

"Shaping the Future" Survey Comments from Osceola 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 Adams Township. All local governments and libraries received full survey results in 1998 (also available at <http://emml.mtu.edu/gem/community/planning/planning.html>).

➤ Osceola Township surveys returned – 102. Total surveys returned, Houghton County – 1,936.

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

- Economic development should not need to be balanced. It should preserve character inherently. [1628]*
- What constitutes community? [1747]

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

- Paid by developer [1628]

4. "Big city" shopping and entertainment benefit the area.

- Too much would take away from historical places & feeling of the area. We do not need a "Honky Tonk-Casino" atmosphere. [1557]
- What do you mean by benefit? [1747]

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

- Who made all the money on this development? Kestner? Interesting background? [1171]

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

- The "pie" is only so big. More stores, smaller slices for all. [1204]
- Spreading like cancer isn't it? [1747]

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

- all ages [491]
- Those of us with skills, initiative and integrity are doing quite well, and since when were we all to be guaranteed big-time "jobs" wherever we wanted to live?? [1316]
- Jobs—not necessarily just young people—decent paying jobs with benefits are required for middle-aged job seekers. [1454]
- There is a shortage of solid decent paying jobs for people of all ages! [1461]
- There will never be enough jobs till the problem of over-population is seriously addressed—do the math! [1747]

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

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

- ❖ non-motorized trails (biking - 7, hiking - 5, skiing - 5, snowshoeing - 2, dogsledding - 1) - 8
- ❖ skating activities – 7 (ice skating - 2, roller blading/skating - 4, skateboarding/skate park/BMX - 2)
- ❖ teen activities/recreation center - 6
- ❖ more live music, concerts - 3
- ❖ complaints about snowmobiles/ORVs/trails from bar to bar - 3
- ❖ beach improvements, picnic areas - 2
- ❖ any kind of recreation - 2
- ❖ more museums/art galleries - 2
- ❖ baseball fields - 2
- ❖ movie theater - 2
- ❖ tennis, basketball, snowmobiling, swimming, docks along waterways, non-drinking activities, arts and crafts classes, tours, steam train, playground in Dollar Bay, camping, parents spending time with children, spending money on roads instead of recreation - 1 each

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

- What is needed are apartments or rental town houses with garages, another "good" restaurant in Calumet—not fast food. [1557]

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

- Should encourage utilizing/preserving existing structures rather than developing new [1628]
- I don't want new development to look like a pile of rubble, which is what the "historic" buildings look like. [1829]

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

- Some properties cannot be reasonably refurbished to include all required mandates (disabilities, parking, etc.). [1454]

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

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

- ❖ tree-covered roads - 17 (to Freda - 10, US 41 near Copper Harbor - 4, unspecified - 3)
- ❖ US 41 - 16 (to Copper Harbor - 11, "scenic" 41 or unspecified - 5)
- ❖ M-26 - 8 (Eagle River to Copper Harbor - 4, Hancock to Lake Linden - 2, unspecified - 2)
- ❖ lakeshore roads (along Lake Superior or unspecified) - 4
- ❖ most/all rural roads in Copper Country (some specified north of bridge or Keweenaw County, forest highways, or past cultural/historic resources) - 8
- ❖ M203 - 5
- ❖ Gay to Lac LaBelle - 4
- ❖ 5-Mile Point Road - 3
- ❖ Houghton and Hancock Canal Roads - 3
- ❖ Mine St., Swedetown-Osceola, trim foliage for lake views, Bete Gris, Sedar Bay, Freda Road (in addition to covered road), Waasa Road, Obenhoff Lake area, Tapiola - 1 each

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

- As long as they are responsible with taxes, etc., utilities, etc. etc. [416]
- #1 of importance [1374]
- Does this include a developer's private property? Timber industry, etc. [1747]
- As long as they do not break the law [1816]

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

- It depends. [416]
- Too ambiguous [1747]

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

- It depends. [416]
- It has become a code word for certain extremists groups and corporations. [1747]

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

- Is use of private lands to access water by the public decreasing, or are there fewer public access sites? [1204]

23. Property is becoming unaffordable for local residents.

- And taxes too! [994]
- Property has always been expensive to locals. [1204]

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

- I see little evidence of it with public policy. [1747]

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

- Depends on the issue [1747]

26. Long-range planning is needed to manage growth and to protect our environment and natural resources such as drinking water.

