



RURAL TOURISM ASSESSMENT

VILLAGE OF ROSCOMMON COMMUNITY DATA REPORT

Prepared By the MSU Extension RTA Team:
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Michigan State University Extension Rural Tourism Assessment

Phase 1: Planning and Asset Identification Workshop

Phase 1 serves as the foundational stage of the Rural Tourism Assessment (RTA) process. During this initial phase, held in workshop format facilitated by Michigan State University Extension, stakeholders identify assets and key metrics central to their tourism economy. Identified assets are prioritized by stakeholders which serve to support subsequent Phases. Additional steps are taken to generate specific questions stakeholders would like answered from First Impressions Tourism (FIT) assessment(s) conducted during and central to Phase 2.

Phase 2: (Data Collection and Analysis)

Phase 2 centers on gathering data generated through surveys and site visits using MSU Extensions FIT program. FIT provides valuable insights into the tourism experience from both first-time visitors and community perspectives generated in Phase 1. The collected data is then thoroughly analyzed to identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities related to rural tourism development in participating communities. Presentations are then generated for the purpose of sharing with community stakeholders offered a community forum setting as part of Phase 3.

Phase 3: Results Dissemination and Community Engagement

Approximately six months after completing Phase 2, Phase 3 commences. Results obtained from Phases 1 and 2 are merged and shared with stakeholders participating in the Rural Tourism Assessment. This phase also provides an opportunity for residents and community members to engage in discussions and provide feedback on the first-time visitor perspective, findings, fostering collaboration and shared decision-making.

Phase 4: Implementation Strategy Development and Visioning (Optional)

Although optional, Phase 4 consists of facilitated discussions with stakeholders around next steps and implementation strategies for communities participating in the entire Rural Tourism Assessment process. These discussions heavily focus on insights gathered directly from FIT assessments conducted during Phase 2 and shared during Phase 3. Tourism development models are applied, where and when necessary, to help guide discussions. Tailored strategies are developed to enhance the tourism experience based on visitor feedback and community priorities.

Rural Tourism Assessment – Roscommon County Summary

The [Roscommon County Economic Development Corporation](#) and [Michigan State University Extension](#) (MSUE) established a partnership in early 2023 to strengthen rural tourism across the county and three communities by capitalizing on stakeholder knowledge, input, and first-time visitor perspectives to the area.

- Following MSUE’s Rural Tourism Assessment format, Roscommon County along with Prudenville/Houghton Lake, St. Helen, and Village of Roscommon participated in the multi-phase effort.
- Phase 1 was conducted April 2023.
- Phase 2 was conducted September – October 2023.
- Phase 3 was completed May 2024.
- At the time of drafting this summary, Phase 4 is being planned for Fall 2024.

As part of RTA, Phase 2 consists of a comprehensive FIT assessment in and with participating partners. In this effort, Roscommon County and the three identified communities received five first-time visitors at separate times between September and October 2023.

All five visitors spent three nights, four days visiting various stakeholder identified tourism assets from Phase 1, as well as a wide range of self-identified tourism assets while on site. A total of 15 nights were spent in the county: eight nights in hotels, four nights in motels, two nights camping, and one night in a bed & breakfast.

Visitor Profiles:

- 1 Female from Generation X visited with her spouse between Friday–Monday.
- 1 Male from Generation X visited alone between Tues–Friday.
- 3 Males from Millennial Generation visited alone between Thurs–Sunday.
- All visitors are married residents of either Upper or Lower Peninsula, MI, and are employees of Michigan State University Extension with various expertise.

Visitor Diverse Personal Interests:

- Artists, (Mountain) Bike Rider(s), Birder(s), Camper(s), Foodie, Hiker(s), Paddler(s), Nature and Outdoor Enthusiast(s), Trail Enthusiast(s), Water Lover, Trip Planners, and Avid/World Travelers.

Introduction to First Impression Tourism Assessments (FIT)

The First Impressions (FI) program was developed in 1991 by the University of Wisconsin Extension to help communities learn about their existing strengths and weaknesses as seen through the eyes of first-time visitors. The FI program has been used to help communities across the U.S. and Canada inform economic initiatives or further develop community goals and has been modified over the years by various Extension services based on different needs. Michigan State University (MSU) Extension adapted this program via a multi-state grant provided by the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development in 2014. MSU Extension's First Impressions Tourism Assessments (FIT) is a unique version of FI for our state and, since inception in 2016,

What is FIT?

