

Comprehensive Planning in Wisconsin

Status of Current Planning Efforts

- Status of comprehensive planning efforts in Wisconsin counties and municipalities
- UW-Extension's role and involvement in comprehensive planning
- Educational needs related to planning

Introduction

In May 2006, the UW-Extension Community Planning and Plan Implementation Team conducted a survey of Extension professionals to learn more about comprehensive planning efforts throughout the state. There were three purposes for the survey: to gauge the current status of comprehensive planning efforts in Wisconsin counties and municipalities, to understand UW-Extension's involvement in those efforts, and to identify challenges and educational needs faced by communities that have not yet begun to plan.

For Additional Survey Data

A survey conducted by the Center for Land Use Education in early 2004 may be used to supplement the results of this survey. The 2004 survey polled a broad cross-section of planning professionals, including county and municipal planning and zoning staff, private consultants and UW-Extension educators regarding the status of ongoing community planning efforts, public participation, difficulties associated with various stages of the planning process, and sources of technical and financial support.

The Wisconsin Planning Experience: Results from the Community Planning Survey by Rebecca Roberts and Chin-Chun Tang may be found online at: <http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr/landcenter/pdf/SurveyReportFinal.pdf>

Authors and Acknowledgements

This survey was developed as a joint effort of the UW-Extension Community Planning and Plan Implementation team. The survey instrument was created by team members Eric Olson, Rebecca Roberts, Douglas Miskowiak and Patrick Nehring. The survey report and analyses were generated by Rebecca Roberts. The map on page 5 was created by Douglas Miskowiak. Many thanks to Mary Lucas who assisted with survey design and administration.

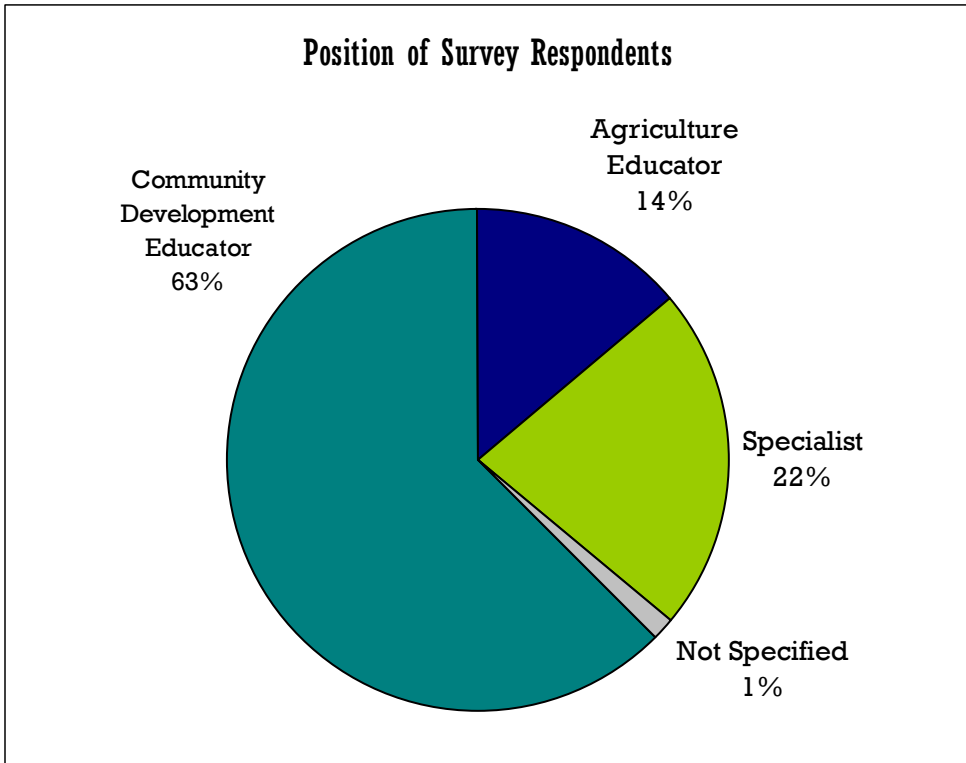
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Survey Respondents

This survey was sent to all UW-Extension staff in the Community, Natural Resources and Economic Development (CNRED) program area. To make sure that all counties were represented in the survey, it was also sent to agriculture agents in counties that do not have a community development educator.

Of the 68 respondents who completed the survey, 52 are county-based faculty and 15 are regional or statewide specialists. Of the county-based faculty, 42 are current or former community development educators, and 9 are agriculture agents. One reported joint responsibility between these program areas.

The specialist category includes those with expertise in land use, growth management, economic development, local government, natural resources, lake and river basin education, and other related fields.



Status of Comprehensive Planning Efforts

The following map depicts the status of county-level comprehensive planning efforts in Wisconsin. The data shown on the map was compiled from survey responses and records maintained by the Wisconsin Department of Administration.

