

What Hillsdale County Residents Want

From April–October 2008, the Hillsdale County Planning Commission administered an online survey called the ‘Picture Hillsdale County’ Survey. The online survey was the first phase of a community engagement process initiated by the County Planning Commission in the revision of the County Comprehensive Land Use Plan. The main objective of this survey was to enable the residents of Hillsdale County to voice their vision for their community.

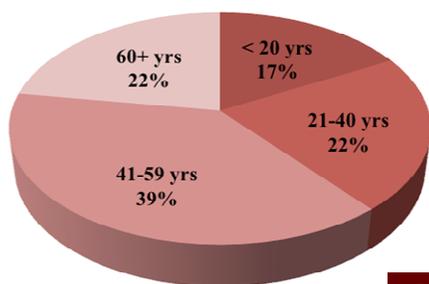
The Hillsdale County Planning Commission developed and issued a final summary report on the findings of the Picture Hillsdale County Survey. ‘The ‘Picture Hillsdale County Survey Report’ can be downloaded from the Hillsdale County Planning Commission website at www.hillsdalecounty.info/planning.asp. This handout is a summary of the final report and represents the concerns and opinions of the residents of Hillsdale County.

Survey Response Rate

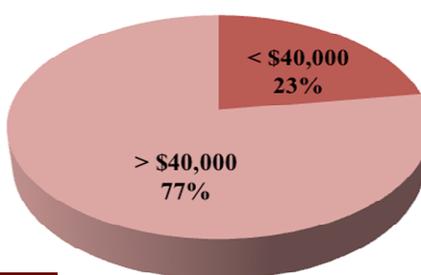
Four hundred and sixty three (463) residents or 1% of the Hillsdale County population responded to the online survey. This rate of response gives us a confidence interval or plus/minus error rate of 4.5. This means that for a particular question, if 75% of the respondents pick one answer, you can be reasonably assured that if you had asked the question of the entire relevant population in Hillsdale County between 70.5% (75-4.5) and 79.5% (75+4.5) would have chosen that answer (Source: Creative Research Systems, www.surveysystem.com).

Who are the Survey Respondents?

Age



Annual family income

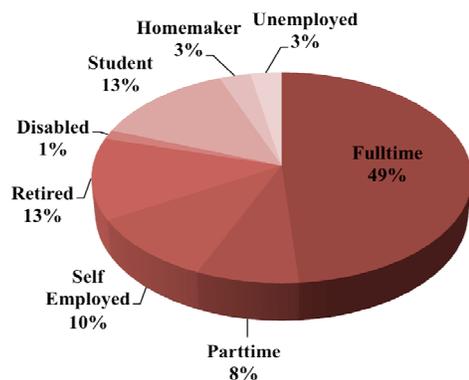


Other Facts

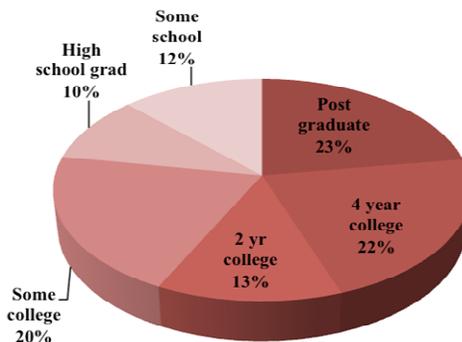
Average distance traveled to work by residents of Hillsdale County is 15.5 miles.

Eighty-five percent (85%) of respondents are employed within Hillsdale County.

Employment status



Educational background



Download Information

To download the ‘Hillsdale County Comprehensive Land Use Plan’, visit: www.hillsdalecounty.info/downloads/hclanduseplan.pdf

To download the ‘Picture Hillsdale County Survey Report’, visit: www.hillsdalecounty.info/downloads/hcsurveyreport.pdf

To download the ‘Picture Hillsdale County Survey Report Summary’, visit www.hillsdalecounty.info/downloads/surveysummary.pdf

Hillsdale County Planning Commission Website: www.hillsdalecounty.info/planning.asp

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Prepared with assistance from Jasneet Sharma, Land Policy Educator

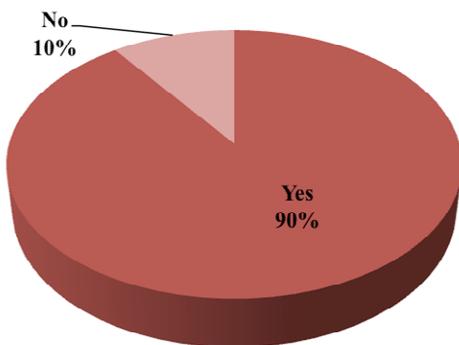


What Hillsdale County Residents Want

Value of Hillsdale County

A majority of respondents prefer a rural/farm area as a place of residence and respondents suggested careful use of planning strategies, discouraging development in agricultural areas, concentrating future development to areas that are already built out and natural area preservation (new development blending in with the landscape) as a way of preserving our rural character.

Is rural character worthwhile and important to preserve?



Top six quality of life aspects desired by county residents

- Good Schools
- High Speed Internet Access
- Parks and Natural Areas
- Slower Pace of Rural Life
- Recycling/Garbage Collection
- Recreational Facilities

Ninety percent (90%) of survey respondents believe the rural character of Hillsdale County is worthwhile and important to preserve.

Vision for the Future of the County

Percentage of respondents agreeing with the following statements:

Local Authorities should do more to enforce existing laws regulating junkyards, junk vehicles, and other nuisances.	79.7%
I support organized and balanced growth compatible with existing neighborhoods	74%
Tourism is valuable to the county's economy and should be promoted	72%
Implement development controls designed to maximize open spaces and provide aesthetically pleasing living areas.	64%
Make available government programs like purchase of development rights to farmers to preserve their farm if they so choose.	62%
Division of farms into smaller residential tracts is detrimental to the county's agricultural base and quality of life.	57%

Uses or services respondents would like to see added or expanded

- Light Industry
- Outdoor recreation industry
- Ag tourism and business
- Alternative energy industry
- County wide public services
- Health care facilities

Sixty-seven percent (67%) respondents want the addition of trails, greenways, parks and nature preserves and sixty percent (60%) have indicated a willingness to pay additional taxes for the expansion of these recreational facilities.

The County should pursue asset-based economic development strategies by promoting tourism, expanding outdoor recreational opportunities and building the county's large agricultural base for agri-business and an alternative energy industry.

Respondents want compact and clustered development

- Utilize alternative patterns of development where businesses and commercial development are grouped together with shared parking creating walkable developments.
- Cluster new industrial development in existing industrial parks.
- Cluster and concentrate residential development to preserve the natural landscape, open spaces and farmland.