FIT is a comprehensive community assessment conducted by unannounced visitors in a host community. FIT involves developing leaders, assessing the host community, sharing results in forum open to all, and providing suggestions to advance community-driven tourism. Overall, FIT helps participating communities learn about their strengths and weaknesses through the eyes of first-time visitors. Since inception, FIT has empowered leaders and stakeholders to develop action plans to improve their communities based on new perspectives and suggestions from first-time visitors. These action plans are proven to be the catalysts needed to launch and expand small town tourism development across Michigan. For more information on FIT, please visit - https://www.canr.msu.edu/tourism_first_impressions/index

Additional FIT Resources

Please visit the FIT Resources Below to learn more about the program

- FIT - [How it Works](#)
- FIT - [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- FIT - [Building a Community Leadership Team for FIT](#)
- A Summary of Community Actions and Success from FIT - [Downloadable Report](#)



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First Impressions Tourism Assessment
Village of Roscommon
June 2024



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MSU Extension
First Impressions: Assessing Your Community for Tourism

How It Works | History | Community Reports | Apply | Resources | Frequently Asked Questions

A comprehensive community assessment conducted by unannounced visitors in a host community Overall, FIT helps communities learn about their strengths and weaknesses through the eyes of first-time visitors.

How It Works | Apply

Results from this assessment were shared with the Roscommon community on May 22, 2024. Their FIT assessment was one of four assessments part of the MSU Extension's Rural Tourism Assessment program for Roscommon County.



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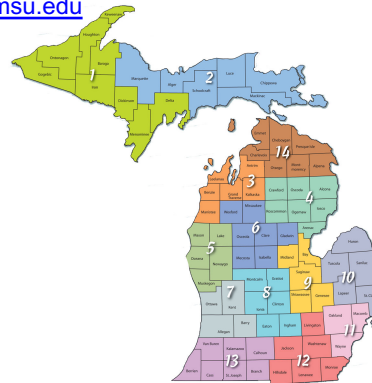
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District 2



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Helping people to improve their lives through an educational process that applies knowledge to critical issues, needs and opportunities.




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U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442;
email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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correo postal:
U.S. Department of Agriculture
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fax: (833) 256-1665 o (202) 690-7442;
correo electrónico:
program.intake@usda.gov.

Esta institución ofrece igualdad de oportunidades.

Rural Tourism Assessment

- **Phase 1 Q2-2023**
 - Tourism Asset ID Workshop / April 12, 2023
- **Phase 2 Q3-Q4 2023**
 - FIT Assessment
 - Roscommon County,
 - Prudenville/Houghton, St. Helen, and Village of Roscommon
 - Aggregating results and reports
- **Phase 3 – Q1-Q2 2024**
 - Roscommon County Forum – May 1st
 - Prudenville/Houghton, St Helen, and Village of Roscommon



Phase 1: Roscommon County & Community Tourism Asset Identification Workshop



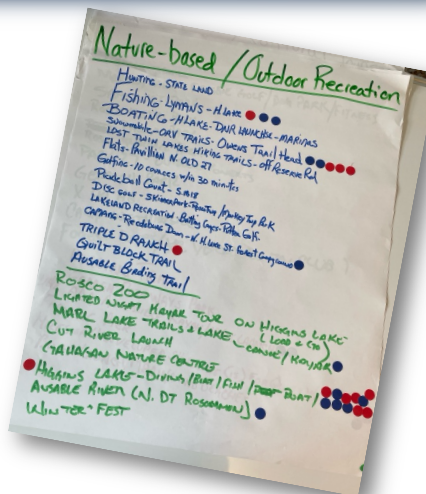
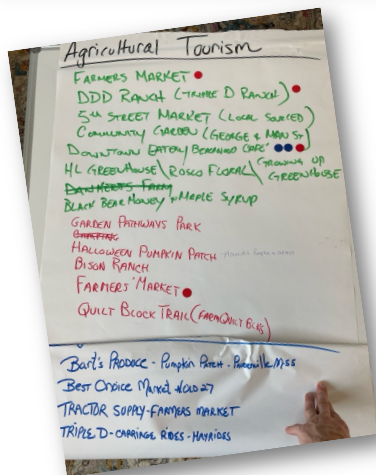
Phase 1: Tourism Asset Identification Workshop

Phase 1 Objectives:

- Bring stakeholders across county/communities into a collective asset identification process
- To provide leaders/stakeholders the opportunity to pre-select and prioritize their tourism assets
- To collect additional stakeholder input for the purpose of generating county visioning questions for First Impressions Tourism (FIT) assessment



