CITY OF MARINE CITY
Community & Economic Development Board
Meeting Agenda
Marine City Fire Hall, 200 South Parker Street
Regular Meeting: Wednesday, September 25, 2019 6:00 PM

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

3. **ROLL CALL:** Board Members Danielle Donahue, Heather Hatcher, Robert Klingler, Laura Scaccia; Planning Commission Representative Joseph Moran; City Commissioner Cheryl Vercammen; TIFA Board Representative Robert Weisenbaugh; City Manager Elaine Leven

4. **COMMUNICATIONS**

5. **APPROVE AGENDA**

6. **PUBLIC COMMENT**   *Anyone in attendance is welcome to address the Community & Economic Development Board. Please state name and limit comments to five (5) minutes.*

7. **APPROVE MINUTES**
   A.   August 28, 2019 Meeting Minutes

8. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**
   A.   Kayak Launch Site (C. Vercammen)
   B.   Clinton River Cruise Boat (L. Scaccia/J. Moran)
   C.   Tall Ship/Large Ship Tie-Up (L. Scaccia/J. Moran)
   D.   Shuttle Bus (R. Weisenbaugh)

9. **NEW BUSINESS**
   A.   First Impressions Tourism
   B.   Michigan and Marijuana

10. **OPEN DISCUSSION**

11. **ADJOURNMENT**

City of Marine City
Community and Economic Development Board
08/28/2019

A regular meeting of the Community and Economic Development Board was held on Wednesday, August 28, 2019 in the Fire Hall, 200 South Parker Street, Marine City, Michigan, and was called to order by City Clerk Kristen Baxter at 6:00 pm.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by City Clerk Kristen Baxter.

Present: **Board Members Danielle Donahue, Heather Hatcher, Laura Scaccia; Planning Commission Representative Joseph Moran; City Commissioner Cheryl Vercammen; City Manager Elaine Leven, City Clerk Kristen Baxter, Deputy Clerk Michele Goodrich**

Absent: **TIFA Board Representative Robert Weisenbaugh**

Appointments

Chairperson

Motion by City Commissioner Vercammen, seconded by Planning Commission Representative Moran to appoint Laura Scaccia as Community and Economic Development Board Chairperson. All Ayes. Motion Carried.

Chairperson Pro Tem

Motion by City Commissioner Vercammen, seconded by Chairperson Scaccia to appoint Joseph Moran as Chairperson Pro Tem. All Ayes. Motion Carried.

Communications

None.

Public Comment

None.

No residents addressed the Board.

Approve Agenda

Motion by Planning Commission Representative Moran, seconded by City Commissioner Vercammen, to amend the Agenda as follows:

ADD: Item #11: **Open Discussion**

All Ayes. Motion Carried.

Motion by Planning Commission Representative Moran, seconded by City Commissioner Vercammen, to approve the Amended Agenda, with a stipulation that this item be added to each meeting Agenda. All Ayes. Motion Carried.

New Business

Ordinance 2019-008 Establish Community & Economic Development

Planning Commission Representative Moran explained the role of the Community and Economic Development Board and ordinance guidelines. He also reviewed the City's Master Plan and Parks and Recreation Plan stating they were the foundation of the group's goals and the blueprints for the direction that the City determined it wanted to go.

Projects Discussed at TIFA Subcommittee:

Chairperson Scaccia reviewed and gave a brief description of projects discussed at previous TIFA Subcommittee meetings and said it would be beneficial if several Board members could volunteer to explore one or more of the projects and bring their findings back to the September 25, 2019 meeting. She suggested that the Board members involve interested community members.

Project volunteers are as follows:

- Kayak Launch Site: City Commissioner Vercammen
- Clinton River Cruise Boat: Chairperson Scaccia and Planning Commission Representative Moran
- Tall Ship/Large Ship Tie-up: Chairperson Scaccia and Planning Commission Representative Moran
- Shuttle Bus: Board Member Weisenbaugh

Open Discussion

Board Member Hatcher discussed her ideas regarding Trick or Treating down Main Street and how local businesses could become involved. Chairperson Scaccia invited her to attend the Pumpkin Palooza planning meetings.

Adjournment

Motion by City Commissioner Vercammen, seconded by Planning Commission Representative Moran, to adjourn at 7:09 pm. All Ayes. Motion Carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen Baxter
City Clerk

Michele Goodrich
Deputy Clerk

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY | Extension

First Impressions: Assessing Your Community for Tourism

Marine City

Photos: Northrop (2018)

First Impressions Tourism Summary Report
Marine City, Michigan
January 2019

Compiled by:
Andy Northrop, Michigan State University Extension

I. Introduction

The First Impressions 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 program has been used to help communities across the U.S. and Canada inform economic initiatives or further develop community goals. Michigan State University Extension has adapted this program, adding a tourism focus to meet the needs of Michigan communities. MSU Extension's First Impressions: Tourism Assessments, or FIT, is unique to Michigan.

This summary report is based on the observations of five visitors, who from this point forward will be referred to as "assessors." Each was provided a stipend to cover travel costs of their visit. Before beginning an unannounced visit to Marine City, each assessor conducted online research about the destination. This research helped them plan and shape their visits based on personal interests and activities in the community. Each assessor then traveled individually to Marine City between September 15th and October 25th, 2018.

The assessors recorded their experiences conducting visitor research, maneuvering through and around Marine City, and visiting stores, restaurants, trails, museums, outdoor spaces and additional tourism-related sites. Each assessor evaluated community characteristics by completing a multi-page assessment focused on their initial and lasting impressions, community information, visitor motives, the destination and its downtown, the residential area and tourism assets. They also provided input on the quality of information relative to Marine City found online. The assessment results and a collection of photographs of the destination were downloaded into the Qualtrics data management program and used in writing this report and the public presentation.

Key findings were presented at a public forum in January 2019. A copy of the electronic slide presentation used during the forum and the Qualtrics data have been provided to the FIT Community Leadership Team of Marine City.

II. Visitor Profile

Of the five assessors who visited Marine City, three identified female and two as male. Before to their visit, all five assessors noted they spent anywhere from 1 to 4 hours researching the community online. Two of the five assessors visited Marine City on a Friday, one on a Monday, one on a Saturday and one on a Sunday. Two of the assessors identified as belonging to Generation X, Y, or Z, one as a millennial and two as baby boomers. Four assessors visited Marine City just for the day and one assessor stayed overnight using accommodation booked through Airbnb. Three visited the city alone, one visited with his or her spouse or partner, and one visited with three or more family members Two assessors identified urban/regional planning as their professional background, two identified as community development and tourism, and one in arts and culture and government affairs.

