

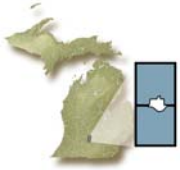
## Area Assets (Large Group Discussion)

**If you could preserve or develop anything in this area, what would it be?**

- Preserve farmland and open space
- Maintain/preserve water quality/river
- Preserve island
- Riverwalk/walking trails
- Non-motorized connections
- Water access/recreation
- Property maintenance (enforcement)
- Make more attractive
- Beautify
- Repair wall around island
- Vibrant business downtown
- Remove bumpouts, replace with right turn lanes
- Canoe portage over dam sites
- Sidewalks through entire city
- Waterfront development
- More recreational opportunities (e.g. pathways, river walks, trails, etc.)

**Why did you decide to move to this area or remain in this area? What is it that attracts you?**

- Family in area
- Born here
- House could afford
- Proximity to larger city
- Jobs



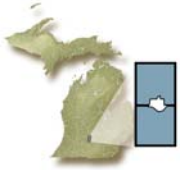
**Appendix A**  
**Futuring Sessions Feedback**  
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- Small town living
- Good education/public school system
- Perspective spouse
- Less traffic
- Beautiful town
- School district
- Spouse employment
- Location, location, location
- Good tax base
- Small town
- Family setting
- Agriculture – 4-H
- Room to move
- Friendly place
- Transportation proximity
- Affordable property

**If you were to describe the Eaton Rapids Area to someone new, what are you most proud of? Where would you tell them to go?**

- Go to Petit Hardware
- Go to island
- Dinner at English Inn
- Nature Trails at Northwest School
- Campground
- Medical center
- Miller complex
- VFW home



**Appendix A**  
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- Playground of Dreams
- Open Space
- Close to large city
- Only Eaton Rapids
- Hospital
- School district/new school
- Dam city (13 of them)
- Island city
- Active service clubs
- Safe
- Senior Center



## Strengths, Weaknesses Opportunities & Threats (SWOT) Analysis (Small Group Discussions)

*Note: \* indicates a repeated comment*

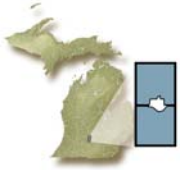
### Public Services

#### Strengths

- Fire department \*
- Ample fire protection – three departments
- Police department \*
- City utilities (electric, water and sewer)
- Schools \*
- Public Safety Building
- City electric
- Ownership of electrical plant
- Imagination
- Industrial park
- Ample utilities available
- Area wide library
- Hospital \*
- County level zoning
- Availability of ETRAN
- Recreation facilities
- Emergency services

#### Weaknesses

- Not enough sidewalks (safety)



**Appendix A**  
**Futuring Sessions Feedback**  
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- Bike lanes (lack of)
- Township roads
- Road drainage
- Road maintenance
- Public transportation
- Lack of educating the public on voting, utilities, services.
- Internet service in rural area
- Inadequate ambulance service
- Not enough recycling
- Youth programs and centers
- No entertainment
- Lack of cable coverage
- Future water and sewer needs
- Township police protection

Barriers/Threats

- Library access
- Cable
- Internet connection and access
- Poor communications (between City and Townships)
- Lack of cooperation
- Confusing of providers of utilities and services
- Funding \*\*
- Distance to provide services
- Residential growth puts strain on utilities
- Government regulations



**Appendix A**  
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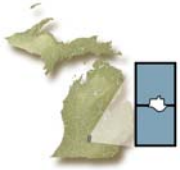
Opportunities

- Fire departments – should work together
- Regional fire department (grant opportunities)
- Friends of the Library
- Expand library services
- Schools and facility use
- Excellent government cooperation
- High spots for wireless
- Expand hospital services
- Expand TV and internet cable
- Manufacturing
- Continue to pursue cooperative agreements in many areas
- Area wide planning
- Planned growth

**Natural Resources**

Strengths

- Ground water
- Mineral springs
- Rivers \*\*
- Drains
- Individual development done well
- Visually appealing
- Relatively clean
- Diversity and abundance of wetlands, parks, etc.
- Managed forests, rivers



**Appendix A**  
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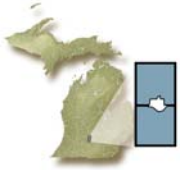
- Forests, woodlands \*
- Trees
- Environment one of Eaton Rapids best assets
- Open space \*\*
- Large lots
- Parks
- Animal (wildlife) population \*
- Fresh air

Weaknesses

- High water (flooded)
- Poor drainage
- Limit access
- Lack of effective control of development
- Salt on roads
- Lack of awareness of potential help
- Trails
- Trespassing via river
- Wild domestic animals
- Illegal dumping

Threats/Barriers

- Lack of assistance to landowners
- Growth for housing (unplanned)
- Subdivision
- Selling farm land for development
- Population growth
- Water flow vs. new builds



**Appendix A**  
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- High water
- Traffic, runoff problems
- Loss of hunting opportunities
- Salt and other non-point sources
- Sedimentation
- Gravel pits (future)

Opportunities

- Connect townships with trails
- Bike paths
- Connect ERPS with community in natural resource education
- Education on natural resources in school, community and farms
- Improve pond at Spring Brook – maybe a fountain for aeration
- Permeable pavement
- Government grants for buffers
- Federal grant
- Boat launch or canoe
- Grants for river walk or canoes
- Control or directing development
- Plan – preserve open space
- Purchasing development rights
- Generation of power (wind or water)
- Wildlife tourism



