

Town of La Pointe Community Survey Report – 2013/2014

A Summary of Findings



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About the Survey

In the fall of 2013, the Town of La Pointe issued a survey designed to gather information that will help determine what changes, if any, should be made to the Town of La Pointe's Comprehensive Plan. The 11 page survey asked participants to rate several different factors regarding life in La Pointe: Land Use/Zoning, Housing, Transportation, Economic Development, Community Services/Facilities, Agriculture, Natural and Cultural Resources, Sustainability and Intergovernmental and Community Involvement. A total of 1,389 surveys were mailed out to property owners and voters on Madeline Island. A total of 404 were returned making the response rate 29 percent. In statistical analysis this is a sufficient percentage of responses to paint an accurate point of view for the property owners on Madeline Island.

Of the 404 surveys returned, 41.5 percent of survey takers identified themselves as summer residents, 22.7 as year round residents, and 30 percent as non-resident land owners. The average age of respondents was: 63 years with a range of 26 years to 96 years. The average for years involved with the island was 28.6 years, with a range from 1 year to 80 years. 42.1 percent of respondents were female, 46.1 percent were male, with 9.4 percent not answering the question.

The survey had two components. The majority of the survey was formatted with multiple-choice questions. There were also several opportunities for comments and more personalized answers. While the question section of the survey provides a more measurable and quantitative analysis, the comment sections provide a qualitative and in many ways deep look into what issues are really important to island landowners. Both components of the survey provide valuable information that can be used to understand the needs and values of landowners on the island and the commonalities between permanent, summer/part-time and non-resident landowners.

This report is a summary of findings that highlights the common themes found in survey participant responses. While there are several points of conflict and disagreement about the issues in the survey, this report focuses on the common ground found by survey participants of all residency levels, ages, backgrounds etc. By finding the common ground and points of agreement amongst landowners, the conversation of improving the quality of life for island residents and the future generations can take place in a positive and productive manner.

Summary of Findings:

Top 5 Reasons For Coming to or Living on the Island:

Very Important Reasons	Percentage
I enjoy the scenic beauty, wildlife, and forests on the island.	70%
I enjoy the peace, quiet and relaxing atmosphere on the island.	69%
The island is a good place to get away from hectic urban life.	49.5%
The island is a more special place than the mainland.	48%
The air and water are cleaner and less polluted than other places.	44.8%

(Table 1a)

Not a Reason	
I am involved with Real Estate Development on the island.	79.1%
I am planning on starting a new business here.	76.4%
I work on the island or in the immediate local area.	70.7%
I am a business owner on the island.	72.2%
I was born or raised here.	69.5%

(Table 1b)

Survey participants were asked about why they live on or visit La Pointe. The above tables show the top 5 very important reasons and the top 5 non-reasons. All of the very important reasons are related to the environment and general small town, laid back atmosphere of the island, while the majority of non-reasons pertained to real estate and business development. This indicates that the majority of island landowners prefer the natural environment, small town feel of La Pointe to commercial and residential development.

Throughout the survey the topics of Land Use/Zoning, Transportation, Housing, Economic Development, Agricultural/Natural Resources, Sustainability etc., all have commonalities and similar themes that give us an idea of the values and what is important to landowners on the island.

*“Traditional family
gathering place, artistically
inspirational, summer
residence”*

LAND USE/ZONING

	Yes	No
The town should develop more public green space, flower gardens and sidewalks.	52.5%	40.1%
I think the town should provide more public parks for walking/hiking.	45.3%	47.8%
I think the town should provide more public parks for picnics.	31%	62.6%
I think the town should provide more public parks for camping.	21.2%	72.7%
I think the town should provide for more streets and roads.	10.7%	82.5%
I think the town should plan and provide for an increase in cars, busses, and other traffic including more parking.	39.7%	51.5%
I think the town should create a focus for the local community and its activities by developing a town square.	43.3%	47.3%
I think the town should acquire more public access to the lake shore.	40.9%	52.2%
I think the town can achieve prosperity without population growth.	45.8%	43.6%
I think the town can achieve prosperity without economic growth.	29.8%	58.9%
Coastal erosion is an issue the town should address.	49.8%	36%

(Table 2)

Respondents were asked whether or not they support local government resources being used for specific services. Table 2 shows that overall people want investment and development in green spaces, outdoor recreation and public access to nature. The majority of people felt that the town should not invest resources for more commercial and development based services such as roads and traffic congestion. The need for population growth for prosperity was divided, however the majority of participants felt that economic growth was necessary for prosperity. This table also speaks to an overall theme of the importance of protecting the environment and natural resources while stimulating economic growth on the island.

