

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

➤ Torch Lake Township surveys returned – 99. Total surveys returned, Houghton County – 1,936.

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

- Only in Houghton, right? [1821]\*

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

- What are the disadvantages? [1804]

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

- There is a lack of good jobs. Most young people go into retail which offers no growth or training in a specific field for future work. [48]
- good paying jobs [1205]

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

- For start-up period only & based on merit of business to area (i.e. sustainable) [751]
- New businesses benefit as much from schools and government services as much as anyone. [1169]

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

*Summary (with number of responses indicated; verbatim responses on pp. 5-6):*

- ❖ teen/youth center/activities – 8
- ❖ non-motorized trails (nature/hiking - 5, biking/jogging - 3, cross country skiing - 2) - 8
- ❖ swimming area (public pool - 2, beach/swimming area - 4) - 6
- ❖ public waterfront access (1 mentioned marina and boat launch) - 5
- ❖ park - 5
- ❖ playgrounds - 4
- ❖ skating - 2
- ❖ picnic area, aerobics, roller skating, waterfront development, improved sidewalks, multi-purpose indoor and outdoor recreational facility, physical fitness center, golf course, more school focus on individual quiet sports (cross country skiing, skating), improved wildlife habitat and snowmobile trails, none, we like the peace and quiet (can go to recreation areas if we can't find our own entertainment) - 1 each

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

- Buildings with extreme architecture, such as the D & N building in Hancock should be outlawed. [1169]

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

- Re: Mine St. Station—our local officials sold out!!! Rolled over and died! \$\$ [751]
- Use of good design is acceptable without trying to look like a new old town! [1569]

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

- \$ cost not always feasible [1569]
- Houghton High School?? [1804]

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

- Land should also be protected from loggers. In my particular incident, loggers clear-cut next to me and due to lack of trees now, my property & neighbor's property flood. [48]
- How about more green space in Calumet/park district? [751]
- Who owns this land? [1804]

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

*Summary (with number of responses indicated; verbatim responses on p. 6)*

- ❖ US-41 (to Copper Harbor or “Keweenaw County” -18, unspecified or “north” -1) - 19
- ❖ M-26 (to Copper Harbor or “Keweenaw County” -14, unspecified or “north” -3, Ripley to Torch Lake and Laurium -1) - 18
- ❖ Freda-Redridge covered road - 16
- ❖ Gay-Lac La Belle (two mentioned Bete Gris) - 6
- ❖ Brockway Mountain - 3
- ❖ lakeshore roads, unspecified - 3
- ❖ all (one specified Keweenaw County) - 3
- ❖ Bootjack - 2
- ❖ Gratiot Lake, Cliff Drive, Misery Bay, 5 Mile Point, M-203, Paradise, Rabbit Bay, Pike Lake, Jacobsville - 1 each

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

- Too many NUTS are ruining our natural land—people with money & way out ideas! [1604]

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

- Waterfront development is too rapid and disorganized in character [1569]

**23. Property is becoming unaffordable for local residents.**

- Aren't all residents local? [1804]
- Outsiders who come here to live then try to take control & tell us how to live. [1885]

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

- We need a transportation system particularly for the elderly and the handicapped. [1169]

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

- I moved here 9 years ago to get away from all the CRAP that now seems to be finding us! [751]

**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**

- We need jobs that pay more than min. wage or full time with benefits. [1023]
- Whenever there are good job openings available in our community why do we always bring in people from the outside when we have local talent as good and a lot better. We will never keep our young people if all we have to offer is minimum wages. [1145] #16
- See [1205] #26
- We need more industry-related jobs not retail. Retail brings minimum wage jobs, industry brings better paying jobs. [1216]
- See [1336] #2
- We need more employment in our area. We should encourage new businesses to our area. Too many of our young people are forced to move for lack of employment. [1415] #6, 22
- Area needs jobs that pay more than minimum wage. It's the same old story of rich getting richer and the rest barely existing. [1434]
- You don't have about fair wages for adult in any jobs that are in the area. So won't have to travel or move. [478]

**2. Business and economic development**

- We need to attract non-polluting, socially responsible business and develop non-motorized recreational opportunities like cross-country ski/bike/hiking trails. There is already a glut of snowmobile/jet ski facilities. [751] #17, 32
- See [1580] #29

- Economic impact on the area is the most important concern. We need good paying jobs to keep our young people from leaving the area. We cannot keep things as they were! [1336] #32
- More businesses & industries will keep people in this area & keep this area a destination rather than an origin. We can preserve some of the historic atmosphere, but is it worth it? What good is it to preserve the history when nobody can afford to live here & enjoy it? We need to move into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century! [1821]

### **3. Concerns about development**

- We have too many posted or no trespassing signs in the Keweenaw & it is getting worse. [777]
- Why does the Houghton Sewage Treatment Plant have to be lit up 24 hours a day? Took away the stars. [1796]