RTA Phase 1 – Prioritizing Tourism Assets



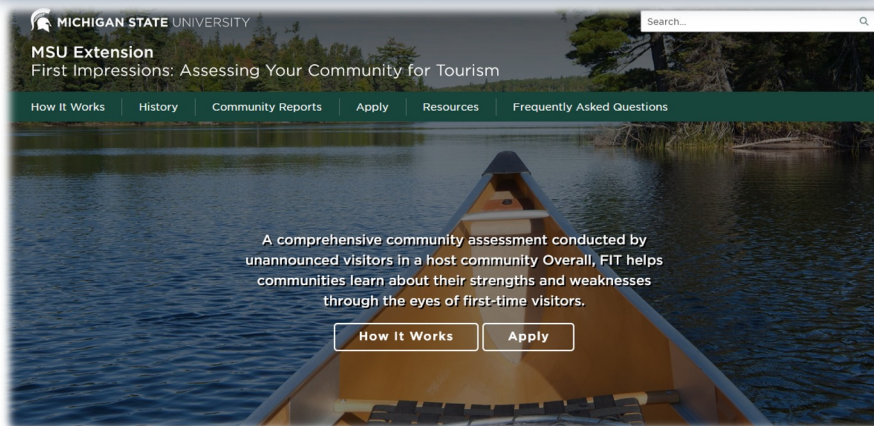
RTA Phase 1 – Collective Visioning Exercise

What is something you would like to know about your County from a (first-time) visitor perspective?




Phase 2:

- First Impressions Tourism (FIT) Assessments



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FIRST IMPRESSIONS:
Assessing your community for tourism (FIT)



msue.anr.msu.edu

PURPOSE


FIT is a comprehensive community assessment conducted by unannounced visitors in a host community positioned to lead development based on the program results. FIT involves developing community leadership, assessing the host community, sharing the results in a community forum open to all, and providing suggestions to drive community action. Overall, FIT helps communities learn about their strengths and weaknesses through the eyes of first-time visitors.



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FIT communities will:

- Learn about their assets and opportunities from first-time visitors.
- Strengthen an existing cohort of leaders and residents by providing them an opportunity to organize on the basis of valuable feedback about their community.
- Develop a list of action items for community improvement.
- Integrate action items into community plans.
- Take action on community improvements and strengthen their image.
- Improve community well-being and quality of life for residents and visitors.




First Impressions:
Assessing your community for tourism (FIT)

The results of FIT can:

- Spawn **local leadership**.
- Strengthen **community vitality**.
- Form the basis for **future development**.

First Impressions: Assessing your community for tourism (FIT), Michigan State University Extension
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MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY Extension **Things to know...**



- Every community gets visitors
- We don't rank or compare communities
- Balance of positives & negatives
- Information from new perspectives
- Not meant to shame
- Repeated data emphasize importance

First Impressions: Assessing your community for tourism (FIT), Michigan State University Extension
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First Impressions Tourism!
Who visited our community?
When did they visit?



• **5 Visitor Profiles:**

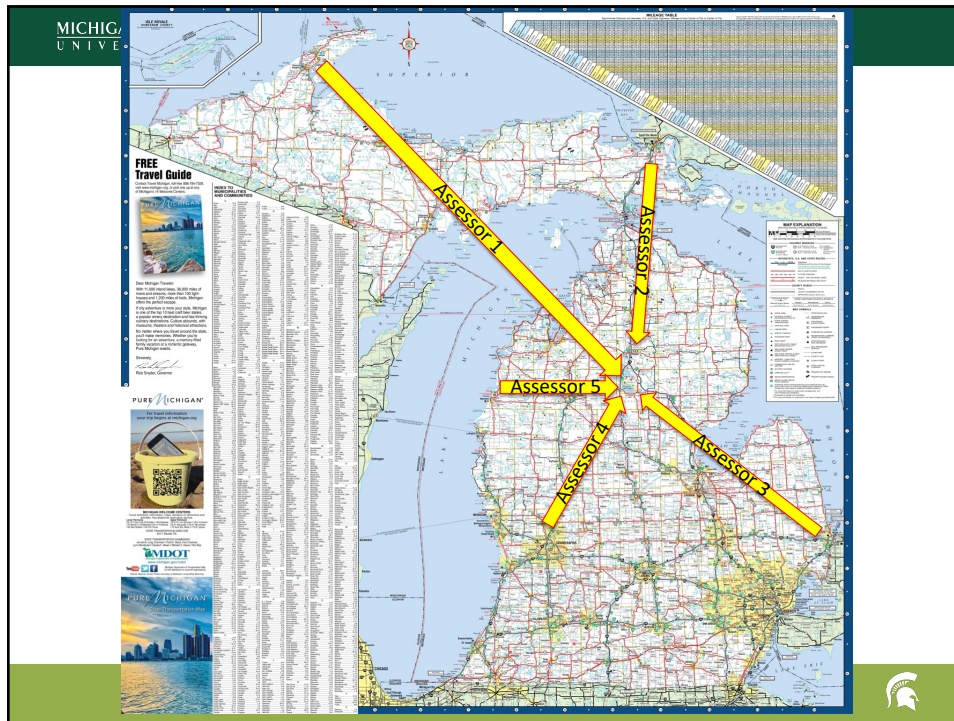
- 1 Female
- 4 Male
- Generations:
 - 3 Millennials
 - 2 Gen X
- Visited alone - 4
- Visited with spouse – 1
- All long-term residents of MI
 - Life
 - 10+ years