“Zoning should be more friendly to sustainable, economic business development all over the island.”

“Enforce current zoning laws equitably.”

Another concern amongst many respondents was the issue of Conditional Use Permits (CUPs). While there was no direct question related to CUPs, many residences commented on the importance of having fair and balanced zoning ordinances and regulations. Respondents raised concern that the issuing of CUPs could compromise the integrity of current zoning law.

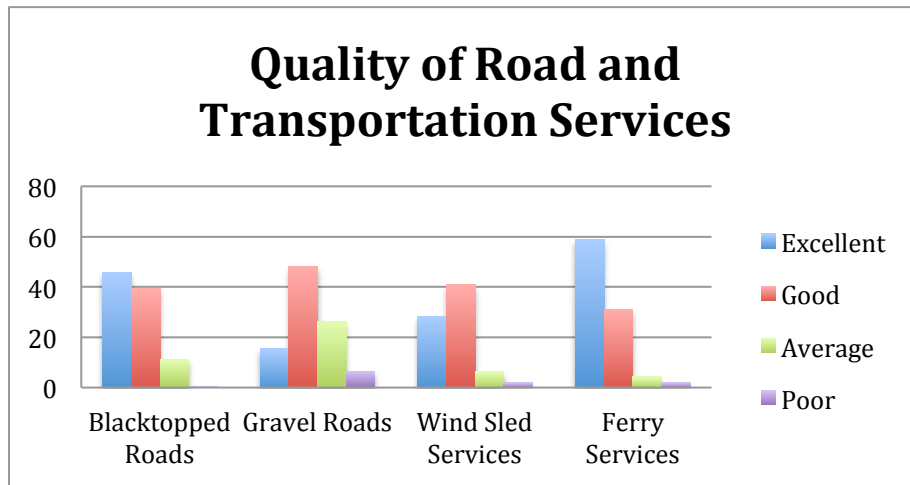
HOUSING

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Single Family Homes	35%	49.3%	7.4%	.7%
Seasonal Tourist Housing/Guest Homes	17.2%	49%	20%	6.4%
Seasonal Employee Housing	15.3%	60.6%	12.6%	3.7%
Mobile Home Parks	3%	9.6%	35.2%	46.8%
Subdivisions	2.5%	21.2%	37.7%	27.8%
Planned Unit Developments	7.9%	36.5%	26.4%	18.2%
Multiple Family Dwellings	3%	28.8%	35.7%	20.7%
Affordable Housing	15%	49.5%	26.4%	10.3%
Energy Efficient Housing	31.8%	48%	35.7%	3.9%
Low Income, High Efficient Housing	16.5%	40.6%	16.5%	13.1%
Year Round Rental Housing	11.3%	46.4%	8.1%	8.1%
On Site Electrical Generation for Any New Housing or Development	5.2%	17.5 %	21.4%	26.4%

(Table 3)

When asked about housing development, the majority of participants were supportive of single family homes, seasonal tourist/employee housing and year round rentals. Mobile home parks and subdivisions received strong disapproval. This indicates that landowners on the island prefer tradition residential development and not large, expansive housing developments. Participants also overall encourage affordable housing and low income, high efficiency housing. On site electrical generation received the least amount of responses. This may be a result of participants not understanding the question.

TRANSPORTATION



(Figure 1)

	Yes	No	Blank
Support public transportation on island.	25.6%	57.6%	15.3%
Town should adopt a plan making downtown La Pointe mostly pedestrian area.	55.2%	37%	6.9%
Town should adopt a plan to reduce traffic congestion.	41.1%	47%	10.8%
Support pedi cab service on island.	40.2%	51%	8.1%
Support minibus service on island.	43.4%	48%	7.9%
Support significant expansion of harbor.	37.4%	54.4%	7.1%
Standard for assigning property tax assessments to new public roads.	34.2%	51.7%	13.1%
Town should adopt standard for private roads.	30.8%	60.4%	8.1%
Town should establish driveway standards.	23.9%	69%	6.4%
Town should take over maintenance of private roads.	7.1%	84.7%	7.4%

(Table 4)

“The ferry should be public transportation subsidized by the town. Lower fares would promote a better Island economy.”

