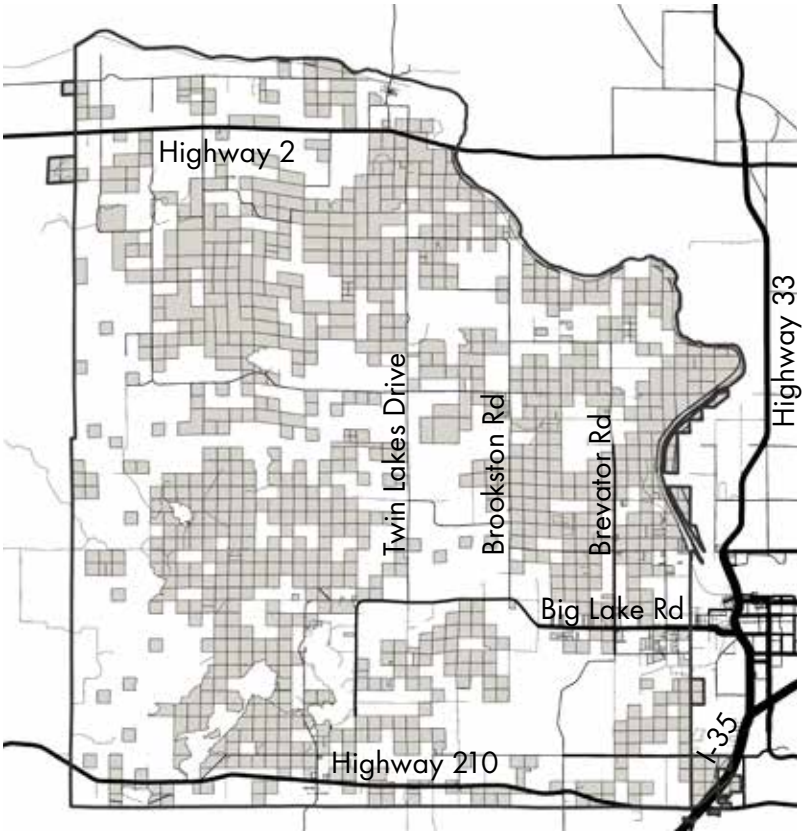


Priority Land Use Overview

This map acts as a synthesis of most of the other maps included within this document to provide a preliminary land use guide. This is not a final land use plan, but is instead a starting point for discussing future development opportunities and updating the current Fond du Lac Land Use Plan.

Commercial/Mixed Use
Higher Density Residential
Low Density Residential
Agriculture
Cultural Preservation/Recreation

Topic 4: Transportation & Infrastructure



Introduction

Now that the what and where have been addressed, transportation and infrastructure provide the answers to "how?". These important services act as the skeletal frame of any community. Poor infrastructure leads to diminished development prospects, good infrastructure leads to success.

One of the more challenging aspects of providing services on the reservation is its large geographic area relative to a low density of people. As compared to more densely developed areas there are comparatively few people benefiting from each mile of road, pipe and wire to offset the cost. Finding creative solutions to this in terms of transportation and utilities will be important in future growth of the reservation.

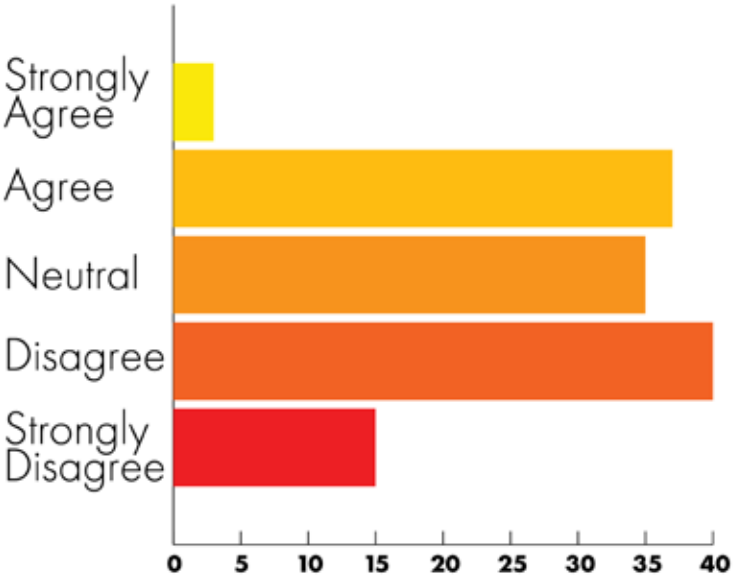
At present, the transportation and utilities grid on the reservation meets the needs of most but not all residents. However, this is already in the process of changing. As high-speed internet becomes available to all residents, and water treatment plans are being developed to deal with wastewater issues, the important legwork for successful development is underway.

Still, there is room for improvement. Future transportation plans will focus on making stronger connections between the reservation's core development areas for all modes of transportation. As many struggle to afford owning vehicles, exploring alternatives to traditional automobile-based transportation systems will be encouraged through developing a strong network of bike trails, including walking infrastructure in new projects, and creating fast and efficient transit and ridesharing networks.

Community Thoughts

What People Said About Infrastructure

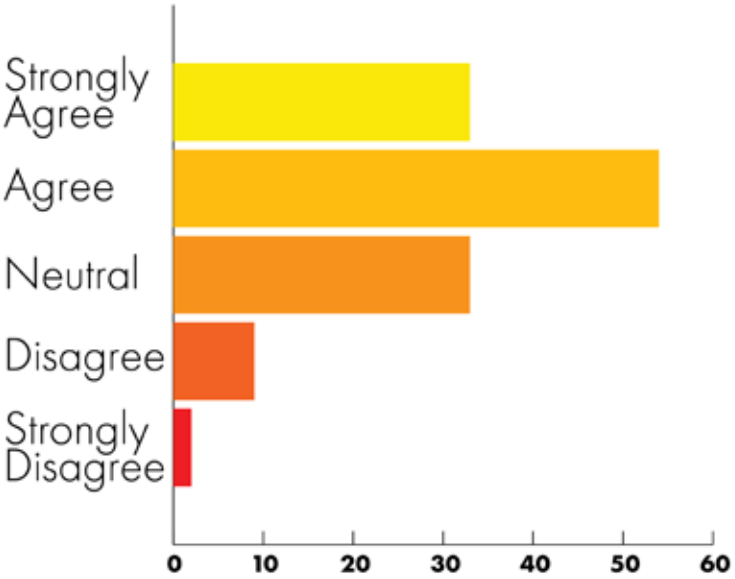
The Quality of Roadways on The Reservation are Adequate



Interpretation

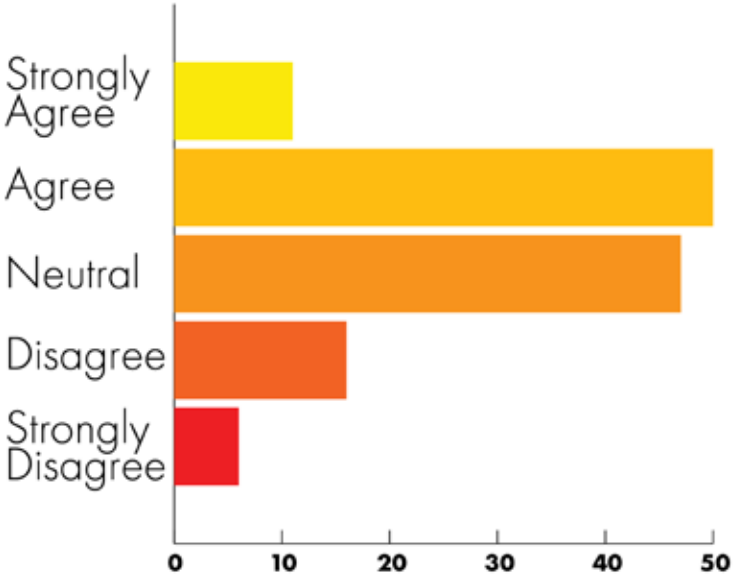
Impressions lean towards an unfavorable opinion of existing roads on the reservation. Many expressed a desire to see the maintenance of existing roads prioritized over building new ones.

The Band Should Focus More On Biking/Walking Infrastructure



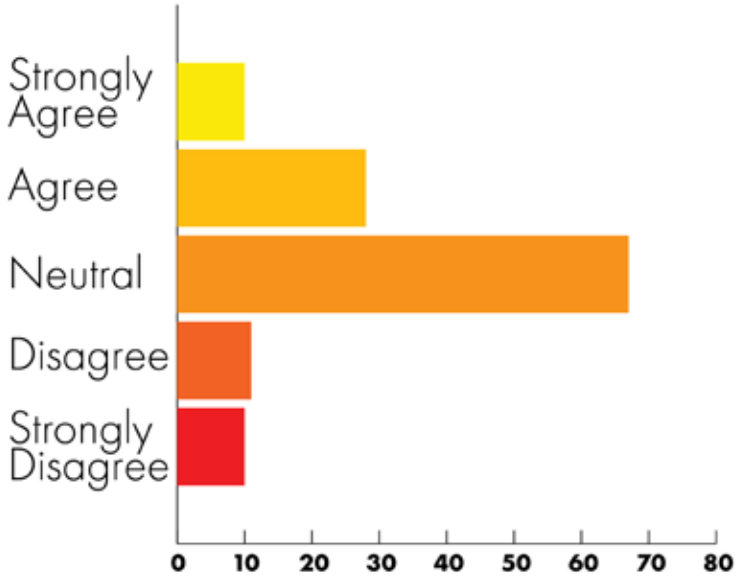
Many members are interested in seeing more focus placed on biking/walking infrastructure through redesigning existing streets and creating new trails.

