

“Shaping the Future” Survey Comments from Chassell Township

The following comments (except summaries) are reproduced exactly as written by respondents to the 1997 Houghton County "Shaping Our Future" Land Use Survey who said they lived in Chassell Township. All local governments and libraries received full survey results in 1998 (also available at <http://emml.mtu.edu/gem/community/planning/planning.html>).

➤ Chassell Township surveys returned – 113. Total surveys returned, Houghton County – 1,936.

1. Developers should be allowed to develop with little or no restriction because it helps the local economy.

- Existing “zoning” (or future) should take care of some of this—the questionnaire does NOT elaborate on “restrictions”—?? [945]*

2. Change brought by economic development should be balanced with actions to preserve community character.

- What character, as in Hubbell, Lake Linden, South Range, Laurium, etc.? [945]

3. Public costs for new water, sewer, and other services should be considered when any development is proposed.

- All developments should be paid for by the developers—schools, sewers, etc. [92]

4. “Big city” shopping and entertainment benefit the area.

- vague [5]

5. The benefits of recent commercial development along M-26 and Sharon Avenue outweigh any disadvantages.

- What are meant by benefits? Does it mean that we’ll know which roads will be kept open in the winter? [201]

6. Similar commercial development along US 41 between Hancock and Calumet would benefit the area.

- WHY single this “corridor” out—US 41 Houghton/Chassell, M26 Hancock/Lake Linden, US 41 north from Calumet?? [945]
- & Chassell & South Range [1619]

7. Lack of jobs, especially for young people, is a problem in our area.

- While it is true that there is a lack of jobs for young people, we do not need more shopping malls, hotels, grocery stores, restaurants, etc. We need industrial jobs. [505]
- and older adults with no income to live on [1861]

9. Tax incentives, such as tax abatements, should be used to attract new businesses.

- I agree for certain industrial businesses if located appropriately. [505]
- But how much does each new job ultimately cost via this program?! [945]

11. More recreational opportunities are needed in my township/city/village. If so what kind?

Summary (verbatim responses on pp. 5-6):

- ❖ recreation for youth - 11 (teen center/YMCA - 5, playgrounds/equipment/activities for children - 5)
- ❖ bike/walking trails (two mentioned railroad grade) - 8
- ❖ picnic area - 4
- ❖ enough/too much play now (more school, volunteerism, citizenship)- 3
- ❖ campground - 3
- ❖ public beach improvement - 2
- ❖ plant trees in the park - 2
- ❖ docking area for boats - 2
- ❖ swimming pool - 2
- ❖ indoor ice arena – 2
- ❖

12. The natural environment, scenic beauty, and “getting away from it all” are important to our quality of life.

- But so is economy! [945]

14. The design and appearance of new buildings and signs are important to the community.

- Don’t legislate this [1552]

*number assigned to survey when received; comments by the same person in response to different statements are followed by the same number.

15. New development would be acceptable to more people if it blended better with the historic buildings in this area.

- Most Copper Country towns not that “historic” in essence!! [945]
- Don’t legislate this. [1552]

16. Improvement of existing properties, especially those of historic significance, should be encouraged as an alternative to developing more land.

- Then why didn’t you rehab the old school instead of building a new one? Old buildings are too costly to rehab & cannot be done efficiently. But at the owners’ expense. [92]
- Get rid of all the ancient mining buildings and construct new businesses in their place. [246]

17. Some open space and undeveloped land should be protected from future development.

- There’s enough state & federal land already for everyone as it is. [92]
- Via public ownership, yes [945]
- The U.P. is already one big open space. [1552]

18. Some roads should be designated as “scenic” and should retain their natural character. If so, which roads?

Summary (verbatim responses on pp. 6-7):

- ❖ US 41 - 16 (most specified north of Calumet or to Copper Harbor)
- ❖ Covered road to Redridge - 13
- ❖ M-26 - 9 (some specified stretches along Lake Superior or timbered areas)
- ❖ both Canal Roads - 3
- ❖ Cliff Drive - 2
- ❖ all roads in Houghton County - 2
- ❖ most roads - 2
- ❖ Portage Entry Road - 2
- ❖ Sturgeon River Road - 2
- ❖ Paradise Road - 2
- ❖ Abandoned railroad tracks as year-round multi-use trail, Calumet Waterworks, Chassell-Painesdale, Pike River, [Brockway] Mountain, Lac La Belle to Gay, [County Road?] 554, needs to be studied, none, scenic view area, along lake frontage - 1 each