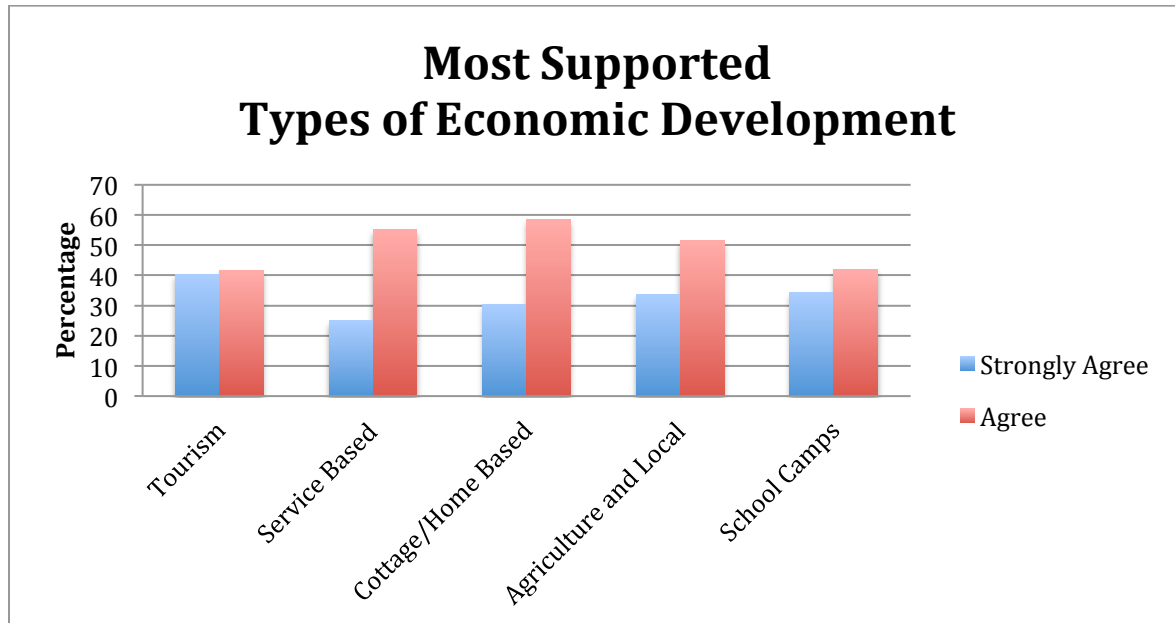
According to Figure 1, participants overall were satisfied with the quality of roads and transportation services. The ferry service received the highest percentage of excellent ratings while gravel roads received the lowest excellent and highest average ratings.

While participants were overall satisfied with the ferry service, there were many complaints about the frequent raising of ferry costs and the infrequency of ferry hours during the off season.

In terms of public transportation, the majority of people do not support public transportation on the island. While there is more support for pedi cabs and mini busses on the island, expansion of the harbor, and having the town establish standards and take over maintenance of private roads and property was very unpopular. However, there is support for taking measures to reduce traffic congestion on the island.

There were some commonalities found amongst many participants. There were several comments about paving North Shore Road, both because of the high tax base residing on the road and the frequency of traffic. There were also a large number of participants requesting an increased number, and better-maintained bike lanes on paved roads, particularly Middle Road.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



(Figure 2)

I believe the town should:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Actively promote a business park.	2.2%	22.7%	45.3%	20.7%
Create new jobs through coordination with business and economic development agencies.	9.9%	52.2%	20.2%	9.1%
Tax incentives such as property tax relief should be used to attract new businesses.	6.45%	29.3%	39.2%	16.5%
Implement additional and/or higher "user fees" to pay for many of the services it provides.	3.9%	32%	40.2%	14.3%
Reduce its budget (and possible services) to help reduce property taxes.	17%	27.6%	38.2%	8.1%
Require any new development to help offset the town costs through impact fees.	16%	49%	19%	4.4%
Support a local food system.	18%	41.6%	20.7%	8.4%

(Table 5)