Key Findings

The key findings outlined in this section below reflect the general structure of the assessment tool used by the assessors before, during and after their visits.

Marine City Assets

Marine City has wonderful assets including waterfront access to the St. Clair River for viewing freighters and boating traffic, clean and inviting green space in their downtown, access to riverfront beaches and public parks, plus a vibrant downtown with eclectic small businesses, rich maritime history, and a welcoming culture to visitors. The variety of opportunities for day-trip and/or overnight stays gives visitors a unique Michigan experience in a coastal community within a one-hour drive from Metro-Detroit not typically highlighted on the traditional tourism path in Michigan.

Other Marine City assets include its proximity to I-94, border crossings to Canada, state parks, kayaking trails and cycling routes such as the Blue-ways and Bay-to-Bridge Trail. The assets and experiences identified by the five assessors can serve as a base that Marine City can capitalize on and use to strengthen its image and assets with visitors and residents.

Preassessment

To foster a true tourist experience, assessors were required to conduct online research prior to visiting Marine City. This prepared them for the in-person tourist experience by determining highlights in the community they intended to visit or learn more about. Most Marine City assessors found web pages to be helpful about local tourism-related amenities and activities.

In their web search, social sites such as Facebook and YouTube were visited the most. Two assessors specifically stating that both sites helped them learn about attractions and how the community was presenting itself. However, one assessor noted that none of the information on those sites was useful and played no part in helping shape their visit.

When asked what website was most helpful and why, most assessors found the Marine City Chamber of Commerce website (visitmarinecity.com/) to be the most helpful and attractive too, but said that it lacked links to information about trails and parks, business locations, and phone numbers. They also reported that there were broken or inactive links on the site. Other assessors noted the Marine City website was equally helpful, and one person said it was the most helpful. One assessor noted both the chamber and the city websites were "equally helpful because they offered complete list of events and places to visit and were linked to one another."

Four of five of assessors agreed that the web information was well-presented and useful, and the web pages were visually appealing, information was useful, but three said even more information is needed on the most helpful websites. Almost all assessors found online maps of Marine City using Google or the CityData website and didn't see any maps available on the most helpful websites where they may have expected to.

Section 1 of The Qualtrics data report highlights additional pre and post assessment of web-based information and assessor experiences.

Visualizing Marine City:

Assessors were asked to visualize Marine City prior to visiting. Assessors expected the destination to be a "small town" with access to an interesting waterfront and views. One assessor visualized the town as having maritime history/heritage connected to the St. Clair River and Blue Water region. Two of the five assessors did

not expect to see much going on when they visited. One assessor wasn't sure what distinguished Marine City from other riverside communities because they had not heard much about the community previously.

Initial Impressions

Assessors were asked to record their impressions of Marine City within 5 minutes of arriving there.

Positive comments included that Marine City is a "lovely small town with historic roots, and one that was strongly linked to maritime heritage." "The eclectic mix of shops downtown made it interesting… I was pleasantly surprised by the many waterfront parks and unique shops," "My first impression was that this was a close-knit community, that residents and business owners truly take pride in their small town." "The homes in the residential neighborhoods were well-kept and festive. Loved it!" One assessor reported they enjoyed crossing the Belle River to get downtown.

Marine City did not receive many negative comments during assessors' initial impression, but one assessor felt the Belle River crossing was underutilized and hidden. One assessor did note it was sad that none of the cultural venues were open on Sunday when they visited. They initially had hoped for a Sunday matinee and museum hours. Another assessor was disappointed when they arrived from I-94 and didn't see signs "of any sort until you are a mile or two out from town and those are very small and hard to read while driving 50 miles per hour or more"; and coming from the west entrance the town looks "pretty stale."

Photo: Vanderstoep (2018)

Overall, assessors viewed the Marine City waterfront, with ample public and private access along the St. Clair River as an asset they weren't expecting to see. They commented that the freighters passing were "mesmerizing." One assessor did note there was evidence of a formerly thriving community. Based on their initial impression, most assessors reported that they would feel compelled to stop into Marine City if randomly passing by.

Photo: Vanderstoep (2018)

Community Information

Overall, assessors found community directions accurate, but didn't find it easy to locate a visitor center nor were hours conducive to visitors when they found a resource for visitors. Assessors had mixed opinions when asked if it was easy to find a community/regional tourist brochure, with 3 assessors noting it was not easy to find a map of the town nor was the local/regional newsletter informative. Only one of the assessors referenced the standing map downtown and this was done so via photograph. Three out of five though agreed information booths/kiosks exist to help visitor's locate attractions and services.

Visitor Motives

Assessors were asked to identify the top three of 15 possible reasons for visiting Marine City. Their top choices are listed by number of times mentioned.

- Relax (3*)
- Visit historical sites (3*)
- Shop (3*)
- Get entertained/entertainment (2*)
- Experience a unique culture (2*)
- Engage in sports activities (1*)
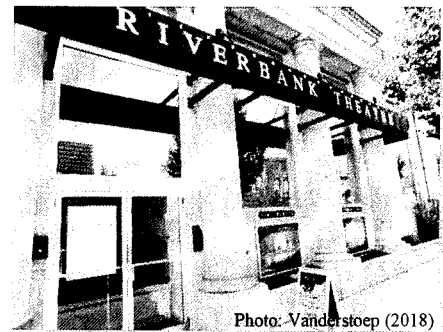- Other (Waterfront, freighters, and beach- 1*)

Photo: Vanderstoep (2018)

* indicates number of times that motive was selected

Assessors identified several activities that appeal to both tourists and residents. Most identified relaxation, history, and shopping (including at several antique shops in the area) as the possible reasons for people to visit to Marine City. Assessors also noted Marine City culture and entertainment were big draws to the community. Freighter viewing and the community's waterfront were mentioned as other draws..

Generational Appeal

Four of five assessors noted Marine City's attributes would be most attractive to Generation X. Three of five assessors noted that millennials, baby boomers, and the silent generation would find the destination equally of interest.

