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Otsego County: One County, One Vision report, prepared at the request of the Otsego County Economic Alliance, was funded by People and Land, an initiative of the Kellogg Foundation.

INTRODUCTION

Description of a community vision

A community vision is the story of a place, a detailed depiction of current conditions and plausible futures. It identifies community features that residents value and those they wish to improve upon. A vision represents an aggregation of viewpoints, desires, and goals—sometimes conflicting. Nonetheless, a vision is the shared dream of how a community could be at its very best; a common ground with regard to growth and development. Just as a stained glass window is appreciated in its entirety yet made of separate pieces of colored glass, so too a community vision is a portrait of the future based on individual residents' unique views. The diversity of opinions among the community results in the potential for portions of the vision to contrast with some residents' personal views. Inasmuch as two neighbors might not agree on everything yet both of their viewpoints are equally valid and important, residents' contrasting views are just as vital to a vision that reflects the whole community's desires.



Motivation for the visioning process in Otsego County

The Otsego County Economic Alliance hosted the Growth Management Roundtable on June 24, 2003 to promote discourse among community leaders on the nature of economic development and growth within the county. Among the critical issues cited by attendees were sprawling development along the M-32 corridor; lack of a coordinated land use and growth management plan for the county; an overly bureaucratic multi-jurisdictional review process for projects; lack of cooperation among adjacent government entities; and the significance of the natural environment to economic, commercial, and population growth. Recognizing the size and scope of these issues, the Growth Management Roundtable participants recommended an outside consultant be engaged to facilitate the countywide discussion necessary for the creation and implementation of a community vision for Otsego County. Keith Charters and R. Clark Associates, Inc. were contracted to facilitate the visioning process.

Creation of the community vision for Otsego County

Although the Otsego County Economic Alliance initiated the visioning process, Otsego County residents authored the “Otsego County: One County, One Vision” report by participating in public meetings, filling out surveys, providing personal stories, and critiquing report drafts. Their involvement was essential to the creation of a vision which captures the unique characteristics, nuances, and diversity of Otsego County. Many gave their time and energy to formulate viable/realistic solutions to current issues, as well as to address those looming on the horizon. This report is the compilation of efforts of old-timers and youth; year-round and summer residents; and concerned citizens and government officials:

OTSEGO COUNTY ONE VISION

STORY-TELLING

(H) Please write your story using a "BEGINNING, MIDDLE and END" in the space below. Please feel free to use the back of the page or on additional pages if you need to.

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Use of the community vision by Otsego County residents

Growth and change are inevitable. Otsego County residents involved in the visioning process, however, can influence planning for better growth within their county. Undoubtedly, hard choices will have to be made during the implementation phase. Crucial to good decision making is realizing present conditions, determining a desired future, and deciding what

INTRODUCTION

concessions need to be made to achieve the desired end state. “Otsego County: One County, One Vision” provides two of these pieces; it identifies specific areas that should be preserved and it outlines the direction residents wish their county to pursue. Community officials and residents can use this document to help prioritize and evaluate development projects. The vision is the optimal destination as decided upon by community members, and the zoning ordinance and master plan provide the means of reaching that place. Thus, these documents need to be consistent in direction and allowances. As the framework for managing and directing growth discussions, this community vision can assist individuals or groups in coming to terms with the issues facing Otsego County today and in the years to come.

METHODOLOGY

Since the most successful projects traditionally are bottom-up—those initiated and directed by the citizens—the “Otsego County: One County, One Vision” project plan incorporated several techniques of acquiring residents’ thoughts and opinions. Methods of citizen participation included visioning sessions with visual preferences exercises and brainstorming, community assessment worksheets, summary meeting feedback, and an interactive website.

OptionFinder visual preference survey

At the Elmira, Gaylord, Johannesburg, Vanderbilt, and Waters visioning sessions, county residents were shown images of different development types depicting both community-wide and site specific development patterns. Through the use of OptionFinder keypads, attendees expressed their preferences on architectural and site details that affect the overall desirability of Otsego County. Images that appealed to a majority of residents included preserved agricultural or wooded land, clustered residential developments, shared road access and parking behind buildings in commercial areas, and improved community character through sign regulations, corporate identity standards, and site furnishings. The visual preference information as well as the other components of the OptionFinder exercise, which include demographic information and an educational component, can be utilized by residents to formulate community character guidelines that could become a development guidebook.



Brainstorming B

Attendees of the five visioning sessions were given an opportunity to vocalize their view of Otsego County’s future, how it could be achieved, and issues which need to be addressed. People were asked to be creative, take risks, and be open to other opinions. All of the ideas expressed were recorded on large sheets of paper and displayed around the room. Following the brainstorming session, each person was given five dots and asked to vote for those they felt were the most important issues. The tallied votes provided a better understanding as to which issues were most important to Otsego County residents. The data collected through the brainstorming process is included in tables in the appendix which correspond with the six *How We* visioning themes.

METHODOLOGY

Community assessment worksheets CA CAY

Community members attending the visioning sessions, as well as area youth, were given the opportunity to share their thoughts/opinions on the current condition of Otsego County. Individuals were asked to list positive/attractive and negative/unattractive physical and cultural features, natural and man-made features that make the county special and unique, and internal and external forces that have changed the county over the past ten to fifteen years. Additionally, residents were asked to share their personal stories to provide greater depth to the visioning process. The community assessment worksheets illustrate residents' sense of place. The data collected through community assessment worksheets is included in tables in the appendix which correspond with the six visioning themes: *How We Work, How We Play, How We Learn, How We Live, How We Get Around, and How We Grow*.

Green/red cards

On June 22 and 29, 2004, community members attended summary meetings to give initial feedback on the strategic actions that would appear in the "Otsego County: One County, One Vision" report. Meeting attendees were given green (consent) and red (dissent) cards to indicate visually to the facilitators whether the strategic actions reflected the overall community view and supported the visioning findings. Any item that received a red response was discussed following the strategic actions presentation. This provided early feedback on whether or not the facilitators captured the community's views.



Summary meeting feedback forms

To assist in drafting a vision that reflects residents' desires, summary meeting feedback forms were provided to attendees of the June 22 and 29, 2004 meetings to obtain their impressions of the material covered in the summary presentation. Attendees were asked to critique whether or not the summary presentation captured their vision for Otsego County or if any important items were omitted. Information provided was incorporated into the final report.

Assets and opportunities: what makes Otsego County special

Otsego County consists of nine townships (Bagley, Charlton, Chester, Corwith, Dover, Elmira, Hayes, Livingston, and Otsego Lake), the City of Gaylord, the Village of Vanderbilt, and a number of unincorporated hamlets (Elmira, Johannesburg, Waters). The county is a blend of a traditional northern Michigan community and an emerging tourist/resort destination. Many longtime residents opted to forgo higher wages elsewhere for the opportunity to live where they could enjoy small-town life in close proximity to outdoor recreational areas. As one resident explained, "...Influencing my decision to accept a job in northern Michigan with less pay for a similar amount of work was acceptance of the trade-off of higher cost of living, less housing availability in exchange for physical beauty of my environment; clean air; quiet, starry skies I could actually see; lakes, rivers, wildlife in close proximity; people in the community of like mind. It was worth it to have a lower economic standard of living balanced against an absolute wealth of the non-material values that matter to me. Thirty years later, I have never regretted my decision. I love living in a small close knit community where healthy difference of opinion is acceptable."

In addition to the city, village, hamlets, and rural year-round residents, Otsego County has long been the vacation home to people from throughout southern Michigan and the Midwest. Nevertheless, over the past ten years Otsego County changed as the population has grown by 30 percent (see appendix for Table 1).

While a portion of this growth can be attributed to the 13 percent growth throughout the nation, Otsego County was one of the fastest growing counties in the state of Michigan (see appendix for Table 2).

The forty to fifty-nine age groups experienced the greatest increase in numbers, quite possibly a result of the relocation of Baby-boomers upon retirement to Otsego County due to the desirability of its natural environment.

OVERVIEW OF OTSEGO COUNTY, MI

Located at the 45th parallel in northern Michigan, Otsego County's four seasons and natural resources are among its greatest assets. The woods and forests which drew loggers and settlers in the 19th century still draw people in the 21st century – this time recreationalists along with the new residents. The 96,725 acres of public land alone make up over 29 percent of the county's 336,749 acres.¹ Recreational activities such as camping, hiking, mountain biking, boating, fishing, hunting, cross-country skiing, and snowmobiling are the principle public uses of state and county land. Additionally, Otsego County is the ideal place for water enthusiasts with nearly 200 miles of streams and rivers (66 of which are state or federally designated wild/scenic/natural rivers) and more than 700 inland lakes over 50 acres (including Otsego Lake – 1,972 acres and five miles in length).

Recreation in Otsego County is not limited to outdoor and water based opportunities; the Otsego County Community Center, Sportsplex, the Energy Center, and numerous county parks provide recreational options for residents. Furthermore, ski resorts and golf courses are among the primary tourist draws. In fact, with twenty-two championship golf courses, Otsego County has become the “Golf Mecca of the Midwest.”²

Given its location along the Interstate 75 corridor—the major north/south thoroughfare in Michigan's lower peninsula—Otsego County has benefited from and been forced to deal with extensive tourist traffic. The recreational destination is within a days drive of several major Midwest cities including: Chicago, IL (320 miles); Cleveland, OH (380 miles); Detroit, MI (230 miles); Grand Rapids, MI (192 miles); Indianapolis, IN (490 miles); and Lansing, MI (170 miles). Moreover, Alpena, Petoskey, Traverse City, Mackinaw City, and Houghton Lake are less than ninety minutes away.

¹ Northeastern Michigan Council of Governments

² Michigan Economic Development Corporation, “Otsego County” 2003. [http://medc.michigan.org/miinfo/places/Otsego County/](http://medc.michigan.org/miinfo/places/Otsego%20County/)

VISIONING THEMES

Introduction

Otsego County will continue to dramatically change if present growth patterns continue over the next ten to twenty years. Without proper planning and management, the forests, waters, farms, and other natural assets that have drawn so many people to the county may be compromised, and people will look to other northern Michigan communities for the small-town life and recreational opportunities they once experienced in Otsego County. Change may be inevitable, but residents can help determine the shape of future development within their community. As one vision participant stated, “I see nothing wrong with growth, so long as reasonable management is done—such as limiting activities in certain areas, adhering to nuisance laws, and providing reasonable police and health protection. When people can get together and form an outlook in order to regulate growth, it can be more like what people need.”

Formulating a community vision is challenging, yet determining what actions should be taken and when to achieve that vision is equally daunting. What does Otsego County need to do to remain economically competitive—especially with the potential exit of the oil and gas companies? How can Otsego County utilize its competitive advantages—location and natural resources—without compromising them? How can residents preserve the natural environment without compromising individual owners’ property rights? How can Otsego County achieve the lofty ambitions formulated in the visioning process without neglecting today’s priorities and given limited financial resources?

To help Otsego County residents determine where to begin, this section of the report outlines themes identified through the visioning process. Topics are divided into six thematic categories: *How We Work*, *How We Play*, *How We Learn*, *How We Live*, *How We Get Around*, and *How We Grow*. Just as Otsego County residents’ lives are interconnected, many of the issues presented are interrelated. Topics frequently link multiple themes, and, consequently, can be found in several categories. Each thematic section includes (1) a descriptive synopsis, (2) response chart, (3) strategic actions for implementation, and (4) potential challenges to realizing the community’s vision. First,

the descriptive synopsis portrays in words how Otsego County residents imagine their community to be at its very best. Second, the response chart indicates the percentage of Brainstorming, and Community Assessment Worksheet responses related to the section. In other words, the chart provides an indication of the significance of the section to Otsego County residents. Third, the strategic actions provide direction for policy debates. The applicability of some may be questionable. Nevertheless, these strategic actions offer plausible alternatives for determining options for retaining and developing the community's character as Otsego County continues to grow. Forth, the list of foreseeable challenges to the implementation of strategic actions are areas for community discourse and compromise in order to achieve the kind of future that residents want for Otsego County.

Throughout each section symbols have been used to link the strategic actions to the citizens responses presented in tables in the appendix. Given the importance of local wisdom and professional experience, symbols have been selected to emphasize those areas of greatest concern. The symbols are as follows:

B The “B” symbol indicates the areas of greatest significance based on brainstorming responses.

CA The “CA” symbol indicates the areas of greatest concern based on adult community assessment worksheets.

CAY The “CAY” symbol indicates the areas of greatest concern based on youth community assessment worksheets.



The binoculars symbol is used to point out the areas where visioning participants' responses did not make the strategic action a top priority; however, based on the consultants' interactions with the community, we recommend focusing on this very important issue.

Collectively the people who have come and continue to come to Otsego County will shape the county's future. Hard choices will have to be made; compromises will have to be struck. Nevertheless, active participation in the planning process by representatives from diverse community groups will lead to the creation of an Otsego County that represents the common interests of all residents. In the words of one county resident: “We have a unique community. If we stick together, we can manage growth gradually.”

How We Work

- Economic development
- Workforce development

“More jobs in the city would be a plus.”

Descriptive synopsis:

Throughout the visioning process residents repeatedly expressed concern over the economic future of Otsego County given recent changes in the United States and world economies, particularly the decline of the domestic manufacturing industry. Additionally, many of the current residents who opted for lesser paying jobs in northern Michigan in exchange for the natural features and proximity to recreational opportunities vocalized frustration over inadequate meaningful employment opportunities – especially for area youth. Whether or not individuals choose to stay in Otsego County, many felt that the lack of fulfilling, living-wage, local jobs prevent people from exercising this option. Without exception, Otsego County residents want to provide a better life for themselves and their families. Consequently, residents would benefit from the formation and implementation of a proactive, sustainable economic development policy.

“After twenty-five years on the farm, I can’t imagine leaving the land I’ve grown to love or see it developed into subdivisions. So much time, energy and money have gone into soil conservation, forest management, and wise use of chemicals that I’d hate not to be able to hold on to our precious property.”

Throughout the visioning processes, Otsego County residents expressed their desire for quality employment. Therefore, Otsego County would be advised to attract and retain the types of companies that offer employees opportunities for advancement while also providing the county with sufficient tax revenues for the provision of public services. The county can achieve residents’ vision by maintaining a diverse employment base through selective recruitment and retention of companies that compliment existing businesses, making the most of the area’s competitive advantages, and providing living-wage employment opportunities for current residents. Inasmuch as Otsego County residents place a high importance on the small-town feel of Gaylord, Vanderbilt, and the hamlets, the county’s economic development plan should support and nurture locally owned establishments, both existing and proposed businesses. During the OptionFinder visual preference survey, residents’ preferences for landscaping, corporate identity standards, and site furnishing became apparent. They reinforced these preferences

VISIONING THEME: How We Work

again and again as they voted on the images presented through the Option Finder exercise. To accomplish this in their county, development and implementation of corporate design standards and landscaping ordinances will ensure that new businesses – either locally, regionally, or nationally owned – will conform to the feel and look of Otsego County.

Blessed with a wealth of natural resources and recreational opportunities, Otsego County is an ideal location for many firms given the recent growth in telecommuting jobs. With more and more people working from home, physical amenities are taking on more significance when people decide where to settle. Frequently, visioning participants stated their wish to attract high-tech firms. To do so, Otsego County needs to provide quality education, public services, health care facilities, as well as the infrastructure necessary to support high-tech ventures.

“Put in place incentives for making it easier for farmers to keep their land intact.”

Given limited time and financial resources, government alone cannot be relied upon to achieve all of these economic goals. Local governments must work together to establish conditions under which the improvement of Otsego County’s economic situation is possible; however, the community’s collective energy and creativity must also be utilized. In addition to the Chamber of Commerce and the Otsego County Economic Alliance, individuals and other organizations within the county offer the knowledge and resources necessary to improve the economic outlook in Otsego County.

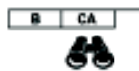
Strategic Actions (in order of priority):

1. Pursue a development policy for Otsego County that is proactive, sustainable, and beneficial to local residents and businesses through:

B	CA	CAY
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- Recruiting and retaining companies which offer meaningful employment to Otsego County residents
- Encouraging sustainable, environmentally friendly tourism in Otsego County

- Investigating methods of assisting local businesses (farmers and entrepreneurs) to remain competitive/profitable
- Maintaining a diverse employment base to stabilize the local economy, as well as provide employment opportunities for local youth upon graduation
- Promoting the establishment of living-wage jobs within Otsego County



2. Develop scenarios anticipating the impact oil and gas companies' departure from Otsego County will have on local employment, tax revenues, and land use.

Challenges:

“My great-grandparents moved here in the 1800s; he farmed and she taught music. My grandparents started farming and also worked in the small factories in Gaylord. My father came home from WWII and bought a farm next to his father’s and started dairy farming. He bought the old Shipp Lumber Farm. The men who worked the lumber in the winter worked the grain during the summer to raise feed for the workhorses and the workmen in the winter. I took over the dairy when my father retired and milked cows until 1989. I now raise hay for horse owners. I am not sure how the farm will still survive after I am gone. I have thought about a preserve for some of it!”

- In order to have a vibrant community that offers the jobs residents desire, growth is necessary. Creating jobs fosters new development and the introduction of firms, retail businesses, and industry. Establishing a balance between the creation of jobs and growth is the challenge facing Otsego County residents.
- Maintaining the natural and rural character of Otsego County while providing for jobs and economic growth. The Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance must take into account land uses that reflect the balance the community desires between preservation and growth.
- Dealing head-on with differing opinions on whether or not to use incentives. If the residents ultimately decide to use incentives as a development tool, a consistent county standard should be created and enforced.
- Creating a knowledgeable citizen task force to find achievable solutions to oil and gas issues.

