Initiating Sustainable Community Development Through Tourism
Sustainable Development

Environmental
Viable natural environment

Social
Nurturing Community

Economic
Sufficient Economy
Tourism Assessment Program

• To identify community tourism assets and obstacles

• To develop recommendations for tourism development

• To encourage community discussion of tourism goals and develop action strategies
PROCESS

• Recruit & coordinate local assessment team
  - 4 to 6 persons
  - Complete asset inventory
  - Coordinate local visit

• Community visit
  - Resource team observation

• Results & recommendations
  - Written report
  - Meeting

• Community action
Chisago County Tourism Profile

- 38th of 87 counties
- 44: Average age
- $74,550 – median income
- 56% - travel for leisure
- 21% - Day trips
- 60% - Shopping as #1 travel activity
Data

• Attractions inventory
• Community SWOT analysis
• Previous reports (7 major studies over 10 years)

• Visitor observations
  - History & Culture
  - Business
  - Infrastructure
  - Recreation
  - Government
  - Community attitude
Community SWOT Analysis

Strengths:
- Lakes
- Swedish heritage

Weaknesses:
- Lack of community cohesiveness
- Lack of food/lodging facilities

Opportunities:
- Swedish tour destination
- Proximity to the Twin Cities

Threats:
- Lack of community cooperation
- Traffic congestion
Conclusions

- Community development before tourism development
  - Develop sense of community investment
  - Hear diverse community voices
  - Collaborate with neighboring communities
  - Address Community leadership barriers
Conclusions

• Community infrastructure needs are a community priority

- Tourism secondary to highway realignment
- Existing projects should be completed
- Examine planning and zoning needs
- Continue working on lakeshore septic tank issues
Conclusions

- **Understand the Lindstrom tourism market**
  - Determine community meaning of “tourism”
  - Develop a viable tourism development strategy for the community
  - Examine available visitor data
Tourism Development Strategy (An “A to Z” list)

- Establish leadership group (4 recommendations)
- Develop Swedish connection (34)
- Develop capacity for additional food/lodging (6)
- Develop day trip market (7)
- Attract realigned Highway 8 travelers (4)
- Build community tourism awareness (5)
Actions: Leadership

- Tourism leadership group established
  - Chamber committee
- City manager actively involved behind the scenes
- Neighborhood issues discussions (Extension Leadership/Civic Engagement Educator)
Actions: Infrastructure

- Proposals for new lodging establishment (mid-price chain hotel) developed and bids being pursued by city EDA
- Swedish Immigrant hiking/biking trail project re-started (20 miles)
- City to purchase large tract of land (preserve as open space)
Actions: Swedish Connections

Invite/involve Swedish group tour guides in tourism development

Review/revise maps & information about Swedish-related sites
Implications

- Tourism needs to fit within a broader context
- Tourism needs community “champions”
- Tourism data is necessary but not sufficient
- All politics is local…..
Tourism Reality

• **Reality**: Lindstrom currently hosts tourists—from friends and family to the Swedish visitors wanting to see Swedish-related sites to people passing through town on their way to other locations

• **Challenge**: How to manage the visitor experience to the benefit of residents and business owners
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