The Utilities the Band Provides are Dependable and Serve My Needs



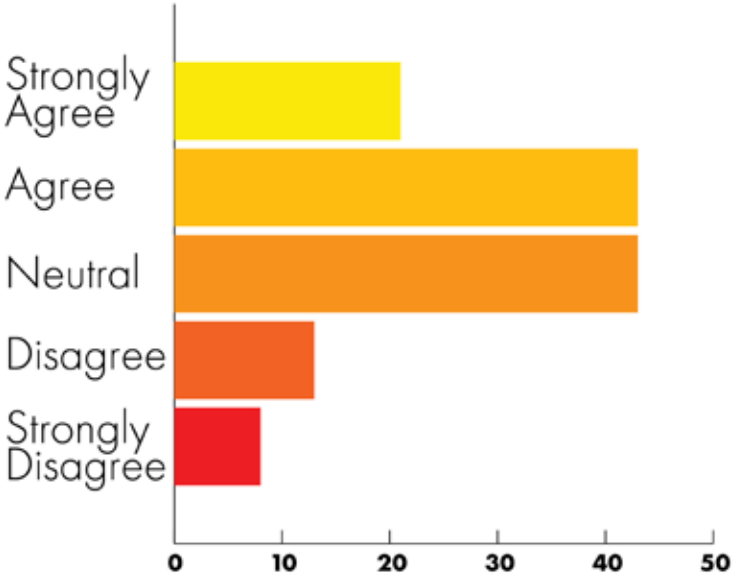
This is generally agreed upon, though there is still opportunity to expand coverage and quality of various utilities on the reservation.

I Am Happy With The Quality of Fond du Lac Transit



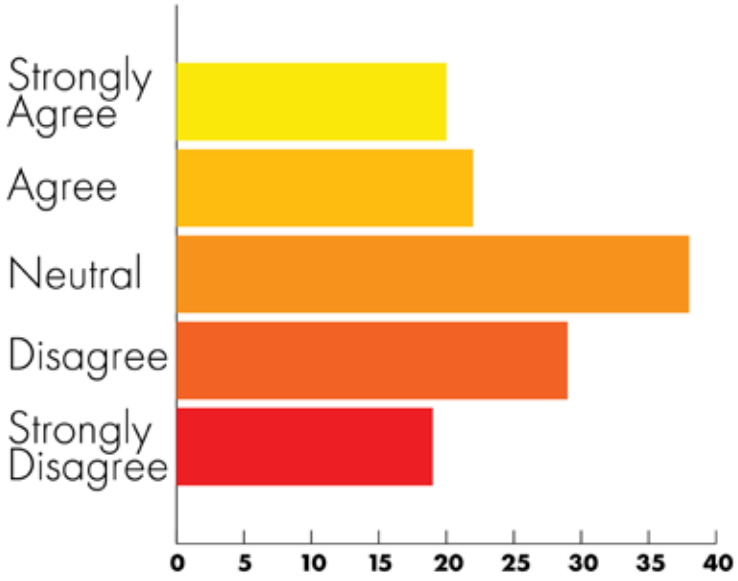
Very few had strong opinions on this topic, which may indicate that transit isn't being used by many individuals. Comments revealed a recurring issue with transit capacity being too low for demand.

I Would Be Interested In Having An Uber/Lyft-Type Service On The Reservation



Many trip types made by residents would be better-served by a taxi/rideshare service.

I Struggle To Afford Owning A Vehicle



Many on the reservation struggle to afford a vehicle, though not enough to warrant significant disinvestment in street infrastructure.

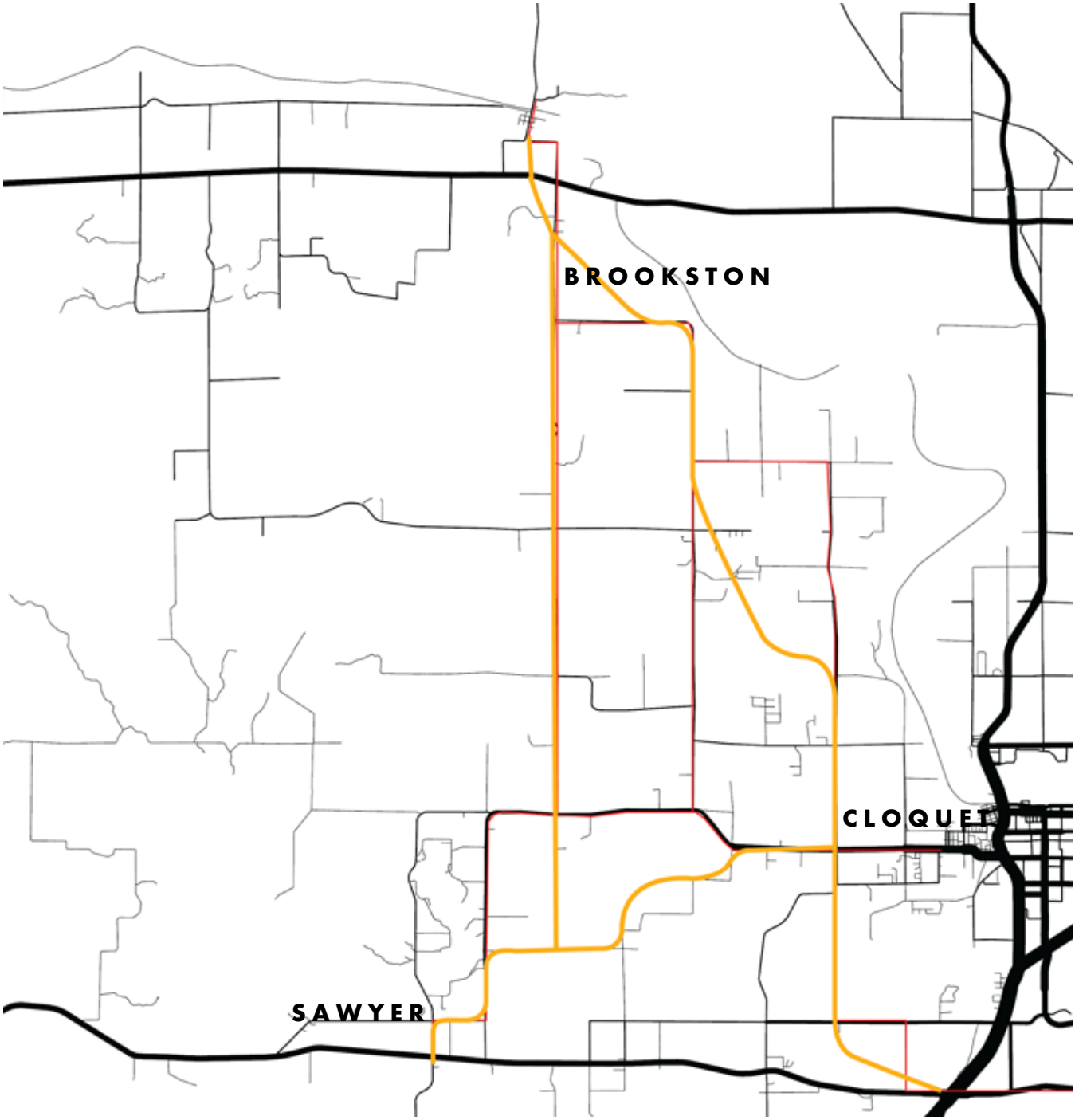
Summary of Community Thoughts On Transportation & Infrastructure

At present, the top priorities for individuals in relation to transportation deal with exploring and expanding opportunities for getting around without a vehicle.

From a roadway perspective, many are dissatisfied with the quality of roadways on the reservation and wish to see improvements made. The costs associated with roadway maintenance should be recognized when considering expansions to the roadway network on the reservation.

Current utility services were seen in a favorable light, with few major issues to address. As services continue to expand, it will be important to ensure this is done in a cost-effective manner.

Lastly, people are very interested in seeing new options for non-vehicular transportation. This includes the creation of new trails, building a more efficient transit system, and the development of more walkable environments.



Missing Links

Taking a phased approach, the reservation will work to create more direct connections between core areas on the reservation. These new connections will be multi-modal (including infrastructure for vehicles, bikes, walking, etc.). The Tribal Government Center is at the hub of this system. Bike facilities will be implemented along key corridors, such as Big Lake Road, Brevator Road, Twin Lakes Drive, and others.

Potential Direct Connection Route
Proposed Bike Facility

Transportation & Infrastructure: Goals And Strategies

Overall Vision: The Fond du Lac Reservation is better-connected through an expanded variety of transportation and infrastructure initiatives.