- We need long range planning to improve the quality of life of the residents; not just to manage growth & protect environmental resources. [1829]

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

- need jobs that can support a family—pulp mills, etc. [511]
- Instead of fixing old buildings to attract tourists, I believe that this county needs to attract jobs that are available for people who have grown up here & want to remain here. Industry, prisons, etc. [1171]
- See [1375] #11

2. Business and economic development—general

- We need a business that brings money into the area, not another Wal-Mart taking money out of the area. A pulp mill or copper mine. [726]

3. Concerns about development

- Anyone that wants a “big city” atmosphere should move to a big city, & leave unspoiled this like the Copper Country alone. Sometimes you don't know what you have until you lose it. Think before doing the irreversible! [397]
- Too many snowbirds are buying up our property then sell it at outrageous prices. Leave the U.P. to the Yoopers—we like it just the way it is. [570]
- I believe that current promotion & development of the Copper Country is geared to an extremely short-sighted, banal vision which treats both the people & the land like a 3rd-world country. Don't we have leaders whose planning can maintain our uniqueness and open spaces? Can we be a quiet and gentle place to learn from the surroundings rather than try to conquer them? Prisons, snowmobiles, ORV's and mass merchandising are not going to provide quality living or environment. [1316]
- Some Lake Superior shoreline should be preserved, way too much building. Very disappointing to see all our farmland growing into brush and going for \$500-1000 an acre. [1438] #4
- See [1628] #18
- Do not like “corridor development”—get much of it off the main through-way. [1682] #25

4. Chain retailers vs. locally owned shops

- See [726] #2
- Too many “fast food” places and “discount” stores cropping up. The area of Houghton at Wal-Mart, Shopko, etc. is disgusting. New mall (?) being built by AmericInn in Calumet is an eyesore! [1071]
- With all the development, mostly retail based out of the area, it is alarming to see so much money leave the area with little return. [1438] #3

5. Shopping/entertainment/restaurants

6. Tourism

- The area in Ripley—the old mining buildings—should be rebuilt for tourists viewing or completely removed as they are truly an eyesore as they now stand & surely are not safe! [39]
- See [1077] #21
- See [1171] #1

7. Logging, timber industry, and wood products

- See [511] #1
- See [726] #2

8. Mining

- See [726] #2

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

- See [1438] #3

10. Development—Calumet/Laurium

- See [1071] #4

11. Development—M-26/Sharon Avenue

- See [1071] #4
- If strip malls are to be built, they should at least keep the trees & incorporate it into the landscape! Keep this community small & quaint. More business is needed not more retail, low paying jobs! The nature & the beauty is what attracts people here, not the shopping. Keep things small & simple & don't crowd. M-26 & Sharon is tacky. [1375] #15, 22, 32

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

13. Waterfront development and public access

14. Property values and taxes

- See [570] #3
- Someone should monitor what happens to tax dollars. H. C. R. C. money in particular. [1340]
- See [1438] #3
- See [1628] #18

15. Planning

- If there isn't good planning, this community's charm will be lost—it will become a crowded Traverse City or Petoskey. [1375] #11, 22, 32

16. Cooperation among units of government

17. Lack of public input in development decisions, favoritism

- How about a similar questionnaire Re: the local “good ole boy” judicial system and if people are satisfied with our court system—especially with fines & sentences handed out to our local fellas that molest kids—sexually abuse siblings, and a lot of CSC, etc. And what about the incidents that happen, but, because “my uncle is the sheriff,” go unpunished, much less reported, etc. etc. etc. (Sorry, caught me on my soapbox.) [416]

18. Zoning, ordinances, building permits

- We need to move ahead quickly. Strengthening building permit process would provide some easily implemented control of inappropriate development (i.e. homes in areas where they shouldn't be (soils, etc.) just because there's a view (seasonal roads, etc.))—we are rapidly destroying the uniqueness of our area & making it unaffordable for longer-term residents. Across the country areas destroyed by growth like is starting here now are trying to return to what we have at great cost while we are trying to head to their failed system of growth. [1628]
- There should at the very least, be zoning ordinances in all of Keweenaw and Houghton Counties. [1126]