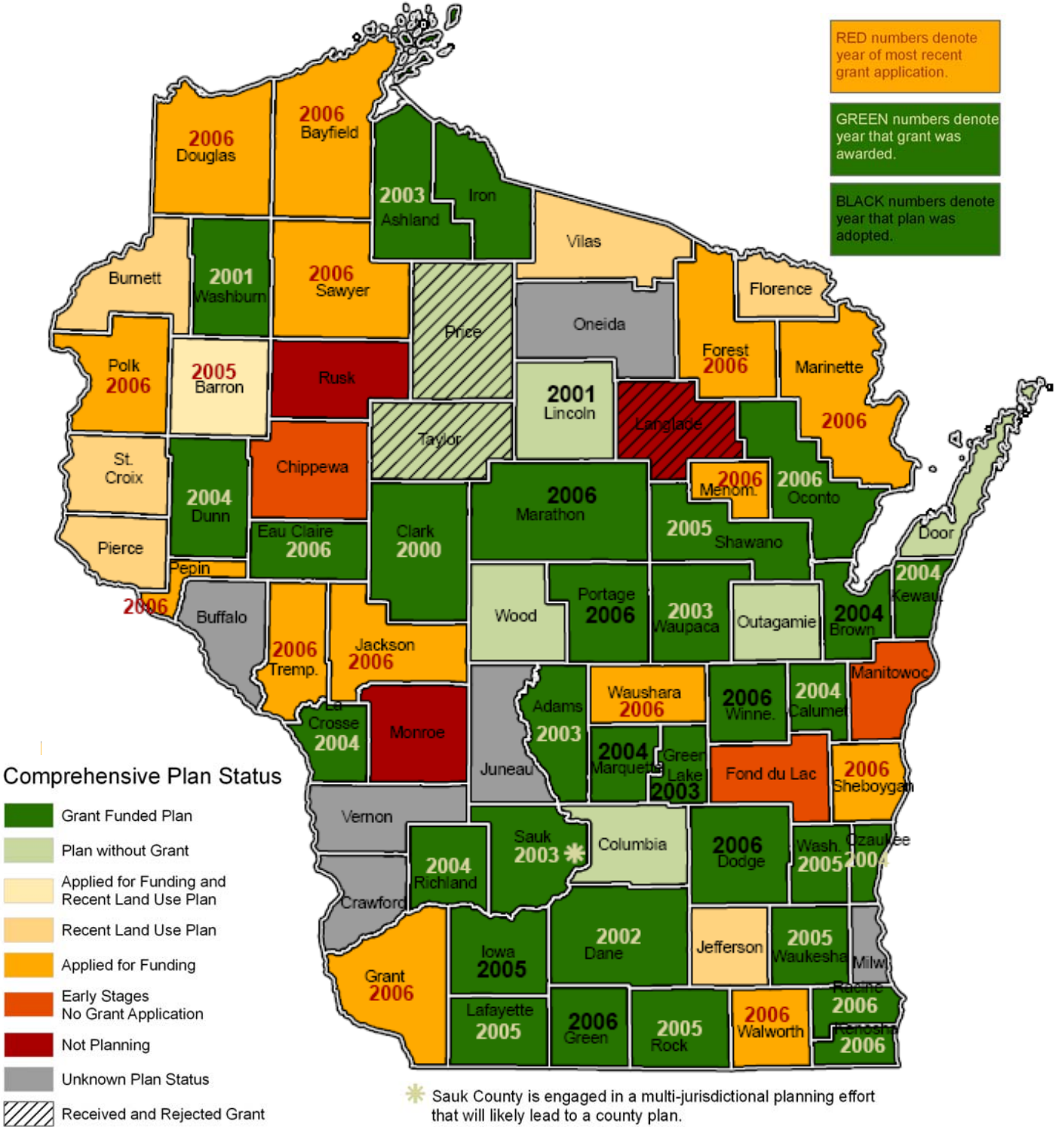
Roughly half of Wisconsin counties (37 of 72) have officially adopted or are working towards completion of a comprehensive plan. Of these, 31 counties were awarded a comprehensive planning grant from the Wisconsin Department of Administration and 6 are planning without a grant. So far, only 8 counties have completed a comprehensive plan and adopted it by ordinance. The others are still in the plan development or approval stage.

Of the remaining 35 counties, most have shown some progress towards creating a comprehensive plan. Eight communities recently completed a land use plan. (A land use plan does not comply with the definition of a comprehensive plan because it does not contain all nine elements). Some of these communities have expressed a desire to use their land use plans as a starting point to create a comprehensive plan. Two communities with a land use plan have applied for funding to do so.

