

FIRST IMPRESSIONS:

Assessing your
community for
tourism
(FIT)



msue.anr.msu.edu

Using visitor *First Impressions* to guide community-driven tourism?

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Extension

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JUSTICE

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- Overview
 - FIT Program
 - What
 - When
 - Who
 - East Jordan's Experience
- Questions and Answers

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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.

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- Not *how* to become a tourist town, but what do visitors *think* of your town...
- ...*because every* community gets visitors.
- Will they return or not and what for?
- What are they drawn to that we might not know?
- Information, not criticism





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East Jordan, MI 49727
Ph: 231-536-7351 | Email: info@ejchamber.org

Sign Up

Member Login

Library

1. Relax
2. Visit Rave
3. Spend time at the parks
4. Visit Stony Brook Mill
5. Tour Castle
6. Hike the trails in Jordan Valley
7. Go Fly Fishing in the River
8. Visit the historic sites
9. Check out the local Council on the Arts
10. Geocaching
11. Visit Wagon Wheel
12. Star-gazing
13. Fly a kite
14. Visit the local museum
15. Dine at one of the local restaurants
16. Paint your own pottery that people can use
17. Check out the local art gallery



Community



Like Follow Share ...

Send Message

 Status Photo/Video

 Write something on this Page...



City of East Jordan

3 hrs - 10

Seasonal positions are still needed in the Parks Department for both Campground Attendants and Parks and Recreation Maintenance Staff. Days of work and work hours may vary. Applications and job descriptions are available at City Hall, 201 Main Street, East Jordan, MI 49727, Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. or at www.eastjordancity.org. Resumes and applications can also be emailed to Cheltzi Wilson, City Clerk at cwilson@eastjordancity.org.



THE CITY OF
East Jordan



Annie Russell

April 26 at 11:39am

Good Morning- just curious: whatever happened to the plans for the b... [See More](#)

1 Comment
Like - Comment



Dee Tomlinson

December 19, 2017 at 10:30pm

Be a good job for Erica then she would be closer so when you make al... [See More](#)

1 Like
Like - Comment



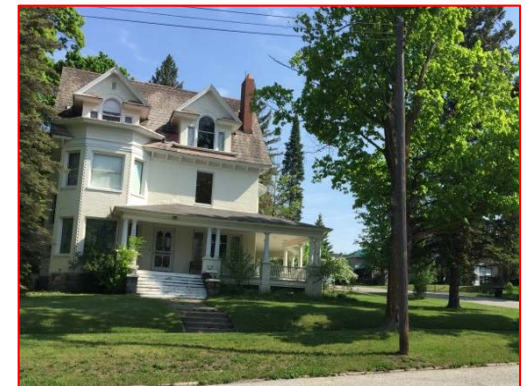
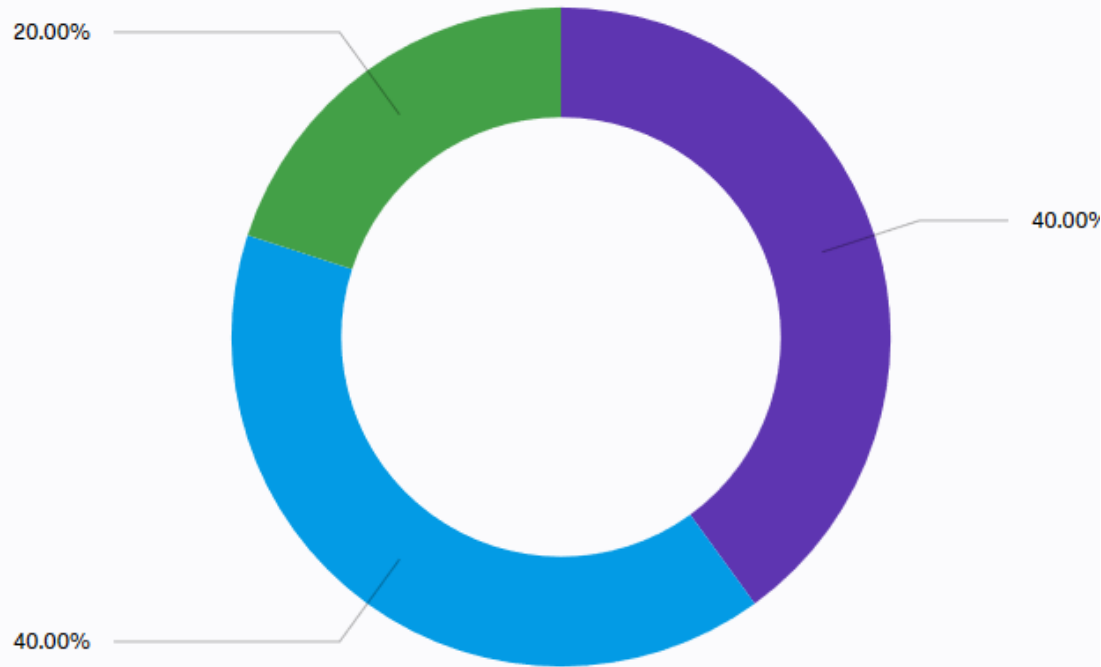
Jaime 'Stebe' Soulliere