19. Balancing environment and development

- Environmental concerns & the need for economic development have got to find a way to coexist. It seems to be polarization on this subject. Both concerns are legitimate, but there must be a meeting place, where reasonable environmental concerns can be addressed, and yet the need for economic development can take place within the context on reasonable regulations. [796]
- Because we live in a most unique part of the country, we have a duty to promote growth, protect the environment and assist a growing senior population. Remember our youth are our future. [1178]

20. Cultural history/community character/appearance/signs

21. Small-town feeling/quality of life

- Our area is extremely unique. If it becomes all Wal-Marts and Burger Kings, we lose that uniqueness. Then why would anyone vacation here instead of Grand Haven (or anywhere else)? We fought hard to become a national park, now we must stay a special area. [1077]
- This area is unique & has been for years. Keep it simple. We do not need anymore “city” than we've got already! Remember that in “cities” you can't look up at night and see the Northern Lights or the “Aurora Borealis”! [1179]
- See [1232] #22
- See [1375] #11

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

- See [39] #6
- See [1171] #1

- It doesn't make sense to have "big city" development in small towns. The older buildings should be protected, improved, and preserved, rather than being torn down. A smaller scale development is much more acceptable to me. [1232]
- Restoration of buildings is preferred over new construction. [1375] #11, 15, 32

23. Open space, undeveloped land

- Sacrificing the unique character and natural attractions of the Keweenaw, and turning it into a tacky clone of a big city suburb in the name of "growth" would be a mistake in my opinion. People who want that environment are free to move away, leaving room for those of us who appreciate the Keweenaw in its natural state. [1591]
- The US is being overly developed. Man is infringing on animal territory. This area should be kept pristine. Do not pollute Lake Superior, the world's largest fresh water lake. The US has superfluous malls & mansions, causing pollution & energy waste. [1709]

24. Drinking water, wastewater, and health concerns

25. Property rights and regulations

- Preserving my rights as a citizen and property owner without dictatorship and forced compliance laws & regulations is most important to me. [787]
- Land owners rights are quickly being eroded by "do-gooders" without a clue. We operate a farm & a tree farm and plan to continue this & encourage others to do the same. Land needs to be used, not preserved and it can be put to good sustainable use. [1682] #3
- "Land take over" is unconstitutional! When a person spends 25 years or more paying off a mortgage on a home and property no one has the right to strong-arm them into selling! We also have a right to our own "family historic significance," such as passing our homes and land down to our children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, etc. [1749]

26. Road maintenance, traffic control, and safety

- Should consider paving areas of the torn up tracks for biking, jogging, walking and roller-blading [1449]

27. Snow removal

28. Public and non-motorized transportation

29. Tax incentives

30. Government and public services

31. Recreation

- See [1449] #25

32. Survey

- Thank you for this opportunity! [1375] #11, 15, 22
- Please allow space in questionnaire for at least 2 different residents of the same household to respond. We do not always agree! [1816]
- good survey—I hope this will be conducive to future area decisions [1200]

33. Miscellaneous

- Given the mounting evidence of environmental destruction and social upheaval caused by our present 'way of life'—a change in the way we live on the planet is essential. We can make the change wisely with less pain or it will be forced upon us—simply because of over-population and the reality of a decreasing supply of oil. [1747]

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

- bike paths throughout county along snowmobile trails or old railroad lines [856]
- Hiking, biking, & ski trails [1004]
- non-motorized like skiing, hiking [1143]
- more "silent sports", and low impact trails—I'd like to see a real concerted effort at bicycle trails, foot paths and snowshoe trails. (We have way too many "butthead opportunities"—i.e.. ORV's already). [1316]
- cross country ski trails, bicycle trails [1438]
- bike path, walking paths, more baseball fields (youth), additional tennis & basketball areas [1682]

