

Student Interviews to compliment the Vision Team's work on the Community Master Plan - Pentwater 9th/10th Social Studies & 11th grade Government Classes

February 11, 2021

Introduction given to Students:

"As students of Pentwater, you have a unique opportunity to provide a viewpoint for the Community Master Plan." On Friday, February 11th during class, Chris Conroy (member of the Master Plan Steering Committee) interviewed Ms. Sisung's 11th Grade class (9:30am) and Mr. MaGrath & Ms. Gallie's 9th/10th grade classes. Heather Douglas and Amy Roberston also participated to assist with note-taking. Amy was able to sit in on the 9:30 class with the 11th Graders which was very helpful as the Zoom audio through their teacher's laptop was challenging. Thankfully Mr. Magrath & Ms. Gallie provided notes from their classes as well. All students were given the questions in advance by their teachers and were encouraged to give thoughtful and complete answers. As you will see, their responses were very insightful, thoughtful and constructive.

High level Summary:

Our takeaway was that the students value many of the same things that came out of the meeting we had with families in July.

Ms. Sisung's 11th Grade Class's responses:

1. What do you love and/or dislike about living in Pentwater?

- I love Pentwater in the summer because there is so much to do and I love going to the beach. I just don't really enjoy Pentwater in the winter when everything is closed, and there's not much to do.
- **I love our summers and the atmosphere of busy times in Pentwater.**
- What I mostly love about living in Pentwater is the calmer atmosphere and the overall closer-knit community than anywhere else. That said, it is quite tough to connect with many people in this town, which means my physical friend group is very small.
- **I love seeing the beautiful sunsets over Lake Michigan, but I dislike that there is bad phone service.**
- I like the number of things that I can do in the summer, but I think we should have more for the people that live here in the winter.
- **Love- the summers and the awesome sunsets and being close to the lake. Hate- the people, in the summer the tourist**
- The beach is something I used to look forward to every summer as a tourist, so living here now and having that is great.
- **I love that it is a small community and that everyone knows each other.**
- I like a lot of things about Pentwater, like the small town where you know a lot of people, and there's a bunch of different shops around town, and the beach is always the nicest and sometimes is very busy. I wish there were more restaurants that served better foods and more variety.
- **I like how everyone in the community cares about each other.**
- I love that we live so close to a beach and in a small town. I also like that we have the option to work during the summer at smaller places that are seasonal.
- **I love the beaches and the environment. What I don't like about living in Pentwater is the lack of diversity.**
- The beach, loving community

- **I love that it is a small community full of familiar faces and how safe it is. In the winter, it can be very boring because not a lot of places are not open because of how slow business would be. I love the beach in the summer and all the people. Ice cream shops and AJ's is always a great way to end a beach day.**
- I love the people and community that we have in Pentwater. **I love being able to watch sunsets at the beach** and go swimming during the summer. I love being able to walk around town whenever I want with friends and going downtown for food or shopping. The only thing I dislike in Pentwater is how stuck up some older people are.
- **I enjoy having a community where I know most people. I also like that we have a lot of small shops to go to in the summer! I don't like that people are sometimes categorized by the status of their family/ money.**
- I Love Pentwater, a cool place that has a great community and **a very nice beach along with lake Michigan**. One thing I dislike is that in the summer it is very very busy, however in the winter it is cold but it's so peaceful at times.
- **I dislike having nowhere to workout/play sports in the winter or even in the winter when snow covers the court.**

Additional notes captured by Chris/Amy:

They appreciate the small town feel in the winter and the diverse population in the summer- nice blend
 They like the shops, restaurants, and events that take place throughout the year (car show was mentioned)
 They appreciate nature and the environment – that it does not have a “city feel”.
 They disliked that there are not enough options for playing sports in the winter
 i.e. indoor courts

2. Have you ever lived elsewhere and/or attended another school outside of Pentwater?

- No, I have only gone to Pentwater school.
- **One other school in West Michigan**
- I have attended a school in California, and I lived there until 2nd grade, at which point I moved here. It didn't have much of an up on this school, as I stated above, as I like the closer-knit community.
- **Yes, I have attended another school outside of Pentwater, and I live outside of town.**
- I have, and I didn't love the big school, but one thing that I think was good was there was less favoritism with the people that have lived there the longest.
- **Yes went to Ludington school.**
- Yes, I lived in Fort Wayne, Indiana.
- **Yes, I lived in the middle of the state.**
- No, I have only attended Pentwater.
- **No.**
- No
- **No, I have not**
- Yes, I have attended one other school.
- **No.**
- I have lived in Pentwater and attended Pentwater public schools my whole life.
- **Yes, a lot of places.**
- Yes. a school near Grand Rapids
- **No.**