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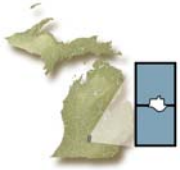
**Economic Development**

Strengths

- Manufacturing
- Industrial park \*
- Centralized location
- Proximity to State Capitol
- Good infrastructure
- Motivated leadership
- COG is together
- Willingness to partner
- M-99 (4 lanes)
- M-99/50
- Good land use mix
- Municipal electric
- Coffee shop
- Easy/quick access to utilities
- Skilled workers
- Work force, especially blue collar
- Master land use plan
- Area growth plan
- Concentration of age groups

Weaknesses

- Lack of marketing
- Downtown building vacancies \*
- Downtown not vibrant



**Appendix A**  
**Futuring Sessions Feedback**  
**January 11 & 13, 2007**  
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- Lack of retail
- Lack of major highways west and south
- Lack of funding opportunities \*
- Lack of vision
- Lack of coordination of ideas
- Uncoordinated economic development plan
- Grant research and application
- No railroad access
- Distance to freeways
- Lack of SBA
- Limited qualified employees industries
- Lack of secondary educational opportunities
- Limited space for commercial/industrial growth
- Lack of parking
- Walking problems
- Poor vehicular traffic patterns

Threats/Barriers

- River limits
- Highway development resistance to change
- Poor State economy limits funding
- Lack of funding
- Soft economy
- Weak economy
- Proximity to Lansing
- Retail opportunities



## Appendix A

### Futuring Sessions Feedback

January 11 & 13, 2007  
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- Lack of action plan
- Government regulations
- Changing job market
- DEQ, etc. restriction on river
- MDOT
- Distrust of government
- Out of town spending
- EDA and LFDA

#### Opportunities

- Utilization of buildings
- Riverfront development
- Enhance M-50 and M-99 corridor (captive audience)
- Affordable housing
- Utilization of available grants downtown
- Proximity to major super centers
- Close relationship with MEDC
- Grants
- Keep and promote present employers including schools and hospital
- Improve quality of life
- Involvement of community (citizens)
- More grants
- Area economic development plan including government, schools, hospitals, business
- Common big idea
- Pursue brownfield opportunities



**Appendix A**  
**Futuring Sessions Feedback**  
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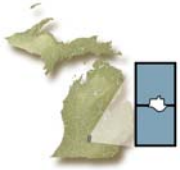
## **Agriculture**

### Strengths

- Still good farmland
- Diversity in land and crops
- Natural drainage and irrigation
- Close to main roadways
- Good roads, recent improvements
- Year round transportation
- Good access to agriculture areas
- Ethanol plants – now in area
- Access to alternate fuel markets
- Close to Farm Bureau – co-ops
- Open space/agriculture keeps people in Area
- Encourage agriculture zoning/good zoning
- Remaining green/natural space
- Nearby grain elevators \*
- Nearby equipment dealers
- Extension agency help

### Weaknesses

- No local storage (elevators)/elevators gone \*
- Younger generation – not a farming lifestyle
- Conglomerates
- Farm economy is done
- Sale of farmland/development
- Property more valuable for housing than agriculture



## Appendix A

### Futuring Sessions Feedback

January 11 & 13, 2007  
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- Cost of land
- Closeness to Lansing Area = more development
- Lack of money for PDR
- Implement dealers – gone/parts not available \*
- Agriculture revenue in community is down
- No rails
- No livestock
- Lack of nearby livestock processors
- Lack of public open spaces

#### Threats/Barriers

- Industrial expansion
- Residential expansion
- Tax structure encourages development – agriculture vs. residential
- Proliferation of “10-acre” home lots

#### Opportunities

- Ethanol – starting to learn and use more/corn production/bio diesel/ soybeans
- Encourage bio-fuel plant
- Alternative heat/corn burners
- Programs – for those who want to farm/lease to buy/ apprenticeship (when not in family)
- Agriculture in schools – curriculum
- Land donation from farmers – land trust/reservation
- PDR – federal grants for keeping young in FFA
- TDR – Accomplish several things: 1) preserve good agriculture land, 2) cluster houses, 3) use land division more efficiently, 4) preserve open space, 5) private transfers
- Increase agricultural support programs



## Appendix A

### Futuring Sessions Feedback

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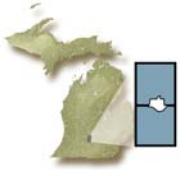
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- Preserve agriculture base
- Promote farming, large-lot homes
- Promote markets with Lansing, agro-tourism, organics, etc.
- Need better prices from farm commodities
- Dedicate land for public access
- Encourage implement dealer open here
- Gravel pit development
- Sod farms, landscape, trees

### Quality of Life

#### Strengths

- Island \*
- Walkable \*
- River/water \*\*
- History
- Quaint old architecture
- Historic downtown
- Small town atmosphere \*\*
- Openness/Agriculture area
- Open space \*
- Green space
- Mature trees
- Nice yard sizes
- Bridges
- Good schools \*
- Improved schools



## Appendix A

### Futuring Sessions Feedback

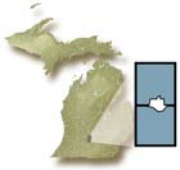
January 11 & 13, 2007  
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- Near lots of urban benefits
- Centrally located
- Lots of assets
- Safe
- Blank canvass (lots to work with)
- Churches
- Recreation programs
- Pretty place
- Natural resources
- People- friendly
- Bedroom community
- Community activities (festivals)
- Community development/improvement projects