Of the remaining counties, 15 have applied for a comprehensive planning grant but were denied funding. Three counties are in the early stages of planning and plan to submit a grant application. Three counties were awarded grants from the state but later turned down the funding. Of these, Price and Taylor counties are moving forward with planning without the grant. Langlade County, who turned down the grant, and Monroe and Rusk counties currently have no plans to initiate a planning effort. The status of the remaining 6 counties shown in grey is unknown.

Status of Current Planning Efforts

Status of County Comprehensive Plans, Spring 2006



Factors Hindering Local Comprehensive Planning Efforts

County Factors

When asked about factors hindering county planning efforts, nearly half of respondents (45%) reported that *two* or more factors were holding back county planning efforts in their community. Roughly a quarter (23%) reported that *three* or more factors were involved. The most highly rated factor was lack of staff resources, with 8 responses. This was followed closely by lack of political support, lack of financial resources, and property rights concerns, each with 6 responses.

“Other” responses ranged from the fact that county staff had recently completed a land use plan or were preoccupied working on town plans, to sheer avoidance or opposition by a county board supervisor. Survey participants did not feel that a lack of educational materials was preventing county-level planning efforts.

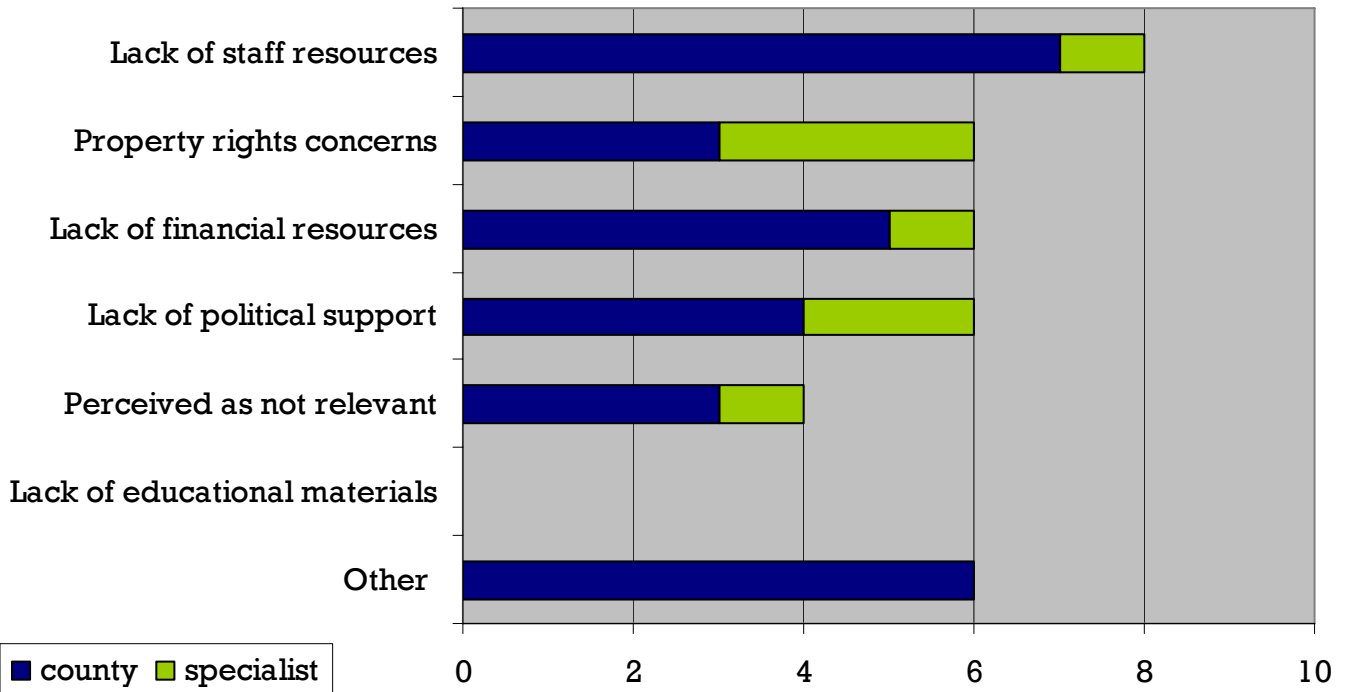
Municipal Factors

When asked about factors hindering municipal planning efforts, roughly two-thirds (65%) reported that *two* or more factors were involved; about a half (45%) reported *three* or more factors; and a third felt that *four* or more factors were involved. The most highly rated factor at the municipal-level was lack of financial resources, with 20 responses. Lack of staff resources and the perception that planning was not relevant each received 15 responses.