How We Play

- Arts & culture
- Entertainment
- Parks & recreation
- Libraries
- Physical amenities

Descriptive synopsis:

A majority of participants in the visioning process indicated the natural environment was among the most valuable county assets: numerous inland lakes, acres of woodlands, miles of rivers, and gently rolling topography. Among the advantages to life in northern Michigan, many cited the prevalence of recreation opportunities year-round. For both residents and visitors, Otsego County offers the possibility to take a break from it all and enjoy some R&R.



Visioning participants expressed their desire for more cultural amenities and venues located within the county to meet the needs of residents who currently drive to other northern Michigan communities and utilize their cultural venues. Moreover, residents stated their preference for commercial and residential areas with aesthetic appeal. Otsego County could create and enforce architectural design guidelines to retain the small town feel of Gaylord, Vanderbilt, and the hamlets. Enforcement of compliance with the Alpine theme in Gaylord and pedestrian oriented development throughout the county would support the community vision.

“We should try to sell our seasons more. A lot of states don’t have four seasons. To have a fall with color, winter with snow, spring with lots of new growth, and a summer with heat and sun—that’s saying something.”

Residents enjoy their recreation opportunities and desire to see these protected. Although few contest the benefits of tourism for Otsego County’s economy, some visioning participants expressed concern over the impact recreation has had on environmental quality. In residents’ ideal community, tourism, growth, and natural resource issues would be balanced.

Strategic Actions (in order of priority):

“Gaylord is the hub of many activities: hunting, fishing, boating, golf, snowmobiling, skiing, etc.”

B **CA** **CAY**

1. Improve recreation in Otsego County by assessing the availability and need to improve:

- Bike paths
- County recreation facilities
- Cultural facilities
- Public access to waterways (including boat ramps)
- Snowmobile trails

B **CA** **CAY**

2. Ensure a Master Plan that sustains the attractiveness of the natural environment.

- Protect the aquifer and water quality and conserve woodlands and agricultural land by promoting sustainable tourist activities in specific areas, while preserving the rights of property owners.

“We’d enjoy more diversity in culture, attitude, ethnicity, etc. Variety is the spice of life.”

B **CAY**

3. Explore the creation of additional civic events within the county for the enjoyment of both residents and tourists.

B **CAY**

4. Review possible use of incentives for the preservation of wildlife corridors and maintenance of wildlife habitats.

B


5. Provide design guidelines for communities within Otsego County to promote a pedestrian and bicycle oriented community.



Challenges:

- Coming to terms with and addressing how tourism affects Otsego County on all levels.
- Balancing the interests of passive and active recreationalists (i.e. skiers and snowmobilers, birdwatchers and hunters).

One County, One Vision

VISIONING THEME: How We Learn

How We Learn

- K-12 Education: parental, community, and business involvement
- Higher education opportunities
- Continuing education

Descriptive synopsis:

As with parents across the United States, quality of life and local schools influences the selection of a community in which to raise their family. Otsego County residents confirmed this throughout the visioning process. One resident shared how her husband and her selected Otsego County because they believed “it would be a nice place to raise our children.” Thirty years later, the couple still valued the community attributes that initially brought them to northern Michigan. Another couple explained that their desire to provide good schools for their two young sons prompted the decision to settle in Gaylord—a quiet, friendly community. For many, Otsego County has and continues to offer a place where children can grow-up in a close-knit community while attending good schools.

“Our schools are not that good. If you walk into Traverse City or Petoskey high schools, it is really nice and awesome. Ours is broke.”

Over the years as the population has grown, so too have residents’ concerns regarding the quality of educational instruction, facilities, and opportunities. To ensure the best possible future for area youth and the skilled workforce area employers require, Otsego County should continue to provide the highest standard of education possible for area youth. Improving area schools is a countywide responsibility, requiring cooperation among parents, schools, local governments, businesses, and civic groups.

Together residents can sustain Otsego County’s educational tradition by providing all students with modern, safe, comfortable, well-maintained facilities in which to learn. In the ideal vision brought forth by county residents, students would be exposed to a wide range of topics during class and extracurricular activities. Access to comprehensive libraries and Broadband Internet would keep them on the cutting edge of technology. In addition to the traditional curriculum, after school programs would be offered to students in need of more one-on-

“The library should have more resources. There should be more for teens to do.”

one assistance and those who would benefit from accelerated/gifted programs. Equal importance will be attached to meeting the educational needs of students who choose to pursue trade and technical school training or college and university education. Furthermore, visioning participants desire as many educational opportunities as possible for county residents regardless of their age or educational goal.

Strategic Actions (in order of priority):

- | | | |
|---|----|-----|
| B | CA | CAY |
|---|----|-----|

 1. Foster support for methods of improving Otsego County schools and educational facilities. Remain aware of what needs to be done to keep schools current now and as growth occurs.

- | | |
|---|----|
| B | CA |
|---|----|

 2. Foster development within the M-Tec/University Center and the possible establishment of additional university extension classes within Otsego County.

- | | |
|---|-----|
| B | CAY |
|---|-----|

 3. Improve access to broadband to assist county residents interested in participating in on-line education opportunities.

- | |
|---|
| B |
|---|

 4. Cultivate parental and community involvement in primary and secondary education through establishment of programs for students to volunteer with local businesses and organizations (and vice versa).

- | |
|---|
| B |
|---|

 5. Create age-appropriate after-school opportunities for area youth by utilizing senior groups, professional, volunteer, and faith-based organizations to provide supplemental educational services (tutoring and mentoring) and enrichment activities beneficial to the entire community.

- | |
|---|
| B |
|---|

 6. Promote programs that enhance the imagination, creativity, and self-esteem of area youth.

- | |
|---|
| B |
|---|

 7. Encourage development of additional childcare facilities in neighborhoods and at local businesses.

VISIONING THEME: How We Learn

Challenges:

- ❑ Providing the means for schools to be what residents envision. Continued funding is essential to improved educational opportunities for area youth.

- ❑ Coming to terms with some residents' anxiety about the impact growth and development in the county could have on local schools. Otsego County should evaluate the ratio of residential and commercial development to ensure the tax base will support area schools.

How We Live

- Housing
- Residents
- Community involvement

Descriptive synopsis:

During the visioning process, residents repeatedly remarked on how Otsego County had changed over the past decades—sometimes for the better, frequently for the worse. While many cited the aesthetic appeal of the Alpine theme, new commercial buildings in Gaylord, and well-maintained homesteads, farms, and villages, they expressed displeasure with poorly planned, rambling developments; light pollution; urban and rural blight (worn down homes and neighborhoods); unattractive flat-roofed buildings; and prejudice against new residents. Most residents realize that Otsego County will continue to change, and growth is both an opportunity and a threat to their northern Michigan way of life. With proper planning and direction, growth can mean creating a better Otsego County.

“We now must turn our attention to jobs with benefits and promote affordable housing opportunities.”

The City of Gaylord, Village of Vanderbilt, and the nine townships that make up Otsego County are unique. As the county continues to evolve, residents want to ensure that the character of each is not compromised by growth. They desire tidy, safe neighborhoods where neighbors are friendly yet respect one another’s privacy. Visioning participants desire future commercial development that compliments the small-town feel and blends with the county’s character.

“We are saddened by a rift between long-time residents and newer members of the community because of property rights issues and growing pains – although we are encouraged by the visioning process.”

While residents value the maintenance and appearance of properties, the quality and type of housing stock available in Otsego County is even more important. The community’s vision is one in which housing remains affordable for all segments of the population, thereby maintaining a diverse population within the county. For visioning participants, Otsego County would always be the beautiful, welcoming place that initially drew them to the area.

VISIONING THEME: How We Live

Strategic Actions (in order of priority):

1. Development in Otsego County should conform to design guidelines, especially in commercial districts, as determined by county residents to ensure residents get the type of development they prefer.

B	CA	CAY
OptionFinder (see Appendix for voting results)		

2. Preserve the “small town” feel through maintaining and/or creating walkable, pedestrian oriented central business districts in Gaylord, Vanderbilt, and the other villages (with parking behind the buildings); moreover, downtown development and redevelopment in Gaylord should be consistent with the Alpine theme.

B	CA	CAY
OptionFinder (see Appendix for voting results)		

3. Supply quality housing for all income levels by offering tools and options for the creation of mixed-use (income, demographics, age) neighborhoods.

B	CA	CAY
OptionFinder (see Appendix for voting results)		

- Inventory the housing stock in Otsego County to ensure that proposed developments conform to the needs of current and future residents
- Ensure the provision of quality affordable housing within Otsego County

“I very much appreciate the opportunity to have a voice in the growth and direction of Otsego County and feel even more ownership and responsibility in helping shape the future as a result of this chance to have my voice be heard.”

4. Provide opportunities for discussion between summer and year-round residents to establish a clear vision for what the region desires. Furthermore, encourage greater community involvement in this visioning process and other community planning issues.

B	CA	CAY
OptionFinder (see Appendix for voting results)		

5. Investigate the desire and need for a countywide recycling and garbage pickup service.

B
OptionFinder (see Appendix for voting results)

Challenges:

- Developing and implementing design guidelines that create the desired community character.



“When we moved to Gaylord in 1963 it was a sleepy town, but a tremendous amount of energy was present. Through great leadership and insight, the Alpine theme came about and propelled our community into the limelight. Hard work and a very positive “can-do” attitude helped Gaylord grow and prosper. I would like to see that way of life continue.”

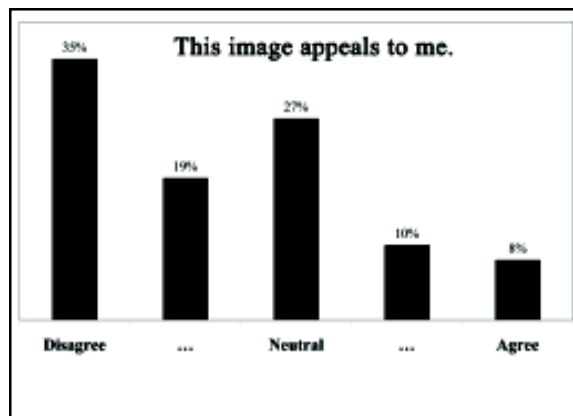
- ❑ Educating the community on housing types and densities necessary to achieve other community goals, such as the preservation of open space, agricultural lands, woodlands, and view sheds. (See below)
- ❑ Providing a forum for open, respectful discussion by community members with divergent viewpoints (i.e. property rights) with the goal of finding a common ground. Establishing a community consensus is imperative if the community hopes to move forward.
- ❑ Maintaining community involvement is a primary challenge. All the reports and meetings in the world mean little without community buy-in and on-going participation.

The density challenge

Part of the education process mentioned in the challenges section will have to be about explaining that although a current resident may not choose to live in a denser development, in time others will. Density and planning for it provides OPTIONS. Options are necessary if the community’s desire is to preserve their natural resources.



OptionFinder revealed the community did not like the look of the existing mobile home park (see appendix), which is a common method for achieving higher density. Keeping in mind that there are appropriate places to achieve density, Otsego County has the opportunity to determine the location and look of higher density areas.



VISIONING THEME: How We Get Around

How We Get Around

- Transportation

Descriptive synopsis:

Most Otsego County residents enjoy the rural, northern Michigan feel of their county. They prefer a quiet, north woods lifestyle to that of the busy cities downstate. Interstate 75, however, provides easy access to Otsego County by tourists year round and transit for long-distance commuters living in Otsego County. Consequently, Otsego County residents have experienced increased traffic congestion in the past decade. Community members cite unplanned developments and greater numbers of tourists each year as primary causes of the traffic problems. Regardless of the cause, participants of the visioning sessions expressed concern over increased traffic within the county making it more difficult to navigate the region. Without proper planning, Otsego County’s transportation issues will compound as the county grows.

“So, what do residents want? We want to see our quality of life protected: clean water, freedom from pollution (including noise) of industrial and commercial activity, and less traffic congestion.”

Participants of the visioning process expressed their desire to improve traffic flow in Otsego County with synchronized traffic lights, improved access management, and improved street lighting in heavily traveled areas. Residents concerned with the loss of rural road character, furthermore, expressed interest in protecting scenic drives and the possibility of creating/designating new ones. They also expressed their wish to see Otsego County become a more pedestrian-friendly community.



Strategic Actions (in order of priority):

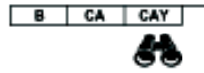
1. Address traffic circulation through improving access management, synchronizing streetlights, repairing streets, and maintaining roadways—especially in winter.
2. Work with state agencies to formulate solutions to long-term interstate and highway transportation issues, including access to I-75 and M-32.

B CA CAY

B CA CAY

“I feel that Otsego County should grow because we are easily accessed from I-75.”

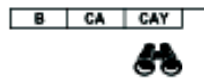
“I have lived here for over twenty-five years. I have seen positive growth and negative growth. It is nice to have a paved road where we live and no party lines for phones.”



3. Review and update the county sign ordinance to protect scenic drives in the county. Pursue the establishment/ designation of additional scenic corridors to preserve the natural aesthetics of Otsego County.



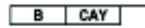
4. Design of new roadways should serve to connect the community by enhancing the existing transportation network.



5. Promote the creation of design guidelines for pedestrian-friendly commercial areas to encourage people to “park once and walk” to shops.



6. Review public transportation services and consider possible ways of making public transportation a viable alternative for county residents (thereby reducing the number of cars and traffic).



7. Given concerns about safety, improve street lighting and reduce speed limits along bus routes.



8. Encourage cluster and mixed-use development within and adjacent to the existing city, village, and hamlets.

Challenges:



- ❑ Coming to terms with and addressing how tourism affects traffic in Otsego County.
- ❑ Although some residents would prefer better street lighting for safety reasons, others are concerned about light pollution affecting their view of the night sky. Resolving this issue may involve specifying streets and areas for improved lighting while protecting other areas from increased lighting. Dark sky lighting standards should be encouraged.
- ❑ Resolving the conflict between constructing new roads to reduce traffic congestion and maintaining the rural “Up-North” roads.

VISIONING THEME: How We Get Around

- Lasting solutions to transportation issues may require more options for travel around the county—either through establishment of reliable public transportation and/or walkable mixed-use communities.
- Combining and implementing the recommendations from the I-75 study in a way that supports the residents’ vision for Otsego County. The consideration of linking land uses, development patterns, and transportation decisions is essential.

“We need to do something about traffic now. Not ten years from now because traffic is bad now. I heard there was a big expensive study done on traffic and that the results were “it’s bad.” No kidding.”

How We Grow



- Development patterns (land use)
- Zoning
- Government policies
- Property rights

Given the quantity of issues related to growth, this section is subdivided into four categories: development patterns (land use), zoning, government policies, and property rights. Each is an important part of How We Grow and together form the complete picture for future development in Otsego County.

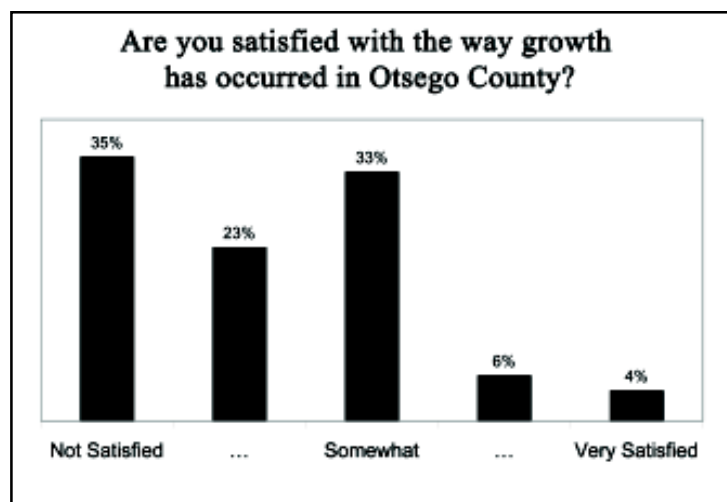
Development patterns (land use)

“In the end, I would hope that we could strike a balance between development and stagnation. Develop without using a lot of land, so people can enjoy living in their environment and the children will have a place to play.”

Descriptive synopsis:

Many residents expressed their concern that if growth continues at the current rate and development follows the current form, Otsego County will lose its hometown appeal and become just another place to drive through. The visioning process revealed that residents place a high importance on the region’s rural northern Michigan character. Promoting sustainable development that enhances residents’ quality of life supports Otsego County residents’ vision.

Over half of visioning participants are dissatisfied with the way growth has occurred in Otsego County. [See figure below]



VISIONING THEME: How We Grow

Most county residents recognize the need for alternative development options. The OptionFinder visual preference survey indicated the development patterns they would like to see include centrally located, pedestrian friendly, mixed-use developments that reflect traditional small downtowns. During brainstorming sessions, residents repeatedly stated their desire for infill developments given their dislike of empty commercial buildings. Implementing a policy that encourages adaptive reuse of vacant, unused properties before building new properties further out could satisfy their wish.



Strategic Actions (in order of priority):

1. Encourage the use of infill, adaptive reuse (of empty big-box buildings), and brownfield development techniques/philosophies to minimize sprawling development in Otsego County.