#### Weaknesses

- Store front appearances
- Lighting (sterile) – poor lighting on islands
- Poor development on river front
- Blocks back from downtown
- Gaps in sidewalks
- No good way to bring in people from townships
- Lack of pathways
- Lack of things to do
- Lack district library (of size)
- Not all connected
- Not up to other community standards



## Appendix A

### Futuring Sessions Feedback

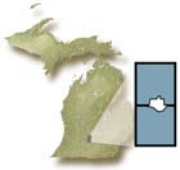
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- Lack of recreational opportunities
- Lack of gathering place
- Not a lot available for youth
- Limited opportunities for seniors
- Funding available
- Attractive retail
- Business developer
- Need public transportation
- Lack of business in town (retail)
- Too many “offices” on Main Street
- Lack of parking
- Library (building and programs)
- Storm sewer issue downtown (flooding)
- Public transportation (from here to outside areas)
- Heavy traffic flow
- Lack of retail
- Lack of enforcement of ordinances (code) for clean-up

#### Threats/Barriers

- Lack of money
- Downtown Main Street is a state highway
- “clickish” society
- Stuck in “no money” thinking
- Lack of follow through
- Difficulty in making plan inclusive
- Poor communication



**Appendix A**  
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- Access to interstate
- Funding problems
- Lack of vision
- Distinct/separate community
- Bedroom community – people are living here by shopping/working elsewhere
- River contains the potential growth of the downtown
- Lack of funding for everything
- Increase in traffic/traffic patterns
- Annexation – proposed expansion of industrial complex

Opportunities

- Historic district – adds funding
- Red Ribbon Hall
- Additional grant funding
- Miller Farm – asset for development
- King Street School – for sale, reuse/redevelopment
- Hall Street Building – development opportunity
- Lots of developable park land. Possible to tie together with bike paths, etc. to bring people/groups to the area
- People – bring us together
- Improve communication
- Develop larger library serving all
- Grow downtown for hub and service area (gathering place)
- Build on small/unique ships
- Implement the plans
- Development based on amenities, culture, history
- A general desire for the small town environment



**Appendix A**  
**Futuring Sessions Feedback**  
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- Grants (small business, recreation, preservation)
- Continued cooperation
- Tapping that traffic flow
- Small town department stores retail, clothing)
- Tapping into our history
- Land use restrictions – to preserve natural features/green space
- Available properties in the downtown for development
- Enhance and promote existing resources, activities

## **Recreation**

### Strengths

- Waterways
- Open lands
- Parks
- School facilities/pool
- Community commitment
- Adult programs
- Ball fields abundance
- Playground of Dreams
- Good athletic complex at school
- Soccer fields
- Natural resources (river space)

### Weaknesses

- Underdeveloped waterways
- Non-sport active



## Appendix A

### Futuring Sessions Feedback

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- Intramural sports
- Transportation around town/facilities
- More needed and gyms
- Limited access to river
- Lack of hiking trails
- Lack of swimming facilities
- Facility accessibility (number of areas)

#### Opportunities

- Examine successful recreation programs
- Canoe launch
- Sand box volleyball
- Low cost family recreation
- Outside basketball
- Volleyball courts
- Skate park improvement
- Festivals/tournaments
- Miniature golf facilities
- Water slide
- Driving range/batting cages
- Go cart, etc.
- Laser tag
- Swimming pool
- Paint ball fields
- Bowling alley
- Walk/bike/hike/ski trails \*



**Appendix A**  
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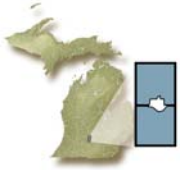
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- Boat livery
- Canoe portages
- Active preservation of nature
- Better facility maintenance
- Go after grants
- Upgrade river walk
- Man made lakes
- Canoe launch
- Expanded river usage
- Cross country skiing
- Movie house/band shell
- Publicity/marketing
- Parks/river parks
- Inline skate park
- Rail to trail
- Go cart track
- Adult programs
- Bike trail
- Camping facilities
- Access to existing facilities (school)
- Nature trails
- Develop current facilities or land

**Housing**

Strengths

- A lot of housing



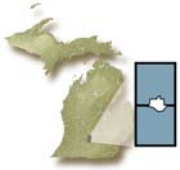
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- New apartment structures
- High rate of home owners
- New-builds in townships
- Open space/trees
- Low tax rates in town
- Transforming old buildings into housing
- Good parcel size on new development in townships (keeps open space)
- Affordable
- Variety –all income groups, home types \*
- Lot of apartments in city
- Nice homes
- Nice development (medium sized structures)
- Not a lot of trailer parks
- Location – a variety of good places to work, a good central location
- Choice of rural or apartment living
- Open space in city
- Choice within city
- Affordable housing
- Close to each other in city – there are “neighborhoods”
- Neighbors looking out for each other
- Safe neighborhoods

Weaknesses

- Utility costs in city
- Age of stock in city
- Traffic



## Appendix A

### Futuring Sessions Feedback

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- Ugly houses coming in from north (M-99)
- Potentially leaning toward a low scale
- Houses not maintained
- Code enforcement \*\*
- Historic homes not kept up
- Lack of senior housing
- Too many slumlords
- Eyesores mixed in – poor first impression coming into town
- Lack of knowledge about funding sources
- Lack of hotel space
- Not enough affordable housing for low to moderate income
- Not enough housing for elderly (assisted living)
- Not kept up – some houses/apartment
- Not very many condos

#### Threats/Barriers

- Lack of funds
- Transitioning from residential to commercial
- Age of dams
- Code enforcement
- Finding funding
- Lack of investors
- Lack of people to buy homes with jobs to pay for them
- Lack of promotion
- Transportation
- Lack of available building site in the city