December 11, 2017 at 7:08pm

Our beautiful town 😊

22 Likes 3 Comments

6. Residential Areas



Positives And Negatives



11. Lasting Impressions...

Most positive experience?

The walkability and welcoming atmosphere on Main Street

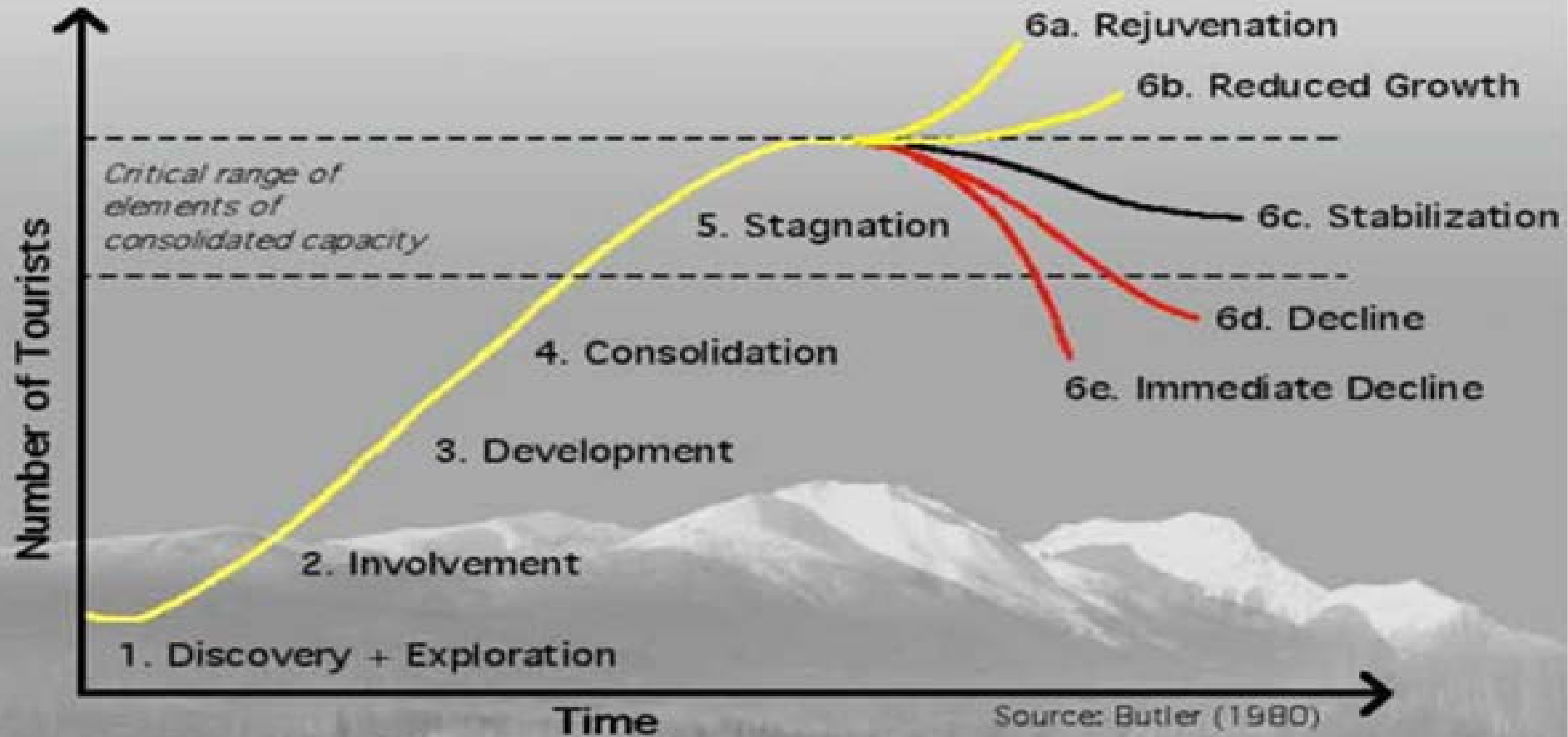


Most negative experience?

- Confusion on certain signage referencing a visitor center and not seeing one...
- Some of the businesses in the area were not particularly welcoming or accommodating to visitors...



Hypothetical Evolution of a Tourist Area



20%
Involvement

60%
Development

20%
Stagnation

Art:



Business:

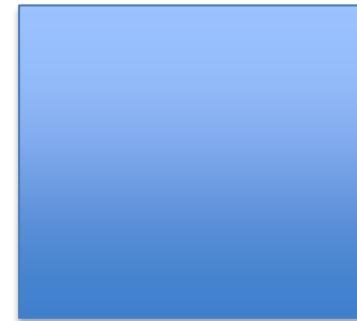
Community:



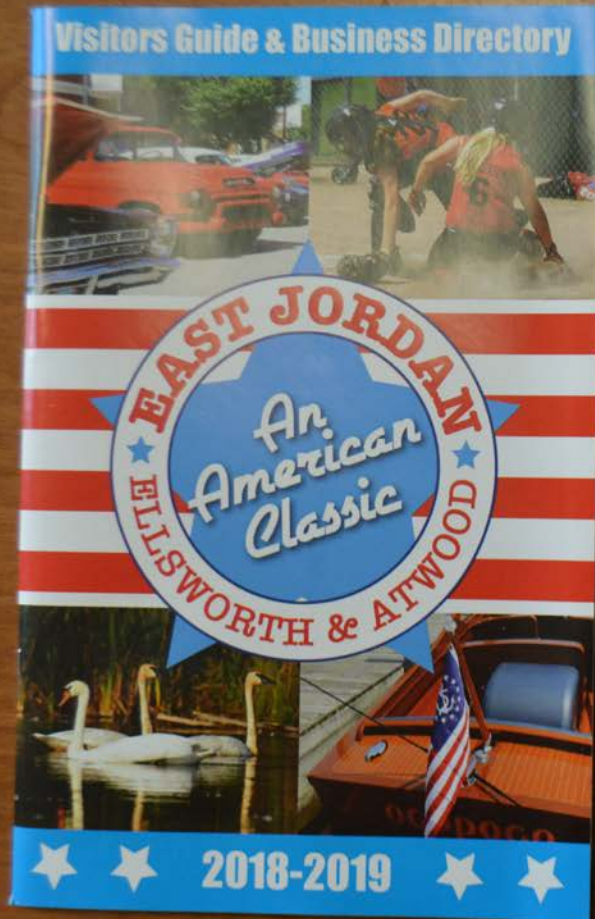
Recreation:



FIT 2018 – East Jordan Experience







East Jordan Marketing/Leadership Team Members

Amanda Baker – East Jordan DDA Coordinator

Mary H. Faculak – East Jordan Area Chamber of Commerce President/CEO

Matt Stevenson – East Jordan Public School Superintendent

Tom Cannon – East Jordan City Administrator

Cheri Leach – Director of Raven Hill Discovery Center

Rich Dietrich – Friends of the Jordan

Karen Walker – Jordan River Arts Council

Chris Oliver – Lynda's Real Estate Service





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1. A Community Leadership Team (CLT) is formed.
2. CLT applies for FIT.
3. MSU Extension conducts a FIT orientation and outlines next steps with the CLT.
4. A team of FIT visitors visit the community unannounced
5. Internal meetings, results summarized.
6. CLT organizes a Community Report Forum (CRF) and summary of results are shared in open forum.
7. A written report is provided to the CLT.
8. CLT takes the lead with community and decides to act.
9. MSU Extension conducts follow-up with CLT to gauge impacts and offer further assistance.

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.