19. Property owners should have absolute and final say about what happens on their property.

- Within constraints of zoning laws [945]

20. Private property rights are more important than public interest when a development is proposed.

- Stores, commercial [825]

21. We need to balance private property rights and public interest.

- We have enough trouble keeping our private property private without any interference from outside. [92]
- Who pays taxes? [1619]
- Who can disagree with #21? Everyone has their own idea of balance. Land use planning is an important need for our community. Thank you for effort. [1690]

22. Public access to waterfront areas is becoming too limited.

- Here & everywhere. If people want such choice land—they should band together and buy it. [1552]

23. Property is becoming unaffordable for local residents.

- Again—the economy!! [945]
- Here—and everywhere. We are no different than other areas in the country. [1552]

24. I feel that I have a voice in shaping the future of my community/township/city.

- Not if you don’t have money. [88]
- Big business have all the say! [92]
- If I cared to be more involved, I could have more say-so. [1552]
- Work! [1619]

25. Neighboring townships, cities, and counties should identify and work together toward shared goals.

- Roads [1619]

C. Comments

General comments not identified with any survey statement were sorted into 33 categories during survey analysis (survey respondents were not aware of these categories). Some general comments that address more than one topic are divided into the appropriate categories, e.g., [251], #25 means that another part of survey 251's comment is found under category #25. Wording was not changed.

1. Jobs

- This area seems to be becoming over-populated with “tree-huggers,” thus limiting the area’s potential for good paying jobs. All this area seems to be becoming is big tourist trap and not everyone can survive with that. [246]
- We cannot afford to give tax cuts to companies who pay \$5/hr or about \$6,000/yr. to employees. Our money spent there leaves the area. Who can live on those wages or income or pay property taxes? We need tax cuts to industry that will pay fair wages. Not another place to spend money. If you want children to stay, get industry that pays insurance & benefits. Recycling plants! Help growth in these small shops. [802], #11
- We do not need more “service” type jobs at low pay! [825], #19
- We need jobs for young people and not minimum wage jobs either. [1041], #26

2. Business and economic development—general

- It seems that what this area needs is a small manufacturing sector to build and export products to bring in fresh uncirculated money. I’m afraid that if we have a recession and poor tourism that we’ll become severely depressed. [201], #32
- Groups such as Folk etc. should be collared so they do not drive away new business—re: pulp mill Baraga County line—pulp mill near Rockland—how do native Americans have so much power that they can stop copper mining in Wisconsin & White Pine—DNR controls on EPA stinks. We also should get rid of all tree huggers. [470]
- We need responsible expansion. We lose the best & the brightest to other areas & they don’t return until they retire or die. Our area is a long way from the negatives inherent in large cities. Those who have good jobs & comfortable lives shouldn’t shut others out of similar lifestyles by ranting about the ecosystem! It takes lumber to build a new house & paper to run most businesses. Young people deserve the good life, too. [1552]

3. Concerns about development

- I think they are destroying too much wooded land for developing. There are a lot of vacant buildings that could be torn down and rebuilding done. We don’t want to have our children living in cities. We love the freedom and wilderness. [1029]
- We moved to our present location because we liked the rural environment. We would very much like to keep that. I feel we have bulldozed enough areas for development and we should encourage restoration of present structures for new businesses. [1788]
- I came here to get away from urban sprawl. It followed me here unfortunately. [1101]
- Environmental quality is a critical advantage for our community—we must maintain natural conditions and respect historic cultural landmarks as well. [1807]

4. Chain retailers vs. locally owned shops

5. Shopping/entertainment/restaurants

6. Tourism

- See [201] #2
- See [246] #1
- I think the best thing for the future is preserve the past as much as we can along with bringing in the future. One of the best things we have is our natural resources for tourism. We should use it and promote it as much as possible. [1638]

7. Logging, timber industry, and wood products

8. Mining

9. Development location—downtown, renaissance zones, etc.

10. Development—Calumet/Laurium

11. Development—M-26/Sharon Avenue

- It is so nice to have Wal-Mart & Shopko & Holiday Inn. But the buildings are ugly. [802], #1

- Regarding the developments on M26 & Sharon Ave., building Taco Bells and Wal-Marts do little for the local economy in the long term. [563], #15

12. Future U.S. 41 development, Hancock to Calumet

13. Waterfront development and public access

- Houghton & Hancock should insure that waterfront remains publicly accessible & should encourage shops & restaurants that capitalize on the scenic waterfront. [5]
- Preserve the Keweenaw & all connected water bodies! [593]