• **Assessors also identified as-**

- Non-parents, Parents
- Artists, Bike riders, Birder, Campers,
- Foodies, Local Food Fan,
- Hikers, Paddlers
- Nature & Outdoor Enthusiasts,
- All Trails Enthusiasts
- Water Lovers
- Map readers, Trip planners, Avid travelers
- Planners, Arts Executive, Tourism Faculty, Community Development Faculty





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The Visit (aka Assessments)

- Pre-research 2-4+ Hours
- 3 nights / 4 days in September
 - 1 Tues - Friday
 - 3 Thurs - Sunday
 - 1 Friday - Monday

Accommodation – 15 nights

- 8 nights - Hotels
- 4 nights - Motels
- 2 nights - Camping
- 1 night - B&B

RTA Roscommon | FALL 2023 | MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

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FIT - Results
3 Sections

- Pre-Visit
 - Web Presence & Marketing / Initial Impressions
- The Visit
 - Our Experiences / First Impressions & Data Sets
- Post-Visit
 - Reflections
 - Strengths, Challenges, and Opportunities


LAPEER FIT REPORT | SUMER 2023 | MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION



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Most helpful website and why?

- Higgins Lake-Roscommon Chamber
 - Had the most information available about local businesses and things to do in the area for visitors.
- Visit Houghton Lake
 - Good overview of everything a visitor might need.



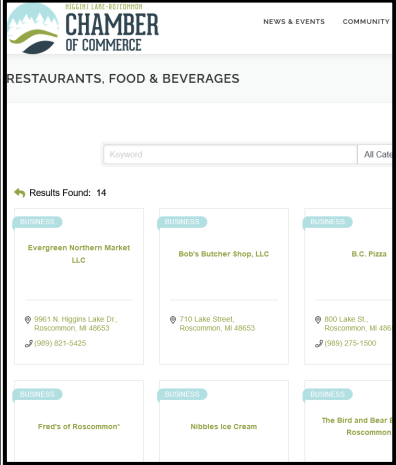
HIGGINS LAKE-ROSCOMMON
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

NEWS & EVENTS COMMUNITY VISITORS MEMBERS ABOUT JOIN



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What additional info would be beneficial?



- Higgins Lake-Roscommon Chamber
 - This website could have included more information about the businesses (pictures, reviews, etc.). Also more information that is geared towards visitors and tourists
 - More pictures.
- Visit Houghton Lake
 - Breakout by community as well as by attraction category.

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Most helpful website statistics -

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The information was well presented.	0	2	2	1
Web pages were visually appealing.	0	2	2	1
I noticed typographical errors.	2	2	1	0
It was easy to find information on the website	0	1	3	1
The information was useful.	0	1	3	1
More information is needed on this site.	0	1	2	2

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PURE MICHIGAN




Roscommon

South Higgins Lake State Park, located in Roscommon, is situated on one mile of shoreline along Higgins Lake, boasts one of the largest Michigan state park campgrounds with pet friendly beach.

For more information:
Houghton Lake Area Tourism and Convention Bureau
West Michigan Tourist Association

Pure Michigan could use brushing up. Lead with the downtown and a more exciting photo?

Also, like St. Helen, links to WMTA which does not serve Roscommon County.





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First 5-minute impressions

- The village of Roscommon feels like a nice little village. Nice little downtown with many storefronts and shops, there were people walking around and a lot of traffic in a good way. Bustling farmers market visible upon entering the community on a Saturday morning. This looked like a place where I would want to park my car and walk around to see all the shops and things.

- What a cute and refreshing little town! Look at the attention to detail with the hanging baskets and nice side walks. Wow what a peaceful little village.



MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension **First 5-minute impressions –**



- *Very nice little downtown, moreso than I was expecting with quality streetscaping and street furniture. It was easy to find some visitor information lots of stuff was open, with several interesting little stores. Strong food selection by small town Michigan standards. This is definitely a place I would stop and have a look around.*
- I visited twice and was glad to see the community as healthy on the surface as could be. I enjoyed seeing the banners hanging and gateway signage as well. It was an easy community to navigate and enjoy outside of the car.



MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension **First 5-minute impressions –**

- Roscommon is a very tidy community with great attention to detail. I noticed how well kept the businesses were and landscaping was impressive (including hanging baskets in town). The parks, river, and old railroad station were all well kept. I was able to find visitor information quickly in front of the Roscommon Village Hall.