### **4. Chain retailers vs. locally owned shops**

### **5. Shopping/ Entertainment/ Restaurants**

### **6. Tourism**

- Tourist business development should be encouraged but we must not neglect attracting industry to the area. [1174]
- I feel we should really improve our waterfronts & parks to attract more tourists. This is one of our ways to bring money to the U.P. [1415] #1, 22
- See [1496] #21

### **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 Ave.**

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

- Controlled growth on US 41 – 26 between Houghton and Calumet is good. The problem is lakeshore. It looks like Torch Lake will be entirely developed. There should be some incentive for landowners or government to maintain some percentage for use & wildlife. We are going to end up like the rain forest. [1092]

### **13. Waterfront development and public areas**

- See [1092] #12
- Water is our most valuable resource. Let's keep it clean and accessible to all. [1443]

### **14. Property values and taxes**

- I don't believe property evaluation should continue to escalate just because some—mostly city people—are willing to pay outrageous prices for a piece of property to build on. I'm referring mostly to residential property. [578]
- Property taxes are too high. [1580] #26, 29

### **15. Planning**

- There is a conceit among individuals who promote planning/control that their wisdom is sufficient to encompass all options and possibilities in the future. Individuals confronting their own needs and limits make wiser decisions and this in fact accounts for the character of our present communities which we wish to preserve! [1309]
- Long-range planning and having the infrastructure grow with future controlled development while retaining the natural beauty is of main concern (a hard task). Man exploiting nature usually wins. [1586]

### **16. Cooperation among units of government**

- I find a lot of our communities should work together, which they don't, especially our villages. [1145] #1

### **17. Lack of public input in development decisions, favoritism**

- We need a citizens' advisory committee to have a voice in planning to preserve historic character/natural beauty, avoid more mistakes like the hideous (TALL!) signs in Portage Twp. Larger cities are now seeking alternatives to strip malls. [751] #2, 32
- Let's keep these issues before the public and create mechanisms for public involvement. [1285]
- See [1580] #29

### **18. Zoning, ordinances, building permits**

- What is lacking here are elements of society found elsewhere including: informed planning & zoning boards, building permits & inspections and zoning ordinances. Also a key is code enforcement. The economic development will happen if the community educates more than they whine! [1569]

## **19. Balancing environment and development**

### **20. Cultural history/community character/ appearance/signs**

- See [751] #17

### **21. Small town feeling/ quality of life**

- If we wanted city living we could have moved. Let's keep the small town feeling. Bring business back to town instead of making new businesses. Keep the Copper Country a quiet place to visit, to get away from it all. [1060]
- A wholesome small town atmosphere can be preserved and enhanced to attract tourism dollars—"city" type development can be accomplished to satisfy the local hunger for fast food and "throw-away" goods & all can cohabit the Copper Country with good planning and vision. [1496]

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

- See [1205] #26
- A lot of our old buildings need face-lifts or to be rebuilt. [1415] #1, 6
- It is a little late for this—most of the historic buildings are gone or beyond repair and even Calumet has a mall which was supposedly done in historic style. [1791]

### **23. Open space, undeveloped land**

### **24. Drinking water, wastewater, and health concerns**

### **25. Property rights and regulations**

- Government should stay out of business and let business run as it did before Government stuck its stupid nose in. [1073]
- People (or corporations) who own property and have paid taxes on it for years should have the right to build on it. (Examples—Bete Gris & Eagle River condos) [1183]
- I don't feel private property owners should be dictated to as to their own private land use. Unless it is a "gross" mismanagement or destruction of the environment. Persons that don't own a particular piece of property should make suggestions as to use, but nothing binding to the owner. [1218]
- We have a real "thing" for all the invasion of private property holders—wetlands, etc. There is far too much tromping on property owners by environmentalists, etc. There needs to be "some" control, but a "Big Brother" attitude is the norm now!!! [1448]
- The tree huggers, DNR, and the Corps of Engineers has gotten too powerful and gone too far in trying to rule the country. [1553]
- We need less interference with individuals who own land. Private ownership is the best way to preserve property. [1653]

### **26. Road maintainance, traffic control, and safety**

- We need roads (good paved roads & a county road commission to maintain them, not ride around in \$30,000 SUV and go for coffee); good paying jobs; people are worried about historic buildings which we have far too few of and start to worry what's happening to the welfare of the people. [1205]
- Need more revenue for roads, we have terrible roads [1299]
- Roads are in poor repair. [1580] #14, 29
- Some of the outlying roads are terrible and need to be maintained better. More people have built beautiful homes & getting to them is outrageous. I hate to see our community tax going for \$40 million to build a baseball stadium most of us will never see & don't need. Put it towards road improvement. [1590]

### **27. Snow removal**

### **28. Public and non-motorized transportation**

### **29. Tax incentives**

- Business and industry should be welcomed and encouraged and given breaks to strengthen employment. Michigan Tech's involvement hinders progress, because they take first for themselves. [1580] #14, 26

- Why not eliminate school taxes for seniors 65 & over—they have paid their share. Why do taxes need to be raised as soon as a person improves their building or adds on? That’s why so many property owners neglect to paint, etc. [1578]