B CA CAY

“Put businesses in unused buildings before building new ones.”

2. Educate the community on development options, such as planned unit development (PUD), infill (adaptive reuse), purchase and/or transfer of development rights programs, and brownfield redevelopment.

B CA CAY

- Come to a consensus on which locations should be preserved and which areas should remain available for development.
- Re-write ordinances to ensure they support the type of growth Otsego County residents desire.

3. Educate elected officials and community members on land use-related issues such as:

B CA CAY

- Alternative energy sources (wind turbines)
- Landfill
- Sewer and water expansion
- Sprawl v. mixed-used development patterns
- Transportation

“I have not lived here long enough although I suspect many of the conflicts about land use results from a great deal of variation in backgrounds between people who grew up here and people who moved from elsewhere.”

Challenges:

“I would like to see our urban areas have a rural look. I would also like to see parking lots behind the stores. The front of stores should have trees and shrubbery.”

- ❑ Think regionally to make the best land use decisions for Otsego County.
- ❑ The entire community—from residents to government officials—need to demand higher community standards, such that government officials are forced to review the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance to ensure development conforms to the community vision.

Zoning

Descriptive synopsis:

Like most communities in the United States, Otsego County’s zoning ordinance specifies guidelines for development. Participants of the visioning process repeatedly expressed their concern with the development types currently generated by the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance in place. Otsego County residents would like to see Zoning Ordinances interpreted and enforced consistently and fairly.

“People depend on the integrity of zoning and planning. If the public is not given the protection it was promised when zoning was sold to the people, the system will continue to be more and more problematic until it collapses under its own weight.”

Throughout the OptionFinder visioning process, residents indicated their preference for development that included corporate identity standards, parking lots behind buildings, regulated signs, sidewalks, tree lined streets—components that enhance the aesthetic appeal of high density and commercial areas. Their vision is to create a physical space where people—residents and tourists—will return to again and again.

Strategic Actions (in order of priority):

- | | | |
|---|----|-----|
| B | CA | CAY |
|---|----|-----|
1. Development in Otsego County should adhere to design guidelines—especially in commercial districts—in order to ensure county residents get the type of development they desire.

VISIONING THEME: How We Grow

2. Implement landscaping ordinances in commercial and high-density residential districts.
3. Take steps to establish guidelines for the use of alternative energy sources. Guidelines will protect the rights of both those wishing to construct wind turbines and neighboring property owners.
4. Encourage the use of “green building” techniques and green zones throughout Otsego County.
5. Create subarea districts with like development issues, such as the townships around the City of Gaylord and the townships in the outlying areas which have less development pressure.



“It is not as radical a suggestion as one might think for a county to declare that physical growth is not one of our goals... Will we reach a point where tourists don’t come here and residents leave because the quality of life here has lost what once made Gaylord special? That doesn’t have to happen. But we have to start making decisions based on quality of life rather than numbers and profit.”

Challenges:

- ❑ Providing a forum for open, respectful discussion by community members with divergent viewpoints (i.e. property rights) with the goal of generating public support for proposed Zoning Ordinance amendments.
- ❑ Developing a countywide ordinance that is applicable and acceptable to county residents.

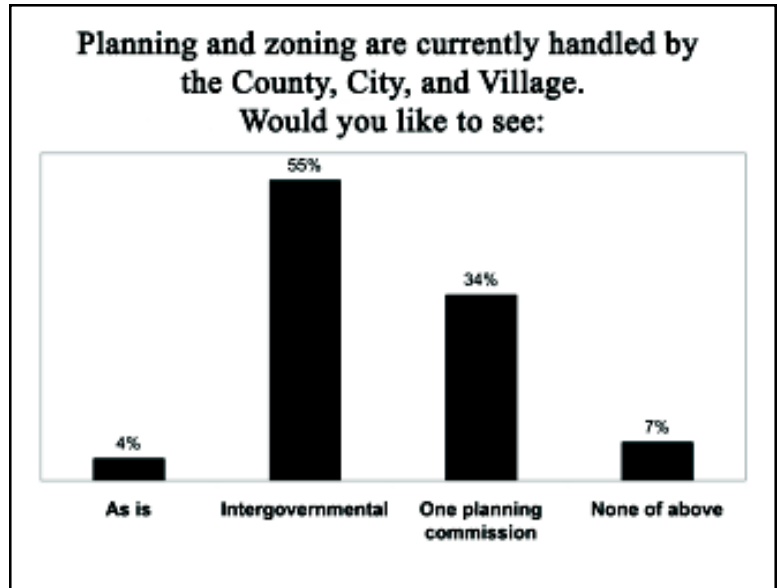
Government policies

Descriptive synopsis:

With a city, village, and nine townships within the county, it is crucial that government bodies work together and establish policies that benefit the entire Otsego County community. Finding areas for collaboration is essential to the improvement and sustainable growth of Otsego County. As one visioning participant remarked, “No unit of government can stand alone anymore; they have to be working together for the benefit of all.” This sentiment was reinforced many times throughout the visioning process in one way or another. Residents said they would like a more streamlined, proactive, inter-jurisdictional government in which officials had the courage to say “no” to

development that did not conform to the community vision. Community members know that to get the growth they want, they need government officials' support.


“All units of government need to think outside the box and work as an entire county (and even beyond) and cooperate.”



Strategic Actions (in order of priority):

- | | | |
|---|----|-----|
| B | CA | CAY |
|---|----|-----|
1. Provide for coordinated development in Otsego County through updating and enforcing a clear and consistent countywide zoning ordinance. Intercounty collaboration among elected officials will improve the quality of development within Otsego County.
 - Enforcement will help protect property owners by minimizing conflicting land uses across township borders, granting of special-use permits, and nuisances.

B	CAY
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 2. Develop alternatives to obtain inter-jurisdictional cooperation, such that elected officials are able to formulate and implement policies beneficial to Otsego County as a region.

VISIONING THEME: How We Grow

3. Discuss use and legality of infrastructure tax to defray costs of new developments, such that the principal beneficiaries of development bear the majority of the economic cost. Consider the possibility of establishing TIF districts/renaissance zones to focus development in blighted areas and those with empty big-box stores.
4. Promote accountability, fiscal responsibility, and a diverse cross section of community members among government officials and community boards.

B

B CA

Challenges:

- ❑ Overcoming any mistrust and apprehension regarding past land-use decisions. Creating an environment where open communication exists is vital to the success of countywide initiatives.
- ❑ Dealing with “turf wars” head on. A conscious effort needs to be made to overcome past disappointments by prioritizing issues and focusing on those that will lead to common goals and building trust.



Property rights

Descriptive synopsis:

The most frequently repeated concern brought forth by visioning participants is best expressed in the question: “How do we have the maximum freedom and quality of life while maintaining property rights?” While many Otsego County residents promote the preservation of their natural environment, others advocate the protection of their individual property rights. Participants acknowledged their opposing viewpoints and realize that developing a framework that protects both is potentially the most important issue facing Otsego County.

“We want to see property values protected instead of disregarded in favor of the rights of businesses to make a profit. Residents have invested a great deal of their assets in their homes, and have the right to know that zoning will not be changed at their expense.”

Strategic Action:

R CA



1. Providing a forum for open, respectful discussion by community members with divergent viewpoints (i.e. property rights) with the goal of developing and implementing policies that will enable residents to create the best possible future for Otsego County and themselves. Establishing a community consensus is imperative if the community hopes to move forward.

Challenges:

- Remaining open to the possibility that there can be planning for growth without infringing on property rights.

VISIONING THEME SUMMARY

What kind of future do Otsego County residents desire for their community? The answer is dependent on the individual preferences of the respondent. Nevertheless, a comparison of brainstorming, visual preference, and community assessment responses reveals the issues which are of greatest concern to Otsego County residents. Although this report separates these issues into “How We...” categories, they are nonetheless interrelated and when viewed together reveal how residents envision their community in the future.

Collectively Otsego County residents envision their rural, northern Michigan community to be a place where housing is affordable in attractive, safe neighborhoods. Students can attend neighborhood schools and participate in after-school activities that stimulate their minds and/or bodies. Residents have the possibility of meaningful employment opportunities locally and they can enjoy the regions’ cultural and recreational activities after work. Through proactive planning and zoning enforcement, the aesthetic appeal and unique environmental quality of the county will be protected. Infill and adaptive-reuse developments will compliment the traditional feel of the pedestrian friendly downtown commercial areas. The option for clustered residential will help to preserve agricultural lands and open space. Landscaping provisions will enhance community streetscapes and add to the distinct characters of Gaylord, Vanderbilt, and the hamlets. Otsego County desires to preserve its natural resources while protecting its residents’ property rights. In doing so, Otsego County will remain an enjoyable place to residents and visitors alike.

The Otsego County: One County, One Vision report depicts the best possible future for the entire community as determined by those who reside in Otsego County. This document reflects the ideas and opinions of community members who actively participated in the visioning process. The desired future vision residents’ created here, however, is not guaranteed. Commitment to further action is required of both Otsego County residents and officials to ensure future development conforms to the community’s vision. The following recommendation can help community members determine a realistic action plan that will help guide the implementation of their vision.

REPORT SUMMARY

Recommendations

Community visioning is the first of a three-stage process that also includes strategic planning and implementation. Having created the vision, Otsego County residents now face the task of establishing a consensus on what needs to be done to implement their vision. During the second phase, residents should prioritize and focus on topics they can agree upon. Doing this is essential to realizing the vision. In this strategic planning phase, it is important to maintain the momentum and community involvement associated with the visioning process. The formation of a community steering committee would help achieve this by providing the necessary impetus for continued discussion, decision-making, and action. These community champions would reflect the range of community interests, ideas, and opinions; motivate other community members to action; and provide the local wisdom, experience, and ability needed to bring about positive change. Only Otsego County residents can determine what is in the best interest of their county and influence elected officials to see that it is done.

Once priorities have been identified and a review of the county's master plans and zoning ordinances has been completed, revision of master plans and zoning ordinances is necessary to ensure future development is in line with the community's vision for Otsego County. Community participation is essential to seeing the visioning process through the implementation phase. One visioning participant recognized the need to "keep asking and encouraging the community to be involved. Because while so many people get frustrated and discouraged after their first attempt to become involved, these are the same people who like to say that this is 'My Town,' as Montgomery Gentry would say."

While much work remains to build off Otsego County's existing assets and ensure creation of the best possible future for community members, the county is fortunate to have motivated, knowledgeable residents actively engaged in the process. Together residents, community leaders, and government officials can produce the community vision of Otsego County—a vision which includes preservation of forests, farming, and natural resources, especially the water and clean air, and the ability to

experience the peace and quiet of the countryside and the wildlife. Through Otsego County residents' continued dedication to the vision, future development in the county will complement and enhance the northern Michigan lifestyle which residents treasure.

APPENDIX

- 1) Methodology (survey examples)
 - a. Community assessment worksheet
 - b. Story telling
 - c. Summary meeting feedback sheet

- 2) Data tables
 - a. Population growth
 - b. How We Work
 - c. How We Play
 - d. How We Learn
 - e. How We Live
 - f. How We Get Around
 - g. How We Grow
 - h. Top responses table

- 3) OptionFinder results

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET



Community Assessment Worksheet

The Visioning Process will seek your input on the following

- What do you want your area to look like in the future?
- What areas should be developed and how?
- What areas should be protected?

Please give us your initial opinions on the following questions about the Otsego County physical and cultural features.

(A) List three positive or attractive features in the County (study area).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

(B) List three negative or unattractive features in the County (study area).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Name three natural and three man-made features that make the study area special and unique. Natural features may include shorelines, streams and vegetation. Examples of man-made features may include the streetscape, architecture and parks.

(C) Natural Features

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

(D) Man-made Features

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

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Fax: (231) 947-2748

Otsego County

Over the last 10-15 years what changes to the study area have been caused by external and internal forces? Examples of external forces may include federal/state policies and global competition. Internal forces may include the demand for commercial services, housing, recreation facilities, change in demographics, etc.

(E) Changes Caused by External Forces

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

(F) Changes Caused by Internal Forces

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

(G) NOTES & COMMENTS

Worksheet adapted from the Center for Rural Pennsylvania, Harrisburg, PA.

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STORY-TELLING

(H) Please write your story using a "BEGINNING, MIDDLE and END" in the space below. Please feel free to use the back of the page or on additional pages if you need to.

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SUMMARY MEETING FEEDBACK SHEET



Summary Meeting Feedback Sheet

To assist the drafting of a vision that reflects residents' desires, we would like to know your impression of the material covered in the summary presentation. Did we capture your vision for Otsego County or did we miss an important item? If, after reflecting on the information presented on June 22nd or 29th, you have additional ideas or suggestions, please write them down and send (or fax) them to us by July 6, 2004 so we can incorporate them in the final report.

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One County, One Vision

POPULATION GROWTH DATA TABLES

Table 1: Population Growth in Otsego County: 1990 to 2000

	1990			2000			Male		Female		Total	
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Absolute	Growth	Absolute	Growth	Absolute	Growth
							change	Rate	change	Rate	change	Rate
Under 5	708	679	1,387	738	707	1,445	30	0.04	28	0.04	58	0.04
5 to 9	777	733	1,510	932	876	1,808	155	0.20	143	0.20	298	0.20
10 to 14	745	706	1,451	907	948	1,855	162	0.22	242	0.34	404	0.28
15 to 19	604	641	1,245	885	793	1,678	281	0.47	152	0.24	433	0.35
20 to 24	502	507	1,009	550	528	1,078	48	0.10	21	0.04	69	0.07
25 to 29	639	655	1,294	610	633	1,243	-29	-0.05	-22	-0.03	-51	-0.04
30 to 34	732	737	1,469	784	781	1,565	52	0.07	44	0.06	96	0.07
35 to 39	709	729	1,438	933	969	1,902	224	0.32	240	0.33	464	0.32
40 to 44	625	601	1,226	986	950	1,936	361	0.58	349	0.58	710	0.58
45 to 49	478	499	977	863	863	1,726	385	0.81	364	0.73	749	0.77
50 to 54	403	400	803	728	746	1,474	325	0.81	346	0.87	671	0.84
55 to 59	384	399	783	606	630	1,236	222	0.58	231	0.58	453	0.58
60 to 64	447	485	932	591	563	1,154	144	0.32	78	0.16	222	0.24
65 to 69	407	417	824	487	487	974	80	0.20	70	0.17	150	0.18
70 to 74	308	331	639	444	463	907	136	0.44	132	0.40	268	0.42
75 to 79	183	243	426	288	351	639	105	0.57	108	0.44	213	0.50
80 to 84	111	202	313	139	222	361	28	0.25	20	0.10	48	0.15
85 years and over	61	170	231	97	223	320	36	0.59	53	0.31	89	0.39
Total population	8,823	9,134	17,957	11,568	11,733	23,301	2,745	0.31	2,599	0.28	5,344	0.30

Source: US Census Bureau, 1990 Decennial Census, Summary Tape File 1 (QT-P1A); 2000 Decennial Census, Summary File 1 (P12)

Table 2: Estimated Population of Michigan Counties: April 2000 to July 2002

Area Name	April 2000		July 2000	July 2001	July 2002	Percent Change		
	Census	Est. Base*				4/00-7/02	7/00-7/01	7/01-7/02
Michigan	9,938,444	9,938,444	9,956,115	10,006,266	10,050,446	1.1%	0.5%	0.4%
Alpena	31,314	31,314	31,291	31,245	31,026	-0.9%	-0.1%	-0.7%
Antrim	23,110	23,110	23,267	23,478	23,809	3.0%	0.9%	1.4%
Charlevoix	26,090	26,090	26,154	26,351	26,386	1.1%	0.8%	0.1%
Cheboygan	26,448	26,448	26,566	26,831	27,072	2.4%	1.0%	0.9%
Crawford	14,273	14,273	14,345	14,544	14,734	3.2%	1.4%	1.3%
Emmet	31,437	31,437	31,536	32,109	32,329	2.8%	1.8%	0.7%
Grand Traverse	77,654	77,654	77,980	79,943	81,263	4.6%	2.5%	1.7%
Kalkaska	16,571	16,571	16,626	16,833	17,043	2.8%	1.2%	1.2%
Montmorency	10,315	10,315	10,376	10,517	10,560	2.4%	1.4%	0.4%
Otsego	23,301	23,301	23,426	23,779	24,155	3.7%	1.5%	1.6%
Presque Isle	14,411	14,411	14,374	14,379	14,320	-0.6%	0.0%	-0.4%
Roscommon	25,469	25,469	25,528	25,744	25,818	1.4%	0.8%	0.3%

*The April 1, 2000 Population Estimates Base reflects modifications to the Census 2000 Population as documented in the Count Question Resolution Program, updates from the Boundary and Annexation Survey, and geographic program revisions.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, County Population Estimates: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2002.
Release Date: April 17, 2003. Estimates were prepared by the Census Bureau through the Federal-State Cooperative Program for Population Estimates (FSCPE).