Destination & Downtown Attributes
- Safety and security
- Cleanliness
- Activities for children
- Historic and heritage attractions
- Authenticity of attractions
- Variety of and quality of shopping options
- Benches
- Waste receptacles

- American Disability Act (ADA) access ramps

Destination & Downtown Weaknesses
- Empty store fronts
- Limited accessibility to St. Clair River and Belle River
- Variety of affordable accommodations were lacking
- Limited water trail access and awareness/signage of bicycling trail(s)
- Few well-known landmarks
- Lack of recycling containers
- Lack of water fountains

Residential Areas

Assessors were encouraged to visit residential areas to help them develop a better understanding of the community at large and provide communities with a perspective rarely evaluated by outside visitors. One assessor rated Marine City's residential area as excellent, and four rated the area as "good."

Assessors said the residential areas and yards were clean and well-kept, and included a variety of architecture that was considered interesting. One assessor enjoyed the seasonal decorations displayed on homes during their visit. However, one other assessor noticed that houses were in variable conditions of maintenance and the private shoreline could be cleaned up or made more visually appealing. Another specifically stated the north side of the community as "extremely unique and rare to see but said the south and southwest sides seemed run-down."

Community Assets Visited

Assessors were asked to visit attractions and assets that were of interest to them either from researching prior to their visit or after arriving. Assessors reviewed each asset they visited. These assets included lodging, restaurants, shops, parks, trails and other locations or businesses. A few of the tourism assets in Marine City that were visited by assessors included Anita's, Marine City Fish Company, Back Porch Antiques, Roasted Coffee Shop, Crazy Cousins Cupcakes, Riverbank and Snug Theaters, The Sweet Tooth, Lazy Llama, Vera Grace Emporium, Algonac State Park, and several Public Parks. The reviews are included in the Qualtrics data report and shared with Marine City leaders.

Waterfront Community Assessment

Assessors were asked to give their first impressions of Marine City's waterfront. When asked to rate the overall quality of the waterfront infrastructure of Marine City, the responses were positive. Four rated the waterfront infrastructure as "good," and one said "excellent." Assessors were also asked to identify one area of the waterfront they deemed excellent. Responses included, "Very inviting waterfront parks with ample public access, but limited seating." "Overall, public visual and physical access to the lakeshore is quite good, with most of the linear footage being public rather than private. Kudos for maintaining
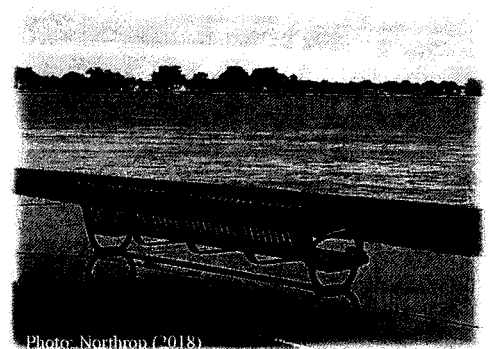
this special resource!" "The playground/swimming beach is connected closely to downtown, and the fact that the downtown is so close to the water is a fantastic amenity." "Several local park access points from downtown. This was a highlight of our visit!"

The assessors identified several areas for improvement, including reopening the ferry to Canada, adding to and improving waterfront parking in front of the Catholic school, and adding a fishing pier. One assessor suggested that creating a wider promenade with benches and vendors would create a positive vibe to the area. Another suggested adding "slow down for kids" signs and entrance and exit signs for kayakers and canoers around the beach area.

After debriefing from their visit, assessors concluded that they hadn't learned anything about the St. Clair River itself and suggested that Marine City incorporate educational pieces into the waterfront parks.

Lasting Impressions

The assessors identified their **most positive experiences** while visiting Marine City:

- "Visiting a previously unfamiliar maritime town, with a friendly and relaxing atmosphere.
- "Seeing the river and seeing a few cool shops that I didn't expect."
- "I'd have to say the local bakery. I think it's critical for communities to have shops like these that make a lasting impression on visitors."
- "The downtown parks were very impressive."
- "I think seeing the lively main street and seeing people coming in and out of the stores on a Saturday evening was the best. Overall, just the foot traffic activity was great to see."
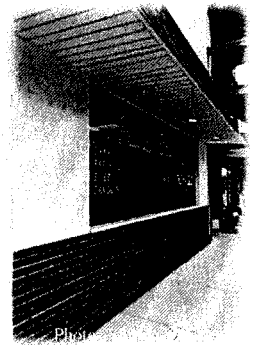
The assessors also identified their **most negative experiences** while visiting Marine City:

- "The fact that all of the museums were closed on a Friday. Probably something I should have researched more but maybe next time."
- "Not really seeing any signage for the bike trails connecting to other communities or how to access them."
- " One of the local restaurants had poor customer service and didn't really make us feel welcomed."
- "The wide streets crossings and a few of the facades were not welcoming to look at such as the building on the SE corner of Market and Broadway."
- "So many facilities were closed when I visited in October on a Thursday."

Strengths and Challenges

Strengths: Assessors identified assets that contribute to the strength of the community.

- Variety of things to see and do, places to eat, unique shopping places in such a small area.
- Growing professional theater scene and three cultural venues in the downtown.
- The waterfront, a nice long main street, and parks and a beach downtown.
- Strong economic base in the area and active public sectors leveraging assets and placemaking. An

understanding of real collaboration and inclusiveness.
- The riverfronts of the St. Clair and Belle Rivers, and a network of heritage sites.
- Proximity to natural resources and walkability of the downtown.

Challenges: Assessors identified assets that are challenges to the community.

- It is an out-of-the way location that needs façade improvements in the northwest end of downtown.
- Advertising to the Metro Detroit area with a targeted marketing and media strategy to specific audiences, such as families, kayakers and bikers.
- Lack of affordable tourist accommodations catering to different audiences.
- Greater use of cultural investments.
- Need to increase the size of signs along I-94 where the freeway enters and exits.
- Moving parking from central downtown and opening the streets for activity.

Local Involvement

Assessors were asked if they had been able to identify local organizations involved with tourism development, management, and marketing. All five assessors identified the local chamber of commerce. Other organizations mentioned were the Blue Water Convention and Visitors Bureau, the St. Clair County Metro Planning Commission, the Riverbank and Snug Theater, the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Department, Pure Michigan, the Historical Commission, and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

Community Branding

After visiting the destination and reflecting on their assessment, assessors provided single statements best describing Marine City. One assessor specifically desribed Marine City as, "A rural community revitalization success story just a stone's throw from Detroit and Canada."