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Top 4 reasons visitors come to Roscommon

Shop
Visit friends and family
In transit to somewhere else
Be in nature
Outdoor recreation
Relax
Visit historical sites
Engage in business/professional activities
Specific activity this community has to offer
Experience a unique culture
Get away from people
Get entertained/for entertainment
Engage in sports activities
Engage in religious activities
Other Reason
Agritourism opportunities








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Community Attributes

Safety and security	15
Customer service	12
Cleanliness	12
Hospitality and friendliness	9
Other	9
Variety of things to do	3
Variety of shopping options	3
Directional signage	3
Variety of restaurants	0
Variety of accommodations	0

Community Attributes –

- *I think this community is just doing everything well. Customer service is great, there is a lot to do (train museum, local museum, farmers market, etc.). They have clearly put a lot of effort into the downtown and it really shows. My favorite part of Roscommon County by far.*



- Not very many lodging options right in the community itself or in the surrounding area. Basically motels, camping or house/cabin rentals. Could use a nice Bed and Breakfast or more diversity of lodging options. Same is true with variety of restaurants, food was good but lacked many diverse options. Felt very welcome and safe when walking around the community. Most of the shop owners were attentive and friendly even if I wasn't buying anything and happily answered by questions.



Community Attributes –

- Such wonderful people all very friendly and willing to engage. Also the cleanest and most well kept infrastructure in the county.
- I didn't really have any POOR rankings per se as I found the community to offer fairly good services that are within reason.

- The only accommodations in Roscommon village, walking distance to town, looked pretty sketchy online. I was relieved that I did not book a night there after arriving in town. Investment in this hotel would be welcomed.



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Community Infrastructure



Sidewalks/Walk-ways	14
Parking	14
Pedestrian travel infrastructure	13
Benches/Seating options	12
Waste receptacles	11
Cell Phone Service	11
Public restrooms	10
Recycling receptacles	8
Bicycle travel infrastructure	7
Water fountains	5
Wifi	5



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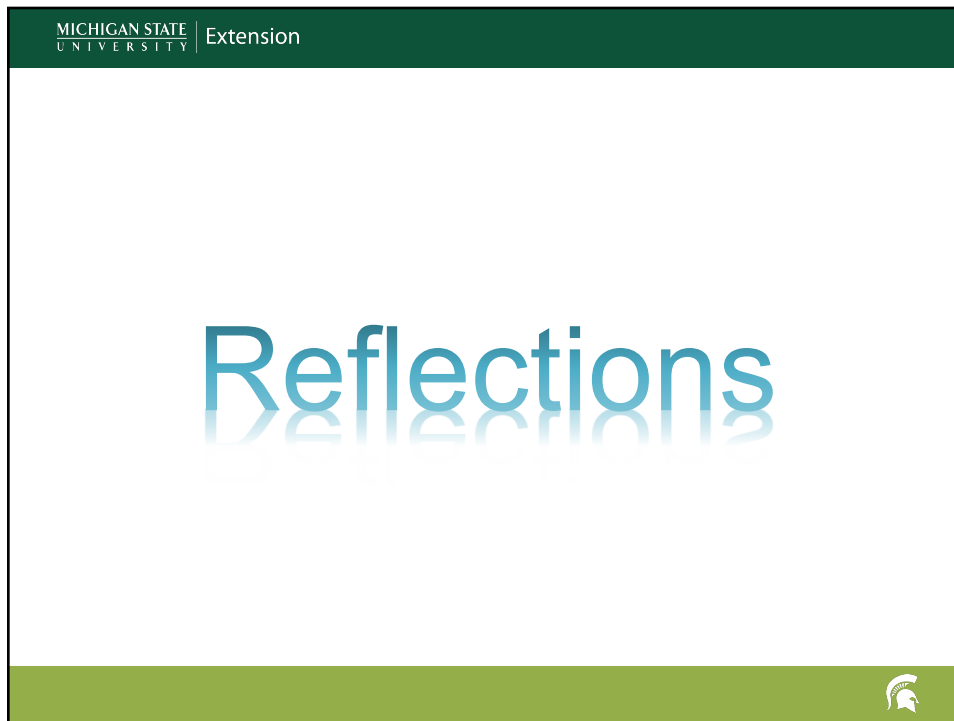
Community Infrastructure-

- I don't recall seeing Recycling receptacles, but the might have existed. Don't recall seeing water fountains. I thought the pedestrian infrastructure was excellent-- very attractive public art, flags, businesses had nice plantings and displays out front.
- I didn't see or experience a water fountain in the community and the only public restroom was a pit toilet that was next to a riverside park, it was okay. I didn't experience or try to find public wifi in the community but had adequate cell phone coverage.
- Again, everything is pretty great. I didn't notice bike infrastructure per se but it seems like a fairly relaxed place to ride in general.






MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY Extension		Downtown Business Area
There are areas of green space	15	
Hanging baskets are displayed on the exterior of businesses	15	
Parking charges are reasonable	15	
There are walker/biker friendly signs	14	
The grounds have been landscaped with flowers, trees, shrubs, and bushes	14	
Flags/banners are displayed on the exterior of businesses	14	
Walking sidewalks are well maintained	14	
Parking is centrally located	14	
There is pedestrian traffic (foot and bike)	14	
This is a welcoming place	14	
Parking is secure	13	
The main downtown business area is a major tourist draw for the area	13	
Customers are greeted warmly when they walk through the door	12	
There is a gateway point to enter/leave town (piece of art, mural, sign, etc.)	12	
The main downtown business area feels distinct or special	12	
Vehicle traffic is managed to encourage pedestrian movement, via foot or bike	11	
The downtown business area is handicapped accessible	11	
There is a mix of ages	9	
Bike lanes exist on roadways	7	
There is a mix of ethnic groups	3	

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- What did you do?
- Where did you go?



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Assets Visited – Roscommon

✓ Cut River Grille	✓ Northern Candles and Soap
✓ Michigan State Firemen’s Memorial	✓ Roscommon Village Market
✓ North Winds Lodge at Higgins Lake	✓ Au Sable River Center
✓ N Higgins Lake SP (Crawford County)	✓ Art-Y-Facts
✓ Roscommon Area District Library	✓ Village Outfitters
✓ Marl Lake Trails	✓ Wallace Park
✓ Michigan Firemen’s Memorial Festival	✓ Addie Beth’s Clothing
✓ CCC Museum (Crawford County)	✓ Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve
✓ The Bird and The Bear Bakery	✓ Tisdale Triangle Pathway
✓ Beechwood Cafe	✓ Uncommonly Goods
✓ Made Up North	✓ Cross Country Ski Headquarters
✓ The Butcher’s Wife Market	✓ St. Vincent DePaul
✓ Roscommon Historic Model Train Museum	✓ Markey Memorial Park and Disc Golf Course
✓ S. Higgins Lake State Park	✓ S. Gerrish Township Park



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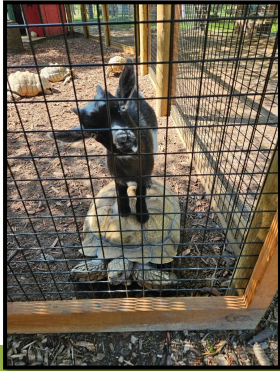
Assets Visited – Roscommon – ID'd in Phase 1

<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Cut River Grille✓ Michigan State Firemen's Memorial✓ North Winds Lodge at Higgins Lake✓ N Higgins Lake SP (Crawford County)✓ Roscommon Area District Library✓ Marl Lake Trails✓ Michigan Firemen's Memorial Festival✓ CCC Museum (Crawford County)✓ The Bird and The Bear Bakery✓ Beechwood Cafe✓ Made Up North✓ The Butcher's Wife Market✓ Roscommon Historic Model Train Museum✓ S. Higgins Lake State Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Northern Candles and Soap✓ Roscommon Village Market✓ Au Sable River Center✓ Art-Y-Facts✓ Village Outfitters✓ Wallace Park✓ Addie Beth's Clothing✓ Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve✓ Tisdale Triangle Pathway✓ Uncommonly Goods✓ Cross Country Ski Headquarters✓ St. Vincent DePaul✓ Markey Memorial Park and Disc Golf Course✓ S. Gerrish Township Park
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Feeling of being welcomed – 100% said Yes!

- Felt welcomed in each shop and restaurant that I visited
- By the people and atmosphere
- Everyone was great.



- Felt like visitors were/are welcomed!



What will you remember most six months from now?



- Quaint but happening feel of the downtown with lots of shopping/retail options.
- How peaceful and cute.
- Just the overall great vibes in the community, it's a fun little place where you want to hang around.
- Breakfast at the Beechwood, how orderly and well kept the village is, a strong sense of community pride (like the miniature railroad next to the kid's railroad at the Rotary Park/Farmers Market)
- This was the more attractive community that clearly caters to tourism and visitors in a more organized manner. I will also remember the snowmobiling trail signs behind the community/north of that could be leveraged for additional trail usage.



Are there specialty shops, attractions or assets that would bring you back to visit? 100% YES!

Farmers Market, Canoeing on the South Branch of the Ausable, Cross Country Ski Headquarters

I would come here again just for the Beachwood. Also the nature preserve. Also to try paddling on this part of the AuSable river. Also for cross country skiing. This is a place I might consider moving to some day if I ever decided to relocate!