HOW WE WORK TABLES

How We Work

(The Community Assessment Worksheet information below is the summation of Otsego County residents' responses to five questions: A, B, D, E & F. See page 36 for the survey)

Item	Number of responses	Percentage of response	Priority of strategic actions (refer to page 12)
Brainstorming			
	75	100.0%	
1 Sustainable agriculture as a business, help farmers	14	18.7	1
2 Jobs - youth stay in Otsego County	8	10.7	1
3 Community that kids come back to -- jobs	8	10.7	1
4 Better paying / living wage jobs	7	9.3	1
5 Tourism and natural resources draw jobs to the area	6	8.0	1
6 Keep kids here	6	8.0	1
7 New businesses	6	8.0	1
8 Smart growth & jobs	5	6.7	1
9 Wal-Mart can only affect us if we let it	5	6.7	
10 Meaningful employment	3	4.0	1
11 Expand farm industry	2	2.7	
12 Living here affects your bottom line	2	2.7	
13 Health care facilities needed	1	1.3	
14 One super Wal-Mart can destroy the whole town	1	1.3	
15 What happens when oil and gas are gone?	1	1.3	2
16 Better daycare	0	0.0	
17 More manufacturing for better paying jobs	0	0.0	1
18 Vested workers out of jobs because of superstores	0	0.0	
Community Assessment Worksheets - Countywide			
	30	100.0%	
1 Area has changed from agriculture based to recreation based (formation of golf mecca)- thus, the economic pressure to sell farmland to developers has led to many farms going out of business	4	13.3	1
2 Businesses centrally located in Gaylord	4	13.3	
3 Gas/oil facilities	4	13.3	2
4 Entrepreneurial individuals in community have led to increase in development and land use	2	6.7	
5 Jo-Jo's Market	2	6.7	1
6 Population migrating downstate - including youth (need jobs to attract/keep youth)	2	6.7	1
7 Availability of jobs	1	3.3	1
8 Diana's Delights	1	3.3	1
9 Federal/state policies that encourage Antrim gas exploration	1	3.3	
10 Gas & oil field development	1	3.3	2
11 Gas and fuel costs making our small shops too far from population	1	3.3	
12 Industrial growth has not kept pace with retail growth	1	3.3	1
13 Oil & Gas Exploration	1	3.3	
14 Outsourcing (Job Losses)	1	3.3	1
15 Poor economy (businesses close)	1	3.3	1
16 Standard of living climbing	1	3.3	1
17 Tourists	1	3.3	
18 Vibrant business community	1	3.3	
Community Assessment Worksheets - Youth			
	43	100.0%	
1 Big businesses coming to area (new stores)	10	23.3	1
2 Economy (budget cuts)	5	11.6	1
3 Unemployment (teens cannot find jobs)	5	11.6	1
4 Demand for businesses (drives expansion)	4	9.3	
5 Construction of buildings for businesses	3	7.0	
6 Global competition	3	7.0	1
7 Closing of stores and restaurants	2	4.7	1
8 Job opportunities (lack of)	2	4.7	1
9 Farmer Crop Aid Program	1	2.3	1
10 Gas pumps on people's property	1	2.3	
11 Good things for tourists	1	2.3	1
12 Lack of demand for commercial services	1	2.3	1
13 Layoffs	1	2.3	
14 Less sales marketers	1	2.3	
15 Too much competition because of some businesses	1	2.3	
16 Tourism	1	2.3	1
17 Unemployment	1	2.3	1

One County, One Vision

HOW WE PLAY TABLES

How We Play

(The Community Assessment Worksheet information below is the summation of Otsego County residents' responses to five questions: A, B, D, E & F. See page 38 for the survey)

Item	Number of responses	Percentage of response	Priority of strategic actions (refer to page 15)
Brainstorming	81	100.0%	
1 Preserve agricultural land and forests	16	19.8	2
2 Preserve water resources by protecting lakes and streams from development	13	16.0	2
3 Wildlife	8	9.9	4
4 Bike trail -- extensive	7	8.6	1
5 Keep hunting rights available	5	6.2	
6 Snowmobile trail in I-75 median	5	6.2	
7 Better launch ramps	4	4.9	1
8 Preserve natural resources	4	4.9	2
9 Protect recreation	4	4.9	1
10 Recreation and non-motorized paths and trails	4	4.9	1
11 Encourage reforestation of land	3	3.7	4
12 Cultural building - civic uses and gatherings	2	2.5	1
13 Curb commercialization of recreational opportunities on public land	2	2.5	
14 More recreation facilities	1	1.2	1
15 Move casino closer	1	1.2	
16 Preserve wildlife corridors	1	1.2	4
17 Provide incentives to get people to do the "right" thing	1	1.2	4
18 Create events (etc.) to make this a destination (instead of a pass through)	0	0.0	3
19 Parks	0	0.0	1
20 Recreation focus	0	0.0	1
Community Assessment Worksheets - Countywide	180	100.0%	
1 Forests and woodlands	13	7.2	
2 Lakes	12	6.7	
3 Aspen park	11	6.1	
4 Farms, farming, & rolling, open fields	10	5.6	
5 Rivers and streams	10	5.6	
6 General	9	5.0	
7 Sportsplex	9	5.0	1
8 Pavilion	8	4.4	
9 Open space (ability to see sun sets)	7	3.9	
10 Hills (rolling)	6	3.3	
11 Public parks	6	3.3	
12 Snowmobile/ATV Trails	6	3.3	1
13 Natural beauty: mix of farmland and forests	4	2.2	
14 Clean, fresh air	3	1.7	
15 Golf resorts	3	1.7	
16 Public land and parks (large, available for recreational activities)	3	1.7	
17 Recreation Opportunities	3	1.7	1
18 Ski Resorts	3	1.7	
19 State parks	3	1.7	
20 Trees	3	1.7	
21 Wildlife	3	1.7	
22 Bike and X-country ski trails	2	1.1	
23 Elk viewing area	2	1.1	
24 Forest Trails	2	1.1	
25 Hidden Valley	2	1.1	
26 Historical and cultural features	2	1.1	
27 Lack of significant arts/cultural facilities	2	1.1	1
28 Lovejoy Monument	2	1.1	
29 Pigeon River area	2	1.1	
30 Pine plantations that have matured (pine baron pathway)	2	1.1	2
31 State forest lands	2	1.1	
32 Sylvan Resort/Trestops	2	1.1	1
33 Trails (pedestrian pathways)	2	1.1	
34 Wetlands	2	1.1	
35 Canoe Liverys	1	0.6	
36 City of Gaylord's parks	1	0.6	
37 Civic activities and locations are good	1	0.6	
38 Cool temperatures, poor growing conditions	1	0.6	

<i>Name</i>	<i>Number of responses</i>	<i>Percentage of response</i>	<i>Priority of strategic actions (refer to page 15)</i>	
39	Golf courses - too many	1	0.6	
40	Michaywe	1	0.6	
41	Natural resources	1	0.6	
42	Not enough parks	1	0.6	1
43	Otsego Lake	1	0.6	
44	Outdoor sports year round	1	0.6	
45	Pigeon River Country headquarters building	1	0.6	
46	Pigeon River Entry Sign	1	0.6	1
47	Pine Baron park	1	0.6	
48	Scenic vistas	1	0.6	
49	Skatepark	1	0.6	1
50	Too many snowmobiles	1	0.6	1
51	Unprotected groundwater (aquifer)	1	0.6	
52	Water - great for drinking	1	0.6	
53	Wilkinson Ironton Spring Park	1	0.6	

Community Assessment Worksheets - Youth		408	100.0%	
1	Golf courses and resorts	42	10.3	1
2	Pavilion	36	8.8	
3	Aspen park/trails	35	8.6	1
4	Ice tree	34	8.3	
5	Ski hills & resorts	22	5.4	1
6	Elk viewing area	20	4.9	1
7	Sportsplex	18	4.4	1
8	State parks	16	3.9	1
9	Lakes (quantity and quality)	14	3.4	1
10	Forests and trees (beautiful)	13	3.2	2
11	Alpenfest	12	2.9	
12	Parks	11	2.7	1
13	Otsego Lake (polluted)	8	2.0	2
14	Snow	7	1.7	
15	Community center (too small)	6	1.5	1
16	Lack of social activities or buildings (youth/teen clubs and hangouts)	6	1.5	1
17	Recreational facilities (new)	6	1.5	1
18	Dumas park	5	1.2	1
19	Otsego Lake	5	1.2	1
20	Seasons (year-round outdoor activities)	5	1.2	1
21	Skate park	5	1.2	1
22	Cinema	4	1.0	1
23	Opportunities for tourists but not resident teens	4	1.0	3
24	Quality of natural environment & features	4	1.0	2
25	Snowmobile trails	4	1.0	1
26	Georgia Pacific pollution plume	3	0.7	
27	Land (fields, countryside)	3	0.7	2
28	Music on Main Street	3	0.7	3
29	Treetops Ski Resort	3	0.7	1
30	City parks	2	0.5	1
31	Dirty snow	2	0.5	
32	Energy Outlet	2	0.5	1
33	Lack of art or cultural opportunities	2	0.5	1
34	Lake pollution	2	0.5	2
35	Otsego Club	2	0.5	1
36	Otsego Lake park	2	0.5	1
37	Parks (roadside)	2	0.5	1
38	Trails (snowmobiling, biking, hiking)	2	0.5	1
39	Wildlife	2	0.5	4
40	Bike trails behind GMS	1	0.2	1
41	Community Center	1	0.2	1
42	County parks	1	0.2	1
43	Court house lawn	1	0.2	
44	Demand for natural resources	1	0.2	2
45	Diversity (lack of)	1	0.2	3
46	Eideweiss Parkway	1	0.2	1
47	Fair	1	0.2	1

One County, One Vision

HOW WE PLAY TABLES

<i>Item</i>	<i>Number of responses</i>	<i>Percentage of response</i>	<i>Priority of strategic actions (refer to page 15)</i>
48 Farms	1	0.2	
49 Gaylord City Park	1	0.2	1
50 Hidden Valley	1	0.2	1
51 Hunting	1	0.2	
52 Ice sculptures	1	0.2	
53 Increased camping sites	1	0.2	
54 Lakes' lowering water level	1	0.2	2
55 Little league fields run-down	1	0.2	1
56 Memorial parks	1	0.2	1
57 Need for natural resources	1	0.2	
58 Otsego County park	1	0.2	1
59 Parks - few and small	1	0.2	1
60 Parks - messy and not maintained	1	0.2	1
61 Pond behind GMS	1	0.2	
62 Pools	1	0.2	
63 Quantity of natural environment & features	1	0.2	2
64 Rivers	1	0.2	1
65 Ropes course behind GMS	1	0.2	1
66 Rural	1	0.2	
67 Scenery	1	0.2	2
68 Snowmobiles	1	0.2	1
69 Soccer complex (Alpine)	1	0.2	1
70 Wa-Wa-Soo Public Access	1	0.2	2
71 Wilderness	1	0.2	2
72 Winter sports (skiing, snowmobiling)	1	0.2	1
73 Winterfest isn't happening any more	1	0.2	1

HOW WE LEARN TABLES

How We Learn

(The Community Assessment Worksheet information below is the summation of Otsego County residents' responses to five questions: A, B, D, E & F. See page 36 for the survey)

<i>Item</i>	<i>Number of responses</i>	<i>Percentage of response</i>	<i>Priority of strategic actions (refer to page 17)</i>
Brainstorming			
	22	100.0%	
1 Good education for youth in the community	15	68.2	1
2 Access to high-tech/broadband	4	18.2	3
3 More educational programs for youth	2	9.1	4
4 More community involvement	1	4.5	5
5 Community college - two year	0	0.0	2
6 Educational programs for imagination	0	0.0	6
7 Expand M-Tec Center	0	0.0	2
8 How do we attract high-tech and provide training and infrastructure (broadband)	0	0.0	3
9 Need more schools (overcrowded)	0	0.0	1
10 Neighborhood schools	0	0.0	1
Community Assessment Worksheets - Countywide			
	8	100.0%	
1 Schools and high school complex	2	25.0	1
2 University Center	2	25.0	2
3 High School	1	12.5	1
4 MSU Extension Gardens	1	12.5	
5 These visioning sessions	1	12.5	
6 Youth emphasis	1	12.5	
Community Assessment Worksheets - Youth			
	47	100.0%	
1 Lack of school funding	13	27.7	1
2 Schools (new)	13	27.7	1
3 School system	8	17.0	1
4 Gaylord High School	5	10.6	1
5 Library - small	2	4.3	
6 Otsego County library	2	4.3	
7 School population (increased enrollment)	2	4.3	1
8 Change in teaching requirements	1	2.1	
9 Technology	1	2.1	3

HOW WE LIVE TABLES

How We Live

(The Community Assessment Worksheet information below is the summation of Otsego County residents' responses to five questions: A, B, D, E & F. See page 36 for the survey)

Item	Number of responses	Percentage of response	Priority of strategic actions (refer to page 20)
Brainstorming			
	43	100.0%	
1 Affordable housing	8	18.6	3
2 Preserve northern Michigan rural character	6	14.0	2
3 Parking for commercial not visible from road	5	11.6	2
4 County wide recycling	4	9.3	5
5 Mandatory recycling	4	9.3	5
6 Apartments next to freeway does not work	3	7.0	
7 Preserve historical character	3	7.0	2
8 Sense of community	3	7.0	
9 Involvement is the price we pay for freedom	2	4.7	4
10 Mandatory garbage pick-up	2	4.7	5
11 Youth focus	2	4.7	
12 Better housing	1	2.3	3
13 Does County care about summer residents	0	0.0	4
Community Assessment Worksheets - Countywide			
	101	100.0%	
1 Alpine theme	18	17.8	1
2 Downtown Gaylord	8	7.9	2
3 Close, county living - where family, neighbors & community support is important	7	6.9	2
4 Pavement total	6	5.9	2
5 Rural character & small-town atmosphere	5	5.0	2
6 Contributions and volunteerism of the population	4	4.0	4
7 Housing issues: lack of affordable housing (especially lower and subsidized housing units), subdivisions v. large lots, clustering v. privacy, number of homes for sale	4	4.0	3
8 Large parking lots	4	4.0	2
9 Growing senior population (many retirees from downstate) demand for housing and services	3	3.0	3
10 Low population density	3	3.0	
11 Relocation of retiring Baby Boomers	3	3.0	3
12 Churches	2	2.0	
13 Minimal light pollution	2	2.0	
14 Parking/blacktop in front of stores (development should be less obtrusive and inline with county theme)	2	2.0	1
15 Pollution (Noise, air, water)	2	2.0	
16 Well maintained farms, homesteads	2	2.0	
17 "You owe me attitude" in youth and newcomers	1	1.0	
18 Aging population (need for services/housing for retirees)	1	1.0	3
19 Allowing large differences in housing costs	1	1.0	3
20 Alpenfest	1	1.0	
21 Climate	1	1.0	
22 Free parking downtown	1	1.0	
23 Good business attitudes	1	1.0	
24 Historical buildings	1	1.0	2
25 Library	1	1.0	
26 Low crime rate	1	1.0	
27 No "unified" county-wide recycling program	1	1.0	5
28 No kill animal shelter	1	1.0	
29 Open land not being actively farmed	1	1.0	
30 Otsego Club	1	1.0	1
31 Pavilion	1	1.0	
32 People who move here and then forget why they came	1	1.0	
33 Poor topsoil	1	1.0	
34 Prejudice against new residents	1	1.0	4
35 Shopping opportunities (there are enough shops now)	1	1.0	
36 Strong work ethic	1	1.0	
37 Too many houses for sale	1	1.0	3
38 Unique character of each town and village	1	1.0	2
39 Village and town buildings	1	1.0	2
40 Well maintained towns and villages	1	1.0	2
41 Wildflowers along I-75 median	1	1.0	1
42 Wind damage in September 1998	1	1.0	

<i>Item</i>	<i>Number of responses</i>	<i>Percentage of response</i>	<i>Priority of strategic actions (refer to page 20)</i>
Community Assessment Worksheets - Youth	228	100.0%	
1 Alpine theme	72	31.6	1
2 Gas prices	22	9.6	
3 Housing (construction of houses)	14	6.1	3
4 Cleanliness (streets and kept up buildings)	13	5.7	
5 Downtown area "streetscape and landscaping" (parks, benches, trees, flowers, lights)	13	5.7	
6 Population growth	12	5.3	
7 Litter (and along roads)	9	3.9	
8 Small-town atmosphere and businesses (friendly people)	8	3.5	2
9 Subdivisions/neighborhood (expansion or construction)	6	2.6	3
10 Pavilion	5	2.2	
11 Apartments and condo (construction)	3	1.3	3
12 Glen's bells	3	1.3	
13 Immigration to the area	3	1.3	
14 Lack of shopping places	3	1.3	
15 Demographics	2	0.9	
16 Elk Club	2	0.9	
17 Housing (too much construction)	2	0.9	3
18 Neighborhoods, nice homes (good)	2	0.9	3
19 Population (generally acceptable)	2	0.9	
20 Windstorm	2	0.9	
21 Bells at Glen's	1	0.4	3
22 Commercialization throughout town	1	0.4	
23 Curfew	1	0.4	
24 Downtown	1	0.4	1
25 Downtown shopping	1	0.4	
26 Drugs and drinking in high school	1	0.4	
27 Fall -- color of trees	1	0.4	
28 Fire department (better)	1	0.4	
29 Glockenspiels	1	0.4	
30 Holiday decorations	1	0.4	
31 Holiday decorations left up	1	0.4	
32 Homes - many empty, for sale	1	0.4	3
33 Houses in town crowded because of new residents	1	0.4	3
34 Interest groups	1	0.4	3
35 Isolation	1	0.4	
36 Kids hanging out in random places	1	0.4	
37 Lack of affordable housing	1	0.4	3
38 Location	1	0.4	
39 Low crime	1	0.4	
40 Low-income housing	1	0.4	3
41 Mud holes	1	0.4	
42 Neighborhoods	1	0.4	2
43 Otsego fire department	1	0.4	
44 Phone lines	1	0.4	
45 Prices at stores	1	0.4	
46 Sister City	1	0.4	
47 Stray animals	1	0.4	
48 Tornado	1	0.4	
49 Vacant houses	1	0.4	3
50 Weather - sometimes terrible and unpredictable	1	0.4	

