

Sustainable Small Harbors Project **St Ignace Final Report**

PROJECT GOAL

To identify the key barriers to small harbor economic, social and environmental sustainability and provide a toolkit to help small harbor managers create more stability in their communities.

MI Sea Grant

Sustainable Harbor Design Charrette
October 2016

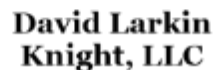




St Ignace Public Visioning Meeting Memo October 24, 2016

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1.0 Executive Summary of Process

Administered by the state, county, and local units of government, there are over 80 small public harbors and marinas throughout the State of Michigan. These harbors are a critical component of the state's blue economy with impacts from Great Lakes recreational boating in the billions of dollars. Unfortunately, a decade-long trend of lower water levels, at least temporarily reversed in 2014, combined with increasingly severe economic constraints have resulted in strained local economies. Most significantly, state and federal funding for public harbors maintenance is increasingly limited. Accordingly, by 2015, public harbors will be required to develop five-year master plans in order to receive financial support from the Waterways Commission of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR). Therefore, research is needed to inform both the development and the content of these plans as harbors seek a more sustainable future.

The *Sustainable Small Harbor Management Strategy* project entails developing a strategy for small harbors to become economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable. A key feature includes documenting the value these small harbors provide to various stakeholders including boaters, anglers, property owners, and businesses and identifying potential revenue streams for the future. Project findings will inform the development of a toolkit of best practices, resources, and funding opportunities to support small harbor planning.

The research is being conducted by Lawrence Technological University, Environmental Consulting & Technology, Inc., David Knight LLC, and Veritas Economic Consulting along with representatives of government agencies who are sponsoring the project. Funding for the project is coming from a unique collaboration of agencies including Michigan Sea Grant (MSG), Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) Office of the Great Lakes (OGL), and Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA). Finally, a state-wide Advisory Board has been engaged to guide the project and reviewing/summarizing documents that pertain to challenges small harbors face. The Advisory Board is comprised of key partners and stakeholders including policy makers, managers, harbor masters, industry representatives and lobbying organizations that deal with this topic¹. As such, there is a tremendous amount of experience and organizational capacity being applied to this problem.

Au Gres, New Baltimore, Ontonagon, and Pentwater were selected as the four research communities. These communities were selected based on a criteria system that included diverse location, the harbor type (small shallow draft), harbor position relative to the

¹ Additional details available at <http://www.miseagrant.umich.edu/smallharborsustainability/>



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community type (suburban, city, downtown), population size, current organizational capacity, and economic condition. A strategic guidebook was developed based on those communities and research conducted by the team. Two additional communities, St Ignace and Rogers City, were selected as “proof of concept” communities for revising the guidebook.

The goal of the community engagement portion of the project is to facilitate regular stakeholder involvement and feedback which builds trust in the process and builds support for the implementation plan. This allows the project team to quickly gain consensus and reduce the time to implement a sustainability plan.

2.0 Introduction to St Ignace Community Visioning

On October 24, 2016, a facilitated community visioning meeting was held at the St Ignace Public Library to discuss the future of the St Ignace waterfront. Twenty three community members attended the meeting and were divided into four groups for a series of exercises. Each group answered a series of questions and prompts listed below:

- Weakness (Yellow Post-It Notes): What is holding St. Ignace back from being the destination in the region?
- Barriers (Orange Post-It Notes): What are the barriers to having a sustainable community, harbor and waterfront
- Assets (Green Post-It Notes): What brings boaters, businesses, residents, and visitors to St. Ignace?
- Vision (Bright Pink Post-It Note): Picture St. Ignace in 20 years. What changed for the better?

Individuals were asked to document their thoughts on Post-It Notes and place the notes on the appropriate location on a community map. Results of the exercise are discussed in the following section.

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3.0 Results

This section summarizes the public input gathered at the St Ignace Public Visioning Meeting. The activities were split up into four Post-It note activities: weaknesses, barriers, assets and vision. The first three activities are displayed in Figures 1 through Figure 7. The topics that arose for each category and were mentioned more than three times are listed in Table 1 through Table 3 for weaknesses, barriers, and assets respectively.

Figure 1 – Public Weaknesses, Barriers, and Assets Activity Group 1



Figure 2 – Public Weaknesses, Barriers, and Assets Activity Group 2



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Figure 3 – Public Weaknesses, Barriers, and Assets Activity Group 2 Small Map



Figure 4 – Public Weaknesses, Barriers, and Assets Activity Group 3



12 miles

City is looking to buy back a lot of the city's waterfront property to create a park area. (Mackinac Island)

There is a lot of property for sale.

