

**VILLAGE OF MACKINAW CITY  
MASTER PLAN**

**PUBLIC INPUT WORKSHOPS**

***VISIONING WORKSHOP  
SUMMARY REPORT***

**September 20, 2006  
6:30-9:15 PM**

**Mackinaw City Public School  
Multi-Purpose Room**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### ***Background***

The Village of Mackinaw City Planning Commission voted late in 2004 to rewrite the Village Master Plan, then called the Comprehensive Development Plan, as it was beginning to be outdated. The Village of Mackinaw City's Economic Development Corporation (EDC) was also beginning a study, with a consultant, to write an economic restructuring plan. It was decided to begin with the economic restructuring plan via the EDC as part of the Master Plan process. The EDC's plan was adopted in May of 2006 and the economic development vision, goals, and implementation plan will be incorporated into the Village's Master Plan. The planning staff of the Village gathered data for the Master Plan during the summer of 2006. The next step was to create a vision for the future development of the Village. The first step in this process was to hold the first in a series of public workshops to .

### ***Process***

Notices were published in local papers, invitations were sent out along with over 1200 citizen surveys, and letters were sent to stakeholder groups, neighboring municipal entities, and government and tribal agencies. Local civic organizations were also contacted. On September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2006, a representation of the stakeholders in Mackinaw City's future gathered to share their vision for their Village. The evening's goal was to engage stakeholders in a visioning process that would eventually lead to a prioritized list of Mackinaw City's treasures, challenges, and shared vision for the future of Mackinaw City. The evening was a great success and all 63 people in attendance had a chance to voice their concerns and hear the thoughts of others.

The evening was facilitated by four planners from Northeast Michigan Council of Governments (NEMCOG). The facilitation technique was the nominal group technique, which allows for all participants to voice their ideas and opinions, listen to others equally, and then vote on the prioritized list. This technique is very successful in distilling ideas from all participants equally and creating a shared vision.

The workshop was broken down into three exercises. First participants were asked to identify the assets that we should work to protect. Participants were asked what they valued most and to indicate their favorite things about Mackinaw City. Why do they live there?

Second on the agenda was an exercise which helped identify the issues that Mackinaw City stakeholders feel were the biggest challenges. What are the biggest challenges in Mackinaw City today and what major issues face the Village in the next 20 years?

The final exercise asked stakeholders to describe their ideal Mackinaw City. What would they most like to see happen in the Village in the next 20 years? They were asked to describe what would make Mackinaw City their dream Village. The responses were very interesting and broad ranging.

## AGENDA

- 6:30 p.m. Opening Remarks  
Community Survey  
The Planning Process  
Purpose of public input sessions  
Overview of tonight's process  
Designate table recorder and leader
- 7:00 p.m. Assets to Protect: (Mackinaw City's Treasures)
- What things do you value most about the Village?
  - What are your favorite things about Mackinaw City?
  - Why do you live here? Why did you move here?
- 30 minutes to identify Community Assets and vote
- 7:30 p.m. Issues to Address: (Mackinaw City's Challenges)
- What are the biggest challenges in Mackinaw City today?
  - What are the priority issues currently facing the Village?
- 30 minutes to identify Issues and vote
- 8:00 p.m. Break and vote on Assets to Protect
- 8:15 p.m. Visions for Mackinaw City
- What ideas do you have for the future of Mackinaw City?
  - What does your ideal or dream Village look and feel like?
  - What would make your Village better?
- 60 minutes to identify the visions and vote on top five
- 9:15 p.m. Wrap-up and Vote on Issues to Address

## RESULTS

### *Assets to Protect*

First priority of a planning process is to make sure that all good things that people experience in Mackinaw City are protected as we grow. This exercise revealed that Mackinaw City's **history** is the most important asset to protect. The asset, 'historical character & ambience', received far and away the most votes as the most important asset Mackinaw City values most. This emphasis on the history of Mackinaw City as an important asset reveals itself in other efforts by the Village. The Village, in partnership with the Mackinaw Area Visitors' Bureau and the Mackinaw Area Chamber of Commerce, recently adopted a new destination logo that includes the phrase *Living History, Making History*.