I would definitely come back for a day in the downtown, especially if there was an event to draw me in.

Beechwood Cafe, X Country Headquarters

Butchers Wife, Made Up North, Uncommon Goods, XC Ski Headquarters



If you could change one or two reasonable things about this community, what would it be?



Have a brewery, some more recreation infrastructure (river access in town, bike lanes and trails connecting to state parks and lakes)

More lodging options right in the downtown would be great. Marketing to really set Roscommon apart from HL/Prudenville and build its own identity as a destination/place worth getting off I75 to visit.

Would love to see a hotel or Air BnB campus of glampers (old campers) or yurts as an option in or near the village of Roscommon.

I suppose I would add a boutique hotel or incorporate some MTB trails off the community center and back that up with a brewery. It could really attract clientele of that sort if some infrastructure like that existed.



What additional activities/facilities/services would you suggest to be offered in this community?

- They could use an additional restaurant like a brewery or location that serves as a community gathering spot as well as a restaurant, perhaps with some live music options as well.
- A handicap accessible canoe/kayak launch on the river in downtown.
- More hiking and bike trails would add to the already great resources.
- Just keep working on events to draw people in and leverage those downtown assets.
- More restaurant variety if practical.
- A dedicated visitor's center.
- I would like to know more about options for floating the S. Branch on a SUP-- that piece of information wasn't that accessible. I also noticed there was a guiding service near E. Higgins Lake-- was curious about multi-day expeditions including hiking/paddling.
- I would like to see some suggestions for itineraries for 1-3 night stays, etc. This could be said as well about the entire county tourism effort, but VR would offer a great starting point for that.



30,000 Foot Suggestions

- Elevate “The Loop” concept as advertised on 75N
- Get communities to buy into it as a regional county effort
- Use concept to develop 1-, 2-, and 3-day+ itineraries
- Use itineraries to develop new ideas, themes, cuisines
- Link communities together visually by story, trails, history, distances, activities, etc.



Recreation

- Increase mountain bike and non-motorized trail infrastructure
- Mountain bike trails would add another layer of outdoor rec.
- More water access wherever possible.
- Consider adding recreational opportunities, like SUP, to suite of possibilities-- increase YouTube presence for those sports
- Add lodging options, particularly in the downtown area. Explore glamping.



Final thoughts...

- To really emphasize, the community has done a great job and I think should work to build its own identity as a small town destination on its own merits. This is not to advocate for "breaking away" from the rest of the county in terms of marketing, but just more supplemental work to build its own brand and draw pass-thru traffic off I75. I probably visited on a really "good day" for a visit but even so, there is a lot of like here!
- The Farmers market was so big with so many vendors, it seemed apparent that the village is a center serving a much larger community including all E. Higgins Lake/Higgins Lake and surrounding areas.
- Of the three communities assessed in Roscommon County, The Village of Roscommon seemed to have the most potential in terms of community level changes to impact the attractiveness and visitor experience in the community.