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- Finance - cutbacks

Opportunities

- Rehabilitation/infill, some are available for purchase \*\*
- Connecting homeowners with funding \*\*
- Many of the houses in bad shape are in spots primed for development
- Open space preservation/cluster development \*
- Condos \*
- Continued care facilities
- Nice housing and commercial along river
- Finding funding
- Good tax base – more attractive to investors and home owners for affordability
- Inter-jurisdictional cooperation
- Land available for good housing
- Walkable downtown – can ride bike to school
- Lots of fire departments – helps insurance rates
- Land available in townships that is in close proximity to city
- collaboration

**Transportation**

Strengths

- Whittum Rd. used for bypass
- Traffic control
- E-Tran \*\*
- Narrow in Main st. (safety)
- Good road



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- River – boating/recreation
- Roadways to N/S/E/W
- New lights – Kinneville
- Recreational – bike
- Agriculture utilization
- Wide shoulders
- No major interstates
- Less congestions/slower

Weaknesses

- Gravel roads used as bypass
- Speed limits
- MDOT communication
- Lack of public transport
- Carpool
- Rails to Trails – old tracks gone
- Poor drivers (ability)
- Lack of paved roads
- Moving towards congestion
- Hard to get in/out of town – time
- New roadway development restricted
- Waverly Road Bridge access
- Lack of bike lanes
- Noise of semi's/tractors through town
- Maintain Bridge (Waverly/Knight Columbia)



**Appendix A**  
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Threats/Barriers

- River crossing \*
- Individual v. carpool
- MDOT – control of highways
- No right turn lanes
- Lack of funding \*
- Redirecting traffic through town
- M-99 and M-50 - bypass – location
- Threat to farmland
- Improvements brings traffic

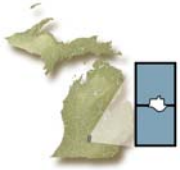
Opportunities

- Culverts added – new development
- Improvement of ex roads
- Updated bridges – pull traffic from city
- Partnering with neighboring school districts – sharing resources
- Bringing business into area – more opportunities for co-op programs
- Development – commercial/residential
- Bike trails
- Improve environment/health
- Better access
- Federal grants available

**Education**

Strengths

- Facilities \*



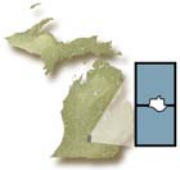
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- Teachers and staff
- Good administrators and school board
- Forward thinking curriculum development
- Working relationships with neighboring school districts (#4)
- Forward thinking superintendent and district – good leadership
- Cooperation with private and charter schools
- Working will together within district
- Highest number attend vocation educations at LCC in high school
- Schools communicate with each other
- Small town education – citizens support schools more
- Early childhood programs
- Schools remain active in communicating with families and community
- Schools are active (Relay for Life)
- Good Superintendent
- Committed to kids
- Produce a large number of highly educated students. Graduate more students than area.
- Great alternative education program
- Community schools 0shared locations, closeness of population
- Teachers have investment in kids. “unit” “cohesion”

Weaknesses

- Funding – state issue (materials, teach out of pocket expenses)
- Declining enrollment – dropping young families \*
- Attitude of accepting “average”
- Structural deficits
- Entrenched teaching habits (poor practices)



## Appendix A

### Futuring Sessions Feedback

January 11 & 13, 2007  
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- Transportation – size of district – long bus rides (even close to town)
- Non-resident teachers
- Not in LCC district (or community college). Students who attend pay higher rate
- Library system
- Nothing in area for continuing education for adults
- Too dependent on property taxes

#### Threats/Barriers

- Low expectations
- Funding \*
- Young families leaving area
- Perception of the area
- Little to draw people to area
- State funding
- Unfunded mandates
- Declining enrollment
- Housing (affordable) market
- Cost of doing business – insurance, retirement
- Internet access (high-speed whole area)
- District for C.C.
- Library – inability to access library outside of city

#### Opportunities

- Adult/community education – non-credit classes
- Partnering with colleges and universities – learning centers at LCC
- More integrated and broader pre-school programs
- Mentoring programs – utilizing senior community members and high school students pairing with youth



## Appendix A

### Futuring Sessions Feedback

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- Strengthening ties with business community (need more business in area)
- Schools of choice
- Exit surveys – why are people leaving? Graduates (what was good/bad)?
- Promoting the schools – mass mailings, updated websites, articles, advertising on buses, creativity, etc.
- Market safety
- Unite the community – 2 counties, many villages, townships, etc.
- Working with other school districts
- New facilities – could do adult/higher education classes at them
- Provide more job shadowing experiences. Not everyone goes to college
- Wireless internet – community wide
- More opportunities to take electives to try new things
- Computer lab in this building – goal was to use for community use – sits empty, no one to staff
- Intra-district (or district-wide system) library – Lansing/Charlotte
- Outside tutoring – need facilities for use by entire area
- Performing arts and theater – opportunities for arts outside of school
- Gyms are used every night – classrooms need to be utilized
- Provisions of programs for youth that do not achieve as high? Need to help kids that fall between the cracks.