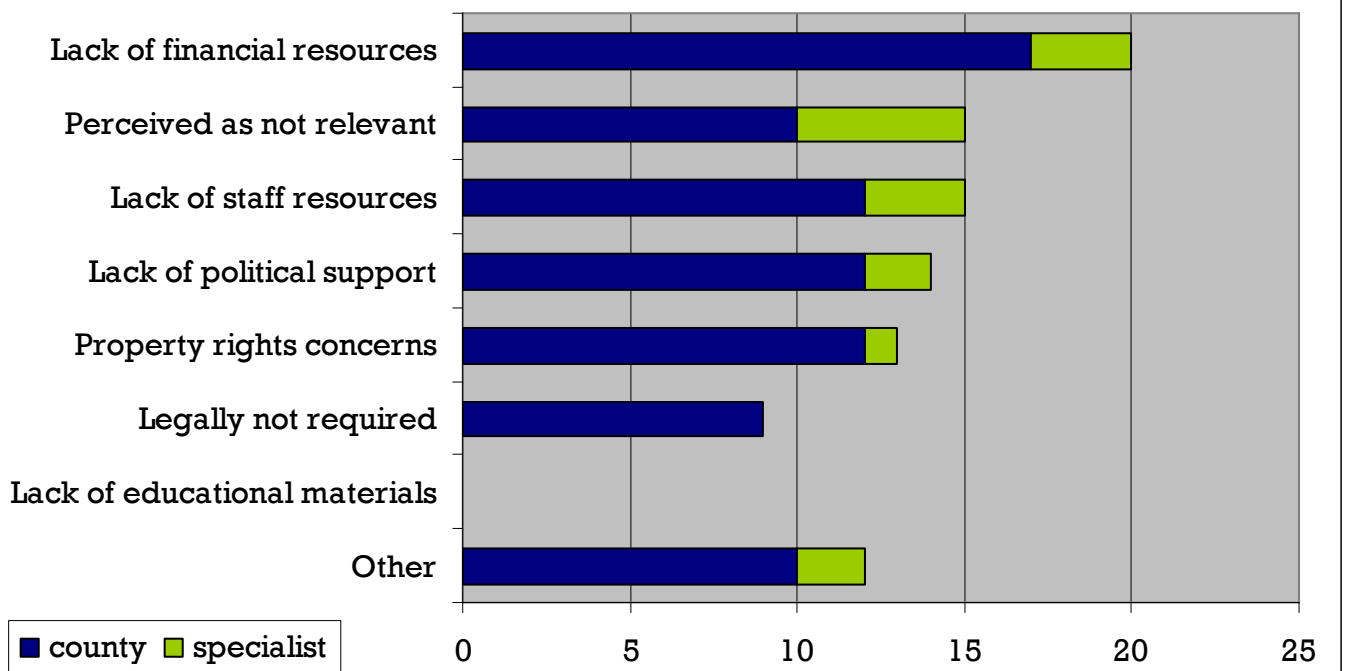
“Other” responses generally revolved around three factors: communities are waiting and/or hoping that the planning law will be repealed; communities are waiting for the county to take the lead because they do not want legal responsibility; and finally, communities are afraid of change or are unsure of how to proceed. Survey participants did not feel that a lack of educational materials was hindering municipal planning efforts.

Status of Current Planning Efforts

Factors Preventing Counties From Planning



Factors Preventing Municipalities From Planning



UW-Extension Involvement in Comprehensive Planning

Of the 68 individuals who responded to the survey, 48 county-based educators and 11 specialists (87% of the total) indicated they were directly involved in a local comprehensive planning process at the county or municipal (city, village, town) level. Extension professionals most frequently report participating in local planning efforts by providing presentations and educational materials, data and research, and expertise related to public participation. Many were also involved in the early organizational steps necessary to initiate a planning project, such as preparing a grant application, helping to organize or serve on a planning committee, and other related activities. Some have gone so far as to help write the final plan document or facilitate a zoning recodification process to implement the comprehensive plan.