Additional notes captured by Chris/Amy:

7 students reported they had attended different schools

2 reported that they had attended schools out of state

3. What features, services, entertainment would you like to see changed, added, preserved to make Pentwater a better place to live and work?

- It would be nice to have a fast-food restaurant.
- **I think more public events despite the times we are living in would be interesting.**
- I can't think of many things that would improve us in terms of adding things, but we could very easily change some of the ways the downtown looks in terms of aesthetics - maybe make it a bit more appealing. And everything should really be preserved unless it's absolutely necessary, it's really nice to have the older buildings.
- **I would like to see better internet service in rural Pentwater, and better phone service in general.**
- I would like for there to be more to do in the wintertime, not right now but maybe next year when it is safer. A really fun thing could be a movie theatre that shows old movies. I think you would get a lot of high school students if that existed. An arcade might also be a good idea for younger kids. Also for cheaper events like a snowman building contest, which could also be a fundraiser, would be fun for kids and adults. Also, a cookie decorating event. These could maybe give people something to look forward to in the winter.
- **More places to park in the summer, a couple of actually good restaurants, maybe even a taxi service.**
- I do not have any suggestions at the moment.
- **I would like Pentwater to become more eco friendly because that would help the future of our town. Some ways we could do this is by having recycling bins by the trash cans and encouraging restaurants to use less waste.**
- **I would like to see a bigger beach parking lot** and more parking downtown, and more restaurants.
- **I think Pentwater is great already. It was definitely different this year with Covid, but I think once things get back to a somewhat normal, Pentwater will be even better.**
- I feel like it would be nice if there were more community events, such as The Movies on the Green Event. **For new community events, I feel like doing more beach things would be fun, like a beach community get together of some sort.**
- **I would like to see most of nature in Pentwater preserved. I would also like to see some of the old buildings preserved.**
- More Restaurants
- **I don't think that there needs to be much change. It's a small town and only thrives during warm seasons, so it's hard to have a stable workplace in a town like this other than restaurants and gas stations.**
- I love the movies on the green, parades, fireworks, crafts fair, and all other fairs that happen in Pentwater. A bike lane would be pretty nice to have because bikes are not allowed on the sidewalks anymore.
- **I think that everything is pretty good.**
- I would like to see Pentwater stay the same. I see no need to really change anything. Honestly, it's a gem how it is.
- **More places to lounge with better wifi, there is nowhere to hangout in town.**

Additional notes captured by Chris/Amy:

More options to work

More parking options

More restaurant options

Taxi Service

Safer streets (crosswalks, golf cart and bike paths) - note: Share Complete Streets plan with students and get their input

More environmentally friendly downtown / village

i.e. recycling receptacles

More activities for school aged and adolescents

i.e. movie theater, arcade, options to play volleyball, basketball (this includes activities at the Charles Mears State Park)

Better internet service

4. Do you picture yourself living in the Pentwater area after post-high school education? Or What are your plans after high school and/or college graduation? Do you feel there are opportunities to stay in the Community after graduation?