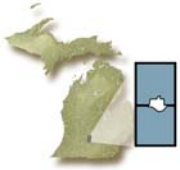
### **Health**

#### Strengths

- Good hospital
- Good doctors
- Good dentists

#### Weaknesses

- Hospital can't provide all the needed services (ex: must go out of area for knee transplants and births)



## Appendix A

### Futuring Sessions Feedback

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- Don't have as many specialists as we need (ex: need: ear/nose/throat, dermatologist, and cardiologist (more often))
- Ambulances not staffed full-time
- Many people with no health insurance

#### Threats/Barriers

- Services we do have are not available to everyone (ex: those with out insurance)

#### Opportunities

- Grow hospital and specialists
- Get community healthier
- Healthy U
- Better use of school facilities for health/increase pool facilities for health and therapy
- Opportunity for partnerships between hospital and school facilities



**Appendix A**  
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### **February 13, 2007 Student Feedback**

On February 13, representatives from each of the three municipalities went into two of Mr. George Matthews' government classes to present the area-wide planning efforts. Students were given a brief primer on planning and then split into three different groups to have a discussion. The discussion focused on what they liked, what they didn't like, and what they would change about the area. In all there were six groups who gave input.

In some areas there was a broad consensus across the different groups. These areas are marked with an \*. The other items that are listed was often the opinions of one or two members of each group. In some areas there was a difference of opinions. (These areas are mainly the level of crime and police in the area and a mixed reception to trimesters in the schools).

**Like about the Eaton Rapids Area:**

No gangs  
Country – Near by  
Smooth transition to country setting  
Medical Center  
Small Town \*  
High School  
Not far from Lansing  
Country living – more privacy  
Walkability in City  
Living right outside of city limits is ideal  
R – Place – was a good thing for the community  
It's pretty small and people know each other  
People are warm  
When you look up you can see the stars  
There is a lot of country space  
Not a confining city



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Easy to navigate  
We have a river and an island  
A little bit of everything  
No traffic  
Teachers are nice  
Like the way it is  
Island  
Wide road – turning lanes  
If you like corn  
Lots of ice cream  
Small town but close enough to Lansing  
A large highway running through our area  
Space to hunt outside of city  
Safe community

**Did not like about the Eaton Rapids Area**

Nothing to Do \*  
No Taco Bell \*  
Too many people – traffic issues  
R- place (Teen center) good for the community but primarily for younger kids  
Everything closes down at 9pm in area  
Skate park is not good enough \*  
More parking needed in downtown  
Felpausch too expensive  
Police department (hassle and target certain people)  
Too many pizza places \*  
Lack of choices for entertainment \*  
Too many churches



**Appendix A**  
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Too many run down bldgs  
The playground of dreams got trashed  
Issue with drugs in the community  
Grand river is too dirty \*  
Teenagers need more places to hang out \*  
Need a social club  
Skate park was downsized  
Burn it and start from scratch  
Fire department needs to get there faster  
Library – don't like to pay for a library card (outside city) \*  
Need to have a café in library with coffee (both in public library and school library) \*  
Need more student friendly books in library  
Internet not always accurate for library, need access to books  
Police too strict  
Dirty river water  
Construction  
Inverness Street – Tree blocking view  
Plains and waverly traffic  
Slow snow plowing on the side street  
Nothing to do here \*  
Delay in getting roads plowed  
Living out in the country, costs too much to get places  
Too far from other activities like skiing  
Water in the city is yellow (at her house)  
Eaton rapids has some problems (drugs, crime) that is not publicized  
Ruining farmland, need to preserve farmland



**Appendix A**  
**Futuring Sessions Feedback**  
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**Changes I would make to Eaton Rapids Area:**

Larger skate park needed \*

Bowling alley needed \*

Movie theatre needed \*

Need someplace to hang out \*

Want to see Hall Street Development

Need a mid level restaurant

Need a department store

Need a music store and music lessons

Publicity

Update old buildings

Update housing stock

Improve traffic

Road Plowing outside of town

Variety of stores

Bakery

Fitness center

Candyshop

Game store

Book Store – Barnes and noble

Beaners

Tattoo and piercing salon

Need a Taco Bell

Would like to see laser tag \*

Indoor sports – recreational facility to have sports in winter (ie flag football, soccer, hockey) \*

Indoor shooting range

Indoor water park/pool – current pool not open enough for public swim

More parking in downtown



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More fireworks shows  
More festivals  
Not enough activities for teens at festivals – only for adults or young children nothing for teens  
More funding for historical society  
Need a clothing store  
Need a wider range of recycling, advertise more and have a bigger operation  
Need more stuff to do at night \*  
Need jobs  
Need better signage telling people where they can and cannot be  
Need better information – students get info from word of mouth, need to publicize recycling and ice skating better \*  
More night life needed for area  
Need to preserve history  
Utilize more of the empty buildings  
Need a museum to promote/expand ER history maybe  
Expand the Miller Place  
A gallery somewhere to display work by local artists  
Need a college in town (LCC)  
Do not want an airport  
Do not want anymore factories outside of the city  
Do not want development to take up all the land  
Want to preserve old buildings  
Less pizza places  
Want leaf pickup  
Want xmas tree pickup  
Need to purify river  
Need some historical educational opportunities  
Want a boxing gym  
Affordable health club \*



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**Recreation:**

Did not like:

Baseball fields at Howe not in good condition, lose too many balls into river, need a net by river, also need better drainage

Want:

Skate Park – improvement

Swimming pool – more open hours

Climbing wall

Laser tag

Arcade

Camping

Underground Railroad House

Horse riding stables

Parks and trails

Dirt bike Trails/ATV trails (2)

Bowling alley

Hiking trails

Cross country skiing and snowboarding

Old hogsback dump converted to multi rec area

There is enough area for soccer already

Create a man made lake and stock for fishing

Would like to see canoes and paddle boats for rent by the island

Tubing/white water rafting

City type activities

More space for living

Drive in movie

Book store

Skating rink



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Recreational facility – basketball courts