Assessors were also asked what they thought they would remember most about Marine City after six months:

- "Small town charm on international waters"
- "Maritime history prevails"
- "A place to call home"

- Maritime heritage, open and accessible waterfront with easy freighter viewing; friendliness in local shops
- Shopping and places to eat
- The theaters in Marine City
- Greenspaces backing up to a welcoming small downtown with food and entertainment

All five assessors stated they would either "likely" or "definitely" visit Marine City on a pleasure trip in the future, but only four of them were likely to recommend the destination to friends and/or family.

Using Senses and Safety

Assessors didn't note any unpleasant smells or sounds while visiting Marine City. All five said they always felt welcomed in the community. One assessor noted, "The shops that were open were friendly and inviting." Another mentioned that "every business I walked into welcomed me and immediately asked how they could help." All five assessors noted they felt safe and secure while in Marine City.

III. Suggestions

Assessors provide suggestions to FIT communities and they are grouped into four categories.

Art and Culture:

- Provide more historical interpretive information to "tell the stories" of Marine City.
  - ○ Focus on the strong ship-building history and focus on where it took place "on land."
- Increase hours of operation for the local museums and add at least one weekday option.
- Make greater use of the theaters for local, regional performances
- Offer live music outside in the public parks on or near the water.
- Encourage collaborations between the cultural facilities so there is something going on most days. The chamber of commerce calendar only listed one event in October.

Business:

- Add a visitor center with marketing materials, maps and information.
- Increase business information (such as hours of operation, location, websites) on the chamber of commerce website.
- Encourage a brewery to locate on the northwest corner of downtown, which could help draw foot traffic to that area.
- Increase opportunities for kayak and bike rentals.
- Increase online information about the hours of operation of Marine City's museums, theaters, shops, and more – especially in the off-season. Put information on a single web page; it is too hard to find such information when having to click open every single site.
- The local restaurant options and other amenities do not support the cost of the overnight stay.
  - ○ Increase lodging options (including less expensive choices) in the city.
  - ○ Consider more facilities booked through Airbnb, which can be more flexible and less expensive than more traditional lodging.

Community:

- Establish zoning ordinances for short-term rentals, which could be an income generator (Michigan cities that have done this include Marquette and South Haven).
- Focus more improvement efforts on the Broadway area of downtown, which is the western gateway to the city and waterfront.
  - ○ Form-based zoning codes, facade improvements and roadway redesign will be key in revitalizing the Broadway area and attracting more visitors.

○ Decrease the width of Broadway, add a boulevard, bike lanes, safe crossings and more placemaking ideas, such as welcoming places to sit and enjoy the downtown.

- Encourage more walkability and reduce the need/desire to park right downtown. Encourage and incentivize of the use the side streets for parking. (e.g., offer discounts in restaurants if visitors use side streets).
- Conduct maintenance on the signs, picnic tables, and other amenities that are beginning to show their age.
- Enlarge signage coming in from I-94.
- Add distance and walking times to downtown signs to encourage parking throughout community.

Recreation:
- Increase the visibility of the online public park list.
- Offer more information about the Belle River (IF there are publicly accessible areas), and more effectively promote paddle sports on the river.
- Increase the evidence of designated bicycling routes throughout the county, including in Marine City. (Information about such routes was only available in the printed maps one assessor picked up.)
- Offer high-quality online maps (interactive and in printable pdfs) that feature key attractions, beaches, restaurants, lodging, trails and shops. (If such maps exist now, they're not easily found.)
- Add a kayak launch right in the downtown.
- Add opportunities for visitors to experience going on the water through charters and boat rides.
- Establish proper signage routing cyclist, kayakers, and walkers to trails, including the Blue Ways and Bridge-to-Bay Trail.
- Increase the number of benches in waterfront parks.

Uncategorized Suggestions:
- Consider developing a "Be a Tourist in Your Own Community" event or activity (such as the Alcona County Bus Tour).
- Use the stories of people who have made your community their home to weave a narrative that informs a sense of place and exemplifies what makes the community a great place to live, work, play and visit.
- Update all websites regularly (daily or weekly), ensuring that business hours and other pertinent information (such as "things to do links) are always accurate.
- Use social media to your advantage by engaging already active groups (students and adults) that are promoting your community already.
- Encourage monthly or quarterly business "after hours" at downtown businesses, and create downtown as a gathering place.
- Continue downtown improvements including sprucing up façades, making parking easy and available, filling vacant storefronts, creating visible business signage, creatively using vacant building window space, using sandwich boards and making other changes where needed.

- Improve marketing by involving downtown businesses, increasing cooperative marketing, utilizing regional guides and Pure Michigan branding, applying for state matching funds via the Downtown Development Authority and using other methods.
- Provide training to business owners and employees on customer service skills and local event and community happenings.
- Explore agritourism as a niche and become involved with the Michigan Agritourism Association (http://www.michiganfarmfun.com/).
- Ensure all businesses are aware of and promote events and attractions in your community, including information that makes each place special and meaningful to the tourist.

IV. Additional Steps for All FIT Communities:
- Catalog existing funding sources and search out new funding opportunities.
- Search out low-hanging tourism-related projects, picking one or two items that can be accomplished immediately and ensure their completion.
- Schedule a discussion between local leaders and active and concerned citizens of all ages to review this document and discuss opportunities to work together.
- Consult the FIT Community Next Steps manual provided to your CLT.
- Consider exploring the raw data further and identifying parts of the results to take action with; tap into MSU Extension Leadership and Tourism educators to facilitate your next steps.

Summary of MSU Extension tourism development programs:

The statewide MSU Extension programs listed here are available to guide community 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.

Planning for Tourism

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.

First Impressions: Assessing Your Community for Tourism (FIT)

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.

Strengthening Tourism Leadership: Facilitation Tools to Move Community-driven Tourism Forward

This experiential workshop is designed to build and strengthen the skills necessary to lead and facilitate productive community groups. Participants will practice using a variety of facilitation tools and learn techniques and verbal skills necessary to lead group discussions, reach consensus, set outcome-based goals and generate ideas for action.

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, eco-tourism and/or cultural/heritage tourism.

Learn more

Learn more about MSU Extension tourism programs by visiting http://msue.anr.msu.edu/topic/info/tourism.