Feelings about activities of which the island economy might be based	Greatly Encouraged	Encouraged	Discouraged	Greatly Discouraged
Summer Resident Support Services	40.2%	52.2%	1.7%	.5%
Weaving, Pottery, Arts and Crafts	43.4%	49%	2%	1%
Small in-Home Businesses	33%	51.5%	7.4%	1.5%
Farm and Garden	45.8%	45.3%	2.7%	2%
Carpentry	38.9%	53.2%	2%	.5%
Construction	28.6%	53.9%	7.9%	3%
Large Commercial Business	2.2%	4.2%	33.5%	52.2%
Hospitality/Tourism Related Services and Businesses	30.1%	58.1%	4.4%	1.5%
Fishing Boat Tours	33.7%	56.7%	3.2%	1.5%

(Table 6)

Types of Tourists	Greatly Encouraged	Encouraged	Discouraged	Greatly Discouraged
Day Visitor	45.1%	45.3%	2.5%	1%
Campers	38.2%	51%	3.7%	0%
Cabin and Cottage Renters	48%	44%	1.2%	.5%
Hikers/Kayakers and Bicyclists	49.3%	41.4%	2.7%	1%
Mopeds/Motorcycles	20.7%	43.4%	22.7%	6.4%
Golf/Tennis/Sailing	45.8%	45.3%	1.7%	1.5%
Snowmobile	19.7%	38.4%	25.9%	6.9%
Jet Ski	10.8%	16.3%	30.5%	33.7%
Shoppers/Browsers	44.1%	45.3%	4.7%	1%

(Table 7)

Figure 2 and Table 5 shows responses regarding types of economic development on the island. The majority of responses show that tourism, service based industries and agriculture are the most supported types of economic development. Overall people support water recreation, school and camps, and retail. Comparatively, there is little support for timber resources and industry/manufacturing types of economic development on the island.

“Commercial Town Square” already established. Business area should be confined to ferry dock area. Carrying capacity of town and island has been reached. Open space/clean air would be threatened with any more public camping areas.”

This is also reflected in Tables 5 and 6. The majority of participants disagree or strongly disagree with promoting a business park. However there is much more support for a local food

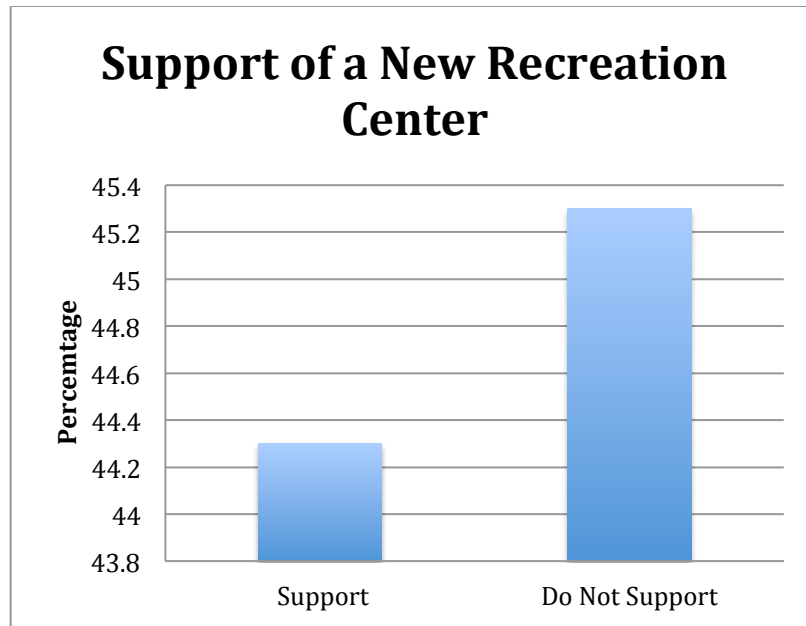
system. In Table 6, tourism/seasonal activities were greatly encouraged, while large commercial development was greatly discouraged by over 50 percent. Table 7 also highlights that respondents prefer types of tourism that have low environmental impact including day visitors, campers and shoppers.