**Agriculture:**

Tractor traffic a problem  
Need to conserve farmland

**Transportation:**

New light at McDonalds not timed right  
Do not like McDonalds Traffic light  
Traffic signals need to be timed

Need:

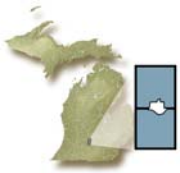
Shuttle to Lansing  
Need left turn lane at Main and Knight street  
Need better speed zone signs (not obscured) and posted when it changes

**Housing:**

Affordable Ranch  
Restrict locations  
Like the small town feel and older houses – not the modern look  
New subdivisions outside of town  
Not at high school – noise complaints  
Losing the country look  
Like big homes

**Public Services:**

Library expand hours and materials  
Ordinance enforcement needed



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Cable internet access upgrade  
WIFI downtown

**Education:**

Like:

Like Trimesters

Clubs and organizations

Bowling club

Good AP classes offered

OK in terms of preparing for college

Did not like:

We spent millions on school buildings but cannot afford supplies

Trimesters – crunch classes, especially harder classes

Need a place for cheerleaders to practice

No yearbook class

Not enough room to put people – (admin staff, student aides, classes)

Need a better industrial room

Need more government classes

Update journalism tools (still using pagemaker, need better programs that are actually used in the profession)

Auditorium needs help

Lunch needs help – too many people, food not always good

School library – teaching classes in there – sometimes off limits to students

Need more of a variety of classes (ie French)

Not enough AP Classes – because not enough interest, makes it tough to compete with other schools

E.R. has a larger percentage of special needs and SSI students, mainstreaming hurts regular students



**Appendix A**  
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Changes:

More AP classes needed  
Need Career planning  
Need Better electives  
Need Study hall  
Need Earlier typing classes in elementary school  
Need Cooperative internships

**Environment and Natural Resources:**

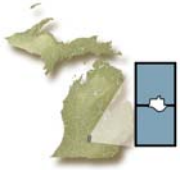
Reduce use of energy  
Publicize recycling center more  
Need more open space/forests  
River clean up  
Grand River is gross, we need to clean that up \*

**Health:**

Hospital ER takes way too long \*  
More economical physical fitness (see grand valley state Univ indoor fitness facility)  
ER needs a walk park  
We have a good physical therapy department

**Jobs:**

More jobs needed for teens \*  
Need more engineering/skilled trades jobs/tech jobs  
More part time jobs  
More internships



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**What would bring you back to the area?**

A million dollars  
Friends and family  
Jobs  
Small town atmosphere



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**March 13, 2007**  
**Senior Center Input**

Approx 15 people in attendance with a fairly equal distribution for each of the three municipalities.

**What do you like about Eaton Rapids Area?**

Small community  
Can get everything you need here in the area  
Not a lot of drugs and booze like Lansing and Detroit  
Good place to raise kids  
Glad there is a Teen center – Area is starting to focus on finding things for younger folks to do  
Pride in E.R. – Old homes in good repair  
Feel comfortable  
Hospital and Schools are good  
Water – a good asset  
Still can get to Lansing quickly  
Police have improved/we have a safe community  
Appreciate the Island Music evenings

**What don't you like about Eaton Rapids Area**

Traffic on Main Street  
Traffic on State Street  
Lack of adequate senior housing including assisted living, subsidized housing, community housing, retirement community, senior condos  
Route into Eaton Rapids (M99) needs improvement, especially for the houses, need to get grant to give money to homeowners to fix up their properties  
Water in the city is hard, same in townships  
Some perception on the school funding not positive – for example, spent millions on a new stadium and now closing a school.



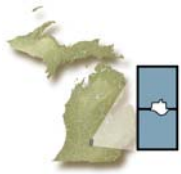
**Appendix A**  
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Need better education on school issues – how is the money being spent  
Takes a long time for many development issues – such as Horner Mills

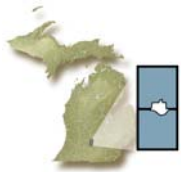
**What changes would you make?**

Another grocery store  
Downtown developed more  
More restaurants (Taco Bell/Applebees for example)  
Need a combo department store with clothes and shoes  
More economic stability in town  
Not always convenient to drive to Lansing as a senior, could use more things locally  
Need more people to shop in downtown  
Riverwalk throughout the city – like walking trails  
Would like walking/biking trail down McArthur Drive  
Want a safe place to walk  
Surface for walkers along trails is needed  
Sidewalks in the city need to be maintained  
Areas of no sidewalks in the city  
Greenspace – use some unbuildable areas to have greenspace and walking trails and benches  
Need sidewalk for McArthur drive or a walkpath  
State Street Bridge – Not wide enough for a wheelchair  
More BBQ pits on the island and athletic field and other city and twp parks  
More park space  
Need a nursing home in the area  
Need a nice sitdown restaurant in the area  
Need some nice condos or senior housing for those who do not want or cannot do lawncare anymore.