HOW WE GET AROUND TABLES

How We Get Around

(The Community Assessment Worksheet information below is the summation of Otsego County residents' responses to five questions: A, B, D, E & F. See page 36 for the survey)

Item	Number of responses	Percentage of response	Priority of strategic actions (refer to page 22)
Brainstorming			
	76	100.0%	
1 Pedestrian and bike friendly development	10	13.2	5
2 Control and regulate signs	8	10.5	3
3 Improve access management on M-32	8	10.5	2
4 Traffic (Improve!)	8	10.5	1
5 West M-32 bottleneck	8	10.5	2
6 Use service roads in development	6	7.9	1
7 Leave roads with tree canopy's alone	5	6.6	3
8 Time/synchronize traffic lights for better traffic flow	5	6.6	1
9 Better local access to I-75	4	5.3	2
10 M-32 shouldn't go through downtown	4	5.3	
11 I-75 crossing	2	2.6	
12 Increase naturally beautiful roads (nice scenic drives)	2	2.6	3
13 No downtown at Exit 279	2	2.6	
14 Better pedestrian walkways across M-32 in central business district	1	1.3	
15 By-pass	1	1.3	1
16 Main road system needs improvement	1	1.3	1
17 Maintain roads in winter	1	1.3	1
18 Better repair roads	0	0.0	1
19 Better street lighting	0	0.0	7
20 Curbs on back roads	0	0.0	
21 Do not allow exits to get bogged down	0	0.0	
22 Less signs/billboards on I-75	0	0.0	3
23 Loss of rural road character	0	0.0	3
24 Lower speed limits on bus routes	0	0.0	7
25 No more curb cuts	0	0.0	1
26 No new roads until ones we have are maintained	0	0.0	
27 Snowmobile overpass over M-27	0	0.0	
28 Tourism as major industry creates traffic problems	0	0.0	
Community Assessment Worksheets - Countywide			
	71	100.0%	
1 Traffic congestion	16	22.5	1
2 Signs -- too many, too large	8	11.3	3
3 M-32 West / Dickerson	5	7.0	2
4 Road ways not able to handle traffic (poor traffic planning)	5	7.0	1
5 I-75	4	5.6	2
6 Easy access to I-75 & other highways	3	4.2	2
7 Airport Enlargement	2	2.8	
8 Completion of I-75	2	2.8	
9 Congested roadways	2	2.8	1
10 M-32 East	2	2.8	2
11 Poor road condition/maintenance	2	2.8	1
12 Road issues: too many roads in the woods and too much asphalt	2	2.8	4
13 Unnecessary hard surfacing (too much asphalt)	2	2.8	4
14 Depletion of trees and open space	1	1.4	3
15 Drive cut restrictions on 27 & 32	1	1.4	4
16 Exit 282 interchange area	1	1.4	2
17 Gas prices higher than neighboring counties	1	1.4	
18 Long-distance commuting (low gas prices make possible)	1	1.4	
19 Loss of funding (Fed. & State) for infrastructure	1	1.4	2
20 Low traffic roads with scenic views (for bike riding)	1	1.4	
21 M-27 North of high school	1	1.4	
22 M-27 South along Otsego Lake	1	1.4	2
23 Major highway access	1	1.4	
24 Rail transportation	1	1.4	
25 South business loop	1	1.4	
26 Too many roads into the woods	1	1.4	4
27 Two rail lines with sidings	1	1.4	
28 US-131	1	1.4	2
29 Walkways between parking & main street	1	1.4	5

<i>Item</i>	<i>Number of responses</i>	<i>Percentage of response</i>	<i>Priority of strategic actions (refer to page 22)</i>
Community Assessment Worksheets - Youth	99	100.0%	
1 Road condition (poor maintenance - especially in winter, pot holes, etc.)	27	27.3	1
2 Traffic (Main Street and west of town)	20	20.2	1
3 Gas prices (outrageous)	14	14.1	
4 Traffic congestion	7	7.1	1
5 Traffic lights	7	7.1	1
5 Road construction	4	4.0	8
6 Arby's sign	4	4.0	3
7 Back roads - bad	2	2.0	1
8 Expansion on M-32	2	2.0	2
9 I-75 (close to interstate)	2	2.0	
10 Speed limits	2	2.0	7
11 Crosswalks	1	1.0	5
12 Dead Man's hill	1	1.0	
13 Downtown street parking (need more)	1	1.0	
14 Driving laws	1	1.0	
15 New traffic lights	1	1.0	1
16 Otsego busing system	1	1.0	6
17 Signs	1	1.0	3
18 Traffic (because of tourists)	1	1.0	1

HOW WE GROW TABLES

How We Grow

(The Community Assessment Worksheet information below is the summation of Otsego County residents' responses to five questions: A, B, D, E & F. See page 36 for the survey)

Item	Number of responses	Percentage of response	Priority of strategic actions (refer to page 26)	
Brainstorming	442	100.0%		
DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS & LAND USE				
1	Infill empty properties	49	11.1	1
2	Incentives (tax or economic credit) for infill of old buildings	24	5.4	1
3	Zoning ordinance needs fixing	24	5.4	2
4	Tighten up zoning so areas inside are developed first - stop sprawl	13	2.9	1
5	We want focus to be controlled change	8	1.8	
6	Watershed and water quality	7	1.6	2
7	Preserve and dredge Otsego Lake	7	1.6	2
8	Lack of infill (problem)	7	1.6	1
9	Affordable sewers around Otsego Lake	6	1.4	2
10	Connect community	5	1.1	
11	Sewer and water in village	5	1.1	2
12	Cluster housing	4	0.9	2
13	Promote sustainable growth - preserve assets and grow	3	0.7	2
14	Vision of the future is needed when zoning and planning	3	0.7	2
15	No subsidies to bad, development, redirect to good (infill, PDR)	3	0.7	1
16	Options and quality of life for generations	3	0.7	2
17	Restore natural resources beyond minimum requirements by law (those who devastate)	3	0.7	
18	Vacant commercial buildings bring values down	3	0.7	1
19	Zoning ordinance exists	3	0.7	2
20	Utilities underground - including power lines	2	0.5	2
21	Move airport outside city	2	0.5	
22	Zoning - How big do we want to be?	2	0.5	2
23	Centralize commercial development	1	0.2	
24	Close the land fill	1	0.2	2
25	Do not close the land fill, take it back as governmental	1	0.2	2
26	Drinking water - un-chlorinated	1	0.2	
27	Encourage new urbanism as a design concept	1	0.2	2
28	Gravel pit maxed out	1	0.2	
29	Restrictive zoning stifles growth in some cases	1	0.2	2
30	Building height restrictions	0	0.0	1
31	Central green town square	0	0.0	1
32	Define and protect view sheds	0	0.0	2
33	Look back further to see what has happened to land	0	0.0	
34	Municipal waste and water treatment outside city to protect aquifer	0	0.0	2
35	Restrict site condo development	0	0.0	2
36	Sustainable forestry on private lands	0	0.0	
ZONING				
1	Alternative energy - wind turbines	37	8.4	3
2	Control (minimize) light pollution	9	2.0	
3	Aesthetics are important	9	2.0	1
4	Stop subsidizing big box stores	8	1.8	
5	Landscaping (greenery) requirements on new buildings	7	1.6	2
6	Encourage green building techniques	6	1.4	4
7	Retain Alpine theme	6	1.4	1
8	No big box stores - do we need all of the big-box establishments	5	1.1	
9	Don't use huge tax incentives to encourage development	2	0.5	4
10	Focus on development not growth	1	0.2	1
11	Community standards too low	1	0.2	1
12	Landscaping ordinances	1	0.2	2
13	Streetscape project on South 27	1	0.2	2
14	Whole area starting to look like everywhere else	1	0.2	
15	Why is growth so ugly?	1	0.2	
16	"Grow" developers right here in this community	0	0.0	
17	A house on every acre = no wildlife	0	0.0	
18	Adequate funding for infrastructure	0	0.0	
19	Beautify town: trees and flowers	0	0.0	2
20	Better description of wetlands for building purposes	0	0.0	
21	Cell towers	0	0.0	
22	Green zones	0	0.0	4
23	Master plan doesn't show infrastructure	0	0.0	
24	What's wrong with looking like everywhere else?	0	0.0	

<i>Item</i>	<i>Number of responses</i>	<i>Percentage of response</i>	<i>Priority of strategic actions (refer to page 26)</i>	
GOVERNMENT POLICIES				
1	Enforcement of zoning and nuisance ordinance	20	4.5	1
2	Reactive not proactive (currently)	20	4.5	2
3	Infrastructure tax	19	4.3	3
4	Enforce clean-up of blighted areas	7	1.6	1
5	Officials need to be on same page- interjurisdictional	5	1.1	2
6	Courage to say "no" to some development	5	1.1	1
7	Tax abatements to locals too	5	1.1	3
8	Fewer units of government	4	0.9	
9	Lower the number of county commissioners	4	0.9	
10	Redo zoning to reduce growth	4	0.9	1
11	Focus politicians on obstacles to growth	3	0.7	2
12	No more community amenities until stuff is paid for	3	0.7	
13	Recall and banish elected officials	3	0.7	
14	Condense county government	2	0.5	
15	Draft master plan and zoning ordinance without loopholes	2	0.5	1
16	Fiscal responsibility	2	0.5	4
17	Limit board membership for better cross section of community and representation	2	0.5	4
18	More proactive planning	2	0.5	4
19	Propose tax deduction for owner saving and maintaining wildlife habitat	2	0.5	3
20	Current buildings - how comply with new rules?	1	0.2	1
21	Be proactive - make decisions so state doesn't have to	0	0.0	4
22	Enforce existing master plan and zoning ordinances	0	0.0	1
23	Not funded to be proactive	0	0.0	4
24	Variances (too many)	0	0.0	1
PROPERTY RIGHTS				
1	Property rights	39	8.8	1
2	Choices are necessary	0	0.0	
3	How do we achieve (preservation of natural environment, beautiful roads) without losing our property rights?	0	0.0	
4	Self discipline to preserve property	0	0.0	
5	Some things do infringe! (on property right to do what want)	0	0.0	
Community Assessment Worksheets - Countywide		143	100.0%	
DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS & LAND USE				
1	Empty buildings - including vacant big-box commercial	19	13.3	1
2	Poorly planned, rambling development (uncontrolled retail/commercial development leading to strip & leapfrog growth)	7	4.9	1
3	Population growth - increased need for public services (police) and natural resources (water, energy)	6	4.2	
4	Stripmalls	6	4.2	1
5	Big-box stores and commercial development (and their effect on local businesses)	5	3.5	
6	Light pollution	5	3.5	
7	Sprawling commercial development	5	3.5	1
8	Demand for Big-box stores like other communities have by locals and surrounding communities	4	2.8	
9	Sprawling development (fragmented not clustered)	4	2.8	1
10	Abandoned old Wal-Mart shopping center	3	2.1	1
11	National chain stores (Big-box stores) forcing small businesses out	3	2.1	
12	Population growth (housing and infrastructure construction)	3	2.1	
13	Big-box stores	2	1.4	1
14	Planning process (as relates to growing population)	2	1.4	
15	Pressure from developers	2	1.4	
16	Sporadic subdivisions	2	1.4	1
17	Unattractive square flat-roof buildings (Big-Box and Polebarns/buildings)	2	1.4	1
18	Clear cutting of trees	1	0.7	2
19	Congested buildings	1	0.7	1
20	Developers need to make a profit	1	0.7	
21	Developers wanting to build a Gaylord metroplex	1	0.7	
22	Empty Wolohan store	1	0.7	1
23	Growth demands employment, housing, services	1	0.7	
24	Industrial Bldgs. Along I-75 North of town	1	0.7	1
25	Industrial parks	1	0.7	
26	Lack of sewer system outside of Gaylord	1	0.7	2
27	Large stores (with large parking lots and no visual appeal)	1	0.7	
28	Looks the same as other towns	1	0.7	
29	Site condo residential developments - too many, too easy to do	1	0.7	2
30	Strong growth	1	0.7	
31	Super Wal-Mart	1	0.7	1

One County, One Vision

HOW WE GROW TABLES

Item	Number of responses	Percentage of response	Priority of strategic actions (refer to page 26)
ZONING			
1 Downtown streetscape - including trees	13	8.1	2
2 Zoning	2	1.4	1
3 Decrease in companies coming in that are committed to the community	1	0.7	
4 Local governments willing to do what developers want	1	0.7	
5 Loss of trees in downtown residential areas	1	0.7	2
6 MDEQ Building in Gaylord	1	0.7	
7 Newer business buildings in Gaylord	1	0.7	1
GOVERNMENT POLICIES			
1 Urban blight - worn down homes and neighborhoods (including but not limited to lower income)	5	3.5	1
2 Lack of trust in local government	2	1.4	4
3 Local governments pushing for growth because of the myth that growth improves the	2	1.4	
4 Selective zoning enforcement - including not enough enforcement to clean up junk	2	1.4	1
5 Annexation of strips along M-32 & old 27	1	0.7	
6 Global trade has introduced non-native species	1	0.7	
7 Growth without order created spot zoning in many cases	1	0.7	1
8 Intrusions on natural resources	1	0.7	
9 Lack of inter-jurisdictional coordination	1	0.7	2
10 Lack of satisfactory or coordinated master plan, ordinances, etc.	1	0.7	1
11 Lack of/Loss of funding for environmental needs	1	0.7	
12 Poor management of deer herd	1	0.7	
13 Resources sold throughout the world	1	0.7	
14 Rural blight	1	0.7	
15 Shortage of public funds in all areas	1	0.7	4
16 Special Use Permits	1	0.7	1
17 State & federal grants & incentives	1	0.7	
18 Too much county government administration	1	0.7	4
19 Water resources being diverted	1	0.7	
PROPERTY RIGHTS			
1 Loss of landowners/property owners rights	2	1.4	1
2 Lack of respect for property rights	1	0.7	1
Community Assessment Worksheets - Youth	223	100.0%	
DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS & LAND USE			
1 Abandoned, empty buildings (vacant lots)	45	20.2	1
2 Super Wal-Mart plaza	28	11.7	
3 Commercial development/businesses - chain stores & restaurants	10	4.5	
4 Kohl's	7	3.1	
5 Location of buildings (too many/majority on west side)	7	3.1	1
6 Mall (new)	5	2.2	
7 Old Wal-Mart plaza (run-down, unused buildings)	5	2.2	1
8 Clear-cut areas	4	1.8	2
9 Cutting trees & clear-cutting wooded areas	4	1.8	2
10 Mall expansion	4	1.8	
11 Shopping center	4	1.8	
12 Courthouse	3	1.3	
13 All major, big stores on west	2	0.9	1
14 Expansion of town	2	0.9	
15 Garbage dump	2	0.9	3
16 Harmony Grounds Coffee Shop	2	0.9	
17 Poor development of commercial areas	2	0.9	3
18 Restaurants	2	0.9	
19 Too much development (construction)	2	0.9	
20 Areas over crowded while others vacant	1	0.4	2
21 BJ's Restaurant	1	0.4	
22 Some business and homes close to Otsego Lake side of town (in between old Willabee's and Burger King)	1	0.4	
23 Car washes	1	0.4	
24 Carter's Building needs improvement	1	0.4	
25 Cinema	1	0.4	
26 Closed down restaurants	1	0.4	
27 Georgia Pacific	1	0.4	3
28 Growth pressure	1	0.4	
29 High school parking lot and entrance	1	0.4	
30 Industrialization of Southside of Gaylord	1	0.4	2
31 Jet's pizza	1	0.4	
32 Lack of a Red Lobster	1	0.4	
33 Lack of growth around Gaylord	1	0.4	
34 Poorly planned city	1	0.4	1
35 Vanderbilt	1	0.4	

<i>Item</i>	<i>Number of responses</i>	<i>Percentage of response</i>	<i>Priority of strategic actions (refer to page 26)</i>
ZONING			
1 Main Street (buildings and landscaping)	11	4.9	2
2 Lights throughout town (on trees)	5	2.2	2
3 Alpine theme mandate	4	1.8	
4 Super Wal-Mart (plaza's architecture)	4	1.8	1
5 Kohl's	3	1.3	
6 Buildings	2	0.9	1
7 Buildings which do not conform to Alpine theme	2	0.9	1
8 Junk yard by Ponderosa	2	0.9	2
9 Sewage plant next to Middle School	2	0.9	
10 Streetscape	2	0.9	2
11 Streetlights in downtown	1	0.4	
12 Windmills	1	0.4	4
GOVERNMENT POLICIES			
1 Alpine theme mandate	4	1.8	
2 Increase in police force	4	1.8	
3 State policies	4	1.8	
4 Federal policies	3	1.3	
5 Buildings - old, worn down	2	0.9	1
6 Police	2	0.9	
7 Trailer park - looks dingy (and in main part of town)	2	0.9	1
8 Lack of funding	1	0.4	
9 Lack of police funding	1	0.4	
10 Lawns - not mowed	1	0.4	1
11 More criminal convictions	1	0.4	
12 Overcrowded downtown	1	0.4	1
13 Stricter police policies	1	0.4	
14 Subdivisions - dirty and cluttered	1	0.4	1
15 Vehicles (for sale) along roads	1	0.4	1
16 War (taken people away)	1	0.4	

TOP RESPONSES TABLE

	<i>Brainstorming Responses</i>	<i>Community Assessment Responses</i>	<i>Community Assessment Responses – Youth</i>
Affordable housing		X	X
Alternative energy issues	X		
Big-box stores and strip-malls		X	
Blighted, run down neighborhoods		X	X
Garbage dump			X
Jobs - meaningful employment opportunities	X	X	X
Large, unpleasant signs and billboards		X	X
Light Pollution		X	
Oil and gas businesses		X	
Parking lots -- too big		X	
Poor road condition	X	X	X
Possible use of impact and/or infrastructure fees	X		
Proactive planning	X		
Property rights	X	X	
Protection of agricultural and forest lands	X	X	X
Too few cultural activities		X	X
Too much "unplanned," sprawling development	X	X	X
Traffic congestion	X	X	X
Vacant, abandoned buildings (Infill)	X	X	X
Water (quantity and quality)	X	X	X
Zoning ordinance: application and enforcement	X	X	

Option Finder

Clustered residential developments (preserve agricultural lands and open space)
 Commercial areas with parking behind and shared road access
 Commercial areas with sign ordinances
 Community character (sidewalks, light posts, front porches)
 Corporate identity standards (building design and location to conform with locality)
 Density
 Landscaping provision (residential and commercial neighborhoods)
 Streetscapes with landscaping, lighting, and defined pedestrian space

OPTION FINDER RESULTS

OPTION FINDER

R. CLARK ASSOCIATES, INC.
Landscape Architects & Land Planners

The following is a compilation of OptionFinder voting results from all five visioning sessions. The results depicted really lend themselves to giving the community a start on creating a community character guidebook.

