

OVERALL SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT EXERCISES 2011

Strengths:

- (17) Natural Resources (beauty of woods, clean water & air, national forests/parks, lakes & streams)
- (12) Outdoor Recreational Activities
- (11) Rural/low population/no traffic/small community closeness
- (9) Good emergency services/government helpful
- (8) Good people/residents
- (7) Good senior services/senior centers
- (6) Transportation system (Dial-A-Ride)
- (6) Baldwin Promise Scholarship program
- (5) Good schools
- (5) Local events
- (4) Strong, helpful organizations and churches
- (4) Diversity of population/racial integration
- (4) Many restaurants, free music arenas
- (3) Libraries
- (3) Active service clubs/churches/non-profit/volunteers
- (3) Great weather
- (2) Having local voice in decisions
- (2)Family health care
- (2) Active veterans' organizations
- (2) Second homeowners/recreational homeowners

The following items were mentioned once:

- Luther Elementary School
- Proximity of higher education (Ferris, West Shore, Baker)
- Prison expansion
- Lower taxes than nearby counties
- Intelligent & educated populace
- Lots of public land
- Airport
- Good poverty services
- Open community to new residents
- Many collaborative efforts
- Lots of opportunities
- Small business community and its diversity
- Hardy business owners (99 years in county)
- Business support for school activities
- Skate park/Baldwin
- Curb appeal of downtown
- Historic area/Idlewild
- Slowly expanding shopping options (Save-A-Lot, Family Dollar)

Weaknesses:

- (18) Lack of stores/businesses/industry/jobs
- (7) Lack of high-speed internet
- (7) Lack of or poor communication
- (7) Lack of recreation for children/youth
- (7) Lack of places to shop (mall, pharmacies big box stores)
- (6) Blight/Slum Landlords/Substandard housing
- (4) Lack of pavement or blacktop/lack of funding for road improvements
- (3) Lack of animal control, care and rescue
- (3) Lack of quality education for youth in job training
- (3) Lack of good, affordable housing
- (3) Lack of adult education classes
- (3) Lack of restaurants (little variety)
- (3) Lack of jobs paying a living wage
- (3) Lack of adequate cell phone coverage
- (3) Lack of recreation center with pool for recreation and/or physical therapy, and gym
- (2) High property taxes/higher prices for gas & groceries
- (2) Lack of county-wide organized economic & planning (need staff person)
- (2) Overzealous police presence, especially with snowmobilers
- (2) No cooperation between county and outlying communities
- (2) Lack of local business support
- (2) Failure to protect river and lake property from pollution, over-building, limited regulations
- (2) No street lights
- (2) Lack of daycare facilities
- (2) Lack of public interest
- (2) Possible closure of local post office

The following items were mentioned once:

- Not enough activities or places to go regardless of age
- Lack of options in school curriculum and local activities for youth
- School lunches need improvement
- Need new playground equipment
- Lack of laptop computers and books at school
- County leadership is not forward looking/no plan or vision for county
- Small town-everybody knows your business
- Lack of larger year round population
- Poor news venue (local paper)
- Too much crime, corruption
- Negative reputation of county
- Weak economy
- Aging population
- Lack of county-wide zoning ordinance to take offenders to court (cost of demolition/disposal)
- No Lake County Chamber of Commerce support
- Lack of medical care
- Lack of community center
- Lack of law enforcement
- Limits on land use permits
- Lack of recycling center
- Lack of affordable trash service
- No mechanism to enforce trash removal on private property
- No structured programs for seniors in need
- No pizza delivery

Need more first responders
No movie theater
No movie rental
Lack of pedestrian paths along roads
Pathfinder library is limited
Small number of senior programs
Employers don't hire locally
Lack of basic transportation, infra-structure

Opportunities:

- (9) More industry or businesses, preferably "green" to save the natural resources
- (8) Community Center/Teen Center with youth activities
- (7) More shopping opportunities and competition in businesses (clothing, pharmacy, groceries)
- (6) Career/tech center for job retraining and/or adult education
- (5) Movie theater, arcade & gamepark, skating rink, shooting range
- (4) Recreation center with gym and pool
- (4) Blight removal program (county-wide funding so townships can enforce zoning ordinances)
- (4) Medical offices for seniors and general population, even 24-hour clinic
- (4) More high-tech jobs and jobs to create careers for graduating high school seniors
- (3) Market natural resources, camping, lakes, rivers
- (3) Internet for county – high speed and affordable
- (3) Cell phone service for county
- (3) Medical facility closer to northern Lake County (hospital)
- (2) More businesses and services for seniors (another nursing home, retirement complex)
- (2) Stop lights
- (2) Stronger government leadership
- (2) More festivals/events
- (2) Expansion of social organizations

The following items were mentioned once:

- Reforestation
- Library with computer lab
- More natural resource activities
- Have more businesses related to natural resources
- Casino
- Land use plan to attract new residents
- More daycare centers
- Do feasibility study to see what type of businesses are needed and would be supported
- Youth leadership development program
- SCORE Chapter: retired persons provide assistance/guidance to youth & entrepreneurs for business growth
- Conference center/Hotel
- Timber/wood products-based business
- Designated horse trails
- Lower speed limits in commercial districts
- Establish Renaissance Zone to encourage development
- Building projects
- Advertise Baldwin Promise program
- Institute county-wide recycling
- Expand adopt-a-road program to secondary roads
- Begin a mobile library or exchange
- Expand mass transportation
- Incentive program to hire locally
- Another lending institution
- Expand veterans groups
- Market Lake County as a place to retire
- Market outdoor recreation
- More school sports
- More school electives (high tech and vocational)
- Promote Lake County as a place to have a second home or recreational home

Threats:

- (12) Misuse of environment
 - Failure of septic systems by water (lakes/ivers)/pollution
 - Illegal dumping and soil contamination
 - Over-fishing
 - Lack of zoning to protect our natural resources
 - Exploitation of natural resources by outside interests
 - ORV trails (noisy, dusty, environmental degradation)
 - Not caring for natural resources (deforestation and water pollution)
 - Industrial pollution
 - Forestry mismanagement
- (5) U.S./Michigan economy
- (5) Lack of job opportunities and poverty
- (3) Closure of camping areas with access to lakes and rivers
- (3) Funding cuts to law enforcement, changing timeliness of response
- (3) Prison closure
- (3) Unfunded mandates from the state of Michigan
- (3) Difficulties in starting new business/loss of existing businesses
- (3) Crime
- (3) High school graduates leaving county
- (2) Not enough year round population to support developing opportunities
- (2) Drug and alcohol abuse
- (2) Politicians not representing their constituents
- (2) Government intervention
- (2) Apathy
- (2) Over development threatening rural character of county
- (2) Image of county as retirement community rather than as a place for young families

The following items were mentioned once:

- Lack of county-wide solid waste and recycling programs
- County going broke
- Fewer people migrating into Lake County
- Lack of boat safety education
- Adult entertainment and adult stores
- Oak wilt
- Consolidation of public funding for education
- No county-wide internet available
- Lack of future volunteers
- Forest Service/DNR not assigning families to Lake County area
- Lack of consolidated zoning
- Run down dilapidated housing
- Lack of school choice and high school drop rate
- Lack of educating residents to the value of the environment and recreational opportunities
- Increase in welfare recipients
- No shopping mall or big box stores
- Loss of long standing events