- No, I think once I graduate high school, I will move away from Pentwater to go to college and get a job. I don't feel like there are that many opportunities in Pentwater.
- **I think in order to find opportunities outside of high school, I need to leave the area, but I always want to come back.**
- I don't see myself living here after I graduate. I most likely plan on leaving for the UP to Michigan Tech to get a degree in some form of engineering before moving either to Canada or someplace that isn't the US, unless things significantly improve for us in the next, say, year. I don't feel there are many opportunities to really live back here, though participating in the community when I visit is most certainly something that could happen.
- **Yes, I plan on living in rural Pentwater after college. I do not think there are opportunities in the community after graduation. I would likely commute to my job, etc.**
- No, I don't think that there is a way that I could do what I want to do when I'm in a really small town. I feel that there are some opportunities to stay, but they just aren't for me.
- **No, I plan on leaving. I'm going to college then living in the northern part of Michigan. No, I do not think there are opportunities.**
- While I do not picture myself living here after graduation, my family will still be active in the area, and I would definitely come back often.
- **I do not plan to stay in Pentwater after high school. I plan to go to college and then, after college, possibly move out of state. I do feel there are opportunities to stay in the community after graduation for other people, but personally the professions I want to do, there are no opportunities in Pentwater for me.**
- Yes, I do see myself living in Pentwater or surrounding areas, depending on what I go to college for. I am hoping to go to a college in Michigan. There could be opportunities depending on what I become and what I choose to do. But if there's not, I would create the opportunity.
- **No, I do not see myself living in Pentwater after post-high school education. I feel there are not very many opportunities for me in my future career.**
- It's possible that I'll come back, but I am not sure. There is nothing that is driving me away, but I am not sure where a job will be the best for me. There are little job opportunities in the area, so that may be a struggle.
- **I do not picture myself living in the Pentwater Area after high school. I plan on going somewhere where I am able to do what I studied for. I feel like there are opportunities to stay in the community after graduation, but not for what I want to do.**
- I would not stay in this location. I would like to move into a bigger city. I also don't feel like there are any opportunities for me to stay in Pentwater after graduation.

- I think I will definitely stay in Pentwater for a while after high school until I can afford to move out and get a job. I want to attend community college for a couple of years, so I would probably stay in Pentwater for that time period of my life. I think that there are definitely opportunities to stay in Pentwater during the summer, but there isn't a lot of options. I don't want to go into manual labor when I am older, so that leaves t-shirt, coffee, toy, home goods, stores, and maybe seven restaurants, and I'm not really interested in that kind of stuff.
- After I go to college, I would love to live in Pentwater for some time of my life if I could find a job close enough to here.
- I don't think that I will be staying here after high school. I want to go see other places throughout the world for my education and just life. I am either going to attend a community college/college or go into the military. I feel like if I were to stay here, I would not be able to make a good living, because jobs are either seasonal or don't pay that much. The closest community college is in Mason county. So, yeah.
- I honestly have no idea. I guess I will just have to cross that bridge once I get there.
- **No, I plan on leaving because there are no jobs to make money around here.**

Additional notes captured by Chris/Amy:

Of 17 responses -

1 said yes

16 responded no, citing that there were not enough job opportunities.

5. What Job/Career would keep them in Pentwater after graduation from high school, trades or college? (Asked after the Zoom Call ended, and Ms. Sisung captured their responses)

- Nothing
- **To bring back the doctors office**
- More opportunities for a position such as an athletic trainer. There are things like schools in the area, but there isn't a community college or anything around with a team that may need one, and they would probably pay better at a higher ranking. But I also feel like if someone wanted to be something like an engineer, or a welder, there aren't many opportunities around.
- **I have no interest in any jobs here in Pentwater. I also see no reason for anyone else to have any either.**
- I plan on going into a career that has to do with science or medicine so I really don't see myself staying here because there is not an opportunity for me to have a successful career here.
- **I am looking to start my own aquaculture place so that will create my job.**
- None, with the career I want I will have to live in a big city.
- **I do not think there is a job opportunity that would keep me in Pentwater permanently.**
- None, there is no way to live here coming out of high school due to it costing so much to live here with no high-paying jobs.
- **lineman where I would work on power line but even if it did I dislike the town so I would still leave**
- probably nothing, I think that for someone wanting an art career there may be already too many artists here and I would rather live in the city anyways
- **If there's an open pharmacy position by the time I graduate college, one that pays over well a year, I will stay in Pentwater.**
- Some kind of job that deals with accounting, etc.
- **It would have to be something related to coding, engineering, or technical infrastructure. That's primarily the jobs I'm shooting for, so that might keep me here.**

- None, Pentwater is not built for raising a family or supporting people who work. Taxes are high opportunity is low
- **A doctor so put a hospital nearby.**
- Better real estate agencies
- **bigger hospitals**

Ms. Gallie & Mr. MaGrath's 9th & 10th grade combined Civic's class (1:05pm)

1. What do you love and/or dislike about living in Pentwater?

Love/Like:

