

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

LYON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The demographic overview presents population and household trends and projections from 1940 to 2020 and illustrates how these trends and forecasts will influence the policies guiding growth and development in Lyon County.

POPULATION

The population in Lyon County increased 14 percent from 1950 to 2000, representing a 0.3 percent average annual growth rate. Figure 2-1 shows a slowly growing population from the 1950's through the 1970's but a decrease in the 1980's. Since then, the county has regained population. Projections from the State Demographer's office project that the county will continue to grow slightly, but at a slower rate in the coming decades: just over 1 percent from 2000 to 2020 to a population of 25,760.

**Table 2-1
Population Trends
Lyon County
1950-1990**

	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	1950-2000 Change		1980-2000 Change	
							Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Population	22,233	22,655	24,273	25,207	24,789	25,425	3,192	14%	636	3%

Source: 1950 - 2000 US Census

In 1950, the rural population in Lyon County comprised 60 percent of the total population as shown in Table 2-2. Urban areas are defined as incorporated communities of 2,500 populations or more. Thus, in Lyon County the only urban area is Marshall, as the population of each of the county's remaining cities is under 2,500. The table shows that by 1970, the urban population had surpassed the rural population by 531. However, as of the 1990 Census the county's rural population exceeded its urban population by 743 persons. This trend can be somewhat misleading however. Seventy-six percent of the county's rural population was considered non-farm in 1990 with only 12 percent of Lyon County residents actually living on farms. However, the percent of the county's population living on farms is still considerably higher than the Minnesota average, which is 4 percent.

**Table 2-2
Population Trends, Rural vs. Urban
Lyon County
1940-1990**

	1950	% of Total	1960	% of Total	1970	% of Total	1980	% of Total	1990	% of Total
Rural	13,295	60%	13,112	58%	11,871	49%	14,046	56%	12,766	51%
Urban	8,938	40%	9,543	42%	12,402	51%	11,161	44%	12,023	49%
Total	22,233	100%	22,655	100%	24,273	100%	25,207	100%	24,789	100%

Source: US Census, 1950 - 1990

Growth within Lyon County has been primarily within the larger cities, with smaller cities and township areas generally growing more slowly or losing population. During the 1980's only two cities gained population: Marshall and Cottonwood. However, during the 1990's, eight of the county's eleven cities experienced at least some population growth. Overall, cities gained population during both decades while townships lost population. Currently, 77 percent of Lyon County's population lives in cities while 23 percent live in township areas. Table 2-3 shows population trends from 1980 to 2000 for the county by city and township.

There are twenty townships in Lyon County, most with populations of less than 300. Overall, township population has been declining since 1980. In the past decade, four townships experienced population growth: Lake Marshall, Lucas, Lynd and Sodus.

The trend of decreasing rural population and increasing urban population is not unique to Lyon County. In part, the farm crisis has taken a toll on the rural, and particularly the farm, population throughout Greater Minnesota with younger people leaving farms for higher paying jobs in the urban areas. As a result, small communities are seeing their schools consolidated, their small businesses close, and face increasing challenges in providing public services with decreasing resources. The migration of young people from the rural areas to more urban areas is one reason for the decline in small cities. In addition, elderly persons often eventually move to the larger cities to be close to needed health care services and shopping. These factors all contribute to the decline of the rural population and the growth of urban centers.

Results of the 2000 Census show population losses for many rural Minnesota communities. Growth that did occur in Greater Minnesota was primarily in counties that have larger cities that serve as regional trade and employment centers, such as Marshall. Lyon County was one of the few counties in Southwest Minnesota that experienced overall growth during the 1990's as shown in Figure 2-1. The areas that experienced the greatest population losses in Minnesota are located primarily in the southern, western and northwestern parts of the state, those most dependent on agriculture.

The four states bordering Minnesota and most of the rest of the plains states also experienced population losses in their farm-dependent rural counties.