COMMUNITY SERVICES/FACILITIES

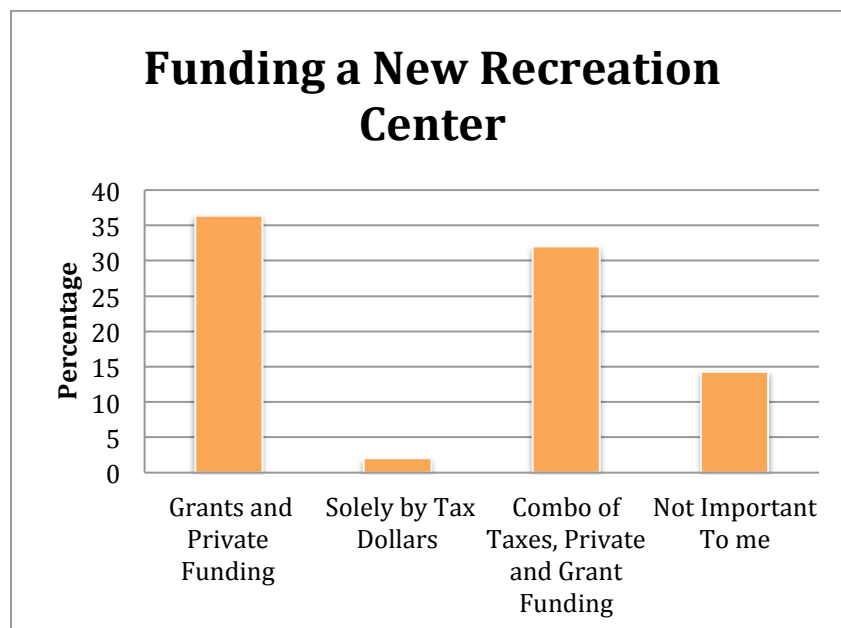
Local Services	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Police Protection	28.3%	42.6%	3.5%	3.5%
Fire Protection	45.6%	39.2%	1.2%	1.2%
EMS/ Ambulance	58.1%	30.8%	0%	0%
Sanitary	27.3%	34.7%	9.6%	2.7%
Recycling	43.8%	39.7%	6.9%	2.2%
Parks	46.8%	41.6%	2.5%	.7%
Zoning and ordinance enforcement	7.9%	39.2%	29.1%	6.4%
Library	54.4%	30.8%	5.7%	1%
School	40.2%	34.7%	8.1%	.3%
Town Campground	43.4%	39.7%	7.1%	.7%
Recreation Center	9.6%	41.6%	23.4%	7.6%
General Medical Services	15.5%	43.4%	20.2%	3.9%
Alcohol/Drug Abuse services	2.7%	12.1%	23.2%	20.4%
Mental health services	1.5%	10.8%	21.7%	23.2%
Domestic Violence services	1.7%	10.8%	20.9%	21.7%

(Table 8)

In terms of community services, there were a wide variety of responses. Most participants felt that the emergency services, (police, fire and EMS) were excellent/good. The school and library were also given high quality ratings. Other services such as recycling, parks, the town campground and the recreation center received decent ratings, mostly in excellent or good but with higher fair ratings. Services such as alcohol/drug abuse, mental health and domestic violence services received higher percentages of fair and poor than other services. There was also a higher rate of blank answers for the bottom three services in Table 8. This may be due to the high percentage of summer/non-resident landowners who participated in the survey and do not utilize these specific services on the island.



(Figure 3)



(Figure 4)

Figures 3 and 4 show the responses in regards to the building of a new recreation center. While the majority of people do not initially support the building of a new recreation center, there is considerable support if the recreation center was funded by a combination of tax and private dollars and even more if funded solely by private dollars. About 15 percent of respondents stated that the issue was not important to them; the majority of these respondents were non-resident landowners.

AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

	Yes, Fund With Local Tax Dollars	Yes, Fund With Private Dollars	Combination of Public and Private Dollars	No Not Important to Me
A Local Food System	1.5%	35.7%	35.2%	18.7%
Island Farmer's Market	3%	50%	34%	7.9%
Community-Owned Gardens	3.5%	43.4%	31%	15.3%
Green Houses and Hoop Houses	1.7%	45.8%	23.4%	21.4%
Processing Facilities	1.2%	33.5%	19.5%	35.5%

(Table 9)

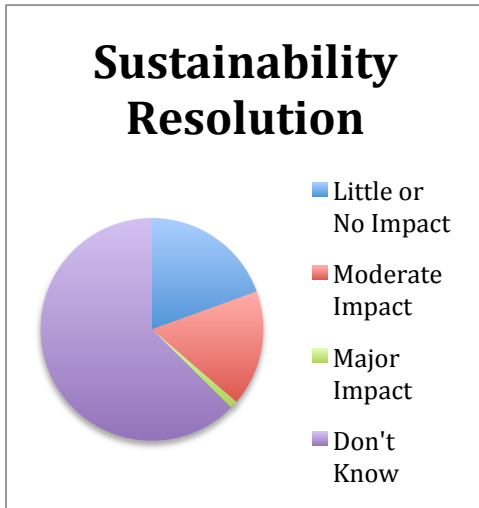
While the majority of participants stated that they prefer the investment of resources into agricultural, natural and cultural resources to be funded either solely or partially by private funding, there is a large amount of support for these ventures. Several respondents commented on the importance of local food systems, the benefits of having a farmers' market and community gardens and the importance of protecting and conserving our natural resources. However, despite the large amount of support there is still concern about whether or not agriculture and protection of our natural resources can strengthen and build the local economy.