Mackinac Bridge Proximity "Highway" to U.P.

Going into U.P.

Back to

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Figure 7 – Public Weaknesses, Barriers, and Assets Activity Group 4 Small Map



The most popular topics for weaknesses of St Ignace were the lack of housing, the seasonality, and poor roads. The most popular topics during the barriers activity were lack of year-round jobs, inflexible attitudes of residents, and the high cost of living.

Table 1 – St Ignace Weaknesses

Weaknesses (Yellow Sticky Notes)	
Occurrences	Subject
7	Lack of Housing (Employee housing, quality housing, affordable and rentals)
6	Seasonality (Winter comes, people leave and the town shuts down)
5	Poor/Bumpy roads
5	Lack of signage and wayfinding (town and harbor)
4	Funding
4	Extensive waterfront parking lots
3	Lack of "3 rd " spaces (a place to go hangout that isn't work or home)
3	Empty buildings downtown
3	Speeding Ferries
3	Unemployment/Lack of Industry and Jobs



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Table 2 – St Ignace Barriers

Barriers (Orange Sticky Notes)	
Occurrences	Subject
5	Lack of year-round jobs
5	Inflexible attitudes of residents
4	High cost of living (Gas prices, groceries, water bills)
3	Downtown buildings are not mixed use
3	Limited Tax Base
3	Current Zoning
3	Main road downtown 4 lanes and controlled by MDOT

Table 3 – St Ignace Assets

Assets (Green Sticky Notes)	
Occurrences	Subject
10	Marina
9	Boardwalk
7	Ferry Line Connection to Island
6	Waterfront Location
5	Museums
5	Restaurants
5	Entry into UP (By the Bridge)
5	Boat Launch
4	Friendly Locals
5	Deep Water Port
3	Lighthouse
3	Waterfront Parks
3	Beaches
3	Little Bear Arena
3	Mackinaw Island Proximity
3	Some of the Housing

Results from the visioning activity are shown in Figures 8 through Figure 15. The comments are summarized in Table 4. The most popular visions for St Ignace include bike paths and affordable or multi-unit housing options.

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Figure 8 – Public Visioning Activity Group 1



