

News Release
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 16, 2014

Media Contact: **Scott Gest**
Regional Planner
(231) 929-5091
scottgest@nwm.cog.mi.us



Survey Looks at Visual Preferences for Future Development in Northwest Michigan

TRAVERSE CITY, MI—Citizens of Charlevoix, Emmet, Manistee, and Missaukee counties are being asked to provide information about what they would like their developed communities to look like in the future by taking the Framework For Our Future Visual Preference Survey. The online survey includes photographs and questions about preferred types and designs of development, including housing, commercial, and public spaces.

“Just as the natural landscape of northern Michigan creates a place we are all drawn to, so can the built environment,” said Scott Gest, a regional planner at the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments. “With changing preferences exhibited by today’s marketplace, creating unique and vibrant places is increasingly critical to laying the framework for successful communities.”

Survey participants will be asked to view a variety of photographs of different kinds of developed communities and indicate the qualities they like and dislike, and whether that kind of development is appropriate for their community. The survey includes images and questions about residential and commercial buildings, streetscapes, and public spaces.

“Without a doubt our region is classified as rural; however, more urban type development patterns have existed in our larger villages and cities since their inception in the late 1800s”, said Matt McCauley, director of regional planning and community development at the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments. “It’s these development patterns that give many of our communities their charm and economic vitality.”

(MORE)

Survey responses will be used in the development of Framework For Our Future: A Regional Prosperity Plan for Northwest Michigan, being developed as part of Governor Snyder's statewide Regional Prosperity Initiative. Framework For Our Future is a regional planning process for the 10 county northwest Michigan region of Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Grand Traverse, Manistee, Missaukee, and Wexford counties. This resource will provide information, tools, and step-by-step action guides for local governments, business leaders, nonprofits, and other organizations seeking resources for communities wishing to connect to larger, more regional goals. The NWMCOG's Regional Prosperity Plan is not a state mandate and does not supersede any local government plans or decision-making.

Responses to the survey will be analyzed with results summarized by county and will add to the collection of previous visual preference survey reports conducted for Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, and Wexford counties.

The Framework For Our Future visual preference survey is available online at: nwm.org/rpi.

#

NOTE to Media: Images are oftentimes available upon request by e-mailing Tom White at tomwhite@nwm.cog.mi.us and stating preferences for resolution (300 dpi?), file format (.tif? .jpg?) and file size (1MB or less?). Or, phone (231) 929-5044. Check our online Media Room at: nwm.org/media

Founded in 1974, the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments (NWMCOG) facilitates and manages various programs and services for the 10-county region. These programs include Northwest Michigan Works, YouthBuild, Small Business Development Center, Procurement Technical Assistance Center, various business services, and many different regional planning initiatives in response to our communities' requests and needs. You will see the broad spectrum of workforce, business and community services NWMCOG offers if you visit our web site, nwm.org

NWMCOG's member counties are: Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, and Wexford.