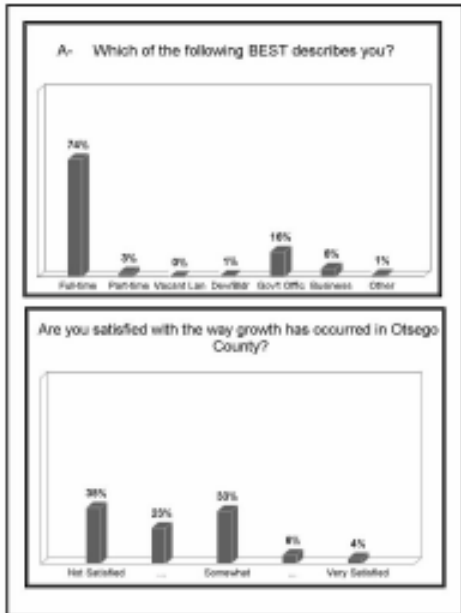
1.

WHO ARE YOU?

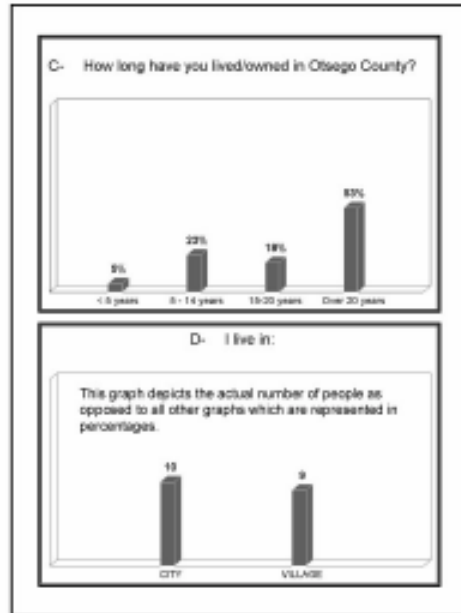
R. CLARK ASSOCIATES, INC.
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The next 10 graphs show compiled demographic information about the participants at all 5 visioning sessions.

2.

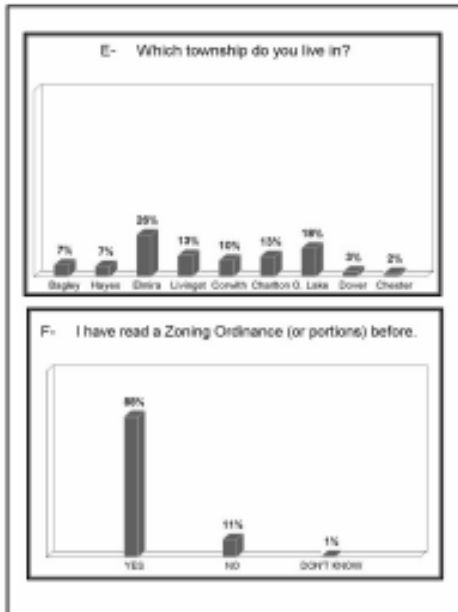


3.

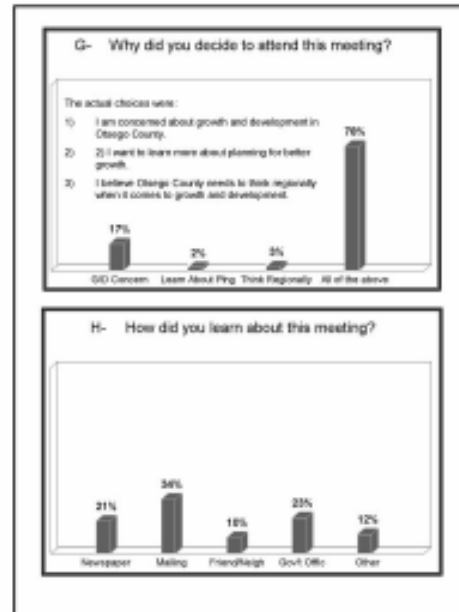


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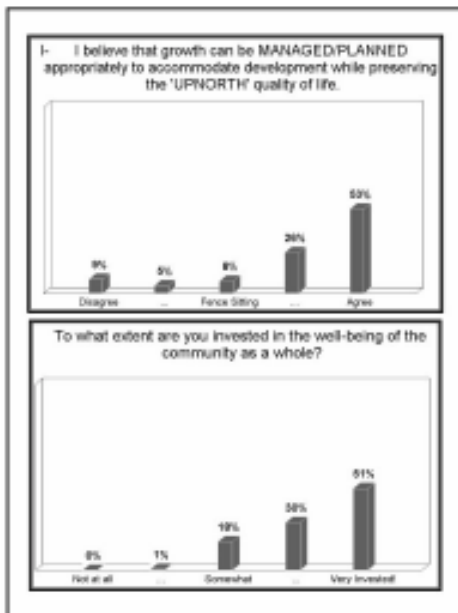
OPTION FINDER RESULTS



5.



6.



7.

TELL US WHAT YOU KNOW...

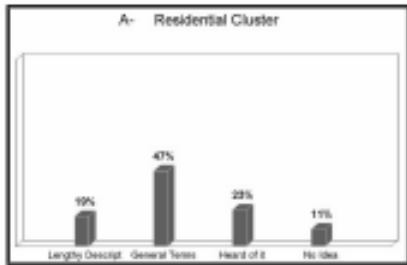
This was the educational component. The facilitators wanted to see how much participants knew about zoning and planning tools. The next 11 graphs show compiled information from all five visioning sessions.

8.

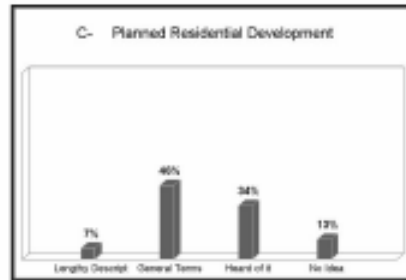
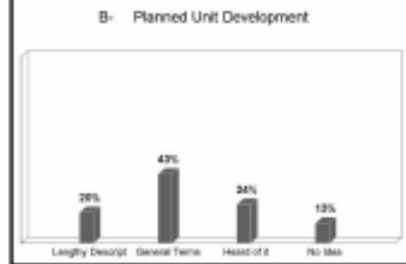
The participants were shown a list of development tools and then asked to rate (on the following scale) their perceived knowledge of each tool.

SCALE:

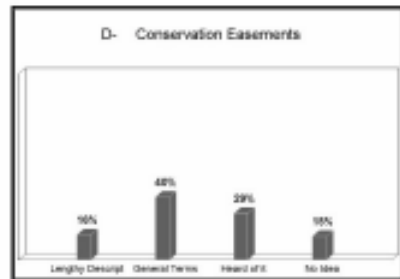
1. I can give you a lengthy description of this
2. I could explain it in general terms
3. I have only heard of this
4. I have NO IDEA!!



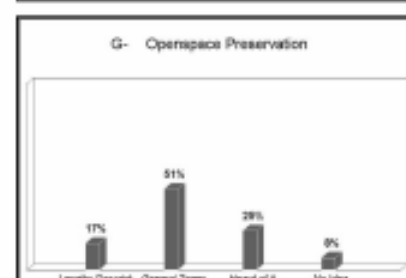
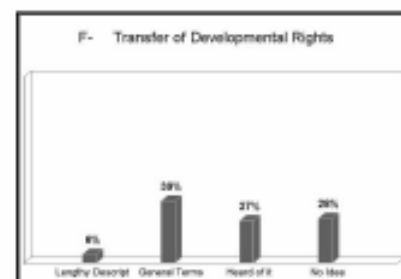
9.



10.

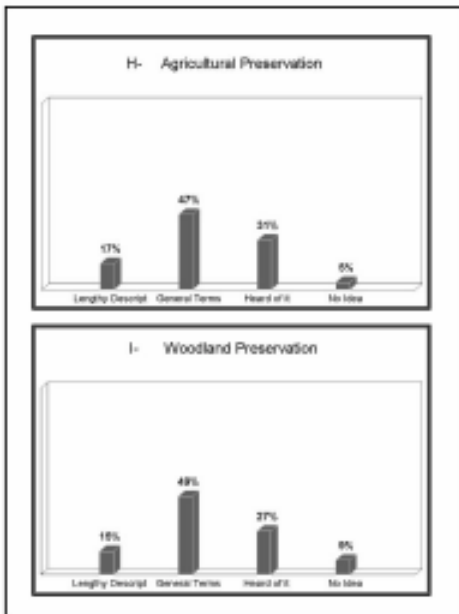


11.

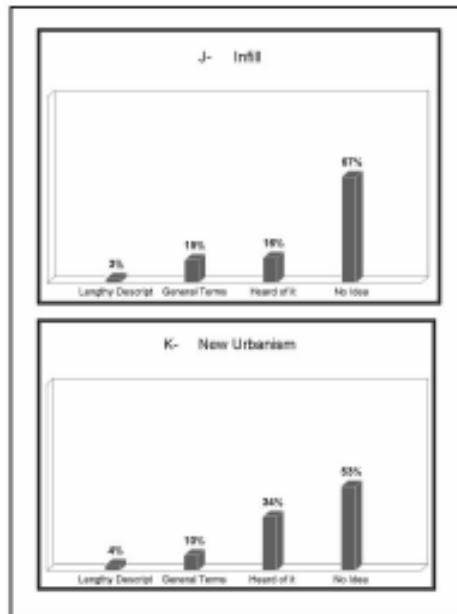


12.

OPTION FINDER RESULTS



13.



14.

Visual Preference R. CLARK ASSOCIATES, INC. Landscape Architects & Land Planners

PART ONE

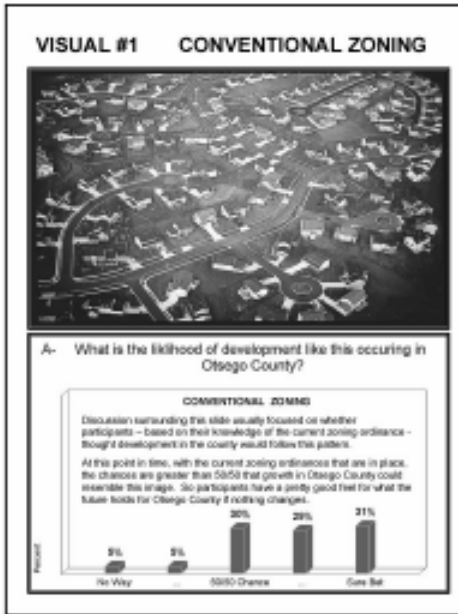
The community may use the results of the visual preference to begin formulating a design guidebook that directs their desired community character.

15.

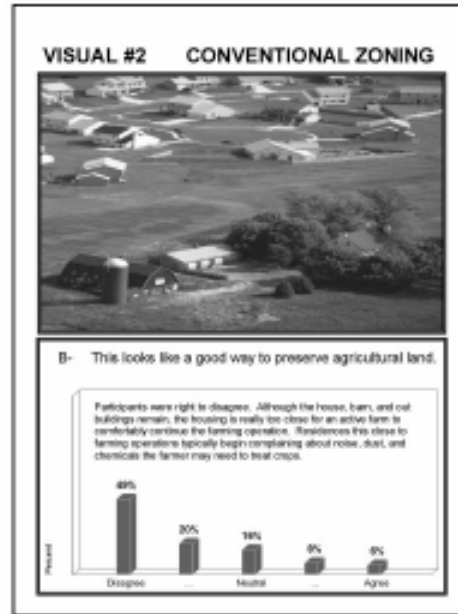
Visual Preference R. CLARK ASSOCIATES, INC. Landscape Architects & Land Planners

The following images depict development of larger areas. The intent is to represent more community wide development patterns. Answers were based on each image (or image set) NOT on a comparison of the entire string of images. Participants were instructed to base their vote on GUT INSTINCT - their initial reaction upon seeing the image.

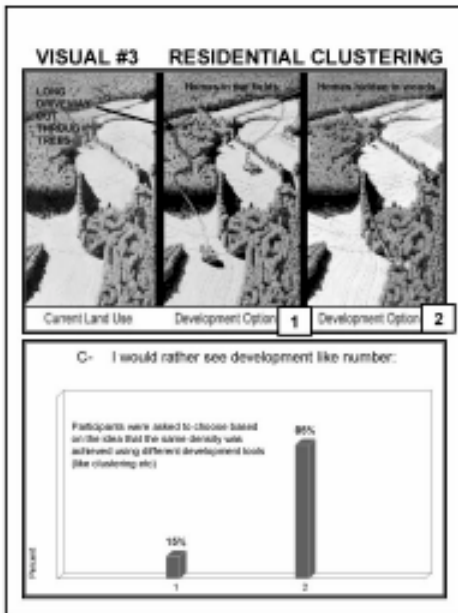
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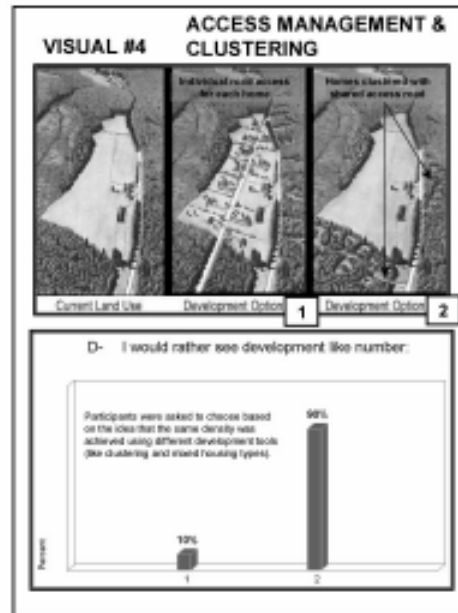
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18.



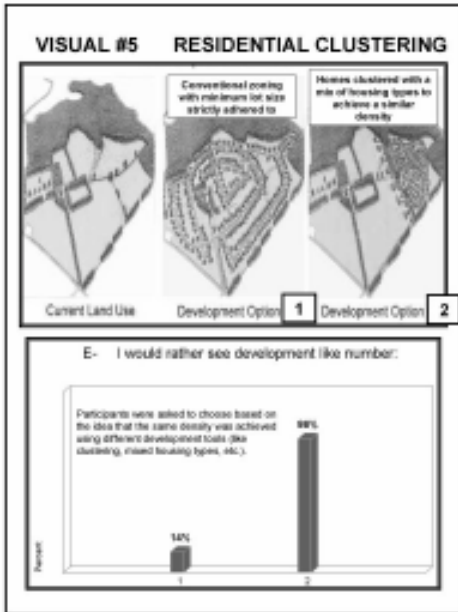
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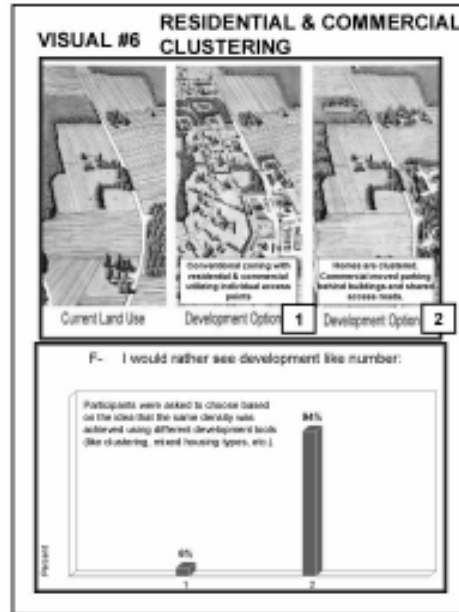
20.