“There should be micro grants to help farmers get started.”

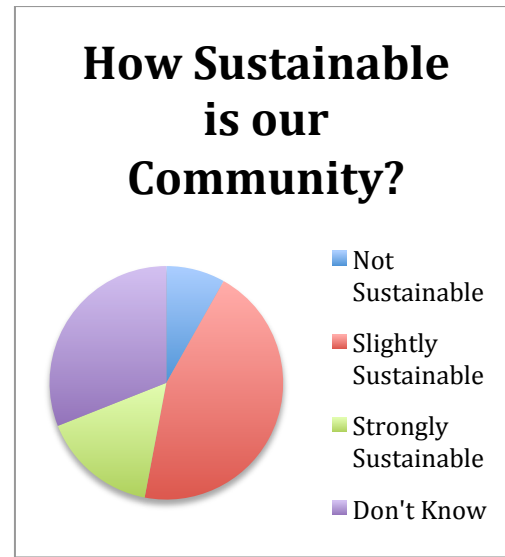
	Yes, Fund With Local Tax Dollars	Yes, Fund With Private Dollars	Combination of Public and Private Dollars	No Not Important to Me
Forests	15.5%	12.8%	58.6%	3.2%
Wetlands	17.5%	10.8%	54.2%	7.1%
Lakes & Streams	19.7%	10.3%	54.7%	4.2%
Lake Superior and Coastal Areas	22.9%	9.4%	56.2%	2.5%
Farmland	1.7%	46.6%	30.3%	12.8%
Community Open/Green Space	20%	13.1%	51.2%	6.2%
Parks and Public Beaches	31.5%	7.1%	50%	2.2%
Public Trail System.	26.1%	7.4%	54.9%	3.2%

(Table 10)

SUSTAINABILITY



(Figure 5)



(Figure 6)

	Not Familiar	Limited Knowledge	Clear Working Knowledge
Term Sustainability	7.9%	41.1%	43.1%

(Table 11)

	Worse	Same	Better
How does the community compare to other towns in the region in supporting and implementing sustainability?	35.8%	45.6%	20.2%

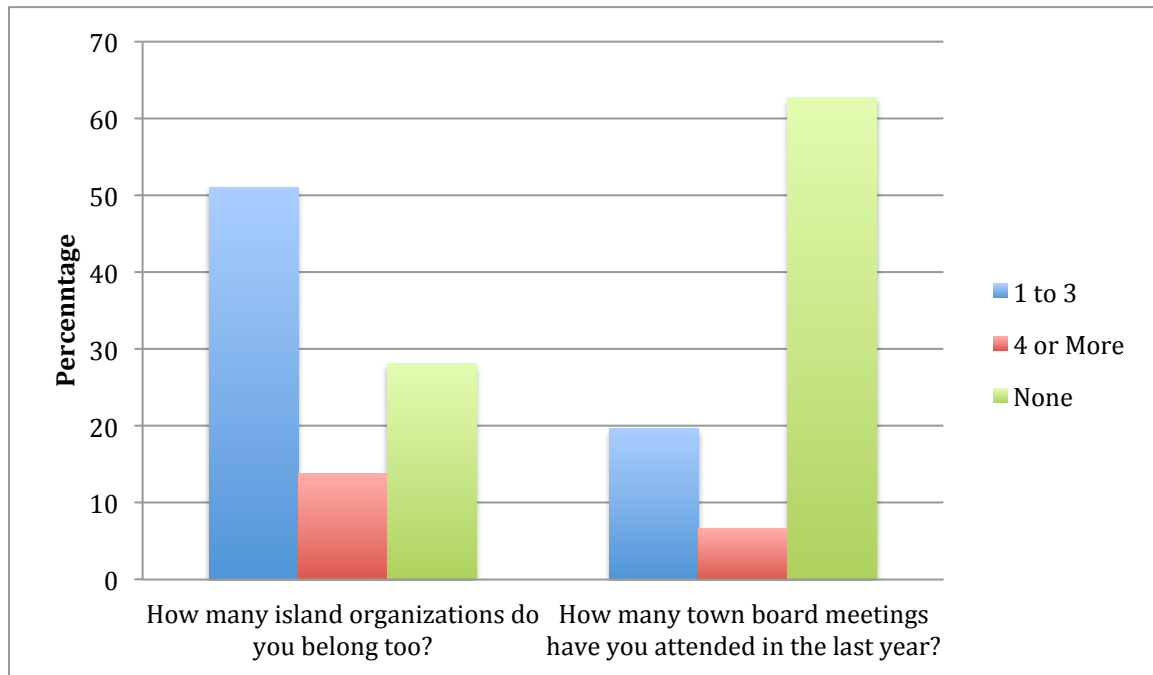
(Table 12)