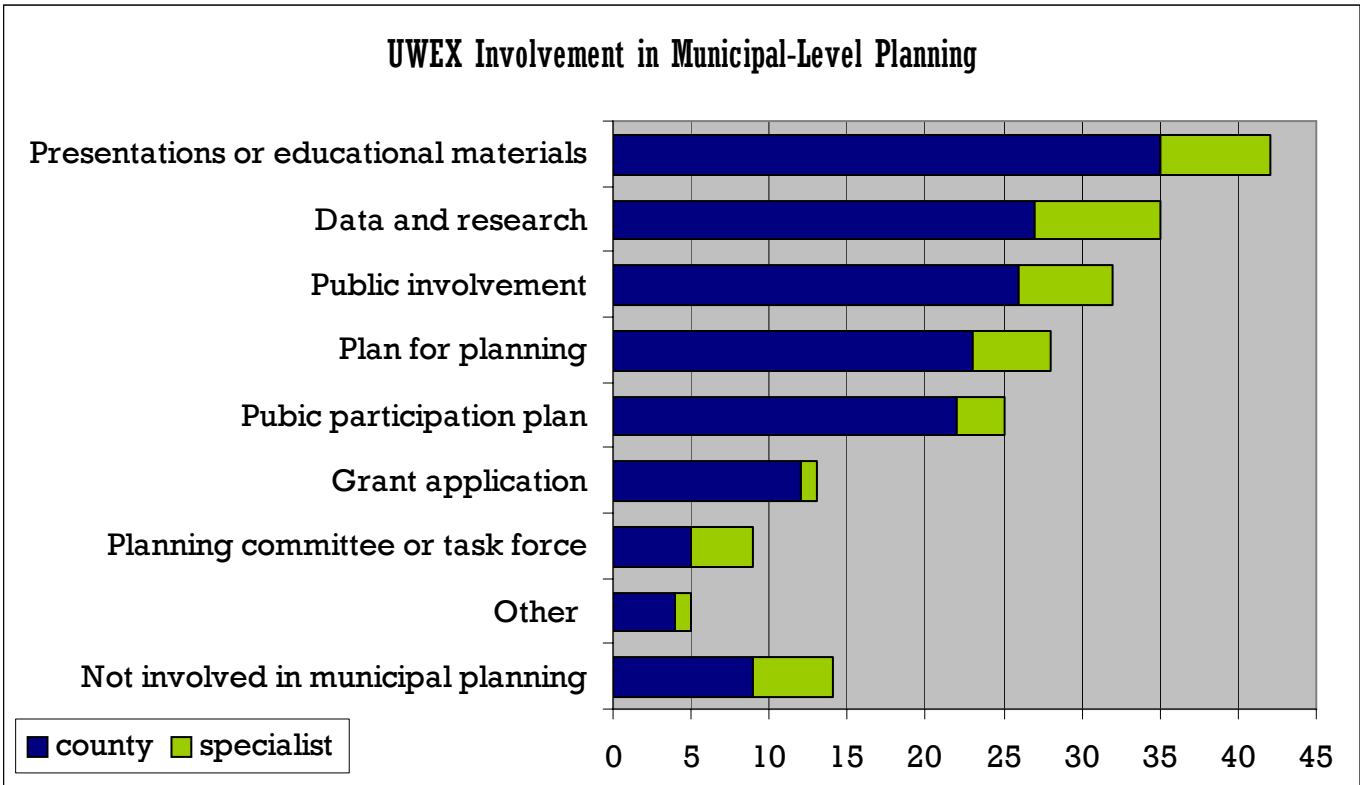
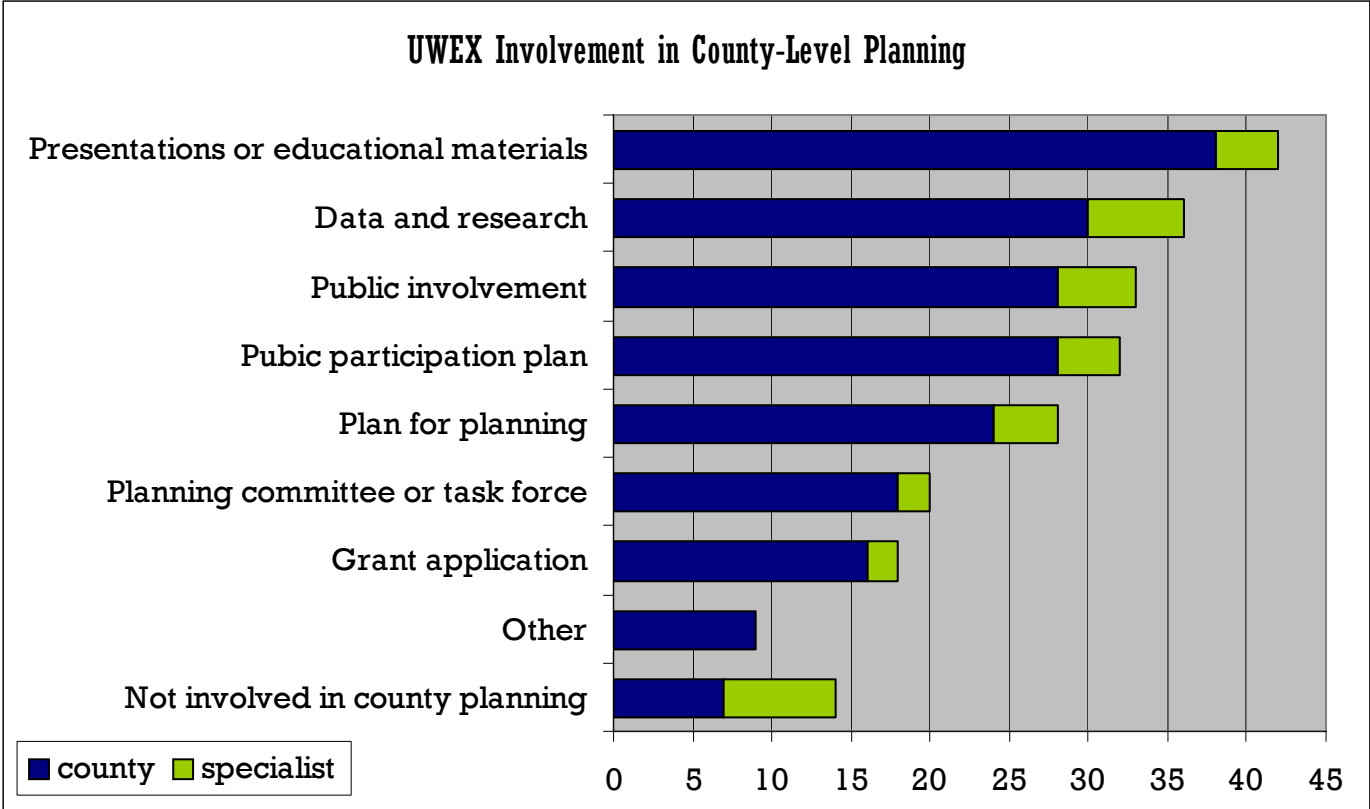
County Involvement