**Table 2-3
Population Trends
Lyon County Cities & Townships
1980 - 2000**

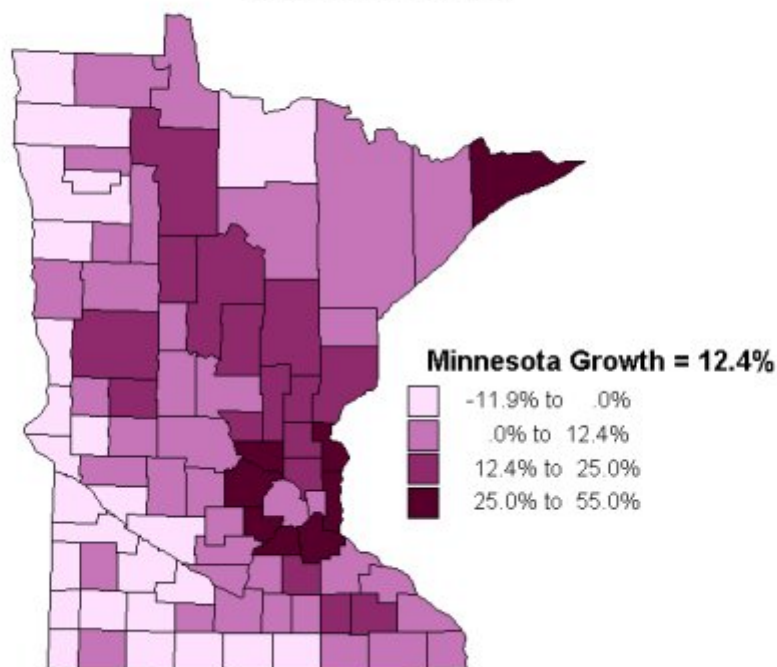
City	1980	1990	2000	% of County in 2000	% Change 1990 - 2000
Balaton	752	737	637	3%	-14%
Cottonwood	924	1,005	1,148	5%	14%
Florence	55	53	61	0%	15%
Garvin	172	149	159	1%	7%
Ghent	356	316	315	1%	0%
Lynd	304	287	346	1%	21%
Marshall	11,161	12,023	12,735	50%	6%
Minneota	1,470	1,417	1,449	6%	2%
Russell	412	394	371	1%	-6%
Taunton	177	175	207	1%	18%
Tracy	2,478	2,059	2,268	9%	10%
City Subtotal	18,261	18,615	19,696	77%	6%
Township	1980	1990	2000	% of County in 2000	% Change 1990 - 2000
Amiret	366	285	230	1%	-19%
Clifton	334	291	288	1%	-1%
Coon Creek	306	286	282	1%	-1%
Custer	340	279	220	1%	-21%
Eidsvold	312	229	223	1%	-3%
Fairview	561	513	485	2%	-5%
Grandview	332	345	317	1%	-8%
Island Lake	286	250	208	1%	-17%
Lake Marshall	570	511	517	2%	1%
Lucas	321	258	260	1%	1%
Lynd	458	468	471	2%	1%
Lyons	258	211	208	1%	-1%
Monroe	294	259	242	1%	-7%
Nordland	267	267	251	1%	-6%
Rock Lake	362	324	282	1%	-13%
Shelburne	285	227	180	1%	-21%
Sodus	345	271	282	1%	4%
Stanley	299	294	254	1%	-14%
Vallers	313	289	243	1%	-16%
Westerheim	337	317	286	1%	-10%
Township Subtotal	6,946	6,174	5,729	23%	-7%
County Total	25,207	24,789	25,425	100%	3%

Source: 1980 - 2000 US Census

Figure 2-1

Population Change 1990 to 2000

Source: U.S. Census Bureau



Converse to the trend of migration toward larger urban areas, however, is the increase in non-farm rural residential development, particularly in close proximity to larger population centers. This trend is occurring throughout Minnesota and the nation as residents increasingly seek the perceived higher quality of life and natural amenities available in rural areas while still enjoying the benefits of being near employment and shopping centers. This trend is evidenced by the growth in Lake Marshall and Lynd townships, which are both adjacent or in close proximity to Marshall. This type of development often occurs on large lots, as people desire to build bigger homes in the country with more acreage and privacy. Thus, communities with only modest population growth may experience the geographic growth associated with this trend.