	Yes	No
Should the town provide public awareness and education on sustainability issues, efforts and programs?	71.2%	13.8%

(Table 13)

In terms of sustainability, the majority of participants felt that the island is either slightly or strongly sustainable. A large majority of people did not know about the impact of the Sustainability Resolution; this may be due to the majority of participants being summer or non-resident landowners. Close to 50 percent of recipients felt that town had about the same level of sustainability as other communities, while 35 percent felt it was worse and about 20 percent felt it was better.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



(Figure 7)

	Daily	Once Week	Once Month	Once Year
Volunteer on Island	5.9%	11.1%	13.8%	38.2%

(Table 14)

Figure 7 shows that the majority of survey participants belong to 1-3 organizations but over 60% stated they do not attend town board meetings. This type of community engagement is reflective of the fact the majority of participants are not full time residents. This can also be seen in Table 14 that shows 38.2 percent of respondents volunteer about once a year.

Common Themes

There were many common themes that were found throughout the survey, including environmental conservation, the need for economic development and the importance of art and cultural outlets in the community.

“The quality of beaches and purity of the water.”

When it came to the land use and zoning section, the majority of participants felt there should be more development of public green space, flower gardens and sidewalks. When it came to economic development many of the job growth and infrastructure investments that were favored the most by survey participants involved natural resources, the environment and agriculture. Participants also favored small business development such as home-based businesses over industrial development.

“The residents are a community family who care about other people.”

Survey participants also preferred economic development that encompassed the importance of the natural resources and environmental beauty of the island. There is support for day visitors, campers, hikers, and short-term visitors that come to enjoy the peace and beauty of the island

and spend money at local businesses. Overall participants were satisfied with the size of the year round population but thought an increase in tourism would be economically beneficial as long as the town maintained its integrity to the above issues.

Many survey respondents were in favor of pursuing local food production/processing, energy independence projects and other sustainability-focused movements. While the majority of people prefer either full or partial private funding for such endeavors, the support for moving forward with making the town of La Pointe more sustainable is clearly there.

The main reason people would leave the island is if the property taxes increased to where they couldn't afford them or if the island became more commercialized and lost its “small town charm.” Another concern

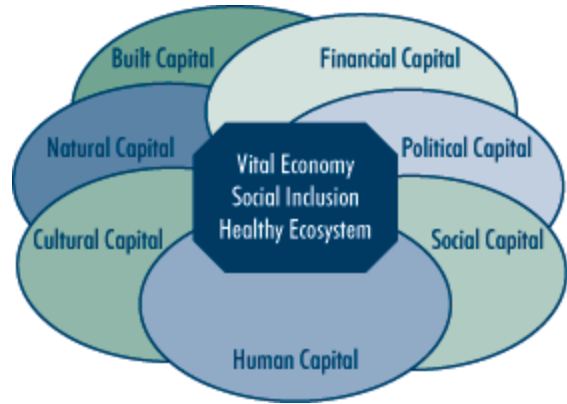
“When the taxes get so high I cannot pay them then I will leave. Taxes are increasing faster than land values.”

that was often expressed was the affordability and accessibility of health care resources, particularly health care resources for the elderly.

Community Capitals Framework

The Community Capitals Framework was developed by Cornelia and Jan Flora in an effort to better understand how communities function. According to Flora and Flora, there are 7 categories of Community Capital. Each form of capital is an important asset for a community to succeed.

