The American Institute of Architects:
SDAT Program

Northeast Michigan

Prepared by:
AIA Center for Communities by Design

Center for Communities by Design
The AIA’s Center for Communities by Design is a catalyst, convener, and source of information that helps AIA members work with citizens and other stakeholders to envision and create more livable, healthy, safe, and sustainable communities.

SDAT
Sustainable Design Assessment Team

- SDATs bring a team of experts to work with community decision-makers.
- The SDAT program provides broad assessments to help frame future policies or design solutions in the context of sustainability and help communities plan the first steps of implementation.
Program Principles

- Multidisciplinary expertise
- Objectivity
- Community participation

Sustainability
Building a community on principles of equality, respect for the environment and a strong economy, not just for today, but for your grandchildren’s children.
Community SWOT Analysis

Strengths
Weaknesses
Opportunities
Threats

A technique for collecting qualitative information about current conditions and future potentials.

SWOT Evaluation Approach

• Each Element is evaluated with respect to three conditions:
  – Community
  – Environment
  – Economy

• All responses were tabulated, and then ranked in terms of importance.
• Only responses that received at least one vote as "most important" are listed here
• Similar responses have been combined for clarity
Community SWOT Analysis

**Strengths - Community**

**Characteristics**
- Quality of life (4)
- History (3)
- Heritage/Culture (2)
- No Traffic (1)
- Safety/lack of people (1)
- Sense of Community (1)
- Walkable Community (1)
- Lack of Regulation (1)

**Facilities**
- Skate Parks (2)
- Community College (1)
- Airport (1)
  - Schools – primary, secondary, ACC (2)
  - Library (2)
  - Northern Lights Arena (2)
**Strengths - Environment**

*Natural Resources*
- Clean Water/Air/Rivers/Lake (14)
- Woods/Forests/Water (11)
- Natural Resources (12)
- Beauty of nature (6)
- Public Waterfront (1)

**Strengths - Environment**

*Recreation*
- Recreational Opportunities (6)
- Marine Sanctuary (1)
- Scuba diving (1)
- Boating (3)
- Fishing (2)

**Strengths - Economy**

- Agriculture (3)
**Weaknesses - Community**

**Characteristics**
- Not a destination (2)
- “Penned in” - too many people (2)
- Declining School Population (2)
- No technical infrastructure – internet cable (2)
- Infrastructure (1)

**Attitudes**
- Resistance (fear) of change (5)
- Negativity (2)
- Public awareness of strengths and use (1)

**Programs & Opportunities**
- Lack of higher education opportunities (3)
- Night life is lacking/limited (2)
- Culture – limited opportunities (1)
Weaknesses - Environment

- TB in deer herd / quarantine (4)
- Enforcement of (alleged) park abuses (2)

Weaknesses - Economy

- Lack of family supporting jobs, esp. for young people (8)
- Undeveloped tourist destination (7)
- Lafarge and other industry on the shore (5)
- Unemployment (5)
- Fishery decline (4)
- Lack of Opportunities for Young People (3)
- Lack of Jobs (2)
- Low income/wages (2)
- Corporate involvement is Declining (1)
- Need Medical Service/Community (1)

Opportunities - Community

- Develop Tourist Attractions - Existing plus Cultural Identity (5)
- Local Interest in Sustaining Quality of Life (4)
- NOAA & Sanctuary (3)
- Maritime Heritage (2)
- Cruise ship (2)
- 4-season tourism development (not just for summer) (2)
- East Side does not have same Development as West Side of State (2)
- People are the “Eyes” of Enforcement (1)
- Senior related service and housing (1)
- Entrepreneurial spirit (1)
- Amusement - Water Park (1)
- Bike path @ Squee Bay (1)
- Tourism outreach (1)
Opportunities - Environment

- Outdoor Sports (11)
- Eco-Tourism (4)
- Undeveloped shoreline (3)
- Attract “serious” outdoor people – NOT RV people (2)
- Opportunity to explore (1)
- State Park Planning Process (1)
- More use of public lands (1)