- New people/summer visitors in town
- Peaceful and quiet
- Farmer market/craft fairs
- Tight-knit community
- Movies on the Green
- Lots of Job opportunities in town in the summer
 - Cosmic Candy
 - Teaching Sailing
 - House of Flavors
 - Hill & Hallow
 - Golden Sands
 - Charles Marina
 - Provisions
 - Beach Store
- Pentwater Pathways
- It's home, I just like it.
- Even the Dollar General made a world of difference for convenience

Dislikes

- There is nothing to do in the winter
- Some areas are not walkable; need more and better sidewalks. Depends on the street--roots, Clymer is dangerous when busy

2. Have you ever lived elsewhere and/or attended another school outside of Pentwater?

- Student A was homeschooled, but lived in several other cities. Co-op for homeschooled students had more opportunities than PHS
- Student B -feels welcome and invited at school, meaningful relationships
- Student C - attended Ludington Area Catholic (LAC), lives in Ludington. LAC lots smaller! Mom teaches at PW, really likes it. Friends at Ludington have AP and honors classes, which we don't
- Student D - Likes PW, but a bigger school allowed for more everything that PW does not have
- Student E -went to a very big school in Mexico, much more athletic opportunities
- Student F -many different schools, bigger schools, more teams
- Student G -LAC, so small she felt like she didn't belong anywhere until she came here

Summary Comments regarding Other Schools Attended vs Pentwater:

- Co-ops for homeschooled students had more opportunities than PHS; Homeschooled, living in several other bigger towns
 - More sports and better education
 - A and B teams for sports
 - Longer school day but no homework
 - More programs
 - Meeting other types of people
 - AP and honors classes

Pentwater offers:

- Very inviting, better for building better relationships in Pentwater
- Some people like the feeling of belonging that comes from smaller schools like Pentwater

3. What features, services, entertainment would you like to see changed, added, preserved to make Pentwater a better place to live and work?

- Not a lot to do, no movie theater
- Sidewalks smooth and consistent throughout town; fix broken sidewalks; add sidewalks on Clymer & busy roads
- **Lockers for belongings when you're at the; and cleaner bathrooms**
- Year round cafe for students to go to hang out, do homework, etc (suggested Park Place post-Covid)
- Phone and internet service for school and work
- More parking, can't see around parallel parked cars downtown
- Year 'round shopping for essentials- grocery /pharmacy; More shops used by locals and not Tourist.
- Auditorium--bring community together, have year round events, plays, drama club, the school bands; dance groups; summer music
- Indoor & Outdoor to host meets
- Real ice skating rink
- More areas for more interesting mountain biking; BMX/ Dirt bike track like Sand Dragway
- Non-touristy shops, convenience stores, more than dollar general, pharmacy
- Rec center--year round
- Volunteer opportunities - Communicating better about them whether online, posted in the village, or posted somewhere in the school
- Skate Park; Rollerskating **(Some suggested converting the community fire pit at the state park near the parking lot to a skate park as the beach is already a location that they enjoy with their friends and family)**
- Arcade/technology based arcade; bringing in more technology based things into the community
- Safety when walking to places
- Golf Cart Rentals

Note: When asked if trolley or bus service between PTW & Hart or Ludington, the responses were not in favor because they didn't think it was sustainable (not enough demand) but they liked the idea of a trolley around town or a shuttle to move people from parking at outlying areas like School parking lot or church parking lots into downtown to ease parking congestion. One student suggested a GOLF CART UBER

4. Do you picture yourself living in the Pentwater area after post-high school education? Or What are your plans after high school and/or college graduation? Do you feel there are opportunities to stay in the Community after graduation?

- Want to live in a bigger city, more opportunities
- Want a Summer home here
- It depends on what I want to do and what my career is. I wouldn't want to have to drive far to go to work
- -Not enough close by jobs- not wanting to have to travel far.
- If more jobs, would love to live here and raise a family, but seen as too inconvenient

- Difficult to work remotely; Poor Internet, Wifi, Cell phones. Not enough technology for them to be working how they should. (better infrastructure)
- Would visit in the summer
 - Housing is very expensive

5. What Job/Career would keep them in Pentwater after graduation from high school, trades or college?

- Veterinarian
- Psychology
- Automotive
- Medical field