14. Property values and taxes

- I also think property prices are way out of hand. [1159], #25, #29

15. Planning

- See [257] #25
- We feel that land use planning is important. We should try to stop the “sprawl” of communities and cities. [913]
- There is a delicate balance between private property rights and the public good that comes from land use planning. Caution must be utilized in the implementation of land use planning so that it is done in a sensible, responsible, and non-dictatorial manner. Land use planning is, however, essential for sustainable development of Houghton County. [563], #11

16. Cooperation among units of government

17. Lack of public input in development decisions, favoritism

- I also feel that too much is decided behind closed doors and that the average citizen is ignored. [89], #19
- See [245] #25
- I don’t believe any of the following [sponsors] could care less what the people think especially what property owners think. [349]
- I don’t think we have much to say for example a new hospital on Quincy Hill—(unbelievable) it would have cost less to renovate the old hospital or build in a different location. Quincy Hill is a bad road. I think they want Calumet/Laurium hospital to close & have only one hospital on Quincy Hill. [824], #26

18. Zoning, ordinances, building permits

19. Balancing environment and development

- Low growth rates are essential to our long range way of life—population expansion will erode our local natural environment—go slowly! [825], #1
- I am a conservative who believes in private property rights and free enterprise BUT I don’t believe in sacrificing everything on the altar of materialism in the name of economic “progress”. [89], #17

20. Cultural history/community character/appearance/signs

21. Small-town feeling/quality of life

22. Historic buildings/improving existing properties/blending old and new

- See [1788] #3

23. Open space, undeveloped land

24. Drinking water, wastewater, and health concerns

25. Property rights and regulations

- See [89] #19
- I feel we need less regulations all around—more input by the people. [245], #26, #32
- So-called governmental development planning & regulation should be extremely minimal. This should not be like Communist Russia quite yet!! Good intentions have a tendency to result in more headaches, red tape, and loss of freedom! [257]
- As a taxpayer, I don’t like the thought of someone else “taking over” control of my property [1159], #14, #29
- Stay out of our townships & stay in Houghton. Taxpayers rights “bundle of rights” should not be infringed on. Businesses will do their own studies—we don’t need self-appointed commissions to tell us what we can do. We have enough problems already with the DNR & others. Please don’t waste money on your pet needs for power. [1619]

26. Road maintenance, traffic control, and safety

- Road & streets insufficient for population—a strong need for overpasses; which would prevent accidents & a need for better engineering for such improvements. [93]
- I would like to see all of the dirt roads changed to tar—we always have dirty vehicles & windows, not to mention tire replacements very often! [245], #25, #32
- We need a new bridge between Houghton & Hancock. The traffic and roads are inadequate. [824], #17
- To go along with development, we need to do something with our roads we all ready have. They are in terrible shape. Gas tax is not the only answer. There's plenty of recreation money's, but lets face it. The areas are useless if you can't get to them without running a high and over-priced vehicle. [1041], #1

27. Snow removal

28. Public and non-motorized transportation

29. Tax incentives

- Are our children going to pay for the tax free zone at Houghton County Airport in the future, & why is this allowed? [92]
- See [802] #1
- and I certainly don't feel developers should receive any tax benefit—the work ethic & attitude of local residents should be enough to draw business. [1159], #14, #25
- We need to develop policies that benefit current residents. Incentives to promote development at times create a disadvantage to current businesses. Some land use policies create advantages for developers at the expense of local landowners through higher property assessments. Someone has to pay for infrastructure needs for development. If the new owners don't, then who does? [1517]

30. Government and public services

31. Recreation

- Too many snow machines [998]

32. Survey

- Will this be based on total information or on the percentages returned in a given age group? [60]
- This survey reflects the viewpoint of only one of two householders—a very different viewpoint may have been expressed by the other householder.[201], #2
- Thank you! [245], #25, #26
- Thanks for the opportunity to give a voice on these topics with this survey. [269]
- your do-gooder bias is obvious [302]
- I do believe that if the value of pi was unknown some knothed would be doing a survey to find what the rabble thought it should be. [1031], #33
- I believe the answers to the questions give a fair idea of my feelings about future area development. [947]
- Thanks for the opportunity! [1886]

33. Miscellaneous

- People who bring children into being when they (the children's own family) do not have the resources to provide for the genetic & material & cultural endowment of the children & for their lifetime employment are the problem the world over & have always been. It is irresponsible behavior of the highest order. Read any corporate annual report—it will reflect an investment of at least \$100,000 per job who is obligated to gather the savings & take the risk & make this investment & how did they incur this obligation? [1031], #32