Opportunities - Economy

- Value added Agricultural products (5)
- Agro-Tourism (4)
- Retirees bring skills and experience- connect with young people/business entrepreneurs (3)
- Industry based on regional resources (3)
- Brochures for marketing (graphics project) (2)
- Develop State lands - work with local government (2)
- Affordable Housing to fill (2)
- Using Deep water ports (1)

Threats - Community

- Lack of regional cooperation (6)
- Drug / alcohol problems among young people (6)
- Lack of political clout (3)
- Not being selective with development (2)
- Complacency (2)
- Changes in Retail that don’t support downtown (1)
- TV/ video / computers / internet (1)
- Declining school enrollment (declining population) (1)
Threats - Environment

• Invasive Species (4)
• Lake levels/ quality (1)

Threats - Economy

• Michigan Economy (10)
• Mis-Development (WalMart, privatizing the waterfront) (9)
• Lack of Influence and Input in Land Management (8)
• Lack of Government Funding (6)
• Corporations – Big Business (6)
• Fuel prices (3)

Strengths

• Community (18)
• Environment (52)
• Economy (3)
Weaknesses

- Community (23)
- Environment (6)
- Economy (38)

Opportunities

- Community (26)
- Environment (23)
- Economy (22)

Threats

- Community (22)
- Environment (5)
- Economy (42)
Past and Current Planning

- US Corridor 23 Sunrise Side corridor study
- Huron Greenways inventory
- Northeast Michigan Integrated Assessment
- Thunder Bay sanctuary management plan

Integrated Assessment
Policy Question

How can coastal access be designed, in a regional context, for sustainable tourism that stimulates economic development while maintaining the integrity of natural and cultural resources, and quality of life?

A Sustainable Vision

- Build on community assets
  - Lake Huron/Thunder Bay
  - Natural resources
  - Pastoral landscape
  - Unique character—Not YET anywhere USA
  - City and village centers
A Sustainable Vision

• Natural-resources based community
• Quality of life
• Quality jobs– sustainable niches
• A supporting landscape

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A Sustainable Vision

• Preserve sensitive lands
• Keep working landscapes productive
• Limited development on US 23
• Enhanced village and city centers

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Economic Prosperity

• Jobs
  – Living wages
• Identify economic niche
  – High economic multipliers
  – Match local resources
  – Economic diversity
  – SMALL growth make huge differences
• Financial AND human resources
Jobs

- Most investment from local players
- Business calling – what do you need?
Economic Niche

TOURISM

Government, 16.8%

Services, 24.9%

Manufacturing, 12.2%

Construction 6.4%

Fishing & Mining 6.1%

Ag Services, Forestry, Retail, 19%

Finance, Insurance & Real Estate, 6.3%

Transportation & Public Utilities, 3.9%

Services, 24.9%

TOURISM

Market Niches and Economic Diversity

• "Cool" Cities and Villages
• Natural Resource extraction
• Manufacturing
• Local business
• Tourism
• Sustainable enterprise/alternative energy
• Sustainable agriculture

Harrisville "cool" village

• Bed and Breakfast
• Equipment rentals
• Unique character
• Focus IN village/city center
• IN existing businesses and homes
Rogers City “cool” city
- Bed and Breakfast
- Equipment rentals
- Focus IN village/city center
- IN existing businesses and homes

Alpena “Cool” City
- Continue downtown efforts
- Focus on existing business
- River, History, Uniqueness

Natural Resources and Manufacturing
- Limestone and gypsum
- Rock product processing
- Manufacturing
- Logging and forest processing
- All PART of the mix
Tourism Niche Opportunities
- Local resources
- 25,000+ vehicle trips daily on I-75
- Access to major population centers
  - Especially for longer trips
- Can be sustainable
- Build on “cool” village/city centers
- Build local business NOT big box

Traffic Recorder Data (2005)
- Grand Rapids
- Detroit
- Saginaw
- Tawas City
- Alpena
- TBNMS&UP