Natural Capital is the environment and natural resources within a community. Lake Superior is an example of Natural Capital in the Town of La Pointe. Cultural Capital is the way in which people live their lives and how they define their values and beliefs. Human Capital is the skills and ability of each individual within a community. Social Capital is the relationships and networks formed by individuals within a community. Political Capital is the amount of influence a group or community has in the local, state and federal policies, markets and other civic issues. Financial Capital is the amount of money reserved for investment rather than immediate use. Built Capital is the infrastructure within a community.



Capital Strengths	Capital Weaknesses
Natural Capital	Built Capital
Social Capital	Political Capital
Human Capital	Financial Capital
Cultural Capital	

When comparing the Community Capitals Framework model to the responses of survey participants, we can begin to see where the different types of capital fit into La Pointe. The importance of environmental conservation and protection of natural resources falls under Natural Capital. Participants also indicated that the friendliness and “small town feel” of La Pointe was important. This category of Social Capital would be a strength for the town. Another strength of the area is Human Capital. Young people, entrepreneurs, laborers etc. all contribute to Human Capital. While La Pointe may have a smaller population than other areas, there is a lot of potential in area residents that will continue to improve their communities.

The survey results suggest that there are types of capital in La Pointe that need to be improved on in order to create stronger and well-rounded communities. In rural communities, having strong Political Capital is difficult. With low populations

removed from larger urban areas, the political clout of La Pointe is limited. However, by strengthening capital in other areas such as Natural and Financial, it is possible to increase La Pointe's Political Capital.

Cultural Capital is similar to Political Capital in that it is hard for a small rural area to be strong in this category. However, La Pointe has a strong history of welcoming the arts to the island. Continuing this tradition can be used to strengthen the other capitals that are not as flourishing.

Built and Financial Capitals are important for any community to thrive. Participants indicated that the town needs to update old infrastructure and make sure the downtown area is clean, presentable and welcoming to visitors. In order to strengthen Built Capital, La Pointe needs to increase Financial Capital by investing in infrastructure, road maintenance, maintenance and cleanliness of public facilities etc.

An important observation to make when looking at the Community Capitals Framework is that when improving one type of capital, other types also improve. Survey participants highlighted several of La Pointe's strengths, assets and resources. Community development begins with utilizing the Cultural, Natural, Social and Human capital assets and resources to create thriving communities that continue to grow. In tough economic times resilience is needed to maintain a healthy community setting.

Increasing Built Capital is important in any community. Quality housing at an affordable rate, maintained streets and sidewalks, as well as clean, presentable storefronts all contribute to strong community development both structurally and aesthetically. As investments in infrastructure and Built Capital are made, a community's Financial Capital increases. In rural areas Financial Capital can be tricky because of a lack of outside investment. However, if a rural area has a strong strategic plan for long term community development and is able to build on Human and Built Capital, achieving financial stability is possible.

The Town of La Pointe in many ways is a thriving community with an active and passionate population. Participants of the survey often indicated that they choose to live in this area because of the natural beauty and the strong sense of community. These are strong and valuable assets for a small, rural community. By building off of these resources and using strategic and intelligent ways of solving problems, the Town of La Pointe can turn weaknesses into strong pillars and create a thriving and vibrant community.

Conclusion

Overall the responses to the Community Survey were positive and constructive. As stated in the introduction, there were some places where there was disagreement amongst participants and responses were split down the middle. However, it is clear that there are the core values and a love of Madeline Island is something all responding landowners had in common. The importance of environmental conservation, the need for a strong and independent economy and the value of art and culture in the community are the common threads that unite the Town of La Pointe community.

The information gathered from this survey can and should be used to create conversations amongst all invested individuals, whether full time residents or part time visitors, about how to continue to make the Town of La Pointe a strong and successful community.

The Community Capitals Framework is just one way to analyze the information provided by the survey, and this is only one interpretation. The important thing to remember is that while the responses from this survey have been transformed into numbers and percentages, the information from this survey is still very subjective and always has the possibility of changing and evolving. So what does this mean when trying to use this data? It means that while one may not agree with all of the responses to all of the questions, and some comments may be more constructive than others, it's important to find similarities and common ground amongst all participants. It is in the common themes and responses that conversations and progress can begin.

The Town of La Pointe on Madeline Island is a strong and resilient community. There are many different types of people that call it home and for many it is more than a home; it's an escape, a sanctuary. It is a place where some families have lived for generations and some are just starting out. This diversity is what makes the Town of La Pointe a strong, vibrant and ever-evolving community.