AGE OF POPULATION

The median age of Lyon County residents in 1980 was 27.8 years of age while in 1990 it was 31.6, indicating an aging of the population. A comparison of surrounding counties is shown in Table 2-4.

**Table 2-4
Median Age
Lyon County Area and Minnesota
1980 and 1990**

Location	1980	1990	Percent Change
Cottonwood	33.6	39.2	17%
Lincoln	35.5	41.4	17%
Lyon	27.8	31.6	14%
Murray	32	38.3	20%
Pipestone	33.2	36	8%
Redwood	32.7	36.7	12%
Renville	32.5	36.7	13%
Yellow Medicine	33.3	37.6	13%
Minnesota	29.2	32.5	11%

Source: 1980, 1990 US Census

Although the data shows the population is aging, the median age is well below those of surrounding counties and the State of Minnesota. The presence of a higher education institution may have some impact on this lower median age.

Table 2-5 shows the county's population by age cohorts for 1980 and 1990. The three largest age groups in Lyon County are the 5 to 14, 35 to 44 and 65+ groups. The overall population of Lyon County decreased 1.7 percent from 1980 to 1990, but changes among age groups varied slightly. There were increases in the 5 to 14, 30 to 54 and 65+ age groups while the remaining age cohorts declined.

The greatest increase was in the 35 to 44 year-old groups while the greatest decline was among those aged 20 to 24. This pattern is common for smaller and rural communities. The latter is typically the age when many are seeking higher education and broader employment opportunities, so it is common to see a decrease in this age group in smaller and rural areas. However, the increase in the 30 to 34 year-old population may indicate that Lyon County is a good place to start a family. This group, along with the 24 to 29 year-olds, is also the typical first-time homebuyer group while 20 to 24 year-olds are typically renters. The increase in the 30 to 34 year-old group may also be attributable in part to the baby boom generation. The corresponding decrease in the 20 to 24 year-old group (the range that this population was in at the time of the 1980 Census) supports this postulation.

The 20 to 29 year-old age group is typically the group that is starting out on its own and putting stakes into the community. Members of this age group, particularly in the upper end, are beginning to enter the family formation years, thus continued drops in this age group may indicate declining school enrollments in the near future. This population segment has declined in Lyon County.

**Table 2-5
Age Cohorts**

**Lyon County
1980 and 1990**

Age Cohort	1980	% of Total	1990	% of Total	Change	Percent Change
Under 5	2,023	8%	1,746	7%	-277	-1.1%
5 - 14	3,826	15%	3,966	16%	140	0.6%
15 - 19	2,707	11%	2,136	9%	-571	-2.3%
20 - 24	2,843	11%	2,186	9%	-657	-2.7%
25 - 29	2,050	8%	1,789	7%	-261	-1.1%
30 - 34	1,489	6%	1,846	7%	357	1.4%
35 - 44	2,433	10%	3,142	13%	709	2.9%
45 - 54	2,126	8%	2,231	9%	105	0.4%
55 - 59	1,178	5%	944	4%	-234	-0.9%
60 - 64	1,150	5%	949	4%	-201	-0.8%
65 +	3,382	13%	3,854	16%	472	1.9%
Total	25,207	100%	24,789	100%	-418	-1.7%

Source: 1980, 1990 US Census

The 30 to 49 year-old age groups tend to be looked at as the new generation of community leaders and business owners, and their children are found throughout the school system from kindergarten to 12th grade. These age groups also tend to be active in the community and demand high quality services for their children and families. However, these age groups also tend to be highly mobile and may move away from a community to find better opportunities. Within this population range, the 30 to 34 year-olds are typically first-time homebuyers while the 35 to 49 year-olds are typically included in the move-up homebuyer market. In Lyon County, this population segment saw an increase from 1980 to 1990.