Tourism Niche Limits
- Low wage jobs
- Jobs may not be filled locally
- High traffic
- Seasonal
- Change character of area
US 23 (I-75 loop) Heritage Route
- Hoeft State Park
- Existing Bike Path
- Harbor View – Quarry Overlook
- Rockport Boat Launch
- Thunder Bay
- Lighthouses

Sunrise Vacation
- Fishing/boating
- Sailing
- Diving-ship wrecks
- Canoe and kayaking
- Water sports
- Biking
- Wildlife Sanctuary
- Unique geological
- Snowmobiling
- Camping

Second or Retiree Home Niche
- Focus on city and village centers
- Focus on existing developed parcels
1. Design on a Human Scale
2. Provide Choices
3. Encourage Mixed-Use Development
4. Preserve Urban Centers
5. Vary Transportation Options
6. Build Vibrant Public Spaces
7. Create a Neighborhood Identity
8. Protect Environmental Resources
9. Conserve Landscapes
10. Design Matters

Urban Centers
- Quality of Life
- Continue Quality Retail & Foster Variety
  - Create a merchant association
  - Design Guidelines
  - Evaluate “Big-Box” Development
- Develop Downtown “identity”
  - Assess unique characteristics
  - Directional signage
  - Gateway for visitors

• Unique Identity
• Off-the-shelf
Unique Identity

National Marine Sanctuary as gateway
- Federal uniqueness to draw visitors
- Encourage sanctuary to serve as a gateway location for other visitor services

Tourism Infrastructure
- Where people spend money
Details matter

• What does the visitor see?

Identity-- Wayfinding

• Traffic Relationships
  • Bikes/skateboards & Pedestrians
  • MDOT Coordination
• Protect Existing Historic Assets
  • Generate tourism & community pride
  • Evaluate opportunities to establish a local historic district
  • Adopt Local Historic District Ordinance
  • Evaluate additional individual State and National Registration opportunities
  • Take advantage of existing Grants
  • Opportunity for State & Federal tax credits

Public Spaces
• Gathering Places that Create Community Pride & Foster Identity
  • City & Township Parks
  • Thunder Bay Marine Sanctuary
  • Farmer's Market
  • Marinas
  • Encourage Community to Engage
  • Utilize Existing Connections to Waterways & Lake Front

Protect Environmental Resources & Conserve Landscapes
Alternative Energy

- Includes: solar, wind, alternative fuels, biomass, combined heat & power.

Alternative Energy - Wind

- Current Status:
  - Michigan: Ranked 14th in the USA for energy production potential.
  - The Study Area, in the northeastern Lower Peninsula has a great ability to take advantage of this potential due to relatively flat topography, exposed coastal, and offshore areas.

Potential Actions:
- Use the Michigan Anemometer Loan Program - an initiative to further establish state wind data and promote wind power generation. (Application Mid-Summer).
- Create a Wind Energy Overlay District that identifies specific areas within an Agricultural District best situated for the development of wind energy facilities.
Alternative Energy - Solar

Potential Actions:
- Take advantage of existing facilities to learn about local solar potential.
  - Hillman Mill Project
- Take advantage of state and federal incentives for infrastructure improvements and demonstration projects.
  - Up to $2,000 for solar electric or solar hot water system

Alternative Energy - Efficiency

Potential Actions:
- Take advantage of other state and federal incentives
  - Federal incentive for consumers and/or homebuilders to get up to:
    - $200 for windows and/or storm windows
    - $500 for doors and/or storm doors
    - $500 for insulation or roofs
- Michigan incentive for $8,000 homebuilders grant for an Energy Star rated home. (Deadline in Dec.)