One County, One Vision

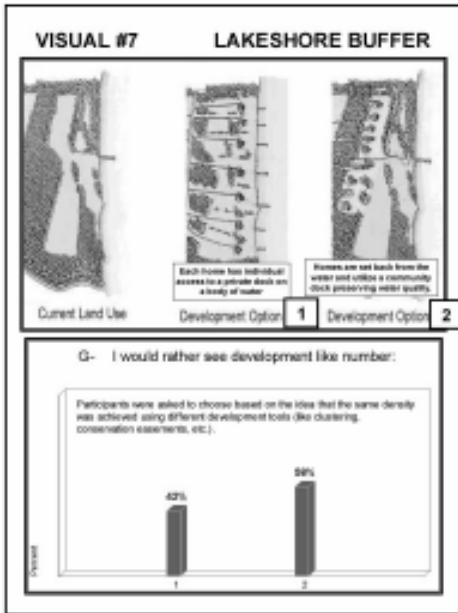
OPTION FINDER RESULTS



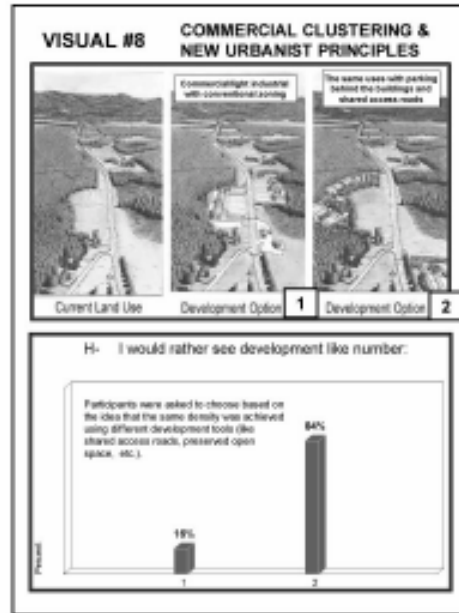
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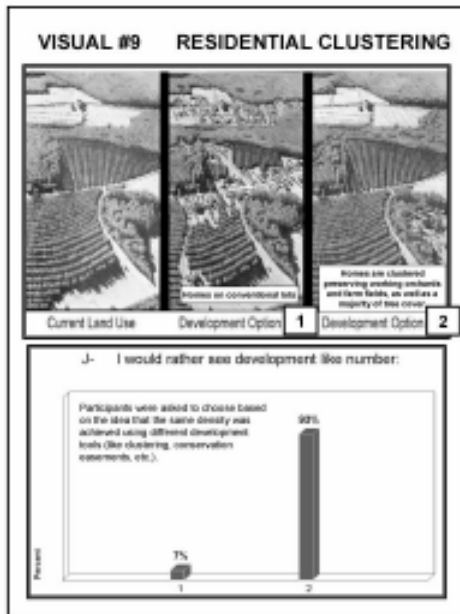
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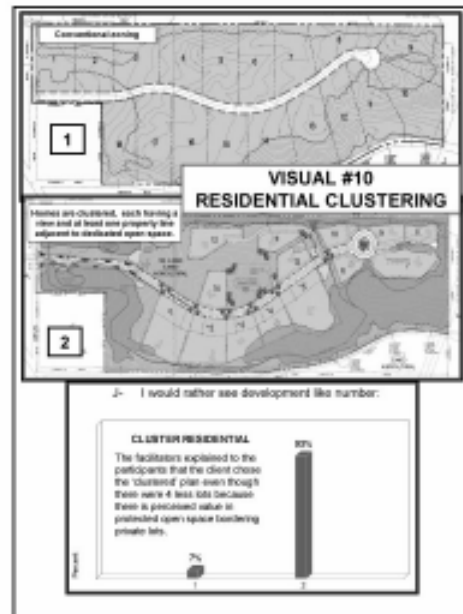
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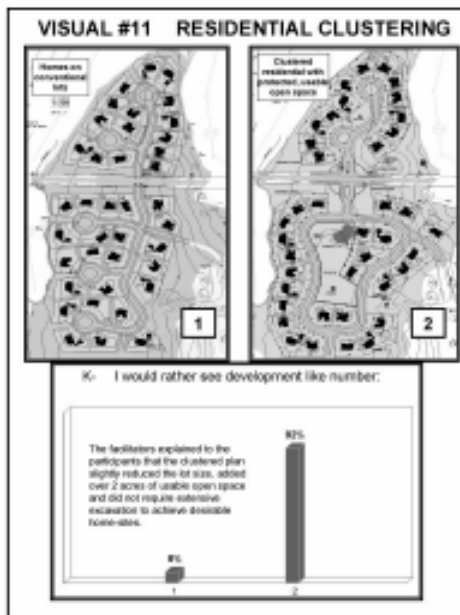
24.



25.



26.



27.

T-SE-GO ONE COUNTY VISION

Visual Preference R. CLARK ASSOCIATES, INC.
Landscape Architects & Land Planners

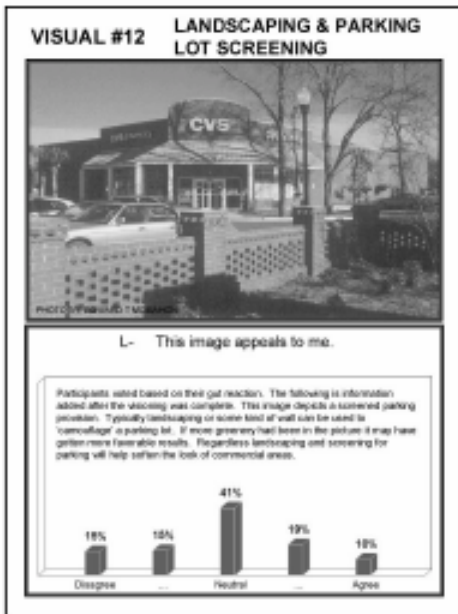
The next images depict more site specific kinds of development. The intent is to demonstrate how architectural & site details affect the overall desirability of a community. Answers were based on each image (or image set) NOT on a comparison of the entire string of images.

Participants were told to base their vote on GUT INSTINCT – their initial reaction upon seeing the image.

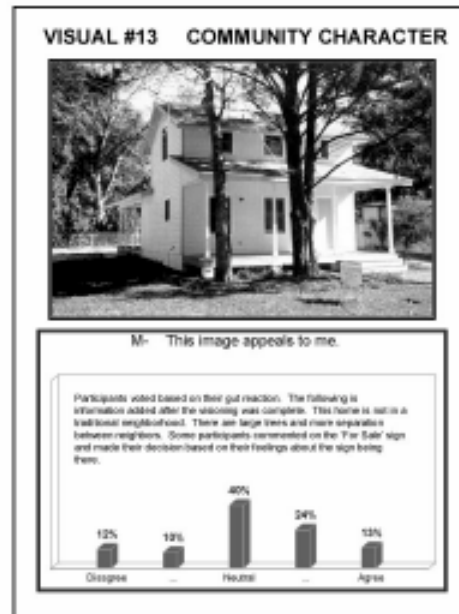
The community may use the results of the visual preference to begin formulating a design guidebook that directs their desired community character.

28.

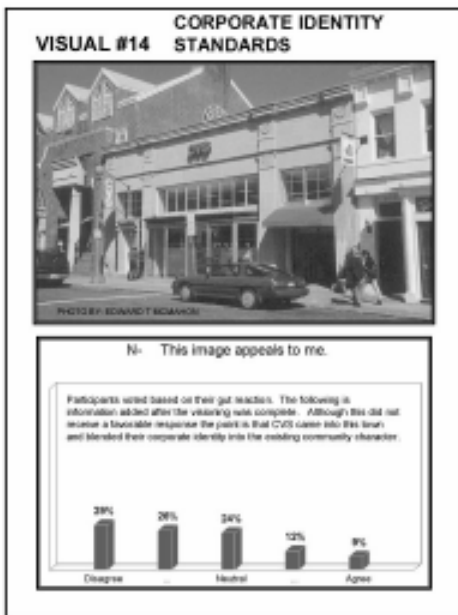
OPTION FINDER RESULTS



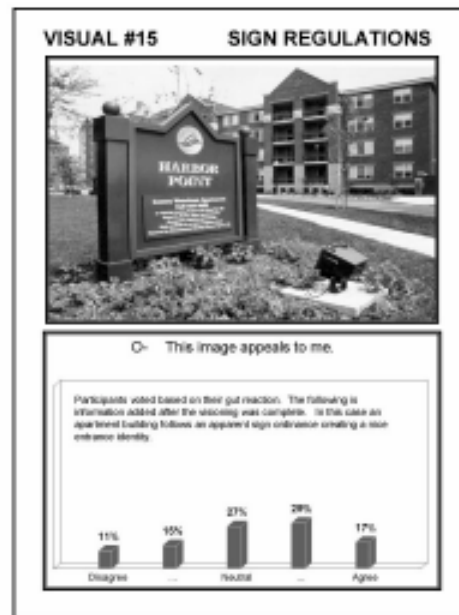
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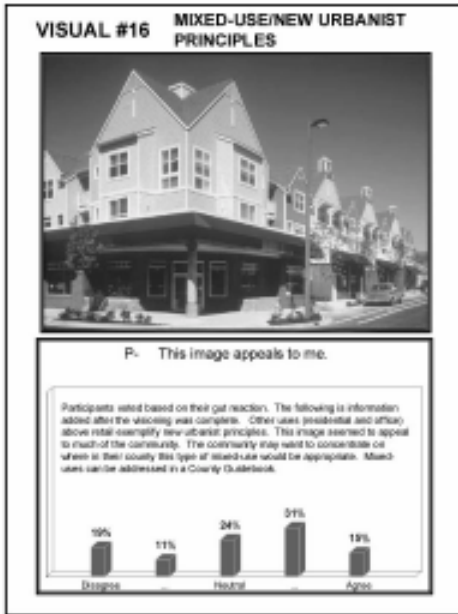
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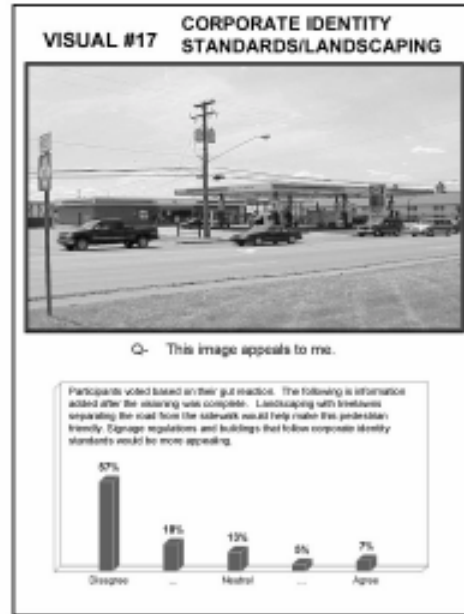
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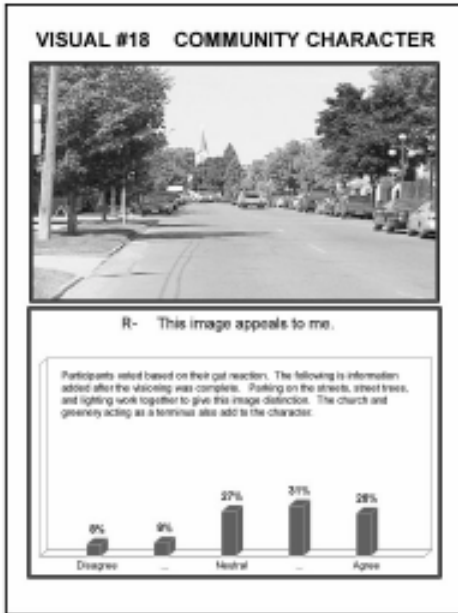
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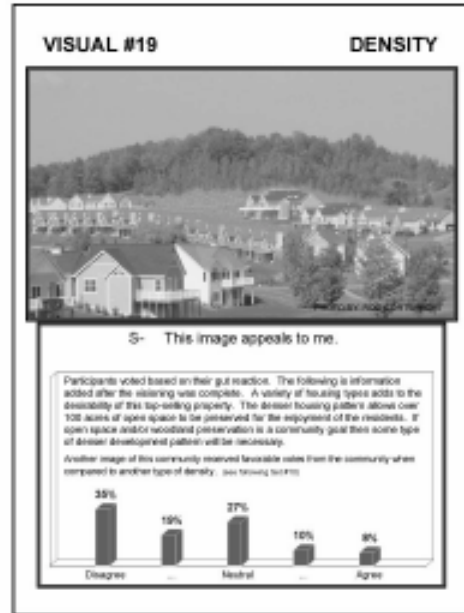
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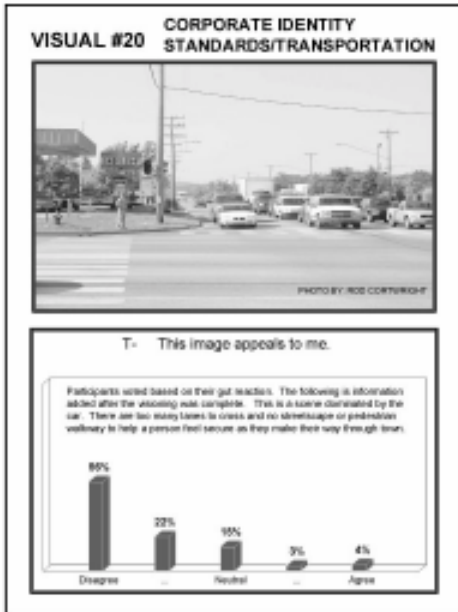


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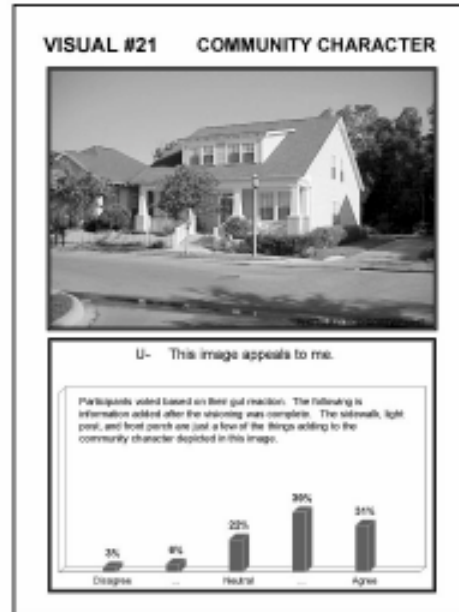


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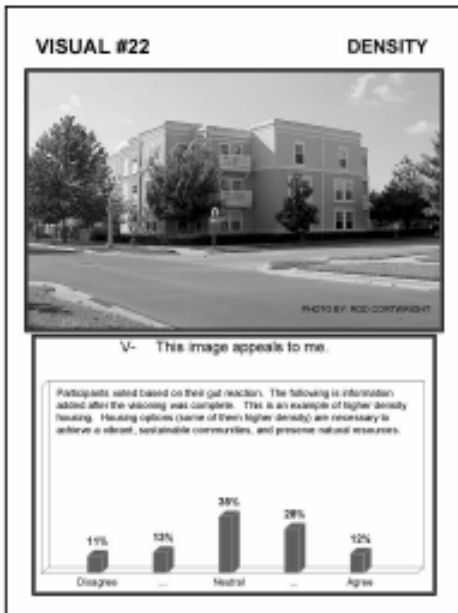
OPTION FINDER RESULTS