FIT2018-with sections

Q51 - On a scale from poor to excellent rate the tourism attractions or activities you personally experienced during your trip. For each item please name the attraction/activity, "X" the box that best represents your answer, and explain your rating. Tourism attractions/activities include: lodging, food & beverage, grocery, lake/river, park, cultural attraction, shopping, festival/event, guided tour, adventure, resort, entertainment, etc. Please list the name of the attraction/activity and explain your rating.
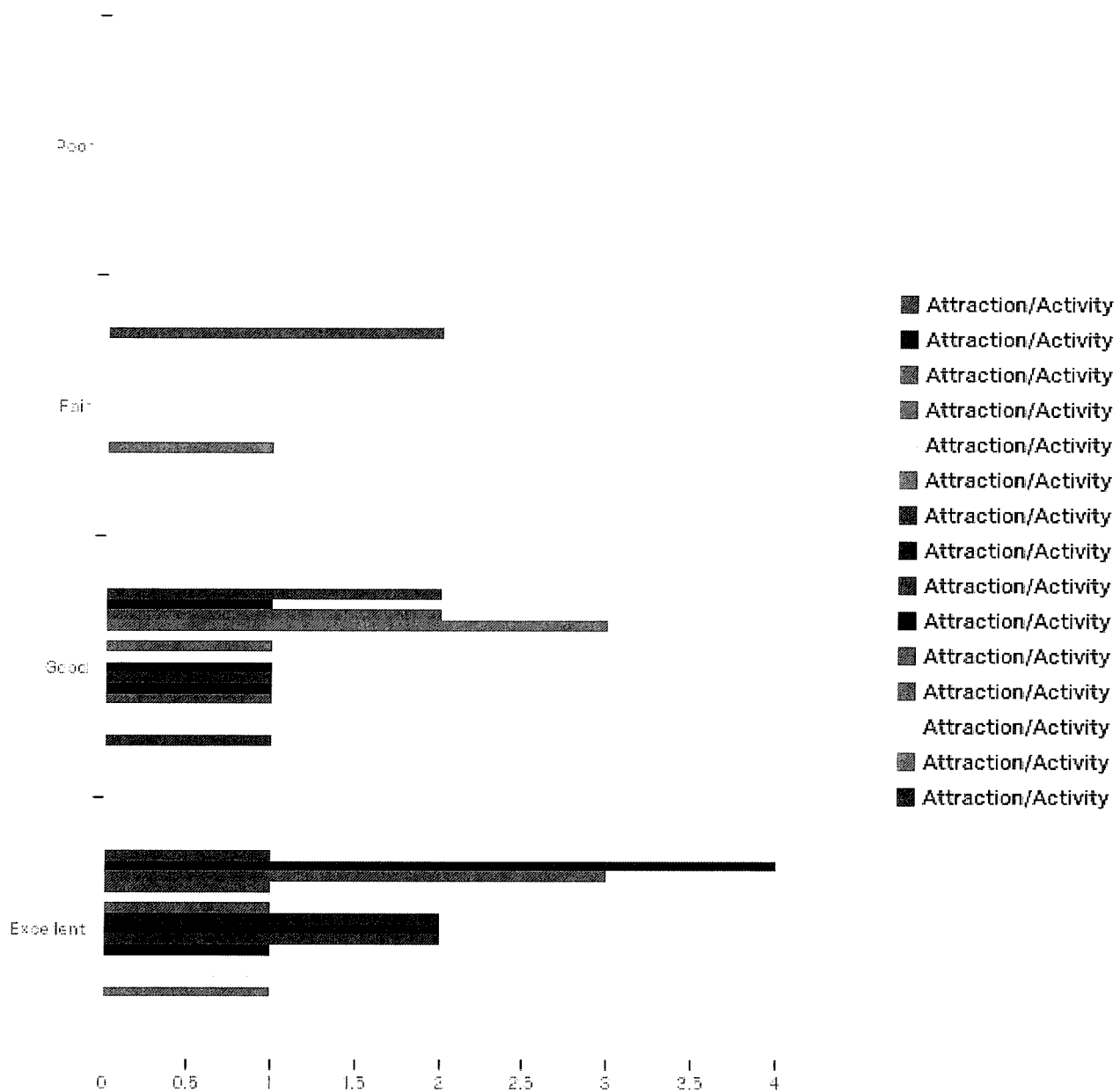
#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Attraction/Activity	3.00	7.00	5.00	1.79	3.20	5
2	Attraction/Activity	5.00	7.00	5.40	0.80	0.64	5
3	Attraction/Activity	5.00	7.00	5.80	0.98	0.96	5
4	Attraction/Activity	5.00	7.00	6.50	0.87	0.75	4
5	Attraction/Activity	3.00	5.00	4.00	1.00	1.00	2
6	Attraction/Activity	5.00	7.00	6.00	1.00	1.00	2
7	Attraction/Activity	5.00	5.00	5.00	0.00	0.00	2

#	Question						
8	Attraction/Activity	5.00	7.00	5.67	0.94	0.89	3
9	Attraction/Activity	5.00	7.00	5.67	0.94	0.89	3
10	Attraction/Activity	5.00	7.00	6.00	1.00	1.00	2
11	Attraction/Activity	7.00	7.00	7.00	0.00	0.00	1
12	Attraction/Activity	3.00	3.00	3.00	0.00	0.00	1
13	Attraction/Activity	5.00	5.00	5.00	0.00	0.00	1
14	Attraction/Activity	5.00	5.00	5.00	0.00	0.00	1
15	Attraction/Activity	7.00	7.00	7.00	0.00	0.00	1

#	Question	Poor		Fair		Good		Excellent		Total
1	Attraction/Activity	0.00%	0	40.00%	2	40.00%	2	20.00%	1	5
2	Attraction/Activity	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	20.00%	1	80.00%	4	5
3	Attraction/Activity	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	40.00%	2	60.00%	3	5
4	Attraction/Activity	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	75.00%	3	25.00%	1	4
5	Attraction/Activity	0.00%	0	50.00%	1	0.00%	0	50.00%	1	2
6	Attraction/Activity	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	50.00%	1	50.00%	1	2
7	Attraction/Activity	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	100.00%	2	2
8	Attraction/Activity	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	33.33%	1	66.67%	2	3
9	Attraction/Activity	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	33.33%	1	66.67%	2	3
10	Attraction/Activity	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	50.00%	1	50.00%	1	2
11	Attraction/Activity	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	100.00%	1	0.00%	0	1
12	Attraction/Activity	0.00%	0	100.00%	1	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	1
13	Attraction/Activity	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	100.00%	1	1
14	Attraction/Activity	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	100.00%	1	1
15	Attraction/Activity	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	100.00%	1	0.00%	0	1

Key: Yellow/Restaurants, Green/Parks& Outdoors, ██████████████████████,
Blue/Business, No
color/Accommodations, some assets visited will fall into more than one category

Attraction/Activity - Text

Nautical Mile/Outdoor Maritime Park and other waterfront park areas. Neatly mowed, some signs and maritime artifacts (though limited information), monuments (fire, military, maritime, and those lost on Titanic). Community had used the park areas for Halloween/straw bale competition. Lots of benches facing the river, for freighter and other watercraft viewing. Some signs could be better maintained. Beach (though small) had a pavillion, picnic tables, restrooms, and other amenities.