Figure 9 – Public Visioning Activity Group 1 Small Map

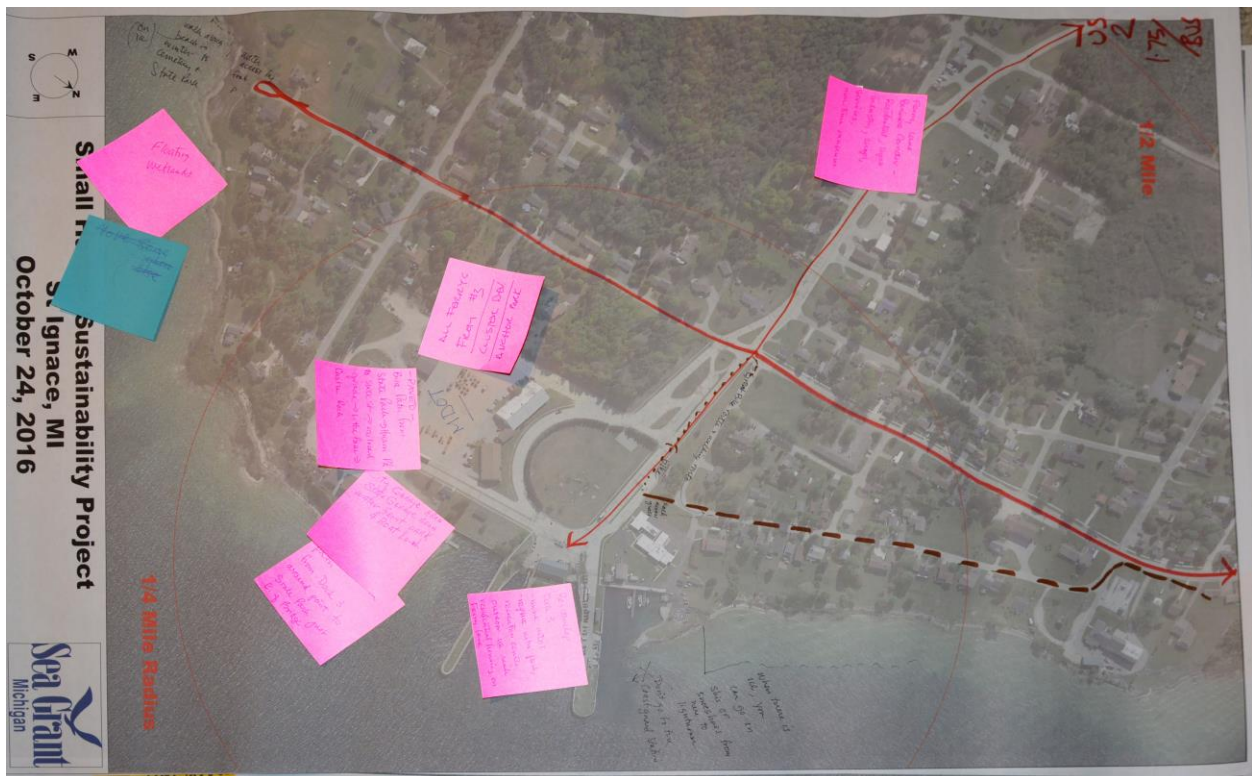


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Figure 10 – Public Visioning Activity Group 2



Figure 11 – Public Visioning Activity Group 2 Small Map



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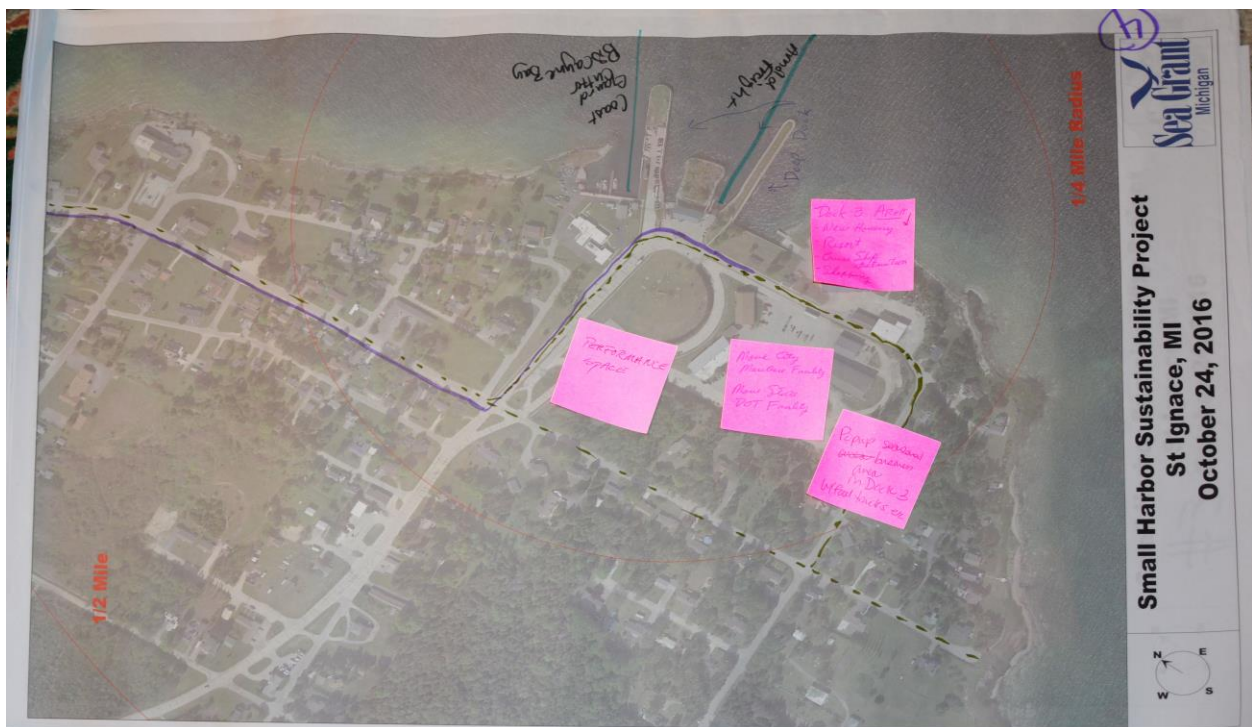
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Figure 14 – Public Visioning Activity Group 4



Figure 15 – Public Visioning Activity Group 4 Small Map





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Table 4 – St Ignace Vision

Vision (Bright Pink Notes)	
Occurrences	Subject
10	Bike Paths
7	Multi-Unit or other affordable housing
4	Better Signage
4	Year-round businesses
4	Waterfront commercial development
4	Mooring Buoys
4	Move City maintenance facility and State DOT Facility from Dock 3
4	Safe pedestrian crosswalks and sidewalk network
3	Trolley to local attractions (Dock 3, Casino, Hotels)
3	More sailing activities (Regattas, school, lessons)
3	Cruise ship connectivity