Roughly 4 out of 5 (81%) Extension professionals have been involved in a county-level comprehensive planning effort. Most of these individuals participated in multiple activities supporting a planning process. Three-quarters (76%) of those involved in a county planning effort were involved in *two* or more different types of planning activities, while more than half (54%) were involved in *five* or more types of planning activities.

Municipal Involvement

Roughly 3 out of 4 (76%) Extension professionals were involved in a municipal-level comprehensive planning effort. Many of these individuals participated in multiple activities supporting local planning processes. Roughly two-thirds (63%) of those polled were involved in *two* or more different types of planning activities, while more than half (56%) were involved in *three* or more types of planning activities. Though Extension professionals seemed to be slightly more involved in county processes, the types of activities they were engaged in at each level did not vary significantly.

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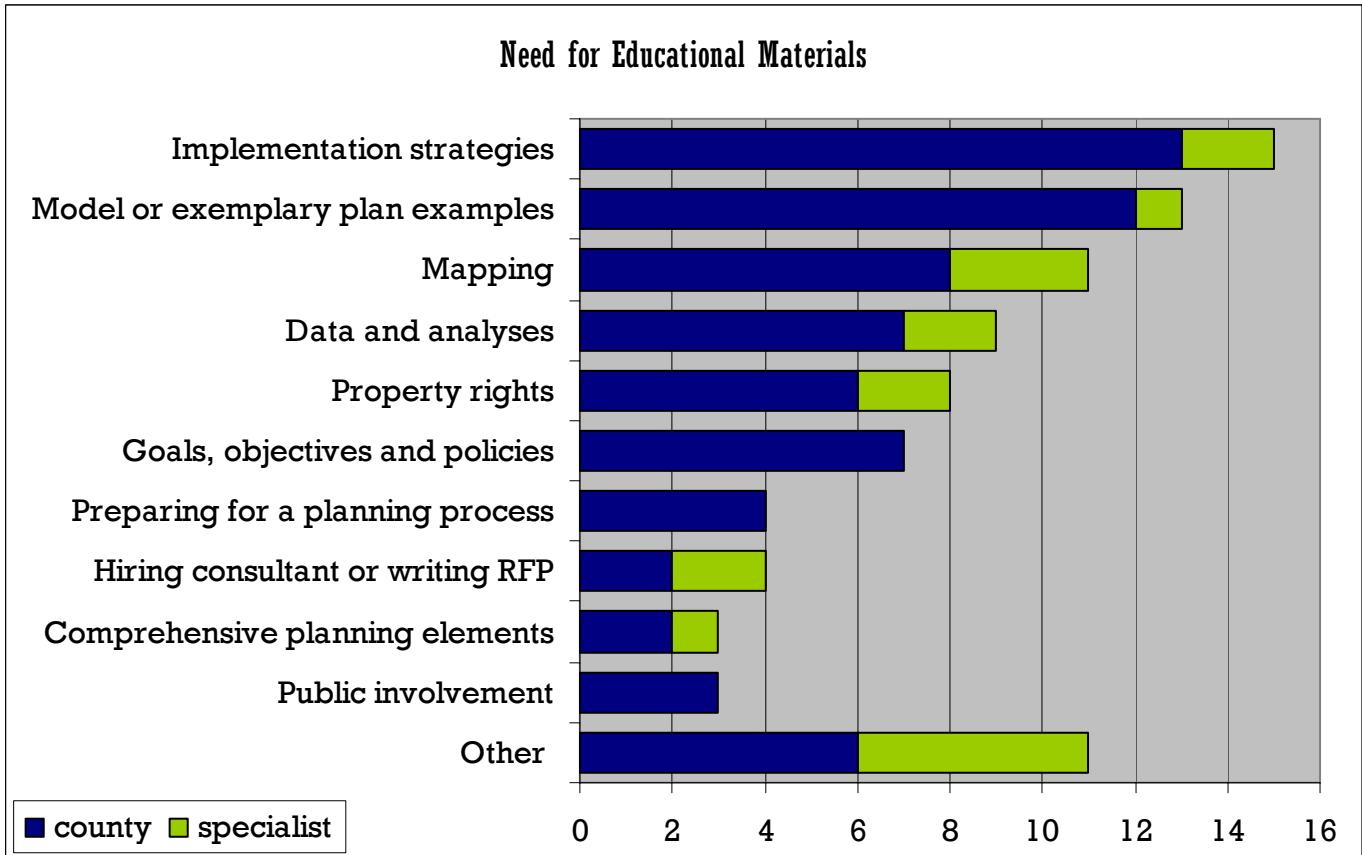
Educational Needs