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The results of FIT can:

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

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FIT 2016 (Pilots)

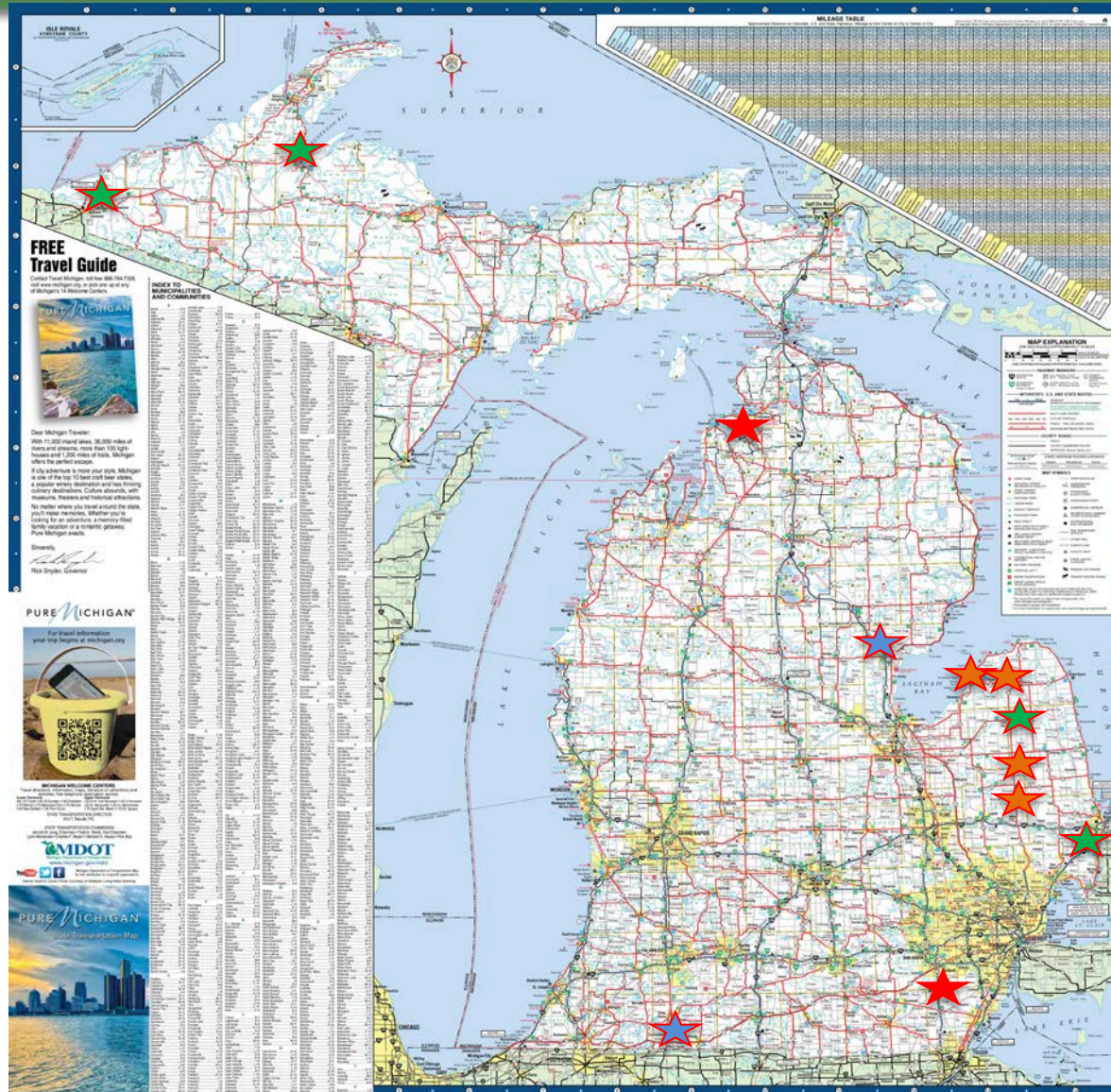
- Sturgis and Standish

FIT 2017

- Village of Elkton
- Imlay City
- City of Marlette
- Village of Sebewaing

FIT 2018+

- East Jordan
- Village of Dundee
- Bessemer
- Houghton
- Cass City
- Marine City



Apply for FIT today to help your community enhance its appeal to tourists while advancing as a place where people enjoy living, working and playing.



Questions?

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