Persons in the 50 to 64 year age group tend to be empty nesters and may move to smaller homes while young seniors aged 65 to 74 often seek a variety of housing options. Empty nesters in these age groups begin to abandon homes with several bedrooms and two or more stories for lower maintenance, two bedroom units, often on one story. Lyon County's 50 to 64 populations declined from 1980 to 1990, but the 65+ groups increased.

The increase in the 65+ population is due partly to the fact that people are living longer than they did previously, but it may also be the result of older residents in the surrounding rural areas moving to the larger cities, particularly Marshall, to be closer to services. A sustained older population has several planning implications for the county and the cities within which they reside. Park and recreational demands of this group tend to be for passive activities rather than ball fields and playgrounds. Social services, elderly housing and medical services will be in demand and will most likely need to be located near one another.

RACE

Lyon County has been experiencing growth in racial diversity over the last two decades, with the greatest growth occurring in the 1990's. Non-whites comprised just 1.6 percent of the county's total population in 1980. Although the county's overall population declined from 1980 to 1990, the Black, Hispanic and other racial populations increased during this decade, bringing the minority population up to 2.4 percent of all residents in 1990. During the 1990's the Caucasian population continued to decline while each minority group increased by significant percentages as shown in Table 2-6 below, resulting in minorities comprising 10.4 percent of the county's total residents in 2000.

**Table 2-6
Racial Characteristics
Lyon County
1990 - 2000**

	1990	Percent of Total	2000	Percent of Total	Change	Percent Change
White	24,187	98%	22,783	90%	-1,404	-6%
Black	49	0.2%	378	1.5%	329	671%
American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut	38	0.2%	80	0.3%	42	111%
Asian or Pacific Islander	140	0.6%	430	1.7%	290	207%
Other	161	0.6%	745	2.9%	584	363%
Hispanic Origin	214	0.9%	1,009	4.0%	795	371%
Total Minority	602	2.4%	2,642	10.4%	2,040	339%
Total	24,789	100%	25,425	100%	636	3%

Source: 1990 - 2000 US Census

HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

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

From 1980 to 1990, Lyon County lost population while the number of households increased, reflecting a decrease in household size. From 1990 to 1999, this trend changed. Table 2-7 shows that, along with the population, the number of households increased but the size of households decreased, indicating the county is growing from an influx of new residents. On average, there were 2.73 persons per household in 1990 and 2.62 in 1999. This represents a decrease of 4.1 percent. This is consistent with the national trend toward smaller families and more single person households.

**Table 2-7
Household Characteristics
By County
1980-1990**

County	1990			1999			90 - 99
	Households	Population	Persons / Household	Households	Population	Persons / Household	% Change
Cottonwood	5,060	12,694	2.51	5,121	12,773	2.49	-0.6%
Lincoln	2,704	6,890	2.55	2,657	6,585	2.48	-2.7%
Lyon	9,073	24,789	2.73	9,738	25,505	2.62	-4.1%
Murray	3,758	9,660	2.57	3,825	9,544	2.50	-2.9%
Pipestone	4,078	10,491	2.57	4,122	10,343	2.51	-2.5%
Redwood	6,554	17,254	2.63	6,735	17,193	2.55	-3.0%
Renville	6,790	17,673	2.60	6,858	17,412	2.54	-2.5%
Yellow Medicine	4,607	11,684	2.54	4,675	11,493	2.46	-3.1%
Minnesota	1,648,825	4,375,099	2.65	1,859,277	4,838,398	2.60	-1.9%