As communities move forward in their planning processes, their educational needs are changing. While the need for early materials such as preparing for the planning process or hiring a planning consultant were once urgent, communities are now more commonly asking for concrete products such as data, maps and ideas to implement their plans. Implementation strategies and model or exemplary plan examples were the most highly rated educational needs, with 15 and 13 responses, respectively.

Some educators are also asking for additional assistance or materials related to mapping (11 responses) and data and analysis (9 responses). As indicated by the 8 individuals who requested additional materials related to private property rights and the number of communities reporting that property rights concerns are hindering local planning processes, this issue is likely an ongoing need in some communities.

Extensive materials related to the basics of planning, the comprehensive planning elements and public participation have been developed by UW-Extension and other statewide partners. Based on the number of Extension educators involved in these types of activities and the low number respondents requesting these materials, this need seems to be fairly well met.

Status of Current Planning Efforts



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1. Are there any errors or updates to the plan status map concerning **COUNTY-LEVEL comprehensive planning in your area?**

Of 69* respondents:	# Responses	Percentage
No	39	57%
Not sure	20	29%
Yes (please describe):	10	14%

* One respondent reported an error to the map but then did not complete the rest of the survey.

Adopted comprehensive plan

- Winnebago County adopted their plan via ordinance in 2006.
- Iron County - Adopted 2006.
- Green County adopted its comprehensive plan in April or May of 2006.
- Many communities have passed ordinances adopting their plans in Marathon County, either late last year or this year.
- Jefferson County completed Wisconsin's first Smart Growth Compliant plan in 2000--you can go on line to see the plan and compliance certification; a Multijurisdiction Grant (for six communities was recently approved (2006) and is underway.

Recent land use plan

- Pierce County has a recently completed land use plan.
- Florence County adopted a Land Use and Lake Protection Plan.

Planning without a grant

- Door County did apply for a grant and did not get one, but we are also going ahead and planning without a grant.

Likely to reapply for grant

- Marinette will likely re-apply in 2007.
- Grant County applied for the planning grant and did not receive one. Our county is looking to reapply for 2007.

Received and rejected grant

- Price County received and rejected grant.

Legally not required to plan

- Milwaukee County does not engage in actions that would require the County to have a comprehensive plan. Milwaukee & Menominee Counties NOT required to enforce shoreland zoning.

Other comments

- Monroe County - At this point, our county board and zoning committee have given no direction to the zoning/land info staff to do any work towards comprehensive planning. Both cities and a few villages and towns have been done for a while. My impression is that these municipalities hired consultants for the project. Currently, a few towns are trying on their own without consultants. The vast majority of municipalities are doing nothing.

2. If your COUNTY has not started a comprehensive planning effort, what factors do you feel are holding it back? (check all that apply) Note: Because all counties are required to enforce shoreland zoning, it is assumed that all counties need to adopt a comprehensive plan.

Of 68 respondents:	# Responses	Percentage
Lack of political support	6	9%
Lack of financial resources	6	9%
Lack of staff resources	8	12%
Lack of educational materials appropriate to audience	0	0%
Property rights concerns	6	9%
Perceived as not relevant	4	6%
Other (please describe):	6	9%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milw. & Menn. Counties NOT required to enforce shoreland zoning • Staff working on Town plans • County Board Chair that personally opposed planning • Easier to avoid it at this point • We started and then stopped, turned back grant • They adopted a Land Use and Lake Protection Plan 		

3. As a UW-Extension employee, what ways have you been involved in COUNTY-LEVEL comprehensive planning in your area? (check all that apply)

Of 68 respondents:	# Responses	Percentage
Not involved in COUNTY comprehensive planning	14	21%
Provided presentations or educational materials	42	62%
Helped with “plan for planning” activities	28	41%
Helped to prepare grant application(s)	18	26%
Helped to prepare public participation plan(s)	32	47%
Facilitated public involvement	33	49%
Served on county planning committee or task force	20	29%
Provided data and research for comprehensive plan(s)	36	53%
Other (please describe):	9	13%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Am new employee, am meeting with counties • Facilitated groups to review draft policies • The process & UWEX involvement has been documented • Those above are past work, will be on Ad Hoc committee • Conducted citizen input surveys, identified local issues • We're just starting, I'll facilitate public participation • Developed a Plan Commission leadership workshop • served on tribal planning committee • Co-wrote final document, implementation 		