████████████████████ - A beautifully preserved historic site, yet the property was empty feeling with not much to see. I realize there are events there at other times of the year, but this is a great opportunity for other placemaking activities such as a free library, sculptures, more places to sit, and outdoor museum component etc.

Park - I was able to enjoy sitting along the water's edge and watch the freighters pass by. It's amazing how close you can be to these large ships. Definitely something everyone should experience.

Riviera Restaurant - after a walk around town, we had a late breakfast there. They apparently have a terrific Sunday Brunch, but it was not advertised at the door or mentioned by the mentioned by the staff. We did not walk past it on the way to our seats, so we didn't know about it before we ordered. When we made the wait staff and the host know about it, they shrugged and said, "Everybody knows about it!"

Public Asset: Boat Launch-Algonac State Park: Seemed pretty run-down and in need of upgrades. Had good signage though for the BlueWays.

Attraction/Activity - Text

████████████████████ Well written, designed color booklet that had clear walking directions plus information about over a dozen architectural styles (mostly houses, some public buildings and churches). Easily walkable and a lot of variety. (I did trip/fall/sprawl on an uneven sidewalk while reading walking instructions WHILE walking.)

Sight-Seeing @ Marine City Beach Park- The view was great for bird and boat watching. there were activities for everyone and it was very welcoming.

Shopping - I really enjoyed the different stores that were available and specifically Good Natured Garden Shops. Since it was a cold day, it was really nice being able to walk indoors from shop to shop.

████████████████████ enjoyed the parks throughout the day. It was great being able to shop a bit, then sit in a park and watch the freighters and boats go by. That definitely extended the time we spent in town.

Food: Anitas on the Water- Food and Staff were great. Excellent location and view, colorful seating. Great they promote events on their website.

Attraction/Activity - Text

████████████████████ easily accessible river front (both via the parks along Nautical Mile, plus along part of the architecture tour, plus from some of the restaurants and a parking lot along the river). Upon asking, one could find where to purchase a book about 2018 freighters plying the waters. (However, did not find any notices about apps or web links to sites that track freighter and cruise ship traffic along the river.) Boats are so close to shore because the river is relatively narrow.

Shopping @ Back Porch Antiques- this place had an attractive storefront and sidewalk area, like many of the shops in marine city. Prices were very reasonable and the merchandise was very unique and fun. I was not greeted when I entered though.

Food & Beverage - I waited until I was in town to determine where I wanted to eat lunch. A local business owner offered that I try Gars Lounge if I was looking for an incredible hamburger and it sure was good.

Roasted Coffee Shop had a nice environment, good local art available, a nice area in the back for relaxing, reading, and playing games. Unfortunately, the coffee wasn't good.

Food: Crazy Cousin Cupcakes- friendly staff and knowledgable events happening in town.

Attraction/Activity - Text

█████████████ lovely restored historic buildings/adaptive re-use. I was told that theater is open on Thursdays, so eat dinner early. Wanted to go to the theater (Escanaba in da Moonlight), but then discovered it didn't open until the following night. Disappointed.

Shopping @ Pet Fantasy & Feed- I was very glad to see a locally owned pet store with a variety of animals and supplies. I was greeted by a pet cat even.These types of small pet shops are extremely rare. It was a treat to visit. the facade could be more attractive.

Vera Grace & Etta Mae's Gift Shop provided a nice shopping experience in an old house on Main Street. Very creative use of space and good service. I especially liked that they carried larger sizes in the boutique area.

Public Asset: Mariner Park - Great little park on the water, but bathrooms were dirty alhough seemed new.

Attraction/Activity - Text

Community Pride and Heritage Museum: some artifacts and signs outside, but the museum was closed. So, again, I was disappointed. Some info in the "walking tour booklet."

MC Marketplace was a nice surprise. Great idea, nice presentation from the street and once inside.

E█████████████

Attraction/Activity - Text

█████████████ Closed; had a sign outside indicating a phone number that could be called (but I didn't have a cell phone). Brochure rack in the yard was empty. Beautiful home on the outside, and a historic plaque was on site. However, disappointed because could not enter.

The Sweet Tooth was delightful! There was a children's party going on in the back and a shopping area across the hall.

Public Beach: Access points seem accessible, but cars need to slow down. Amenities are good with great playground.

Attraction/Activity - Text

█████████████ Part museum (housing the scale model of Titanic ship, linked to several dozen MI residents who lost their lives during the sinking), part film/video theater and event center. Visitor Bureau rep called the manager to ask if I could visit, but answer was "no" because she was prepping for some other event. Disappointed because couldn't get in. Restored old movie theater. Outside attractive, and adds to historic downtown atmosphere.

Popcorn Paradise added a lot of 'flavor' to our park visits! We really enjoyed the novelty of it.

Food: Roasted with Perks - Great lil coffee shop with wifi

Attraction/Activity - Text

Holy Cross Church: historic plaque outside that provided some history and significance information. Doors were open, so I could just wander in. Architecture and stained glass windows are quite attractive. No guided tours or other info (beyond what was in the walking tour booklet and historic plaque).

Public Beach - we enjoyed sitting in the park and watching the families out for the day.

Food: Fish House - Price was decent and seemed to be a well-visited restaurant with visitors from all over.

Attraction/Activity - Text

The Sweet Tooth: old-fashioned candy (MANY kinds from childhood, so lots of nostalgia). Plus good ice cream. Proprietors spent time talking, suggesting special candies, and telling a bit of the store's history. Has a side room where kid's birthday and other parties can be held. Great community facility as well as store.

Algonac State Park - we walked the Bridge to Bay Trail.

Food: Sweet Tooth - A great liittle spot to get a cavity and visit what a candy shop should look like.

Attraction/Activity - Text

Lazy Llama: Recommended by community members. Had quite a unique collection of household items and gifts. Also, in restoring the building, they had kept an old water fountain and had it operating. A special little nostalgic attraction inside the store. Staff were friendly and took time to talk with me.

██████ Light House - Nice downtown landmark and historical piece to town.