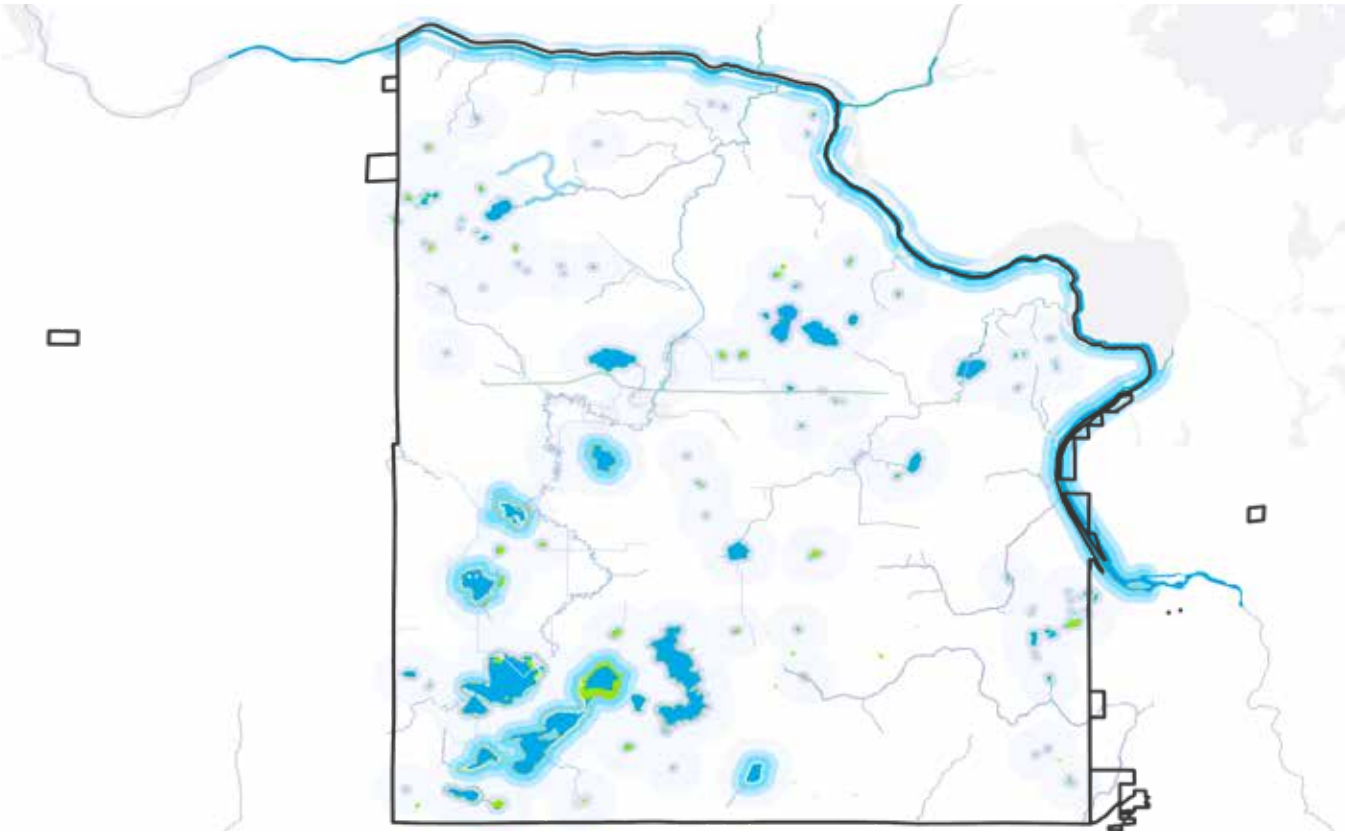
- **Prioritize maintenance of existing roadways over expansion of road network.**
  - Inventory existing roadways and trails, documenting their current condition. Use this to determine a transportation maintenance schedule.
  - Work with Carlton County to obtain more control over reservation road network.
  - Utilize TERO to create funds for maintaining roads damaged by heavy construction projects.

- **Emphasize the development of non-vehicular transportation infrastructure.**
  - Include multiple modes of transportation in planning processes moving forward. Include sidewalks and bike racks in new construction projects.
  - Designate trails as transportation-oriented or recreation-oriented and fund them as such.

- **Create direct connections between population centers.**
  - Designate/implement direct routes between population cores (Brookston and Sawyer, Brookston and Cloquet, Cloquet and Sawyer, Cloquet and the Highway 210/I-35 interchange) and prioritize their maintenance.
  - Establish the Tribal Government Center as the central hub of this system.

- **Redesign major corridors to be more setting-appropriate.**
  - Work with Carlton County to redesign Big Lake Road from the reservation entrance to the Tribal Government Center to include sidewalks, lighting, landscaping, and other elements to enhance development of "main street".
  - Work with MnDOT to establish secure pedestrian/bike crossing points along Highway 210 in Sawyer and along Highway 2 in Brookston.
- **Make the reservation less reliant on vehicle ownership.**
  - Establish more consistency within the Fond du Lac transit system.
  - Explore creating a taxi/ride hailing service
  - Continue to develop a transportation-oriented trail network.
  - Connect reservation bike trails to the regional trail system via the Munger Trail.
  - Encourage residential and commercial development in close proximity to each other.
- **Develop essential utilities in a cost-efficient manner.**
  - Continue the expansion and development of the Aaniin fiber-optic network.
  - Implement a wastewater treatment plan for the Big Lake Sanitary District and any other areas which are struggling with wastewater systems.
  - Provide vital drinking water and wastewater infrastructure services to current communities as well as plan for future infrastructure outlay in coordination with Band growth and agency funding, ensuring public health and safety as the Band continues to diversify and grow.
- **Promote safety through quality and complete transportation design.**
  - Creating high quality trails and streets will make more people use them, and having more people around will improve sense of safety along these routes.
  - Utilize smart infrastructure (lights, signals, bollards, etc.) to create greater sense of safety within physical environment.

Topic 5: Natural Resources & Environment



Hydrological features and associated development buffers.

Introduction

The Fond du Lac people desire reinforced connections with the land upon which they live their lives. By preserving the pristine lands of the reservation and creating a new system of parks and trails, the Band can improve the quality of both their environment and the lives of its residents.

At present, residents enjoy the scenic vistas of the rural countryside on the Fond du Lac Reservation. The abundant lakes, rivers, and streams on the reservation provide opportunity for cultural preservation and recreation.

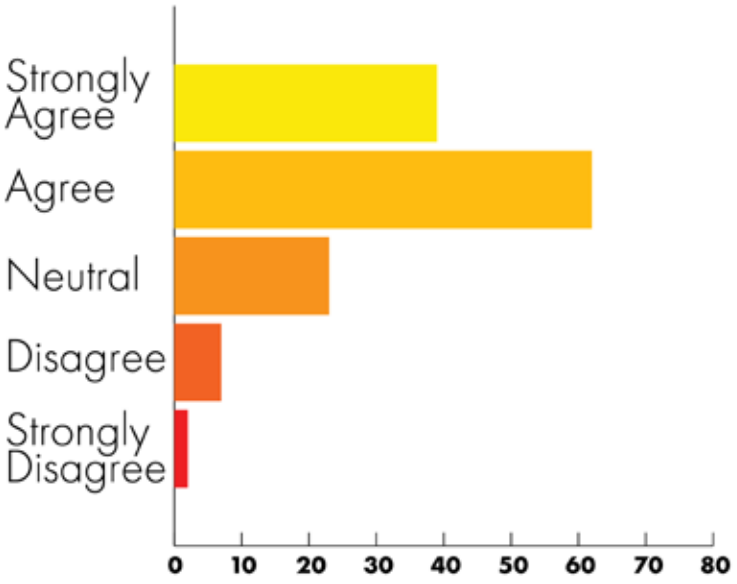
Expanding access to the abundant natural beauty on the reservation is encouraged in areas that are not in need of strict environmental protections. Park spaces will be within walking distance of everyone living in core development areas, and within close proximity to those who are not.

Productive lands will be managed for sustainable and regenerative industries such as forestry and agriculture. If done sustainably, these fields can both improve the environment and provide quality jobs to people.

Community Thoughts

What People Said About Natural Resources & Environment

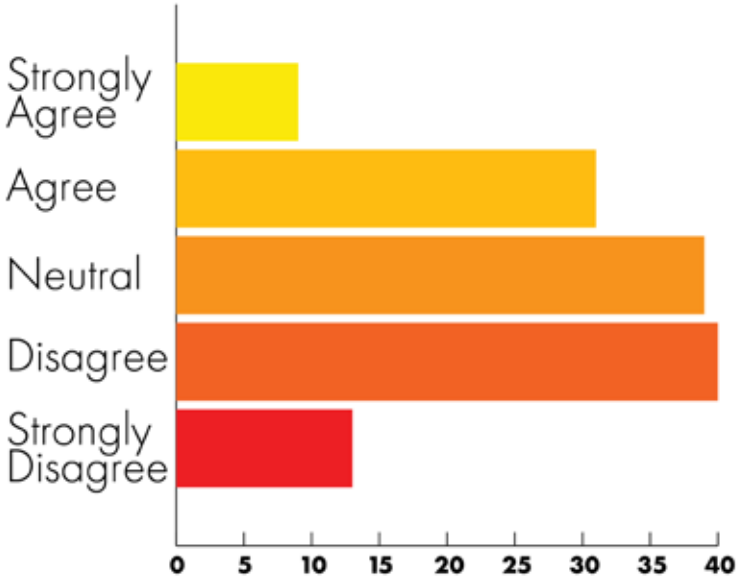
The Band Does A Great Job At Protecting Its Natural Resources



Interpretation

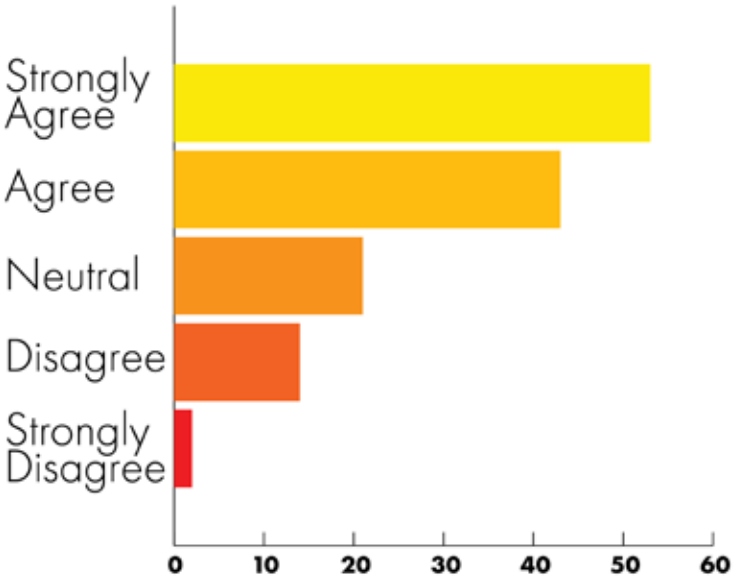
Comments indicated a strong love of the land and natural resources available on the reservation. The majority voiced strong support for the preservation of these resources, especially more pristine and undisturbed areas. This indicates that the majority of members are satisfied with how the band has protected these resources.