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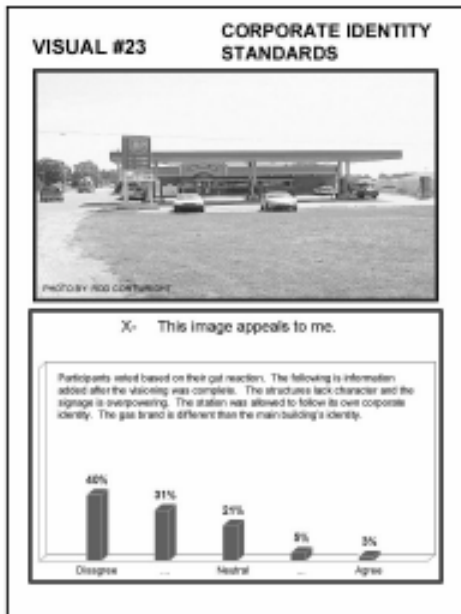
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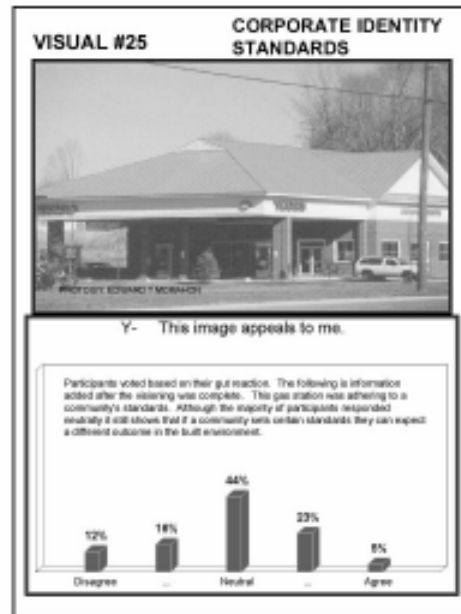
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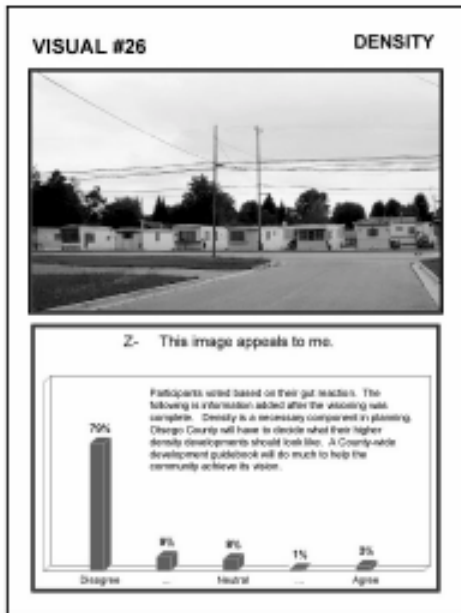
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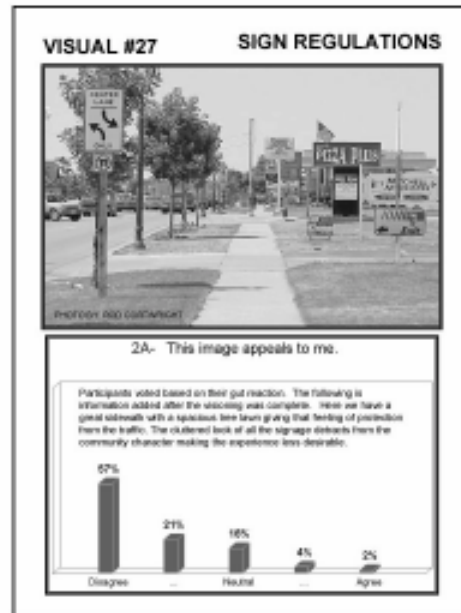
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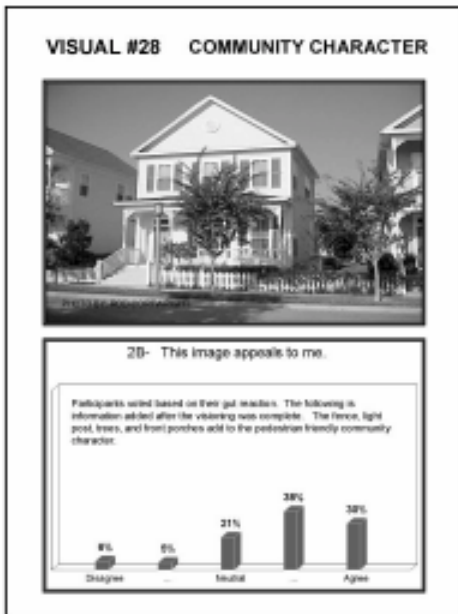


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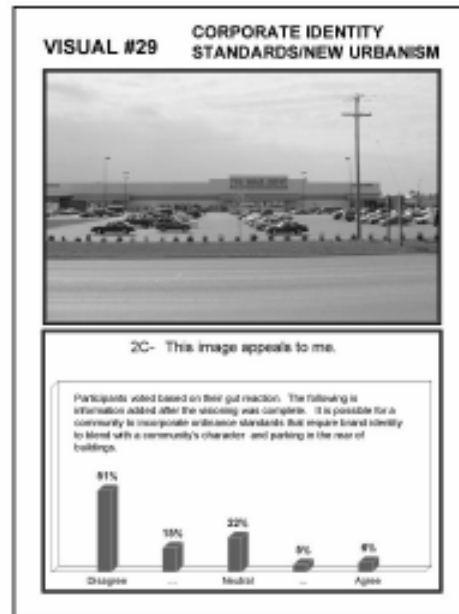


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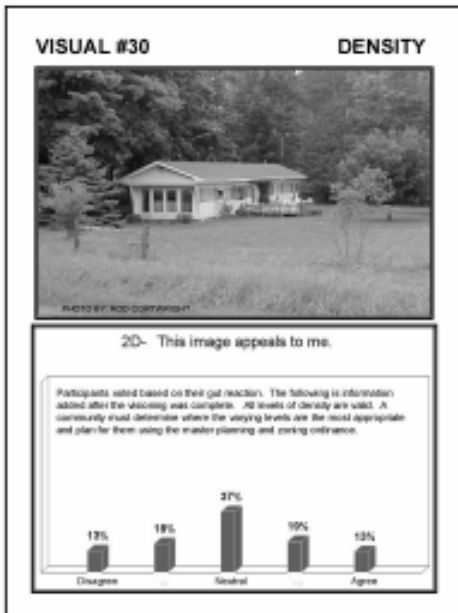
OPTION FINDER RESULTS



45.



46.



47.

OTSEGO ONE COUNTY VISION

Visual Preference

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Landscape Architects & Land Planners

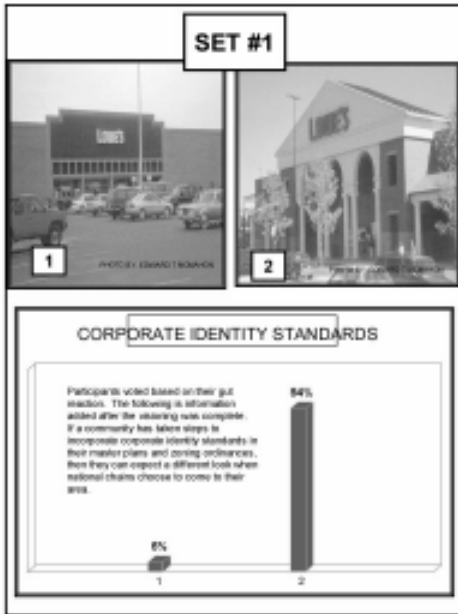
PART TWO

The next images are a comparison of site specific kinds of development. The intent is to demonstrate how architectural & site details affect the overall desirability of a community. Answers were based on each image set NOT on a comparison of the entire string of images.

Participants were instructed to base their vote on GUT INSTINCT – their initial reaction upon seeing the image.

The community may use the results of the visual preference to begin formulating a design guidebook that directs their desired community character.

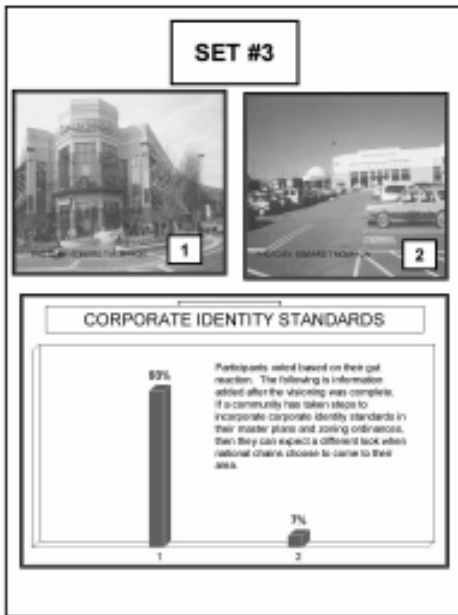
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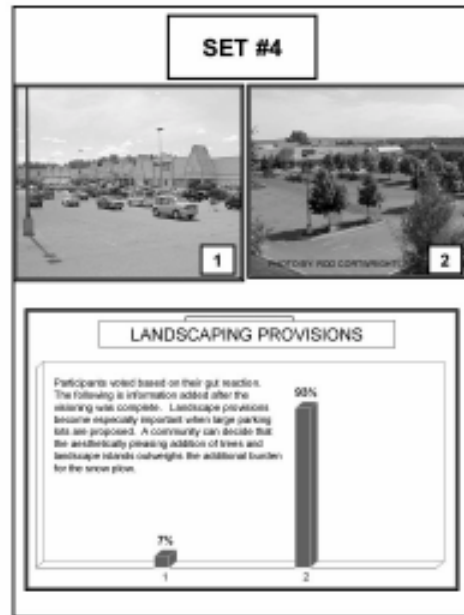
49.



50.



51.

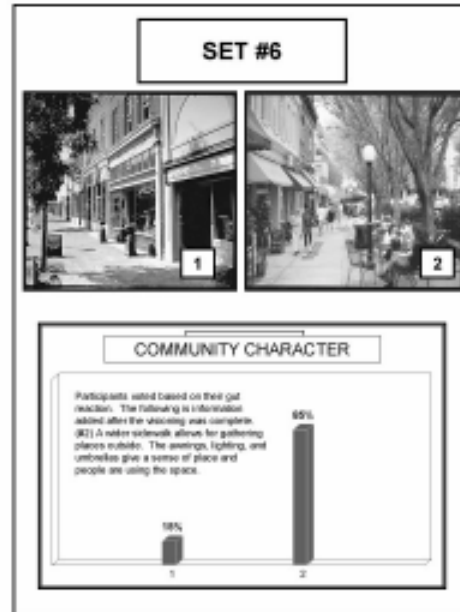


52.

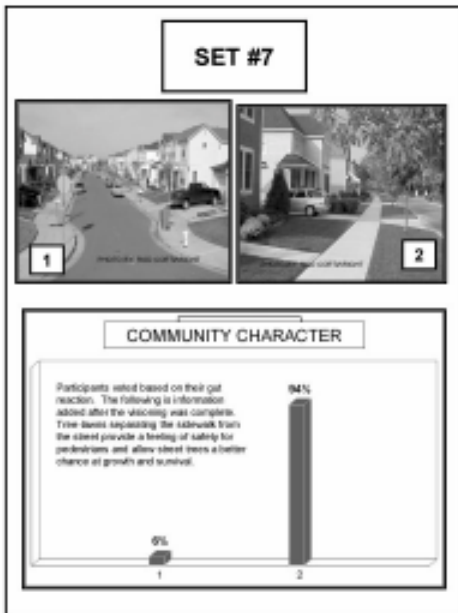
OPTION FINDER RESULTS



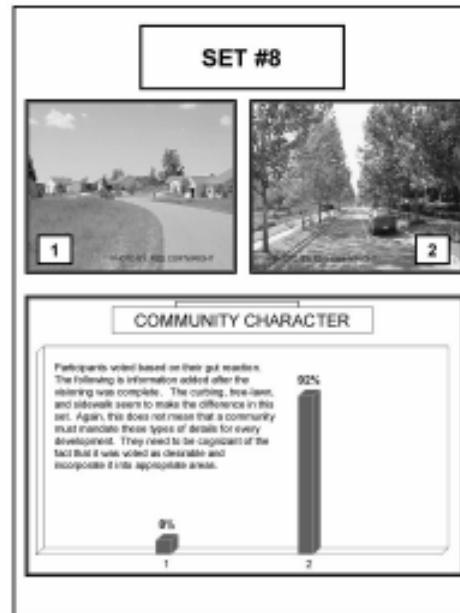
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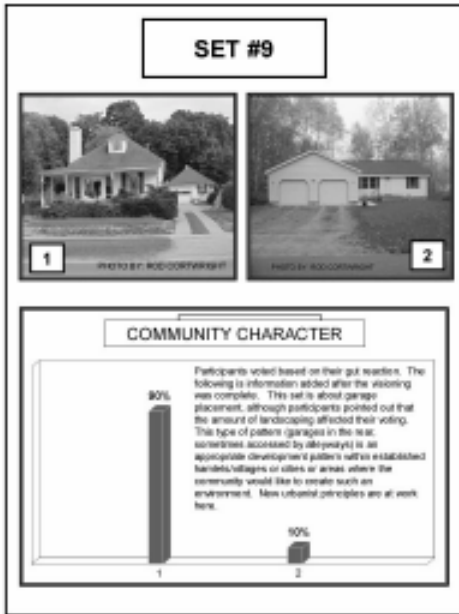
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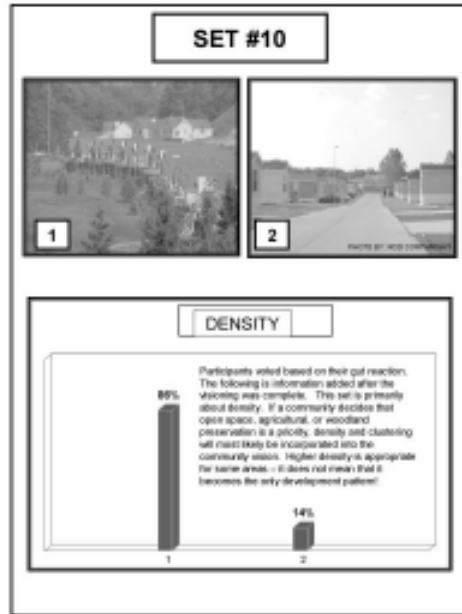
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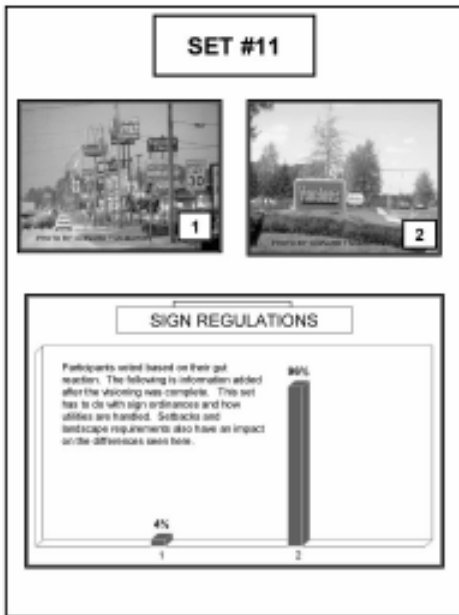
56.



57.



58.



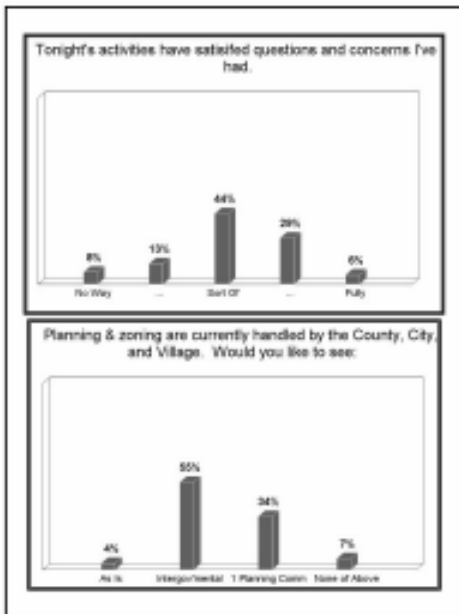
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OT-SEGO
ONE COUNTY VISION

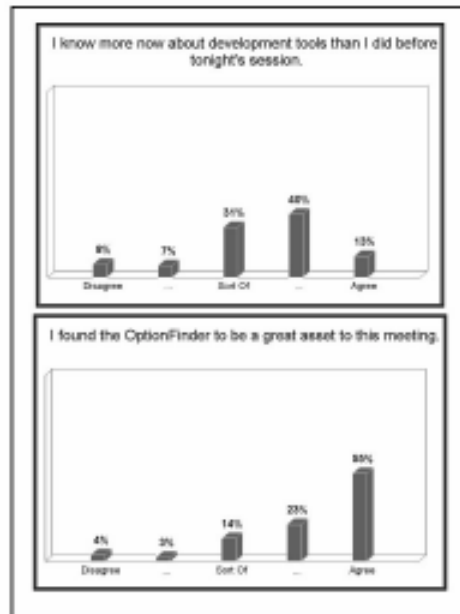
EVALUATION RESPONSES
(NEXT 8 GRAPHS)

60.

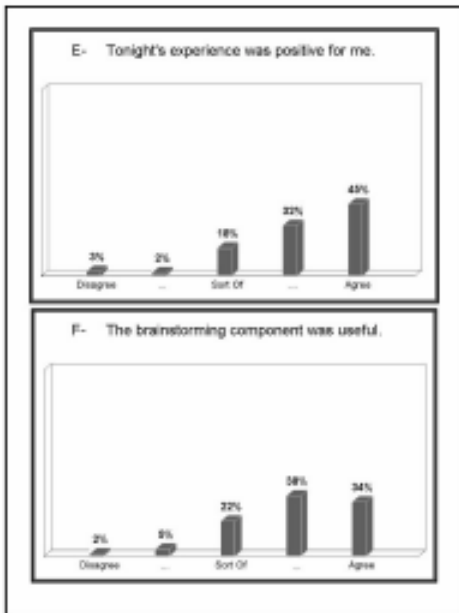
OPTION FINDER RESULTS



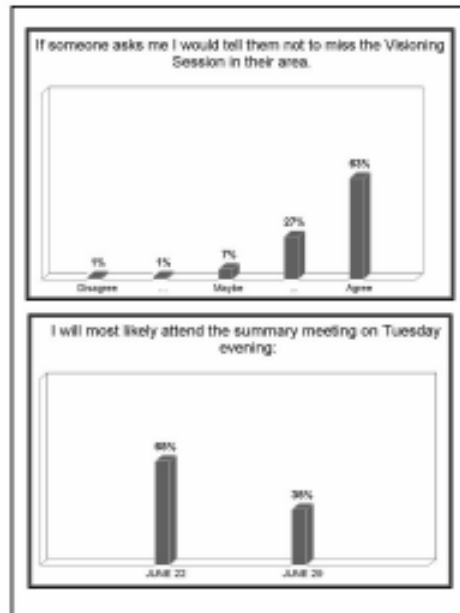
61.



62.



63.



64.



One County, One Vision