Attraction/Activity - Text

Vera Grace Emporium: also recommended by locals. Variety of antique and gift items, clustered by broad categories in various rooms. Apparently they "change it up" regularly. Staff were friendly and took time to talk with me, answer questions.

Attraction/Activity - Text

Anita's Restaurant: Visited after dinner elsewhere, to sit by window overlooking the river and have a beer. Quiet when I was there, but can imagine it could get noisy. Unfortunately, the inside lights reflected on the windows, so I couldn't really see out. Daytime would be better.

Attraction/Activity - Text

Inn of Water Street: New restaurant inside the new Inn. Quality, local food (as possible). Good food choices. Expensive. Staff was friendly and helpful (and even let me run back to my BnB to get my wallet after I'd finished eating, which I'd somehow forgotten. So they were quite trusting.) Pleasant atmosphere.

Attraction/Activity - Text

Roasted Coffee and Tea: Though I don't drink coffee, others had recommended it as a good breakfast place. It was. Food was tasty, well prepared, and staff gave me time to give recommendations for places to visit. Also served as a bit of a community gathering space, with "child" areas and places to exchange business card, provide tourist info. Seems a place for locals to "conduct business."

Attraction/Activity - Text

Marine City Fish Company: At lunch here before departing. Good recommendations from several people. Definitely "fish" themed, with all sorts of fish-related signs, rustic decor, chalkboards, and informal atmosphere. Good variety of fish meals served. Quality was fine, though not top-of-line.

First Impressions Tourism
Supplemental Data Analysis
Marine City, Michigan
January 2019

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Introduction

The following analysis was conducted using data mined from travel-related websites such as Google Maps, Tripadvisor, Airbnb, and VRBO. The objective of the analysis is to provide an overview of visitor's experience and online impressions on hotels, attractions, and restaurants in Marine City, Michigan.

1. Hotels and Accommodations

Online Presence

Types of accommodations available online

- Vacation Rental
- Hotel
- Motel/B&B
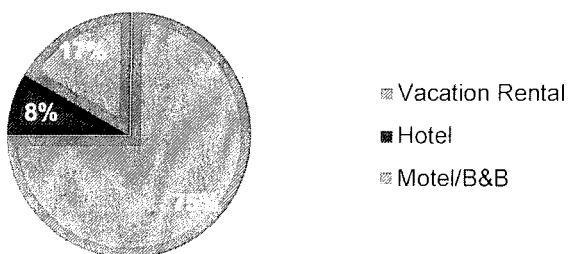
There is twelve types of accommodations in Marine City listed online. The most popular accommodation types are vacation rentals with nine listings (75%) available online. Additionally, Marine City hosts only one hotel (8%) and two motel/bed & breakfasts (17%).

The following numbers summarize the listings of all hotels and accommodations in Marine City on different travel sites.

7	3	4	1
Airbnb	Tripadvisor	Google Maps	VRBO

Presence of hotels/accommodations listings in multiple platforms would increase the visibility of the listings and hence increase the likelihood of it being reserved by potential tourists. Only seven (60%) of all listings are available on Airbnb, one of the top vacation rental sites in USA. Followed by that, only four listings (33%) are present on Google Maps, three (25%) on Tripadvisor and only one (8%) on VRBO.

Out of the 12 total hotels/accommodations available online; three listings (25%) do not accommodate online bookings, making it more difficult for consumers to make a reservation. Two of those listings do not have any pricing information available online, reducing the probability of reservation due to consumers not being able to make a quick purchasing decision from the information gathered online.
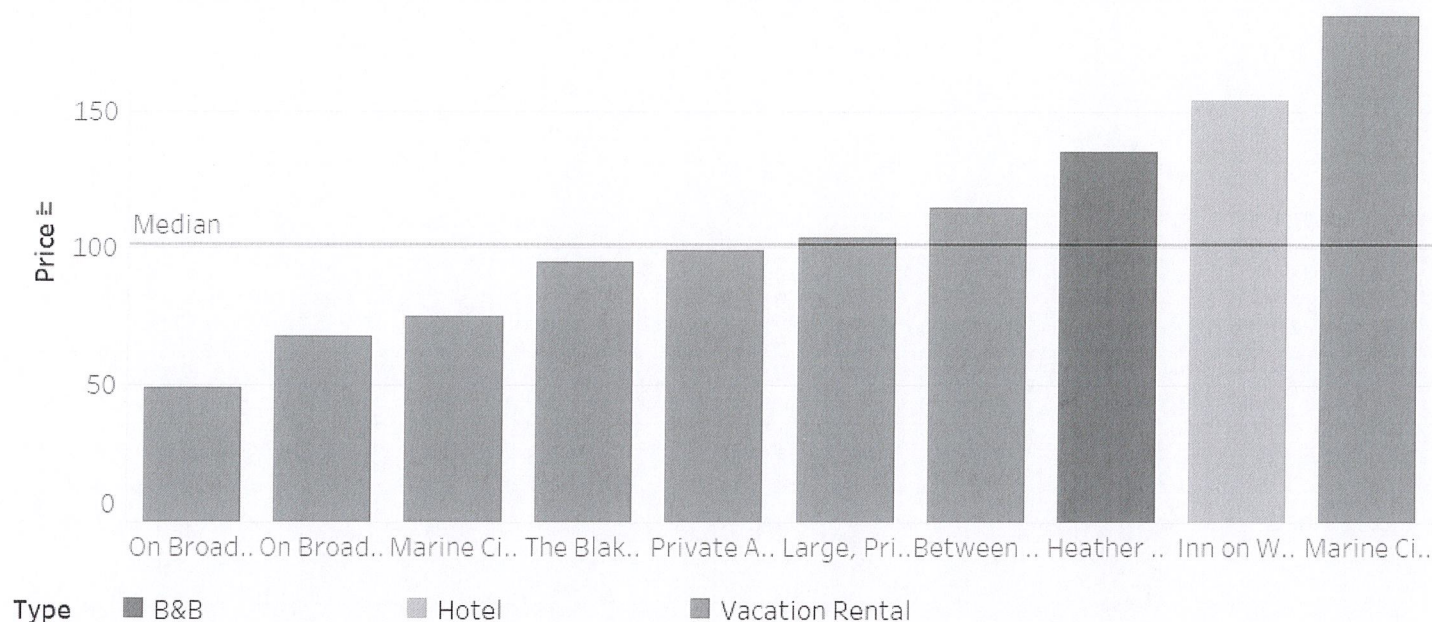
Price

Figure 1.2 Price distribution of hotels and accommodations in Marine City

The chart above illustrates the distribution of hotels and accommodation prices in Marine City, categorized by accommodation type. Based on the chart, we can identify that the minimum budget for travel accommodations would be $49/night for a 1-bedroom vacation rental, with a median price of $101.50/night that is relatively low compared to most lakeside locations. The most expensive would be a luxurious vacation rental at the heart of Marine City that costs $184/night, able to accommodate six guests with 2 bedrooms.

