

# Community Input – Notes from Community Meeting

## City of Houghton M-26 West

Visual Enhancement  
Steering Committee Meeting  
Monday May 17, 2004

### Vision 2024- We Picture This

1. Landscaping
  - Large tree Islands to break up parking areas and direct traffic flow
  - Landscaping along roadsides to soften the visual impact of stores
  - Dirt slopes vegetated
  - Trees (not too big – bushes)
  - Trees lining the roadway
  - Natural landscaping and wildflowers
  - Flowers along sidewalks
  - Landscaping around commercial signs
  - Median down middle of M-26 landscaped with flowers
  - Slopes covered with vegetation (No bare hill sides)
  - Frontage roads with trees as a buffer from highway
  - Retain as much existing vegetation as possible (Trees added where that was not done)
  - Sidewalk and green buffer zone with trees
  - Winter view (Evergreens)
  - Evergreen trees between highway and parking lots
  - No mine rock
  - Landscaping that is easy to maintain
  - Lighted trees for winter
2. Limit to Signs
  - No Bill Boards
  - No Billboards allowed – Limit sign height and size
  - Better control of signage in terms of size and lighting (Zoning ordinance)
  - Get rid of tall sign on corner of Sharon and M-26 by Pizza Hut
  - No tall signs (>15 feet?)
  - More attractive signs (None above rooftops) (Wood and stone instead of plastic)
  - Shared signage
  - Attractive signage
  - Signage and lighting that look well in winter and summer
3. Views
  - Light up the Quincy Mine Shaft at night (Flood light Quincy Mine)
  - Better view from Quincy Hill overlook
  - Excess lighting reduced (Down Directed)
  - Recreate scenic view from Hancock Hill

- “Rest Area” – Viewing and picture taking location on M-26
- Remove or disguise used car presence along corridor
- Use enclosed pipe instead of drainage ditch on West side
- 4. Bike and Pedestrian Access
  - Add benches, awnings
  - Alternate transportation paths- i.e. Golf Carts
  - Safe Biking, walking path from Houghton to Mall area and beyond
  - Cooperation of commercial interests
- 5. Welcome and Information Signs
  - Houghton welcome sign (Established 1858? –Home of Michigan Tech University, Quincy.....)
  - Tourist information signage i.e. portage canal ¼ mile – Mount Ripley Ski Hill elevation: \_\_\_\_\_, Downtown Houghton ¼ mile, Quincy Mine established: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Events billboard
  - Nicer welcome to Houghton sign with plantings
- 6. Parking Lot Design
  - Parking lots are not seas of pavement but have attractive landscaping on islands
  - Parking lots allow safe pedestrian access
  - Green area sized to accept snow removal (At expense of parking!!)
  - Parking lots behind buildings
  - Lesser amounts of driveways to highway
  - Minimum driveways off highway
- 7. Lighting
  - Consistent lighting
  - Control of street lighting
  - Nicer fixtures
  - More attractive lighting
  - Lighting with a mining/historic theme and protect the night sky

### Current Conditions/Issues/Visual Invaders

- Billboards
- Mine Rock
- Broken Pavement
- Used Car lots – Parking on grass
- Trash (McDonalds cups, boxes etc. Bottles and caps)
- Bare hillsides
- Large/tall signs
- Sign with unused spaces
- Open ditches
- Erosion of hillsides
- Grey concrete boxes
- Parking lots
- Unattractive building facades

- Store front designs
- “Off the Shelf” franchise architecture
- Pole buildings without attractive facades (wood, brick, stone would be nice)
- Five lanes of traffic
- Varied landscaping (not only lawn)
- Snow banks (especially in late winter/early spring)
- Access Roads—Traffic
- Temporary signage i.e. sales events
- Lack of directional signage i.e. center lane purpose

### Roadblocks

- Hospitality
- Progress versus blight
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### How do we get there?

- Publicity (Newspaper)
- Awards
- Plan → vision → Developers
- Negative and positive image display (Pictures)
- TIF funding
- University and Ski Hill Promotion/Campaign
- Sign ordinance
- Interaction with businesses
- Present designs to businesses to build enthusiasm
- Don’t shame businesses
- Invite businesses to planning meetings during early stages
- Stress the importance of a Chamber business locator
- Involve the Houghton Business Association
- Directional signage is a piece of the puzzle
- Promotion of six things people like about the Keewenaw

### Theme

- Historical but Progressive