People also value the small town atmosphere that Mackinaw City provides. This includes the feeling of safety and friendliness of the people. Knowing the names and faces of the people you live with and encounter through the day is a valuable asset for Mackinaw City residents and business owners.

Mackinaw City has an historic and emotional link to the water. Views of the water were ranked third as an important asset to protect. Stakeholders in Mackinaw's future have clearly stated that these views are highly valued and in need of protection. Millions of visitors have made Mackinaw City a destination for this very reason.

Other items of note are the school system and our streetscapes. Schools are at the heart of any community, especially a small town. Schools nurture what are hopefully the future generations of Mackinaw City. The streetscapes are part of what makes Mackinaw City such an attractive destination for visitors and add to community pride and aesthetics. We receive many compliments on the streetscapes from visitors and dignitaries. Streetscapes of this quality are rarely seen in other communities.

The following table shows the items that made the final list and the number of votes each received.

### **Assets to Protect: (Mackinaw City's Treasures)**

*What things do you value most about the Village?*

*What are your favorite things about Mackinaw City?*

*Why do you live here? Why did you move here?*

<b>Votes</b>	<b>Item</b>
41	Historical character & ambience
25	Small town atmosphere
24	Maintain water views
21	School system
13	Streetscape of East Central Avenue
12	Visitor friendly community
12	Local police, fire, emergency

- 6 Access to the environment
- 6 Fresh air clean water
- 3 Quiet environment

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- 3 Commercialization of waterfront
- 1 Friendly people
- 1 Service clubs
- 0 Traffic - lack of congestion

*Issues to Address*

In addition to protecting assets, a healthy community knows the challenges that it will face in the future and be working to meet those challenges. Mackinaw City residents believe that the community will have to work on providing more year-round business and employment opportunities. Diversity of business opportunities is an issue in Mackinaw. Supported by the results of the EDC’s economic restructuring plan, the Village needs more non-tourist based industry to provide balance and improve its economic health.

Lack of medical facilities are also a priority issue facing Mackinaw City. More of our Village’s population is over the age of 60. This segment of our population will need medical attention. There will be value added to our community and our residents’ health with the addition of doctor’s offices or even a pharmacy.

Just as it was an asset for the Village, views of the water will be a challenge to protect. The stakeholders suggested a viewshed protection ordinance as a priority issue for the Village. Viewsheds are the areas that lie between a person and an object of visual importance. One important viewshed type within the Village is the view of the water from our public rights of way. These views are important as they provide more reasons to attract the general public to the Village and are one of our most important economic and environmental resources.

Viable year round jobs and the taxes are also going to be challenges, according to our workshop participants. Just like the need to have more year round business, there is a need for employment opportunities that last all year. Taxes were also mentioned as a challenge for the Village. As in other forums, the high rate of taxes is mentioned as a potential barrier to attracting new business and home owners to Mackinaw City.

The following table highlights the top three responses from each table, duplicates combined, and the votes that each item received.

**Issues to Address:(Mackinaw City’s Challenges)**

*What are the biggest challenges in Mackinaw City today?*

*What are the priority issues currently facing the Village?*

<b>Votes</b>	<b>Item</b>
28	Year-round business/diverse business
23	Lack of medical facilities
18	Viewshed ordinance - allow view of water

16	Viable year-round jobs
15	Taxes
14	Zoning - balance utility & aesthetics
	Family friendly store fronts improve offensive
7	windows
7	Control growth
5	Mackinaw City reputation (protect it)
5	Water/sewer system
4	Extending tourist season
4	Recycle transfer stations
3	Park up-keep
2	Architectural theme
2	Expose students to outside opportunities
1	Zoning - beachfront property
1	Lack of swimming beaches
0	Maintain quality of life

*Vision for Mackinaw City's Future*

A very important part of a planning process is to get a vision of the future from the stakeholders of the community. This vision won't give guidance on specific decisions that need to be made, but they provide guidance in creating goals and general policy statements. Our stakeholders shared many ideas of what a future Mackinaw City would include. This exercise did not include a final vote by all stakeholders, rather all tables and their top 5 visioning ideas were included. There was some duplication and those topics were combined. However, many ideas varied enough to leave them separated. Future focus group workshops will take these visions and create more specific goals and objectives.