There Is An Adequate Range of Recreation Opportunities on The Reservation



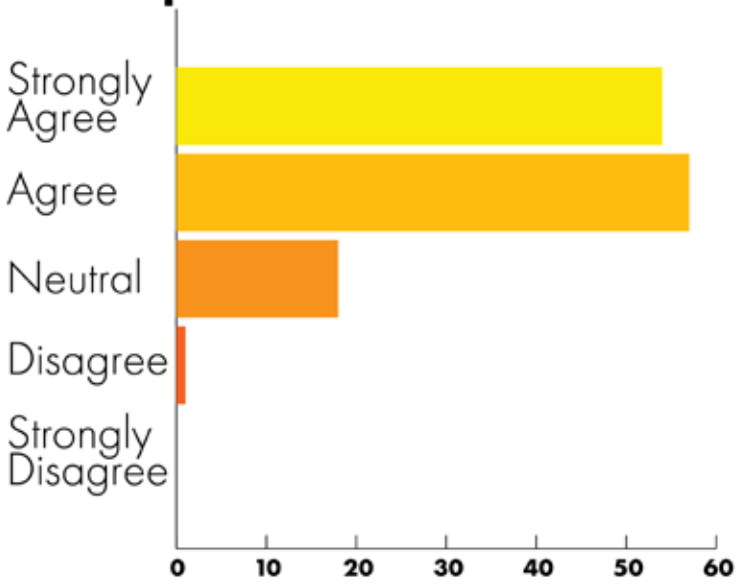
There is a mixed opinion on the amount of recreation opportunities available at present, with more people favoring the development of more opportunities.

Band Members Value A Healthy And Clean Environment



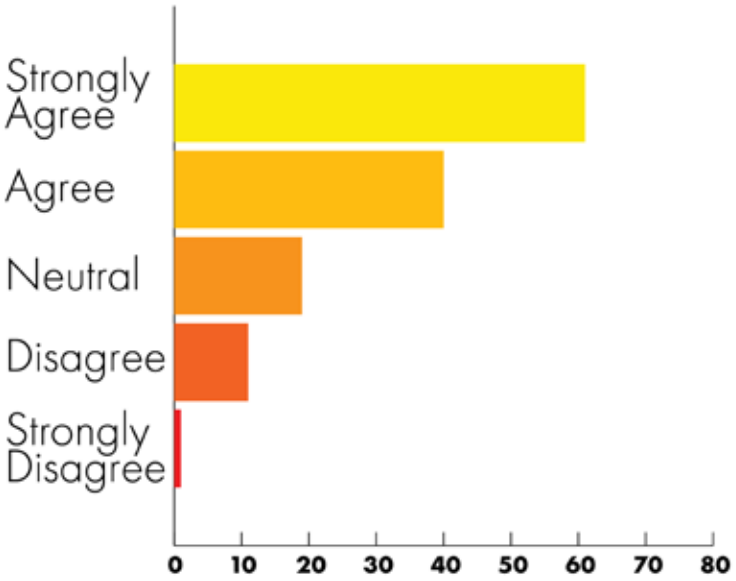
Band members are supportive of and are willing to work to maintain a healthy and clean environment. Many expressed a growing concern over litter along highways and in residential areas.

There Should Be Sustainability Requirements For New Development on The Reservation



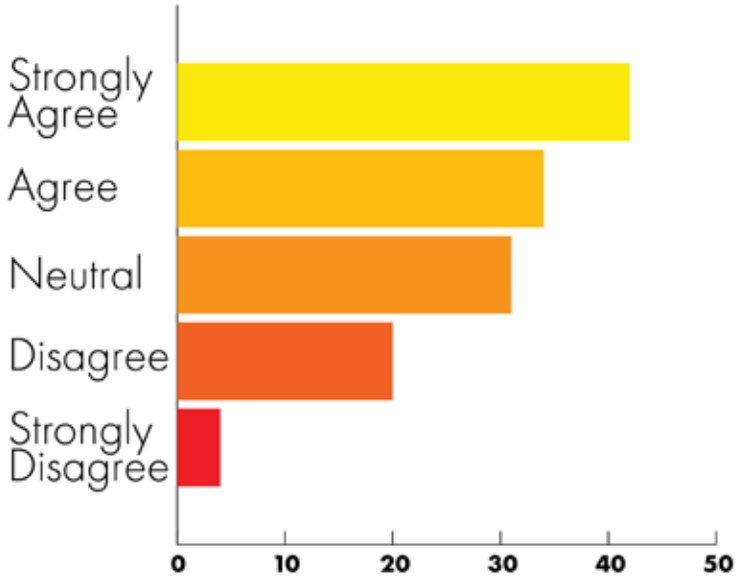
Creating a set of sustainability requirements for new construction projects on the reservation is widely favorable.

The Band Should Explore Creating New Bike Trails



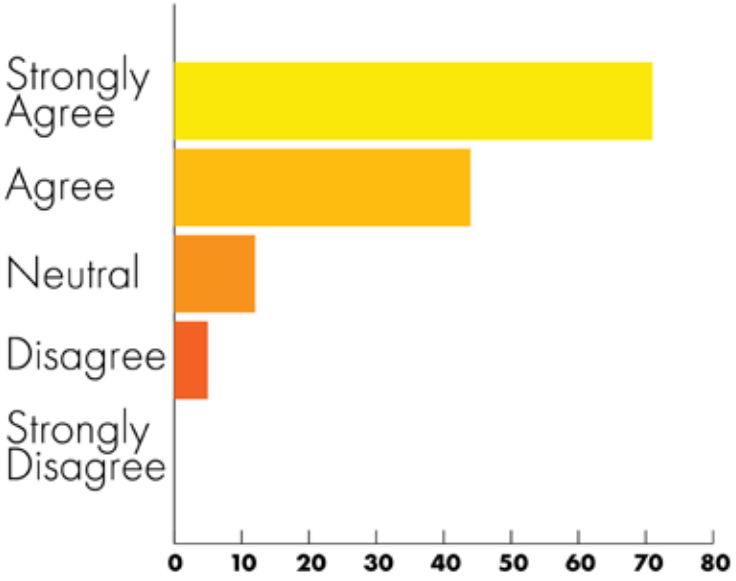
Looking at specific types of recreation opportunities, there is strong support for expanding the reservations system of bike trails.

The Band Should Explore Creating New ATV/OHV Trails



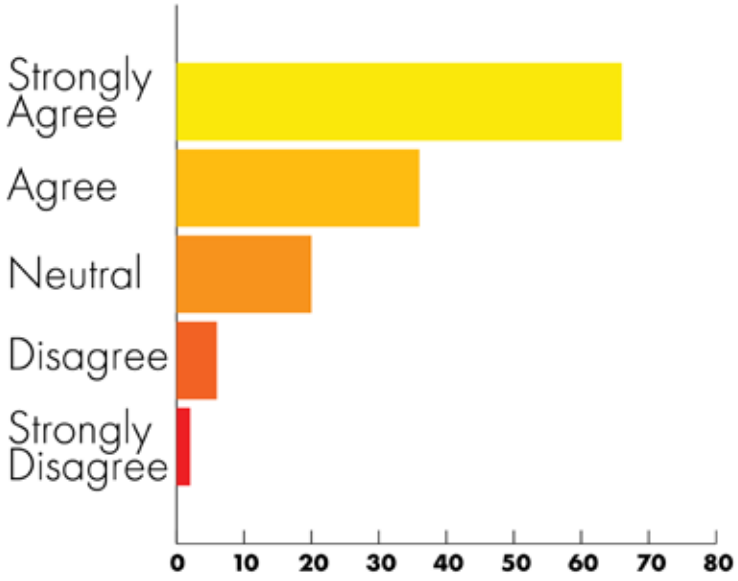
While still generally favorable, many expressed a level of concern over ATV use and associated noise/environmental damage.

The Band Should Explore Creating New Hiking Trails



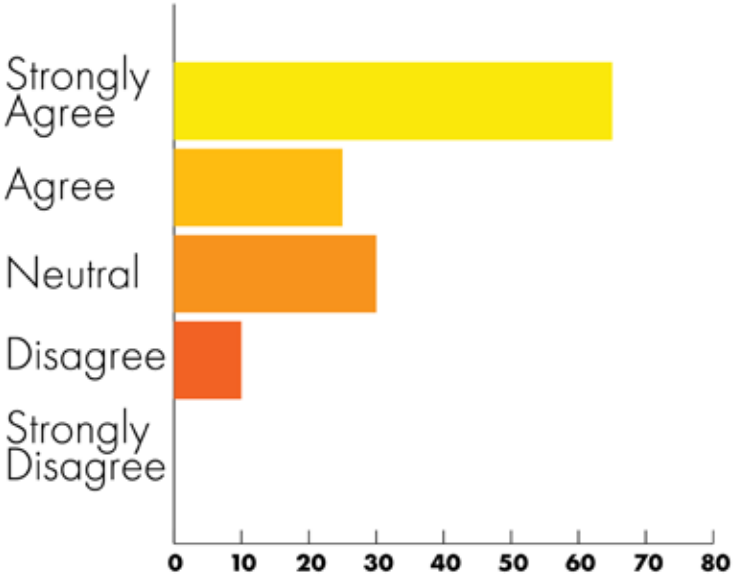
Creating new hiking trails on the reservation is broadly popular. Members expressed needing to visit places outside of the reservation when looking to go hiking.