Source: 1980 US Census, 1999 State Demographer

HOUSEHOLD PROJECTIONS

Based on past trends, the Minnesota Demographer’s office makes projections of household types to the year 2020. These can be seen in Table 2-8. From the State Demographer’s projections, you can see that *Married Couples with Children* are expected to decline by nearly 7.5 percent from 1990 to 2020. The baby boomer age groups would be moving into the empty-nester category by this time and could account for a large part of this decrease. The largest increase is expected in the *Other Family Households* category with an over 27 percent increase, followed closely by the *Female Householder* and *Other Families with Children* categories which are expected to see increases of 24 percent and 22 percent respectively.

**Table 2-8
Household Projections
Lyon County
1990 - 2020**

Household Type	1990*	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	1990-2020 % Change
Married-Couple Households	5,480	5,470	5,470	5,540	5,660	5,800	5,900	7.66
Married Couples with Children	2,743	2,710	2,650	2,580	2,600	2,570	2,540	-7.40
Other Family Households	771	820	870	910	950	960	980	27.11
Other Families with Children	491	520	540	570	600	610	600	22.20
Male Householder	80	80	90	90	100	100	90	12.50
Female householder	411	430	450	470	500	510	510	24.09
Non-Family Households Living Alone	2,370	2,480	2,560	2,620	2,650	2,680	2,770	16.88
Living Alone, 65+ Years Old	1,189	1,240	1,240	1,220	1,210	1,230	1,330	11.86
Other Non-Family Households	452	500	530	560	530	500	490	8.41
Total Households	9,073	9,270	9,430	9,630	9,800	9,950	10,140	11.76

Source: State Demographer, * 1990 Census

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

The Minnesota State Demographer’s office prepares population projections by age cohort through 2025 for each county in the state. The projections for Lyon County are shown in Table 2-9. Lyon County’s overall population is expected to remain stable, adding just 549 persons to the county’s estimated 1995 population by 2020. However, there are significant variations among age cohorts. The 60 to 64 year-old population is expected to double from 1995 to 2020 with significant increases in the 55 to 59 and 65 to 69 populations as well. The greatest declines are expected in the 5 to 14 and 35 to 39 groups.

**Table 2-9
Population Projections by Age Group
Lyon County
1995 to 2020**

Age Group	1995 *	2000 *	2005	2010	2015	2020	Change	% Change
0-4	1,628	1,640	1,570	1,550	1,490	1,430	-198	-12%
5-9	2,031	1,670	1,680	1,590	1,550	1,490	-541	-27%
10-14	2,127	2,080	1,700	1,700	1,610	1,570	-557	-26%
15-19	2,217	2,690	2,700	2,490	2,260	2,160	-57	-3%
20-24	1,976	2,000	2,390	2,400	2,250	2,040	64	3%
25-29	1,407	1,170	1,230	1,460	1,350	1,560	153	11%
30-34	1,875	1,480	1,230	1,270	1,510	1,390	-485	-26%
35-39	1,938	1,930	1,520	1,270	1,300	1,530	-408	-21%
40-44	1,609	1,970	1,970	1,550	1,280	1,320	-289	-18%
45-49	1,362	1,620	1,980	1,960	1,540	1,280	-82	-6%
50-54	1,164	1,360	1,610	1,970	1,950	1,520	356	31%
55-59	939	1,170	1,360	1,620	1,960	1,940	1,001	107%
60-64	933	910	1,140	13,210	1,560	1,890	957	103%
65-69	991	870	860	1,060	1,240	1,460	469	47%
70-74	1,003	880	770	770	950	1,110	107	11%
75-79	845	840	750	650	650	810	-35	-4%
80-84	581	650	640	580	500	510	-71	-12%
85+	585	680	770	830	810	750	165	28%
Total	25,211	25,610	25,870	37,930	25,760	25,760	549	2%

Source: State Demographer, * State Demographer estimates, not actual Census counts.