11 (recreational needs) verbatim responses, grouped generally from most common topic to least:

- A place for children to play in winter. [94]
- Parks and playgrounds for children under 10, bike & walking paths, a place for youth to gather [802]
- Youth center, indoor swimming pool [896]
- Teen centers [879]
- Youth meeting places [947]
- More organized activities for youth, find use for community center [1517]
- There isn't much if it's not tied to snow, teenagers also need more activities. [1301]
- Things for kids to do [1029]

- Need for kids, “touch” museums as in cities [1731]
- Something for teens to do [1788]
- convert Chassell-Houghton railroad line to a bike trail; plant trees in the park [4]
- convert railroad to bike trail, plant trees in lakeside (Centennial) park [5]
- bike trails [429]
- Bike trail, place to rollerblade [1475]
- Biking trails [1786]
- walking trail, bicycle [1220]
- Picnic areas, swimming pool, public access to streams & lakes [913]
- more playground equipment/picnic tables [245]
- Picnic areas, foot trails [1471]
- Studies in school are more important than sports & they get enough sports in school. [92]
- We have enough. [1619]
- There’s too much play. We need to “inspire” young people to work, to volunteer time for those in need. With the school helping, keep a record of their good deeds with school planning meetings (during or after) with those people interested. Keep in mind citizenship awards & a good record on their job resume. No one will have too much time on his hands. With thinking of others, can’t get in trouble. [1861]
- Public beach improvements [1807]
- Yes, improved beach area including amenities for cookouts & overnight camping. [60]
- campsite at the park [1902]
- small docking area for boats on Chassell Bay & possibly a small campground [505]
- more public docking for boats [737]
- If your mind is open & your spirit is alive, there are many wonderful recreational opportunities throughout the Copper Country. People who are bored...are boring! [1552]
- more natural areas without manipulation for recreation [88]
- two covered official size ice arenas together to host hockey tournaments & host conventions, etc. in summer [269]
- Softball complex/batting cages [823]
- Indoor ice rink [942]
- Should think “area” as a whole [945]
- Open playing fields [1001]
- Golf courses [1531]
- Sporting complex, YMCA, gym [1765]
- no more snowmobiles [1872]

#18 (scenic roads) verbatim responses, grouped generally from most common topic to least:

- US 41 north of Calumet [593]
- US 41 in Keweenaw [824]
- US 41 to Copper Harbor [942]
- 41 to Copper Harbor [1220]
- Scenic US 41—Keweenaw [1786]
- US 41 Copper Harbor [1158]
- scenic 41, covered road to Redridge [1475]
- Copper Harbor US 41 [1531]
- US 41/M-26 [1101]
- US 41 South of Chassell, covered road in Portage Township, keep abandoned railroad tracks as a year-round multi-use trail system [269]
- M-26, M-28 road to Copper Harbor from Hancock [292]
- to Copper Harbor, covered road to Freda [1510]
- covered drive [112]

- covered road, Cliff Drive [505]
- the covered road to Freda [349]
- Covered drive, Calumet Waterworks Rd. [1041]
- covered road—Liminga area [1902]
- Covered road [945]
- Covered road, US 41 N of Calumet, Chassell-Painesdale, Liminga-Freda [825]
- covered road, US 41 Keweenaw County [1517]
- timbered areas along M-26 [95]
- M26 along Lake Superior, Pike River Road [92]
- M-26 to Copper Harbor [201]
- M26 [1844]
- M-26 [938]
- M-26 towards Calumet (along canals and Lake Superior), Keweenaw County scenic road to Eagle River, Eagle Harbor, Copper Harbor, Keweenaw Bay, US 41 [941]
- Houghton Canal Road, Hancock Canal Road, Portage Entry Road [896]
- both canal roads [1886]
- Brockway, Freda, both canals, Paradise [700]
- Cliff Drive, M26 north of Eagle River [88]
- All roads in Houghton Co. [822]
- All major highways and county roads [1690]
- Most [1031]
- All except 41 & 36 (north of Calumet OK) [1765]
- Roads without extensive development such as Entry Road [916]
- Sturgeon River Rd., US 41—already designated portion [913]
- Sturgeon River Road [1807]
- Paradise Road, M206 [1326]
- Mountain drive, Lac LaBelle to Gay, Obenhoff to Redridge [947]
- 554 [1457]
- Along lake frontage. Scenic view area. [60]
- needs to be studied [85]
- none [589]
- road to Copper Harbor [245]
- In the Keweenaw [1781]