The Band Should Explore Creating New Public Parks



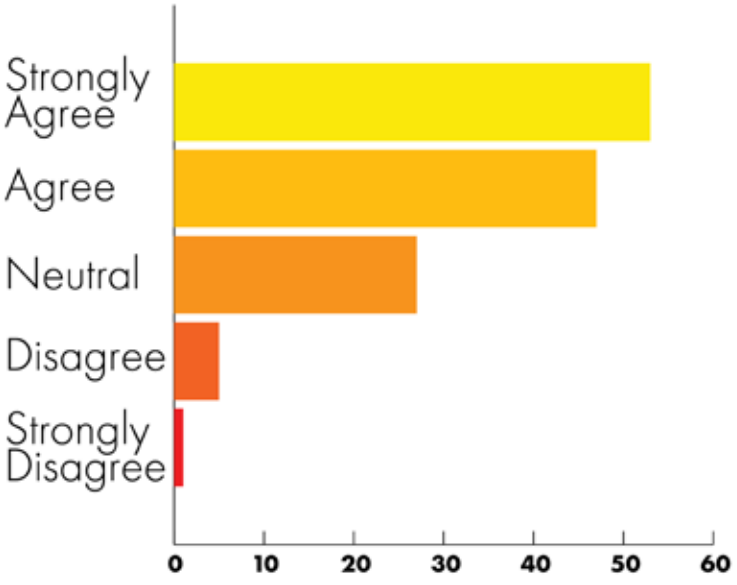
Promoting access to the outdoors through new parks is widely supported.

The Band Should Explore Creating New Sports Facilities



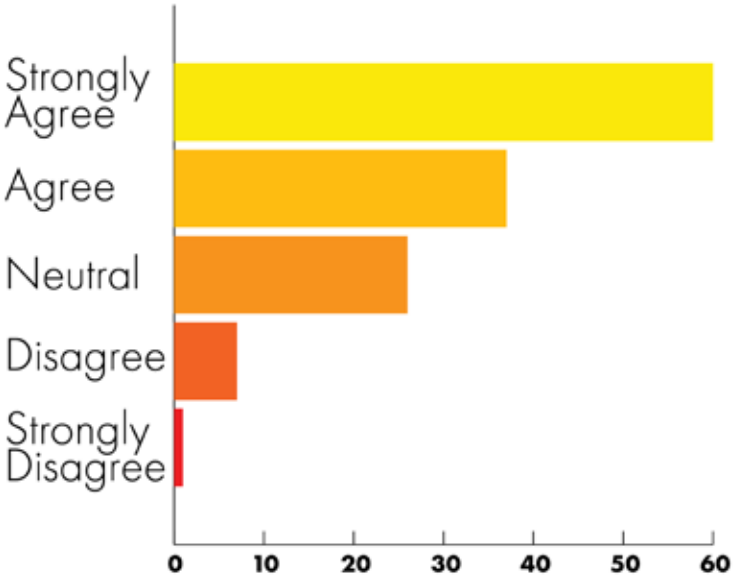
The creation of new sports facilities is widely supported, though many expressed interest in seeing more diversity in the types of sporting facilities available.

The Band Should Explore Creating New Skiing and Winter Trails



Creating opportunities for continued outdoor recreation during the winter months is generally favorable.

The Band Should Explore Creating New Aquatic Recreation Facilities



Creating new aquatic recreation opportunities is broadly favorable.

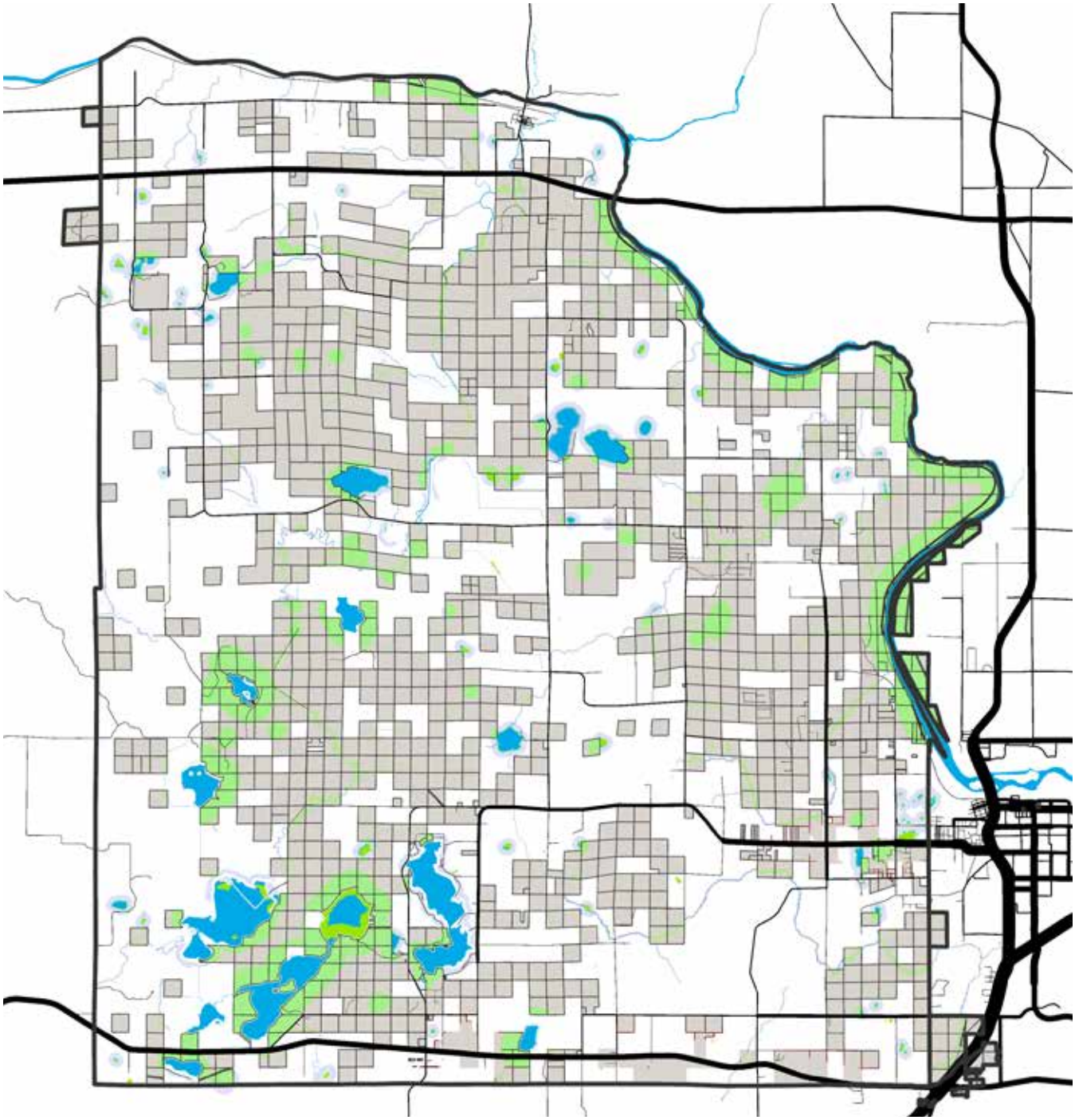
Summary of Community Thoughts On Natural Resources & Environment

Residents expressed a deep care for their environment and a desire to have reservation land held to a high standard of stewardship. Issues related to littering were seen as one of the most pressing environmental protection threats.

In addition to sustaining the land, many mentioned the importance of maintaining existing park and trail facilities. While expanding this system is important, ensuring existing facilities are well maintained and programmed is equally so.

Creating new parks was widely supported. Residents expressed a desire to see more actively programmed parks (with playgrounds, sports facilities, etc.) as well as more passive parks (land with hiking/biking trails and preservation components). These parks should include programming for winter recreation as well (skiing, hockey, skating, etc.)

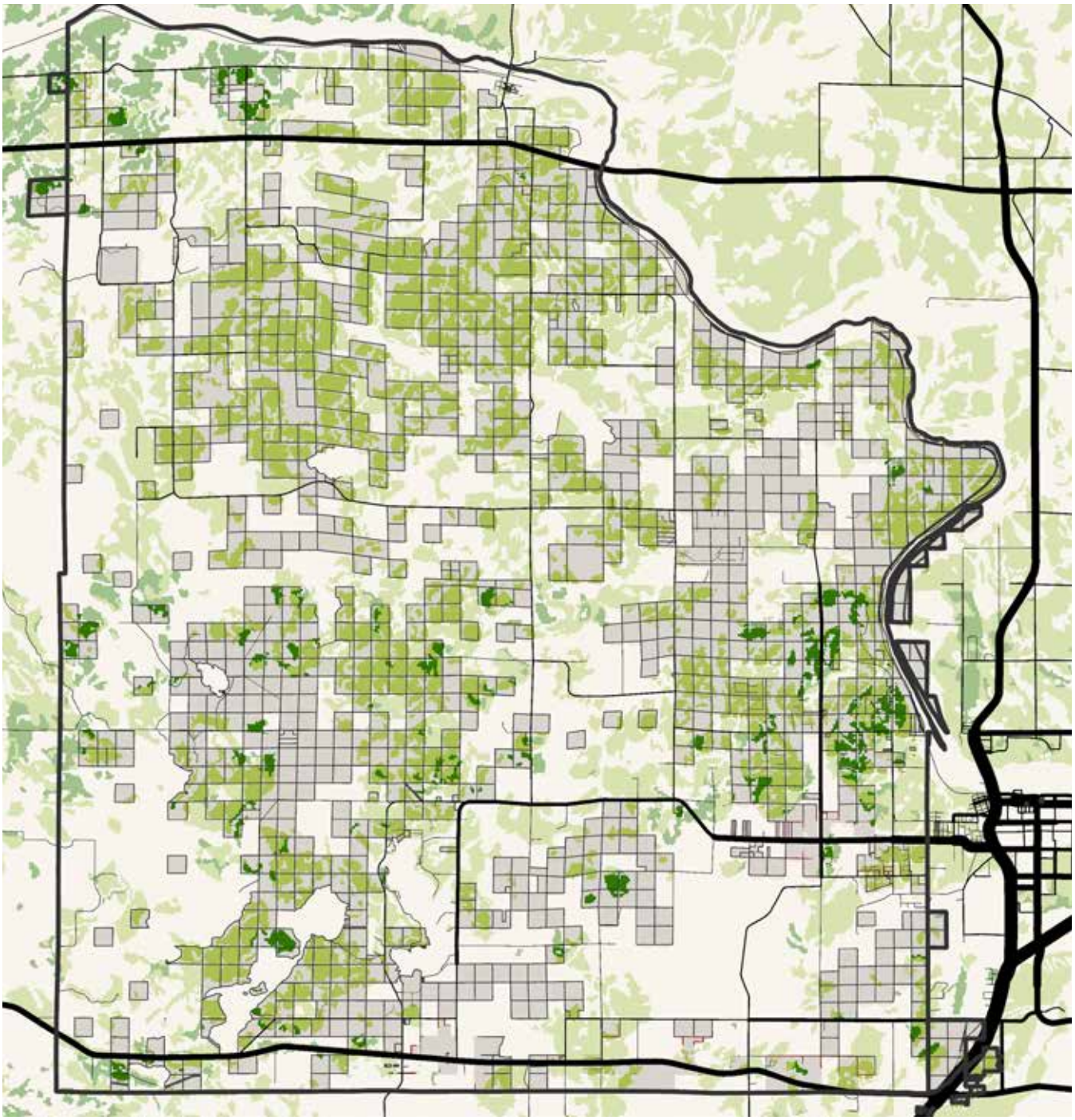
New parks will be located close to places where residents live and, to the degree possible, be connected through a system of new and existing trails. New parks and trails would benefit from improving connectivity to the water bodies on the reservation, and should include opportunities for aquatic recreation when applicable.