### **30. Government and public services**

#### **31. Recreation**

- See [751] #2

#### **32. Survey**

- Thank you—it’s time someone asked us, the residents! [751] #2, 17,
- Thank you for the survey. [1336] #2

#### **33. Miscellaneous**

- I live in an apartment. [1335]
- I don’t know of anything further at this time. [1689]

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

- a teen center may help [551]
- teen center [1693]
- places & activities for teens [1254]
- place for youth & teenagers [1451]
- youth programs to keep them off the streets [1590]
- kids need healthy places to be—not “hanging” on street corners [1610]
- pool & game place for teens [1820]
- Bike/jogging trails (paved) [770]
- a nature trail bike path away from the Bootjack road, maybe around the lake [1415]
- bicycle lanes, more ski trails, more public access to lakes & rivers, lakeshore drive from Copper Harbor, north to Jacobsville [1174]
- More public beaches, hiking trails [1060]
- playgrounds, swimming, nature trails for walking or non-motorized bikes [1144]
- swimming pools [1145]
- public swimming pool [1216]
- swimming and play area, children & young adults [1890]
- public access without development of park junk; That long dock by Ray Kestner’s is what we DO NOT need. Wasted money—no parking—junk design—low use. [1653]
- public waterfront development [1285]
- boat launch and marina are needed [1336]
- public access to water, community multi-purpose recreation facilities (indoors and out), hiking trails where hunting is prohibited [1443]
- improve sidewalks & existing parks [1569]
- parks, swimming areas, skating [1304]
- better park [1129]
- a park [1689]
- public parks access, nature trails [1277]
- children’s playground, picnic area [1827]
- Outside ice for kids to use - playground [151]
- more focus from schools on individual & quiet sports (cross country skiing, skating, etc.) [1496]
- aerobics, roller-skating [1614]
- more skiing [1796]
- physical fitness center [1821]
- Golf course [1023]

- We like the peace and quiet and can drive to recreational spots if we're too lazy to create our own entertainment [751]
- We need to improve or retain wildlife habitat and snowmobile trails. [1092]
- none [1169]

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

- US 41 from Calumet to Copper Harbor [412]
- US 41 Keweenaw County, lakeshore drive Keweenaw [578]
- US 41 & M26 in Keweenaw Co., Gay-Betsy Road, Gratiot Lake Rd., Cliff Drive [751]
- US 41 Hancock - Copper Harbor [1060]
- US 41 to Copper Harbor, M26—same area [1129]
- US 41 south of Copper Harbor, arboreal tunnel [1174]
- Covered road to Copper Harbor [1614]
- US 41 to Harbor, Gay road to Lac LaBelle [1406]
- 5 Mile Point/M41 central to Copper Harbor, Gay-Lac LaBelle [1450]
- M-26/US 41 Keweenaw County [1653]
- M-26 Copper Harbor to Eagle River [1693]
- M-26 to Copper Harbor [1821]
- M-26 Eagle River to Copper Harbor, Bete Gris to Gay, US 41 Delaware to Copper Harbor [1885]
- US 41 north, 26 north, covered drive, etc. [1796]
- M-26 from Phoenix to Copper Harbor, 41—Phoenix to Copper Harbor [770]
- M-26 to Copper Harbor area, scenic road to Redridge [1144]
- Along Lake Superior to Copper Harbor [1415]
- Lakeshore Drive to Copper Harbor [1586]
- M-26 Ripley through Torch Lake area to Laurium, Freda road & Paradise road [1596]
- The road to the Harbor [1689]
- covered road, US 41 Hancock to Copper Harbor, M26, M203 [1890]
- Freda, 26 & 41 to Copper Harbor [1485]
- Covered road (to Freda) - US 41 North to Copper Harbor [1020]
- Covered road to Freda [1820]
- arboreal tunnel toward Redridge and the roads leading up to Brockway Mountain [1218]
- “covered” road (Freda, Copper Harbor), dunes area [1277]
- “covered road,” M-26 (Eagle River to Copper Harbor), US 41 (Phoenix to Copper Harbor) [1443]
- Houghton to Freda covered road, US 41 Delaware to Copper Harbor road, Lac LaBelle to Lake Linden road, Gay to Mohawk road, Toivola to Misery Bay road, and M-26 Eagle River to Copper Harbor road [1169]
- Lakeshore roads—the covered road on the way to Freda [1827]
- covered road, Brockway [1285]
- Covered roads [1072]
- Covered road [1569]
- Gay to Bete Gris, Copper Harbor to Eagle River [1791]
- Brockway Mountain Drive, covered road off Houghton Canal Road [1145]
- All scenic roads [1074]
- All in Keweenaw county [1015]
- All [1609]
- Most along the lakeshore [1496]
- along lakes, mountains & forest [1183]
- US 26, Bootjack Road, Pike Lake Road & beyond to Jacobsville [1590]
- Bootjack & Rabbit Bay areas [413]
- roads in Houghton Co. are not much better than cow paths [1205]
- Who decides? [1804]