- dogsled, cross country skiing, snowshoeing trails without the danger of speeding snowmobiles [1816]
- youth centers—recreational areas for skateboarding, roller blading, etc. [497]
- skate park/BMX course for teenagers [713]
- more activities, recreational and others are needed in every area of the Copper Country, our youth are poorly served [1178]
- teen activities [1230]
- “teen center” or of that nature [1298]
- teen centers—roller skating, drop-in, etc. [1375]
- skiing, skating, snowmobiling [860]
- skating rinks, baseball fields, rollerblade areas [1449]
- swimming, roller skating [1454]
- Could use several “docks” along the waterways for fishing, boaters, etc.; more little “picnic” areas around waterways!! [416]
- any [702]
- anything [1306]
- ice rink roof and teen center in Dollar Bay [994]
- ice skating, cross country skiing, biking [1747]
- non-drinking activities, museums, art galleries, concerts [1170]
- arts & crafts classes, perhaps connected with Coppertown area, ie. use the old train depot in Calumet for a permanent museum & restaurant. Bring back steam train service. Conducted tours, etc. [1557]
- community dinner/dances with local live music [1591]
- cultural, musical concerts [1818]
- like movie theater/recreational facility [1273]
- current movies [1351]
- Clean up & establish a nice beach area with a shelter & tables (Dollar Bay area) [39]
- Playground at Sandy Bottom Beach—Dollar Bay [432]
- affordable kind [570]
- parks for camping [726]
- Tax payers are paying big bucks for snowmobile trails that lead from one bar to the next - What about the general public?? - Need more recreational opportunities [1004]
- It’s OK as it is. [1077]
- Need more school age kids who stay in area [1103]
- Torch Lake clean up, use old rail bed as “walking trail/bike path” [1200]
- Parents spending more time with children is vastly more important!! [1204]
- use tax money on roads instead of recreation [1524]

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

- covered road to Freda [39]
- Houghton to Freda—Hancock to McLain Park to Calumet Waterworks [797]
- US 41 Phoenix-Copper Harbor, covered road to Freda [1800]
- Scenic drive to Copper Harbor (& road between Eagle River & Eagle Harbor) & scenic drive to Freda [1071]
- covered drive, 41 to Copper Harbor, Lake Linden to Lac LaBelle, Burnet Park [1170]
- any covered drives, roadways along &/or around lakes/Superior especially, also consider trimming foliage to get a better view of the lakes [1200]
- Any without 1-acre lots cut out with new homes on them, covered road, Freda road, Waasa road, Gay road, & others, Obenhoff Lake area, Tapiola [1628]
- M-26 Eagle River to Copper Harbor [726]

- Scenic 41, M26 from Eagle River-Copper Harbor, covered road [1126]
- M-26, US 41, & all roads which pass by scenic & cultural resources [1316]
- US 41 north to Copper Harbor & M-26 [1427]
- US 41 to Copper Harbor [431]
- US 41 Copper Harbor, Freda [1327]
- US 41 to Copper Harbor [1352]
- US 41 to Copper Harbor, Bete Gris [1524]
- Scenic 41, tree tunnel [432]
- US 41, M203, M-26, 5 Mile Point [1749]
- Scenic 41 & Forest highways [1682]
- Shoreline roads & highways [1375]
- Along lakeshore areas, M203 to Calumet Waterworks, Sedar Bay & others around historical areas [1557]
- As at Copper Harbor, along Lake Superior, etc. [1818]
- Any road north of Houghton Bridge! [397]
- Fix these roads all over the Copper Country! [1340]
- All in Keweenaw Co. [1351]
- All [1548]
- All [1747]
- Mine St., 203, Swedetown-Osceola Rd., US 41 Copper Harbor Rd. [713]
- M203/US 41 north [1179]
- Rural parts of all highways & roads [1463]
- Gay to Lac LaBelle—5 mile point road throughout Keweenaw! [416]
- Lake Linden—Gay—Lac LaBelle; Ahmeek (Phoenix)—Eagle River—Harbor Copper Harbor [994]
- Hancock to Lake Linden [278]
- Ripley to Dollar Bay [497]
- Copper Harbor area [772]
- Copper Harbor arboreal [1374]
- Both sides of the canal [1449]
- Covered drive in Liminga, lakeshore from Eagle River to Copper Harbor [1591]
- Copper Harbor area, Houghton & Hancock Canal roads [1709]