Potential Parks and Trails

Ideal Land for Parks/Recreation
Water Feature
Other Fond du Lac Lands

The areas noted in green are currently within water protection buffers and are prohibited from intense forms of development. These areas are typically well preserved and are near water features, making them ideal for creating parks and trails.



Agricultural Lands

Highly Productive Soils (FDL)
Nearly Highly Productive Soils (FDL)
Highly Productive Soils (Non-FDL)
Nearly Highly Productive Soils (Non-FDL)

This map indicates areas in which productive agricultural soils have been observed. Darker green areas are highly productive, while light green are nearly highly productive. Compared to the surrounding area, the Fond du Lac Reservation contains an abundance of fertile soils which will be utilized in the Band's food sovereignty and economic development initiatives.

Natural Resources & Environment: Goals And Strategies

Overall Vision: The Fond du Lac Band's relationship with the land within the reservation goes two ways: We take care of our land and our land will take care of us.

- **Encourage environmental stewardship, appreciation, and preservation.**
  - As one of the most cherished features on the reservation water resources will be preserved at a high level of quantity and quality.
  - Use existing and new parks to provide enhanced access to major water features.
  - Promote a land stewards program aimed at beautification of the reservation through gardening, maintenance, and trash cleanup.
  - Start a recycling/composting program.

- **Create more opportunities for outdoor recreation.**
  - Establish a Parks and Recreation Division.
  - Create opportunities for river recreation along the Saint Louis River north of Brookston.
  - Work with Carlton County to create a trail connection to the Willard Munger Trail.
  - Create a network of hiking trails in the areas surrounding the lakes northwest of Sawyer.
  - Establish community gardens in Sawyer, Brookston, and Cloquet.
  - Look into creating a trail/recreation pass that can contribute to parks and trails maintenance. Offer discounted rate for locals.

- **Emphasize sustainability and outdoor preservation in new development.**
  - Develop a list of sustainability guidelines which can be realistically achieved for new buildings.
  - Encourage development of site standards which maintain wooded feel of reservation even within core development areas.

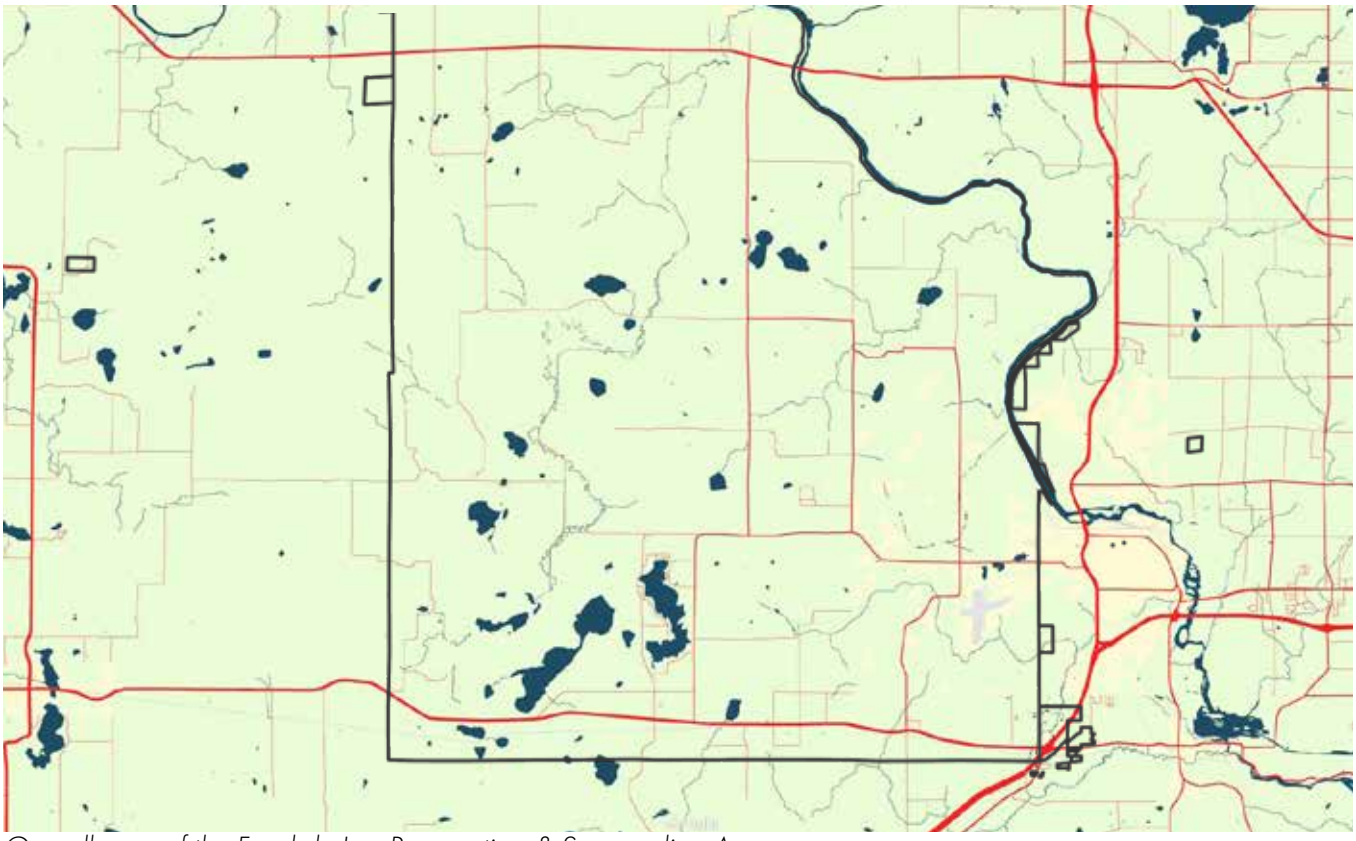
- **Encourage sustainable agriculture practices.**
  - Establish the Fond du Lac Reservation as a shining example of sustainable agriculture techniques for northern climates.
  - Encourage agriculture as a means of promoting self-sufficiency and empowerment.
  - Lease lands in service areas to agricultural entrepreneurs.
  - Create a new branch of Gitigaaning aimed at providing native landscaping plants to be used in Fond du Lac construction projects.
  - Utilize food crop and medicinal plant growing to build greater food security and sovereignty.

- **Encourage sustainable forestry practices.**
  - Actively manage non-preserved forests for economic and fire safety purposes.
  - Foster development of food forests in tandem with sustainable agriculture practices.
  - Develop gathering sites for berries, nuts, and other significant woodland species.

- **Sustain culturally significant species.**
  - Create a preservation plan for culturally significant species found on the reservation.
  - Establish one or more sanctuaries on the reservation to protect and promote culturally significant species and ecologies.
  - Work with the Fond du Lac Natural Resources to develop a list of significant plants and animals to be protected. Locate where these species exist on the reservation and have this information available.

- **Utilize products which can be produced on the reservation in new construction projects.**
  - Work with Fond du Lac construction managers to determine commonly used products in new tribal construction projects.
  - Determine which products could be produced on the reservation and explore establishing businesses to fill this need.

Topic 6:
Quality of Life



Overall map of the Fond du Lac Reservation & Surrounding Areas

Introduction

The Quality of Life topic covers a wide range of topics including cultural activities, health, and education. While it could be argued that all the topics within this document have the potential to improve one's quality of life, the items outlined in this section work on a more personal level.