4. If local MUNICIPALITIES (towns, villages, cities) in your area have not started a comprehensive planning effort, what factors do you feel are holding them back? (check all that apply)

Of 68 respondents:	# Responses	Percentage
Lack of political support	14	21%
Lack of financial resources	20	29%
Lack of staff resources	15	22%
Lack of educational materials appropriate to audience	0	0%
Property rights concerns	13	19%
Perceived as not relevant	15	22%
Legally not required (no zoning, land division, official map)	9	13%
Other (please describe):	12	18%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unknown (2) • Waiting/hoping for the law to be repealed (3) • State mandate, top down approach • Not willing to adopt village powers • Apathetic because they are unsure what to do • afraid of change/new and this is new • general procrastination • Towns defer to County • Agenda 21 and black helicopters 		

5. As a UW-Extension employee, what ways have you been involved in MUNICIPAL-LEVEL (town, village, city) comprehensive planning in your area? (check all that apply)

Of 68 respondents:	# Responses	Percentage
Not involved in MUNICIPAL comprehensive planning	14	21%
Provided presentations or educational materials	42	62%
Helped with “plan for planning” activities	28	41%
Helped to prepare grant application(s)	13	19%
Helped to prepare public participation plan(s)	25	37%
Facilitated public involvement	32	47%
Served on county planning committee or task force	9	13%
Provided data and research for comprehensive plan(s)	35	51%
Other (please describe):	5	7%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary resource to coordinating committee • Facilitated zoning recodification process • Conducted citizen input surveys • served on tribal planning committee • Several citizen input surveys. Wrote three plans. 		

6. If you indicated there is a lack of educational materials related to comprehensive planning, what resources would you like to see created or improved?

Of 68 respondents:	# Responses	Percentage
Preparing for a planning process	4	6%
Hiring planning consultant / writing a request for proposals	4	6%
Summary of 9 required comprehensive planning elements	3	4%
Data and analyses	9	13%
Mapping	11	16%
Developing goals, objectives and policies	7	10%
Implementation strategies	15	22%
Property rights	8	12%
Public involvement	3	4%
Model or exemplary plan examples	13	19%
Other (please describe):	11	16%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement & Education plans • Integration of the nine elements especially groundwater • Issues regarding the cost of sprawl • What to do once the plan is adopted. Now what? • Can help distribute my new book on Comprehensive Planning • Integrating Bryson's Strategic Issues vs. goals • should regional planning be involved in a primary • "hand-off" from visioning results to consultant • How to do data ANALYSIS with GIS • There is a wealth of ed. resources on this topic • Lots of great educational material. Thank you. 		

7. What is your position?

Of 68 respondents:	# Responses	Percentage
Community development educator	40	59%
Agriculture educator	9	13%
Basin educator	2	3%
Specialist	10	15%
Not specified	1	1%
Other (please describe):	6	9%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Director, former CRD Agent • Former county CRD educator • Specialist CRD position • Lakes Specialist • Growth Management Educator • Ag/Resource 		

8. Which communities do you work with as part of your position?

Of 67 respondents:

Statewide responsibility (10)

Regional responsibility (5)

- Lake Superior Basin counties
- Milwaukee River Basin
- Rock River Basin: Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Fond du Lac, Jefferson, Green Lake, Rock, Walworth, Washington, Walworth counties
- Western WI: St Croix, Pierce, Pepin, Dunn, Polk, Washburn, Burnett, and others
- Sheboygan and Washington Counties

Single or multi-county responsibility (52)

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| • County not specified (10) | • Marinette County |
| • Ashland County | • Monroe County |
| • Calumet County | • Oconto County |
| • Clark County | • Ozaukee county |
| • Columbia County | • Polk County |
| • Dodge County | • Portage County |
| • Door County | • Price |
| • Dunn County, now with Marquette Co. | • Richland County |
| • Eau Claire County | • Rock County |
| • Florence County | • Rusk |
| • Grant County | • Sauk |
| • Green County | • Sawyer County & Lac Courte Oreilles Tribe |
| • Iron County | • Sheboygan |
| • Jefferson County | • St Croix |
| • Kenosha County | • Taylor County |
| • Kenosha and Racine Counties | • Trempealeau County |
| • Kewaunee County | • Walworth County |
| • La Crosse County | • Washburn County |
| • Lafayette County | • Waupaca County |
| • Lincoln and Marathon Counties | • Waushara County |
| • Lincoln County | • Winnebago County |
| • Marathon County | |

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