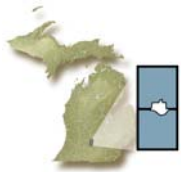
## Appendix B Public Meeting Issues Ranking Feedback May 9, 2007

Topic	Rank
65.) Increase activities that encourage physical fitness among all citizens.	1
63.) Develop public education program on understanding local government services.	2
47.) Maintain public facilities, such as the Playground of Dreams	3
62.) Encourage connection between school programs and business employment needs.	3
7.) Encourage Fire Departments to work together and coordinate services.	4
13.) Enhance recycling opportunities.	4
8.) Improve storm drainage to help control flooding.	5
17.) Fill building vacancies downtown.	5
29.) Manage growth to preserve land for farming.	5
30.) Manage growth to preserve open space.	5
41.) Increase public access and connection to the river (e.g. river walk)	5
44.) Increase services and opportunities for Senior Citizens	5
64.) Develop local education opportunities for technical and higher educational enrichment and advancement.	5
21.) Coordinate Eaton Rapids Area economic development plans.	6
52.) Connect citizens to funding sources for purchase of homes and rehabilitation.	7



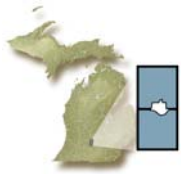
## Appendix B Public Meeting Issues Ranking Feedback May 9, 2007

Topic	Rank
53.) Increase the number of senior housing facilities (condos, assisted living, retirement communities.)	8
51.) Create Area wide recreation program with broad representation from Area youth and adults.	9
67.) Examine opportunities for facilities-sharing between schools and hospital for the purpose of community programs.	9
12.) Develop a public program to increase awareness about environmental issues.	10
14.) Create a river cleanup campaign.	10
45.) Develop walking non-motorized paved paths in the Eaton Rapids Area.	10
50.) Increase the number of youth programs and centers.	10
5.) Improve ambulance services	11
18.) Create a more vibrant downtown by increasing retail.	11
66.) Increase health specialty services locally.	11
59.) Develop a stronger relationship with MDOT to improve communications.	12
48.) Provide intramural sports opportunities	13
49.) Identify sports opportunity needs in the Area for all ages.	14
56.) Increase affordable housing options	14



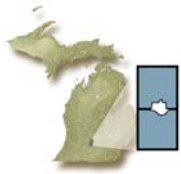
## Appendix B Public Meeting Issues Ranking Feedback May 9, 2007

Topic	Rank
58.) Improve traffic flow and patterns	15
24.) Increase the range of dining choices.	16
16.) Increase marketing efforts of the Area to attract new commercial and industrial businesses.	17
31.) Increase access to public transportation.	18
6.) Increase police protection services	19
19.) Increase parking in the downtown area.	20
38.) Preserve older, historical buildings.	20
46.) Develop paths that connect city with townships	20
22.) Encourage educational and training opportunities to help develop local qualified employees.	21
9.) Increase the number and quality of sidewalks	22
57.) Encourage developers to provide a variety of housing choices.	23
32.) Develop a plan for appropriate riverfront development.	24
10.) Increase enforcement of property codes to improve the overall appearance of the Area.	25
55.) Add nursing homes and medical care facilities	25
61.) Develop a new bridge to improve the access to town.	26



## Appendix B Public Meeting Issues Ranking Feedback May 9, 2007

Topic	Rank
60.) Examine the condition and use of gravel roads to determine if paving is appropriate.	27
23.) Improve store front appearances.	28
11.) Create a cooperative library system.	29
37.) Fix Island Park wall.	30
39.) Develop a museum and/or other cultural establishments	30
34.) Increase access to wireless Internet.	31
28.) Work to meet agricultural infrastructure needs (e.g. increasing access to storage, transportation, implement dealers).	32
33.) Increase access to Internet services.	33
20.) Create a more vibrant downtown by increasing entertainment establishments.	34
40.) Increase the number of civic pride events, such as festivals.	35
25.) Increase late night entertainment opportunities that target youth.	36
27.) Pursue funding for a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program.	37
36.) Improve lighting on Island Park	38
4.) Increase leaf and tree pick-up services? (brush, leaves & Christmas trees)	39
26.) Increase late night entertainment opportunities that serve adults.	40



**Appendix B**  
**Public Meeting Issues Ranking Feedback**  
**May 9, 2007**

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<b>Topic</b>	<b>Rank</b>
42.) Create a performing arts theatre	41
15.) Develop Springbrook pond improvement effort (aerator, fountain).	42
54.) Increase subsidized housing	43
35.) Increase access to cable.	44
43.) Encourage an Internet Cafe	45



### 1. Why did you decide to move to or remain in this area?

I was born here and live most of my life here. I have three kids in the school system and I plan to see them graduate from Eaton Rapids Schools as I did.

Posted on 5/3/2007 3:46:29 PM by Barbara Johns

I like the area because I feel safe at my school. I like how many of my peers' parents and my parents know each other because they went to school together. It's a nice small little town where you recognize the majority of the faces around downtown.

Posted on 3/1/2007 7:54:51 PM by Amber Ellsworth

I moved here because my family was moving and it's a nice place to live. The people here are really nice and it's a small community close to everything.

Posted on 12/20/2006 9:48:49 AM by Jennifer Schafer

i want to live in this area because i like how it is a small town and a has a smaller school

Posted on 12/18/2006 3:07:27 PM

### 2. If you were to describe the Eaton Rapids Area to someone new, what are you most proud of?

think the schools are great and the community involvement is very important. That fact is evident during 4th of July, Christmas and Homecoming parades and celebrations. We love our Greyhound Marching Band!!

Posted on 5/3/2007 3:48:53 PM by Barbara Johns

I'm most proud of the school district. The teachers really care about their students. Also, because our school is so small, the teachers remember your name and siblings, or in some cases, even parents, and they talk to you when they see you, even years after they may have had you in class.

Posted on 3/1/2007 7:58:08 PM by Amber Ellsworth

I'm proud of the school here because it's really a great place. It's really a family orientated place where people care about each other and I'm proud to be a greyhound.