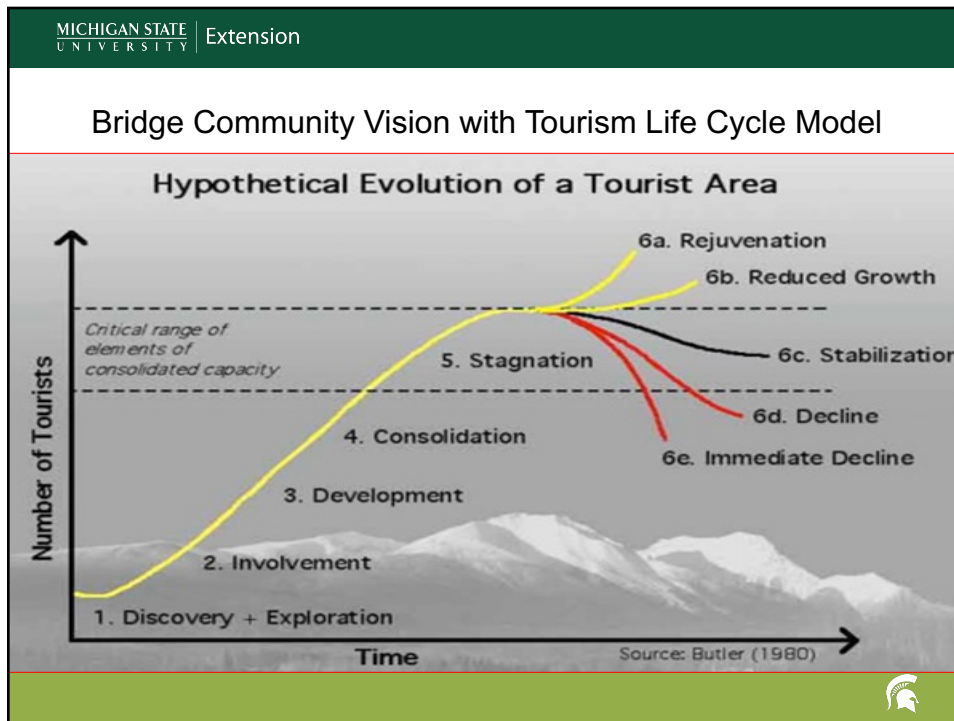


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Key Recommendations

- Market the Village as its own tourism brand within the county.
- Economic Development: Strategies to add downtown lodging.
 - e.g.: 3one3 Boutique Hotel, Alma
- Build out bicycle infrastructure and connectivity in the village and area, especially between outdoor rec attractions.
- Continue to focus on events as a driver of foot traffic and spending in the Village.
- Add variety to dining options.

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- Communities are using FIT to -
 - Build capacity
 - Strengthen their image, assets, and tourism/recreation opportunities
 - Update master and/or recreation plans
 - Spawn new ideas and leadership
 - Increase grant applications to -
 - DNR, Community Foundations, USDA Rural Development
 - Organize for state agency programs, such as
 - Redevelopment Ready Certification (RRC)
 - Main Street Programs



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First Impressions: Assessing your community for tourism (FIT), Michigan State University Extension
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Thank you!

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Summary of MSU Extension tourism development programs

The following programs are available statewide to guide decision making around tourism development and implementation.

Understanding Tourism for Michigan Communities (UTMC)

This interactive workshop highlights tourism industry statistics and exposes communities to trends and travelers' interests, as well as a number of niche tourism markets. UTMC is specifically designed to promote regional synergies, leadership, and tourism product development. <https://www.canr.msu.edu/tourism/programs/understanding-tourism-for-michigan-communities>

Planning for Tourism-Preventing Destination Decline

This workshop walks communities through a planning process and uses life-cycle models to explore where communities may be in establishing themselves as tourism destinations. Additional tools will be employed to determine their readiness, identify next steps for action and explore engagement strategies for coalition building within the community. <https://www.canr.msu.edu/tourism/programs/planning-for-tourism>

First Impressions Tourism (FIT) Assessments

FIT is a comprehensive community assessment conducted by unannounced visitors in a host community positioned to lead development based on the program results. FIT involves developing community leadership, assessing the host community, sharing the results in a community forum open to all, and providing suggestions to drive community action. Overall, FIT helps communities learn about their strengths and weaknesses through the eyes of first time visitors.

https://www.canr.msu.edu/tourism_first_impressions/index

Custom Tourism Programs

MSU Extension tourism educators are equipped to meet the diverse needs and interests of Michigan communities. Specialized programs are available to communities with a specific interest in agri-tourism, ecotourism and/or cultural/heritage tourism.

Learn more Learn more about MSU Extension tourism programs by visiting:

<https://www.canr.msu.edu/tourism/>

Next Steps for FIT Communities

- Consult the FIT Community Next Steps manual provided to your Community Leadership Team (CLT).
- Learn from other FIT communities as to what is achievable by reviewing “FIT Successes Report–April 2021 Edition” – <https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/fit-successes-report-april-2021-edition>
- Consider exploring the raw data further and identifying parts of the results to act.
- Facilitate discussions with private sector assets visited during the assessment and share asset reviews with each stakeholder and/or department.
- Schedule a public discussion meeting between the CLT, local leaders, and active citizens of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.
- Review your community’s result and discuss strategies to work together.
- Search out low-hanging tourism-related projects from list of results, picking one or two items that can be accomplished immediately and ensure their completion.
- Schedule a follow-up discussion with MSU Extension Government and Community Vitality/Tourism educators to facilitate your next steps if you need assistance. ○
Contact MSU Extension Statewide Tourism Educator, Andy Northrop – northro5@msu.edu

Available Funding and Grants

- MI Economic Development Corporation – Public Spaces Community Places – <https://www.miplace.org/programs/public-spaces-community-places/>
- Match on Main – <https://www.miplace.org/small-business/match-on-main/>
- United States Department of Agriculture–Rural Development Grants <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/all-programs>
- Michigan Arts and Humanities, Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs (MCACA)
- Arts Midwest (Touring Gig Fund), National Endowment for the Arts
- Community Foundations and/or individual Foundation funds (example: Dow in Midland)
- Business/Corporate sponsorships (example: MI Sugar Trails – <http://www.sblc-mi.org/michigan-sugartrails.html>)
- Crowd Funding, Individual donations / sponsorships (Lions Club, Rotary Club, etc.)