Sustainable Agriculture

- Includes: Creating systems that secure:
  - Production
  - Processing
  - Distribution
  - Storage
  - Food Security
- Currently – Majority of the agriculture is commodity crops, which is more difficult compete with due to proximity of the area.
Sustainable Agriculture

**Actions:**
- Expand Farm Markets
- Increase Local Purchasing
- Institutional Purchasing
- Medical Centers
- School Districts

**Potential Actions:**
- Resource Efficient
- Non traditional value-added.
  - Potatoes – Potato Chips, Vodka!
  - Beer / Soda

**Examples:**
- Ben & Jerry’s
- Nantucket Nectars
- Cherry Republic
- Bells Brewery

**Potential Actions:**
- Research holes on the ‘Farm to Plate’ path
- What products need intermediate processing, sorting, and/or cleaning
- Create cooperative enterprises
  - Storage
  - Distribution Networks
  - Fuel
  - Grain Elevator
  - Quick Freezers or Driers
Financial and Information Resources
- Low interest and high risk loans
- Workforce development grants
- Property/tenant match-ups
- Tax incentives
- Local bank and venture capital interest
- Community development corporation partners
- Broadband Internet in village/city centers

Human Resources
- Job training
- Business and financial counseling
- Alpena Community College partnerships

Sustainability IS Economic Prosperity
- Farmers’ Market money stays local and gets recycled locally
- Wal*Mart and big box money mostly leaves the community
Regional Land Use Master Plan

• Community Benefits:
  – Coordinated development plan for the region.
  – Coordinated zoning and land use ordinances for municipalities.
  – Coordinated utility and service plans.
  – Legal basis for fighting sprawl.

Regional Land Use Master Plan

• Process:
  – Develop cross municipality support for a regional plan that leads to a coordinated land use and zoning code for the region.
  – Analyze existing natural resources, ownership patterns, cultural amenities, infrastructure and development.
  – Develop land use types and associated actions.
Regional Land Use Master Plan

- Goals:
  - Focus development in cities/villages
  - Keep working landscapes productive
  - Preserve and enhance coastal access and views
  - Manage inland natural areas

Regional Land Use Master Plan

- Potential Regional Land Use Types:
  - Working Landscapes
    - Forested and Farm Land
  - Coastal Corridor
  - City/Village/Hamlet Centers
  - Sensitive Resources

Working Landscapes

- Includes: Prime farm lands and forested lands that are not sensitive resources.
Working Landscapes

• Potential Concepts:
  – Require low density of development with limited public services
  – Divest public owned lands that do not contribute to natural resource protection or recreational opportunities.
  – Maintain private ownership in farmsteads
  – Encourage managed forestry production

Coastal Corridor

• Includes: Areas adjacent to US 23 corridor – not including coastal resource lands.

• Potential Concepts:
  – Require low-density development with restrictions on % of development frontage
  – Provide limited public services
  – Require visual impact mitigation.
  – Preserve key views through development policies and potential public acquisition
Coastal Corridor

- US 23 Sunrise Side Coastal Highway Management Plan
- Start with:
  - Signage and wayfinding
  - Visual impact guidelines
  - Private and public lands
  - Work with land owners to promote guidelines
- Non-motorized activities
- Think about:
  - Infrastructure expansion
  - Fiber optics/internet/cable

City/Village Centers

- Includes: cities, villages, and hamlets
- Potential Concepts:
  - Encourage compact, mixed use development
  - Provide a high level of public services and amenities
  - Provide a mix of housing types
  - Develop as nodes along US 23 corridor
Sensitive Resources

• Includes: Wetlands, habitat corridors, and stream corridors.

Sensitive Resources

• Potential Concepts:
  – Provide regionally attractive recreation opportunities
  – Restrict future residential/commercial development
  – Encourage public acquisition
  – Encourage stewardship of private owned lands

Sensitive Resources

• State Land Management:
  – Focus Resources!
  – What areas need what facilities for who’s using them?
  – Manage land to specific user groups locally and regionally.
  – Manage lands to protect resources based on sensitivity.
Inter-O rganizational Communications

Local

State

Federal

SDAT Follow-Up

- 60 Days: SDAT Report delivered to the community
- Post-Visit to One Year: Conference Calls
- One Year Assessment