Posted on 12/20/2006 9:50:51 AM by Jennifer Schafer

### 3. If you could preserve or develop anything in this area, what would it be?

I would like to see a definite partnership between the City and the owners of the Eaton Rapids campgrounds. I feel that there is so much potential where those facilities can be refurbished and utilized more than they are now. There is a tremendous historical background with that property and it would be great if it could



be used more than just during the annual camp meetings. It might be another draw to get more people into the City and it is very surprising to me that most residents don't even know it is there.

Posted on 5/3/2007 3:45:01 PM by Barbara Johns

I would fix up many of our run-down and not in use buildings to attract more people to our city and make the town a little more interesting and unique.

Posted on 3/1/2007 7:59:42 PM by Amber Ellsworth

I would like to see the former "hogsback road dump" developed into an outdoor recreation area for the community. Hiking, Biking, and Skiing trails along with an area to camp would be very nice. It would give Eaton Rapids area residents a place to come and get away from the city without having to travel great distances. The new area would also attract more people who would not normally spend much time in Eaton Rapids. This is a low cost project that could potentially be a big attraction to Eaton Rapids.

Posted on 2/13/2007 11:14:06 PM by Tim Isley

I would preserve the island because it's a great landmark and it's walls around it are failing and it could sink, so i want to keep it.

Posted on 12/20/2006 9:57:30 AM by Jennifer Schafer

#### **4. What are the Eaton Rapids Area's strengths?**

Eaton Rapids has great potential. There is new leadership in the Mayor's seat that hopefully can take Eaton Rapids in a new direction that will keep the small, home-town feeling of Eaton Rapids but at the same time allow for growth and opportunities for new business to be established.

Posted on 5/3/2007 3:52:20 PM by Barbara Johns

The strengths of Eaton Rapids would be the things the town is known for. For example: our band, our Cross Country/track team, our wrestling team, our basketball teams, etc. When people hear of Eaton Rapids they think of the great things that come from here and often bring up how great our band is our how good a few of our sports teams are.

Posted on 3/1/2007 8:03:07 PM by Amber Ellsworth

#### **5. What are the Eaton Rapids Area weaknesses?**

Eaton Rapids needs to attract more retail business into the downtown area. Established businesses needs to invest locally by purchasing goods and services locally to help build their neighbors business. There needs more to be collaboration between and among all the local buisness owners to achieve this goal. I don't think this is being done as much as it could be and that is a weakness.

Posted on 5/3/2007 3:56:18 PM by Barbara Johns



One major weakness that Eaton Rapids has is the lack of things to do around town. We don't have a bowling alley, movie theater, or any stores for teens to shop at, so they think the only thing to do in this town is to drink and do drugs.

Posted on 3/1/2007 7:52:02 PM by Amber Ellsworth

Drugs are weakness and it's everywhere and building that are old and not vacant and parking lots downtown are small. Also, there's not enough restraunts downtown.

Posted on 12/20/2006 10:00:49 AM by Jennifer Schafer

### 6. What are the threats to the Eaton Rapids Area?

I think that a major threat to the Eaton Rapids area are the number of empty houses in town that are foreclosures or abandoned homes. The number of houses that are currently for sale and sitting empty is a huge concern. True, there may be many opportunities to attract new home buyers to these empty houses but not if they are run down and have sat empty for a long time. Eaton Rapids officials need to look for Federal or State programs that may help low income families be able to occupy these homes that are sitting empty.

Posted on 5/3/2007 4:01:03 PM by Barbara Johns

The only threat to Eaton Rapids that I can think of would be drug and alcohol abuse. They aren't really threats, but they are a major issue in this town.

Posted on 3/1/2007 8:04:47 PM by Amber Ellsworth

The threats are development to places that might ruin the small town feel like big stores.

Posted on 12/20/2006 9:56:15 AM by Jennifer Schafer

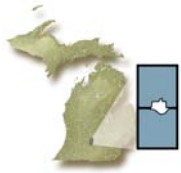
### 7. What opportunities are available in the Eaton Rapids Area?

I think that Eaton Rapids and the surrounding townships have a great opportunity to reach the growing number of people that are building homes in the area. We also have an opportunity to attract retail and food service establishments that will serve these new residents. Our schools, athletics and performing arts are great and also help attract new families to our neighborhoods. Our churches and community organizations work hard to help those in the area with various needs. Eaton Rapids is a great place to live and raise a family.

Posted on 5/3/2007 4:07:43 PM by Barbara Johns

There are good opportunities for your children to grow up in such a safe and friendly town of Eaton Rapids. We aren't too far from Lansing either, so the parents can work in Lansing and not have to send their kids to Lansing schools and parents don't have a very long drive to work.

Posted on 3/1/2007 8:06:44 PM by Amber Ellsworth



## Appendix C Website Comments

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There's opportunity to open your small business here and start a family in a great community and be close to Charlotte and Lansing, so you don't have a long commute.

Posted on 12/20/2006 9:58:23 AM by Jennifer Schafer



## Appendix D Phone Survey Results

### Number of Completed Surveys

City of Eaton Rapids	32
Eaton Rapids Township	30
Hamlin Township	38
Total	100

### Some Comments

*Expensive sports*  
*Lower taxes*  
*Schools-healthier choice pop machines*  
*More jobs*  
*Loves town*  
*Schools – money problems*  
*Roads – free graveling*

### Years Lived in Area (Median)

25

### Age Group (Mode)

65 +

### Satisfaction Levels (1=low, 5=high)

#### Averages Excluding No Opinions`

High	Public Services	4.31
Low	Employment	
	Opportunities	2.41