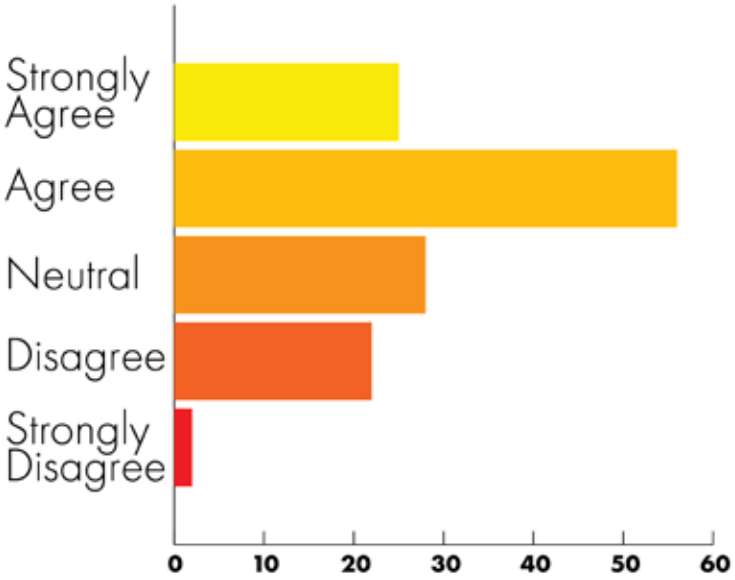
The overarching goal is to foster a sense of pride among members of the Fond du Lac Band. Pride in their culture, their reservation, and themselves. This will be accomplished through quality education, health services, safety, and cultural resources.

This section also addresses the development of a distinct aesthetic for the reservation to ensure individuals recognize when they are on tribal lands. This will be an ongoing effort which will involve the community, especially its artists.

Community Thoughts

What People Said About Quality of Life

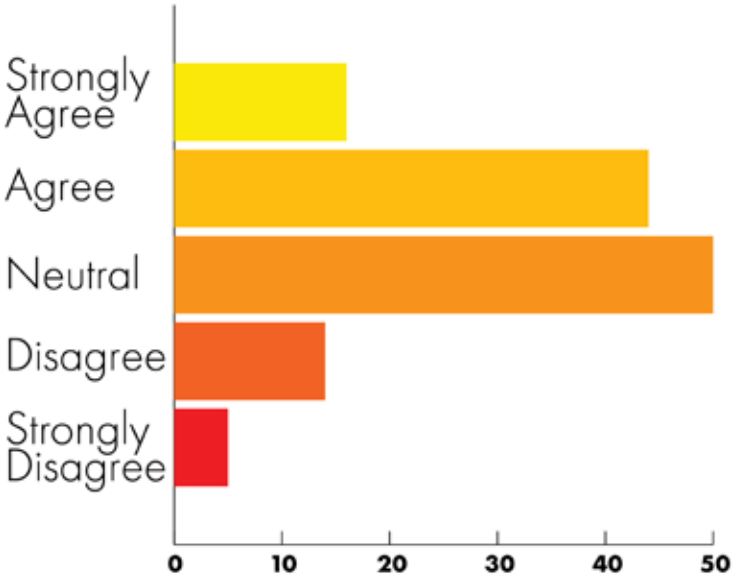
It Is Obvious When You Are Entering The Reservation



Interpretation

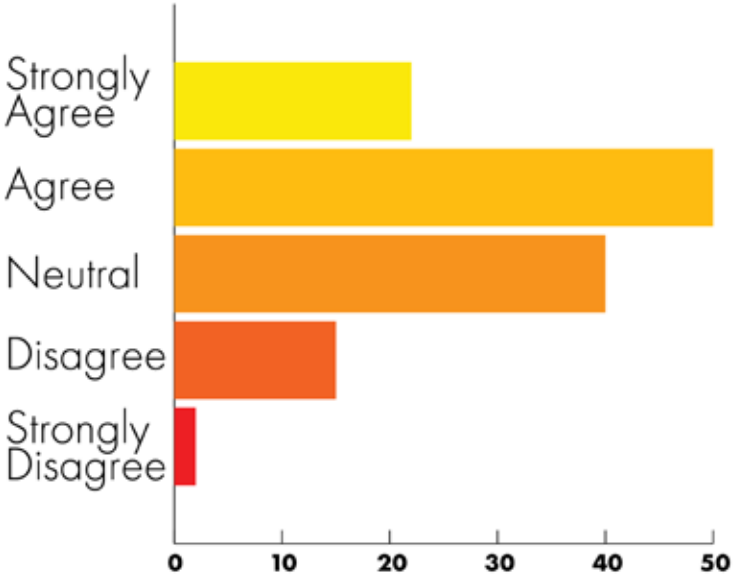
People have mixed but generally favorable opinions related to the reservation having a distinct sense of place from surrounding areas.

I Feel Safe Living On The Reservation



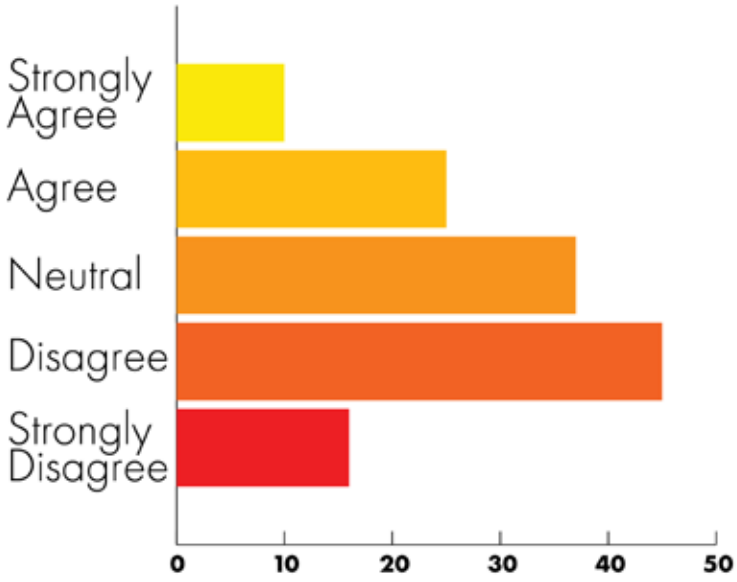
There is a large number of people who express a neutral attitude towards their level of safety, though more people feel safe than those who do not. Ideally, all people would agree with this statement. Many express concern over drug use on the reservation.

People Are Proud To Live On The Reservation



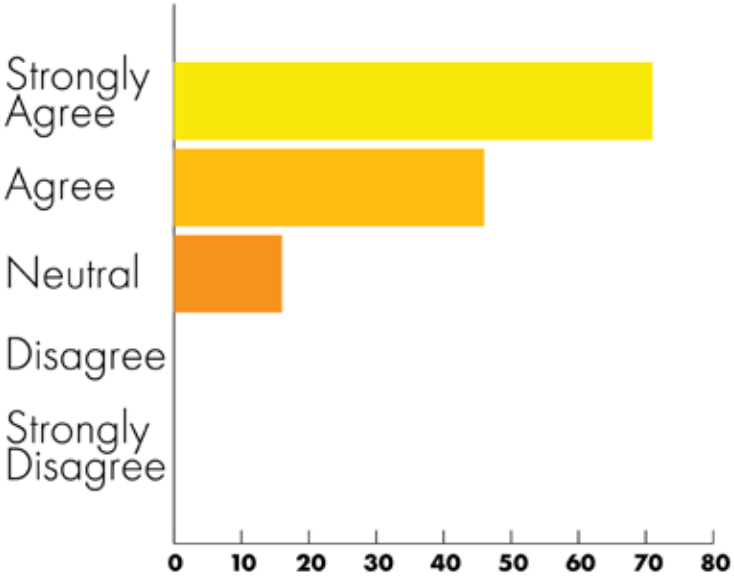
There is a strong sense of pride amongst people living on the reservation. This can be enhanced through increased opportunities for residents to learn about and engage with their culture.

The Fond du Lac Education System Meets The Needs Of Its Residents



There is room for improvement in the Fond du Lac education system. In addition to improving traditional K-12 education, there is a desire to see more cultural teaching in schools and more opportunities for learning as an adult.

The Band Should Promote Access To Locally Grown and Harvested Foods



One of the most widely supported topics, residents view food production and sovereignty as key to promoting public health and cultural understanding.

Summary of Community Thoughts On Quality Of Life

Much of what is considered quality of life issues and opportunties stem from a desire by people to reconnect to traditional foods, use cultural medicines, host more gatherings, and expand access to cultural education. Band members want more opportunities to connect with their culture and their community.

The Band has done a good job of using Ojibwe language to strengthen cultural identity and promote a stronger sense of sovereignty. This can be further enhanced, as there are still many who find the boundaries of the reservation to be somewhat blurred, depending on the point of entry.

Many residents report improved feelings of safety, though this isn't the case for everyone. Many issues of concern stem from drug and alcohol use. The Band has already done a great job creating treatment facilities and paths to sober living, but should also focus on treating the issues which lead to the abuse in the first place. By investing in more community-building events and places, the Band can begin to help individuals who feel isolated regain a sense of community.

This sense of community can be further strengthened for residents by incorporating more cultural education opportunities into traditional education pathways. There was a strong desire to see more community programming and events that can appeal to the population of the reservation at-large, providing opportunities for people to come together around common interests. The Band should invest in creating the spaces required to accommodate desired activities.

Lastly, a healthy community requires healthy food. Expanding both production and access to locally grown foods will help create healthy people and environments.

Quality of Life: Goals And Strategies

Overall Vision: The Fond du Lac Band grows stronger as a community and healthier as individuals by fully embracing its culture.

- **Promote Anishinaabe culture in the aesthetic of reservation facilities.**
  - Commission local Ojibwe artists to work with the community to create new welcome signage at the reservation's most used entry points (Big Lake Road, Highway 2, Highway 210).
  - Encourage the use of artists and cultural experts in the design of culturally significant buildings.