The future vision of Mackinaw City expressed by our stakeholders seeks a Village with controlled light industry, light manufacturing, where its residents have locally-available health care, more lakefront dining/shopping/public access opportunities, and more year-round employment. We see some recurring themes which strongly encourage year-round employment, preservation of environmental assets, specifically the water front views, and more health care.

The following is the list of visions and the votes from each table. Again, it is important to note that this exercise did not get prioritized by the whole group with a second vote and is, therefore, a much larger list. This is additional valuable information for the Planning Commission to distill.

<b>Votes</b>	<b>Item</b>
16	Controlled light industry, light manufacturing
13	Health care available locally
13	Mackinaw harbor complex with restaurant on lake, perhaps floating, boardwalk
12	Year-round employment

- 7 Fully developed Historic Village
- 6 Pursue high tech businesses
- 6 Responsive local government
- 6 Warm gathering - community place
- 6 Clean beaches
- 6 Maintain small town atmosphere
- 6 Enhance use of Coast Guard Cutter - year round marketing
- 5 Adult education classes
- 5 More development in historic projects
- 5 Senior housing community with facilities - assisted & independent
- 5 Tax abatements to attract businesses
- 5 Underground utilities
- 4 Buy groceries in town
- 4 Center for arts & crafts production which would bring artists to Mackinaw City
- 4 Parking structure that fits into streetscape
- 4 Attraction resort
- 3 Communication system for reaching locals
- 3 Develop fishing village at Headlands
- 3 Electronic shop
- 3 Interactive historical museum - year round
- 3 Marked historical walkway - through town to historical village
- 3 Modernize infrastructure, especially communication infrastructure
- 3 Monthly newsletter from village council
- 3 Professional services (i.e. Doctors, lawyers, etc.)
- 3 Summer programs for children & youth
- 3 WiFi (greater access to technology, wireless, etc.)
- 2 Basic clothing store
- 2 Businesses that leave every year to support local things more
- 2 Control height of businesses & houses
- 2 Greater coordination of community groups
- 2 Greater use of Headlands
- 2 Library - more hours
- 2 More comprehensive education system
- 2 More diverse businesses
- 2 More emergency staff - fire, EMT - & community staff to handle situations
- 2 More intergenerational support
- 2 More events for pre-teen & teen entertainment
- 2 Promote local producers of "Made in Michigan" products
- 2 Provide services for retirees
- 2 Public transportation
- 2 Recreation - horseback, boat rental
- 2 Recycling
- 2 Resort town - convention center
- 2 School with arts & languages & drama & automotive classes (vocational training)
- 2 Sidewalks throughout community
- 2 Smart growth

- 2 Year-round tourist destination
- 1 Best in class - targeted services education
- 1 Boat shows
- 1 Branch of Lake Superior State University
- 1 Childhood through old age - whole package (medical - schools - further tax payer services)
- 1 Civic & service organizations need to welcome new members
- 1 Community working together - agencies
- 1 Consistent historical architecture
- 1 Convention center
- 1 Cute, historic, free transportation - trolley, cars, etc.
- 1 Daily city newspaper/newsletter via email
- 1 Dark skies - northern lights
- 1 Good neighborhoods - for housing - variety
- 1 Growth of core population
- 1 Keep it so non-motorized can be used - don't drive to all - bike - walk
- 1 Mackinaw Film Festival
- 1 More diverse age-spread of community members
- 1 More night time outdoor entertainment later than 10 PM
- 1 Native American skill contests - displays
- 1 New library/information & education center
- 1 Newspaper
- 1 Continuing education
- 1 Offer work available to educated old & young
- 1 Promote & publicize archaeological digs @ fort
- 1 Public swimming pool
- 1 Purification of areas
- 1 Quality school system
- 1 Residential & Commercial architecture consistent with history
- 1 Treat locals as well as tourists
- 1 Walking - safe environment
- 1 Wider diversity of entertainment in Crossing