Ratings and Reviews

Upon consolidation of reviews from Google Maps, Tripadvisor, VRBO and AirBnB, the following numbers record the average reviews as well as average ratings for all hotels/accommodations:

90 reviews
Vacation rentals
4.75 stars

99 reviews
Hotels
4.50 stars

130 reviews
Motels/B&Bs
4.75 stars

Overall, hotels and vacation rentals in Marine City have received very positive reviews and ratings. Relative to the size of hotels and accommodations available in Marine City, there is a good amount of online presence.

Visitor Impressions

A deeper look at visitor's perception, 46 reviews from Tripadvisor describing hotels/accommodations in Marine City were collected and compiled in the word cloud below.

Figure 1.3 Word cloud of visitors' quotes describing hotels and accommodations in Marine City.

Further compilation of the comments that visitors had on hotels/accommodations in Marine City is illustrated by the word cloud below.

Figure 1.4 Word cloud of visitors' comments on hotels and accommodations in Marine City.

Using the word clouds as reference, Marine City could identify the general perception of tourists. The words used in the reviews can describe the overall sentiment that tourists had during their stay in Marine City. While the reviews may vary by hotel/accommodation, they can be used to inform hotel managers on what could be highlighted in their promotions as well as what could be improved. Understanding strengths and weaknesses of available accommodations will also guide strategic branding of Marine City as a whole.

2. Visitor Attractions

Recommended Activity	Average Rating	Number of Reviews
Algonac State Park	4.5 stars	54 reviews
Riverbank Theatre	4.5 stars	25 reviews
The Mariner	5 stars	10 reviews
The Snug Theatre	4.5 stars	20 reviews
The Sweet Tooth	4 stars	1 review
Gord's Bar	3.5 stars	3 reviews

Table 2.1. Top things-to-do in Marine City.

According to Tripadvisor, there are six recommended things to do in Marine City as summarized by Table 2.1. The variety of activities listed are balanced with entertainment, food, and outdoor activities. On average, many of the things to do in Marine City have very positive feedback. The most popular attraction in Marine City is Algonac State Park. The following word cloud summarizes visitors' description on things-to-do in Marine City.
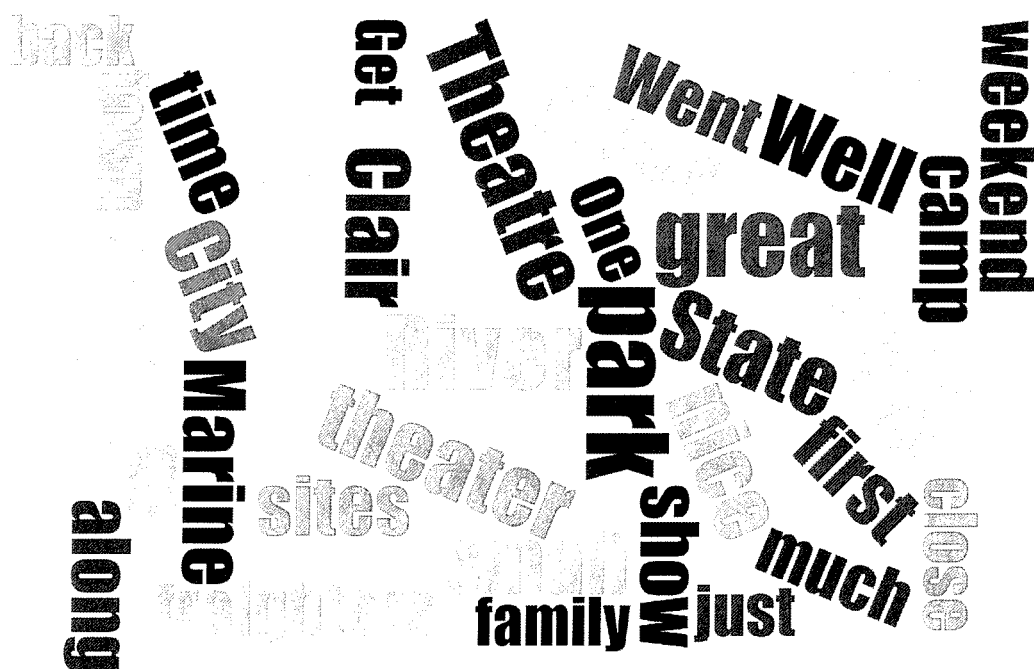

Figure 2.1 Word cloud summary of words used to describe "things-to-do" in Marine City.

Figure 2.2 Word cloud summary of words used in reviews of "things-to-do" in Marine City.

The word clouds above summarizes the terms most used by 112 visitors to describe their experiences in Marine City. This illustrates the impressions that visitors had from their visit. The popular words can be used to identify strength and weaknesses of Marine City's tourist attractions.

3. Restaurants

Review Analysis

Restaurant	Average Rating	Number of Reviews
Marine City Fish Company	4.5 stars	265 reviews
Anita's Riverfront Grille	4.5 stars	133 reviews
The Little Bar Restaurant of Marine City, MI	4.5 stars	62 reviews
The Sweet Tooth	4.5 stars	44 reviews
Blue Pike Cantina	4.5 stars	29 reviews

Table 3.1 Reviews and ratings of top five restaurants in Marine City as featured on Tripadvisor.

Overall, most restaurants in Marine City have received above average reviews. This is an indicator of the quality of food available in Marine City. Marine City has many local restaurants to offer. The emphasis on local restaurants would uniquely appeal to potential tourists looking for something new other than fast food chains that are widely available everywhere else. A breakdown of tourist impressions on the top ten restaurants in Marine City is summarized in the word cloud below.

Figure 3.1 Word cloud of quotes describing restaurants in Marine City.

Figure 3.2 Word cloud of specific comments on restaurants in Marine City.

The two word clouds above summarize the terms most used by 769 visitors to describe their experiences in Marine City restaurants. This illustrates the impressions that visitors had from their experience visiting the premises. The words could be used to identify strengths and weaknesses of Marine City's restaurants.