- **Increase education on Anishinaabe culture amongst residents.**
  - Provide assistance and resources to individuals interested in exploring and documenting the history of the Fond du Lac Reservation and the Anishinaabe people at large.
  - Circulate materials on cultural history to band members.
  - Host monthly events focusing on specific cultural topics.
  - Coordinate broader public learning events with Ojibwe School and Fond du Lac Tribal College curriculum.

- **Increase education on Anishinaabe culture amongst the general public.**
  - Increase the availability of accurate Anishinaabe history to non-native populations.
  - Work with non-Fond du Lac schools and museums to develop resources for teaching Anishinaabe history in the words of its people.

- **Create more places which can host community events and cultural celebrations.**
  - Create a larger pow-wow facility near the Cloquet core development area.
  - Create spaces for cultural ceremony and celebration in Sawyer and Brookston.
  - Create a funeral home on the reservation.

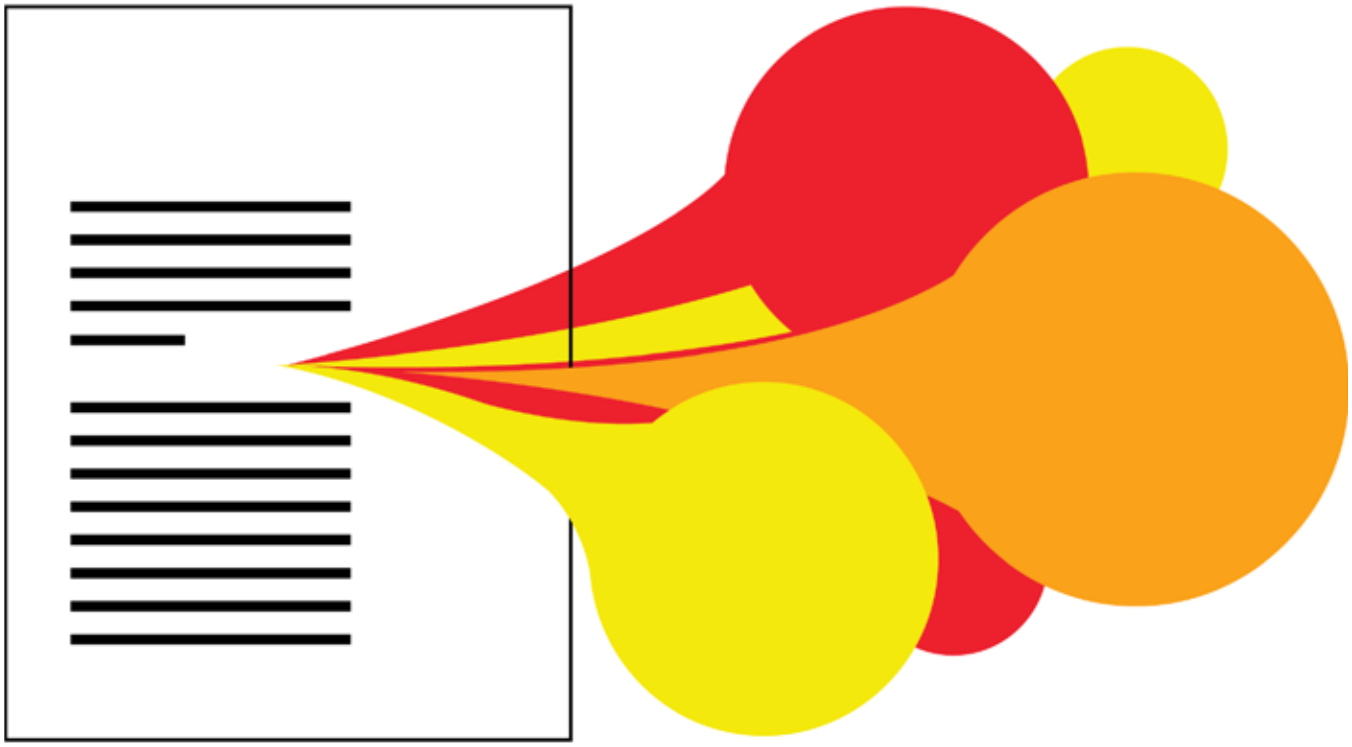
- **Utilize nature to teach about our culture.**
  - Establish community gardens in Sawyer, Cloquet, and Brookston.
  - Incorporate food production into public spaces where relevant (agriscaping).
  - Create a park dedicated to showcasing native plants and providing information on how they have been traditionally used by the Ojibwe people.

- **Improve and expand access to traditional education opportunities.**
  - Provide ongoing adult learning opportunities aimed at teaching traditional skills and knowledge. Use various tools including surveys to determine programming desired by the public.
  - Work with regional education centers to develop relevant educational programming on the reservation. (Forestry, sustainable agriculture, cultural studies, etc.)

- **Improve sense of saftey among reservation residents.**
  - Establish a fire department on the reservation.
  - Establish an Band-owned security services provider.
  - Look into anonymous gun and drug drop-off programs to keep illicit items out of communities.
  - Continue to expand awareness of and access to treatment facilities for drug and alcohol abuse.
  - Establish appropriate street lighting in core development areas.
  - Provide comprehensive mental health programs which offer trauma-informed therapy courses, intergenerational healing programs, and creative outlets for expressing pain and healing.
  - Offer courses which encourage self-confidence and acceptance.
  - Continue to address the systemic issues which lead to drug and alcohol abuse (lifting people out of poverty, encouraging community building, etc.)

- **Continue to explore methods of engaging youth and ensuring they feel valued as members of the community.**
  - Develop programs which actively reach out to youth as opposed to programs which expect youth to reach out to them.
  - Ensure youth members are included in community activites by programming elements which are of interest to them.
  - Begin skills development programs at younger ages.
  - Create more programs which keep youth connected with elder generations.
  - Update "My Brother's Keeper" plan to help keep at-risk youth out of trouble.

Plan Implementation



Implementation Strategies

This document presents the community's assessment of its current status and sets forth goals for its future. The following identifies basic actions for realizing these goals upon the plan's formal adoption by the Reservation Business Committee (Tribal Council).

Governance

This plan will be implemented at the direction of the Fond du Lac Reservation Business Committee on behalf of the Band. The Fond du Lac Planning Division is responsible for the coordination of the efforts outlined within this document. Any Fond du Lac division which directly oversees the usage and/or development of tribal land should familiarize themselves with this document in its entirety.

A Guiding Document

The Fond du Lac Comprehensive Plan provides a high-level look at initiatives the Band can take to realize the vision of the Fond du Lac people, but it is only a starting point for these initiatives. An entire planning process could likely occur for each individual goal and strategy contained within this document. This likely is not necessary in every instance, but it should be stated that the work is not done. "Next step" planning efforts which are encouraged moving forward include:

- A housing inventory, assessment and rehabilitation plan
- A parks and recreation master plan
- A transportation plan aimed at connecting core development areas
- Master plans for each of the four core development areas
- An update of the community economic development strategy plan
- A building design standards plan
- An updated land use map which includes agricultural and downtown designations

Further planning efforts will be undertaken by the Fond du Lac Planning Division at the direction of the Reservation Business Committee (Tribal Council).

Prioritizing Implementation Goals and Strategies

There are many goals and strategies listed in this document and not all need be or can be accomplished in the near term future. The following offers an initial take on desired timing for certain major actions.

Short Term Implementation Goals (2020-2025)

- The Fond du Lac Land Use Map and Guidelines should be reviewed to represent the recommendations of this document.
- The Big Lake Road corridor has already seen considerable growth related to new services provided by the Band. Given this area's new designation as the reservation downtown, the expansion of government services and business development will continue into the future. A master plan for the Cloquet core development area should be undertaken within the next 2 years.
- Areas near the Konzak core development area are within the fastest anticipated growth area on the reservation. While potential options have been explored for this area, a formal master plan should be adopted for this area within the next 2 years.
- Create a master plan for the Sawyer and Brookston core development areas.
- Conduct inventory projects specified within this plan (housing, roads, trails, etc.)
- Implement a wastewater management solution for the Big Lake Sanitary District.

Mid-Range Implementation Goals (2025-2030)

- Establish missing essential services in core development areas.
- Establish a private business sector.
- Ensure all core development areas have access to essential utility services.

Long-Range Implementation Goals

- To be updated in future iterations of this plan

Assessing Progress

While the high-level nature of this plan makes it difficult to create a checkbox-style list for assessing progress, it is possible to measure how things are moving along. Utilizing changes in demographic indicators such as unemployment, average income, and other items can give an idea of whether or not people's situations are improving. Another option, of course, is to ask the people themselves through conducting surveys and meetings. Utilizing available information, the Planning Division should keep tabs on how much progress has been made from time to time to ensure the plan is on track to be realized.

Updating the Document

This plan provides a picture of where today's residents want to go, but may fail to align itself with the vision of the future community. In the event of any major changes in demographics, economic activity, community attitudes, political shifts, or major technological advancements, this plan should be updated accordingly. Any modifications to the plan should undergo public review and will need to be approved by the Fond du Lac Reservation Business Committee (Tribal Council).

Conclusion

The Fond du Lac Reservation community has expressed a vision for its collective future. This document is the starting point for making this vision into reality. Over the next 20 years this document will help guide the community to a stronger, healthier, more sustainable and resilient future.

Appendix

Materials for the Comprehensive Plan appendix will be available by placing a request to the Fond du Lac Planning Division. Available materials included the following:

Sample Survey (PDF File)
Aggregated Survey Results (Excel Document)
Data Sources
Existing Plans and Documents (also available online):

- Fond du Lac Reservation 2019-2025 Strategic Plan
- Fond du Lac 2021-2026 Community Economic Development Strategy
- My Brother's Keeper - Community Action Plan
- Fond du Lac Safety Plan
- Fond du Lac 20-Year Transportation Plan
- Fond du Lac Ojibwe School Safe Routes to School Plan Update