



2017

# Marinette Assessment



# Executive Summary Report

## Destination Assessment

### Marinette, Wisconsin

February 2017

Wisconsin Department of Tourism  
Strategic Mission

The Wisconsin Department of Tourism's mission is to market the state as the Midwest's premiere travel destination for fun. By executing industry-leading marketing programs, providing reliable travel information and establishing strategic partnerships, we will play a significant role in delivering exceptional customer service and generating greater economic impact and jobs for Wisconsin.

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**Acknowledgements**

The Marinette Destination Assessment was conducted as a joint project between the Wisconsin Department of Tourism, Bureau of Industry & Agency Services, and the community of Marinette. The project was coordinated by the Department of Tourism's Regional Tourism Specialist Jeff Anderson and the City of Marinette.

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## Marinette Tourism Overview

The City of Marinette is located in northeastern Wisconsin on the shores of the Bay of Green Bay and the Menominee River which forms the boarder between Wisconsin and the Upper Penninsula of Michigan. The destination is known for its maritime heritage and as a walleye fishing destination. The greater Marinette County area is home to a number of waterfalls and motorized recreational trails including ATVing and snowmobiling. The business district, including its downtown, is primarily located along the Highway 41 corridor, as is the Marinette Travel Wisconsin Welcome Center which has a long history of providing information to Wisconsin visitors. The City of Marinette has a significant manufacturing industry generating business travel to the community and shares a business region with Menominee, Michigan located on the adjacent shoreline of the Menominee River.

### 2014 and 2015 Economic Impact of Tourism in Marinette County

Direct Visitor Spending		Total Business Sales*		Employment		Total Labor Income		State & Local Taxes	
2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015
\$144.4	\$154.3 M	\$202.9 M	\$215.4 M	1,592	1,632	\$30.2 M	\$31.3 M	\$14.8 M	\$15.5 M

\*Ranked #20 of Wisconsin's 72 counties in 2015

## **What Does Success Look Like Here?**

To effectively plan the tourism development strategy, it is necessary to bring together the right people who can plan what activities, events or attractions will bring in visitors and cash flow. The outcome of such a process sets the stage for product growth and the platform for marketing plan development. It is important to answer the following questions:

- Who are your customers and what do they say is important to them?
- Do you have those assets and experiences or do you need to develop them?
- Is there a coordinated effort between your tourism and economic development programs?
- Are your stakeholders on board and do they understand the power of tourism and the contributions it makes to local and state economies?

## **Destination Assessment Process**

Communities that believe they can compete for visitors should be commended for the vision to diversify their economies. In terms of job growth, the Travel and Tourism industry is one of the fastest growing industries in the new economy. And, these are jobs that can very rarely be exported outside the borders of the Badger State, much less the nation.

The Wisconsin Department of Tourism offers tourism partners a process designed to find the best path for maximizing strengths, appealing to visitors, and the development necessary to increase the impact of visitor spending on the local economy and grow jobs.

The process begins by engaging a municipality or an independent not-for-profit agency such as a Destination Marketing Organization (DMO), Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB), Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Council, Sports Commission or Arts Council. These entities have the resources to launch the process and the administrative ability to keep it on track.

### **1) Lead Organization/Municipality to Assign Task Force**

The first step in the Destination Assessment Process is to assign a Task Force to take the lead in the deliberations that will ultimately establish a framework for enhanced Destination Marketing and Development.

The Task Force should have some individuals with hospitality-specific experience, but other stakeholders in the community are vital as well. The Task Force should be made up of hoteliers, restaurateurs, retailers and attractions but also individuals from the arts community, agriculture, finance, healthcare, manufacturing, media and education. While every community is different, the optimum size for such a group is 13-20. This can be scaled back for very small destinations.

### **2) Task Force Gathers Perception Research Data**

The Destination Assessment Task Force embarks on a fact-finding mission to thoroughly understand how the community perceives itself and what visitors think. This two-pronged approach affirms that there is a base from which an effective tourism strategy can be launched and that the community would be supportive of welcoming more visitors.

The Department staff guides the Task Force through available primary marketing research, existing economic impact research and how to perform perception research through intercept surveys and online vehicles.

Once the data has been gathered, the Task Force reconvenes to analyze the findings and develop a case that increasing visitation to the community could significantly enhance the local economy and job growth.

### 3) Perform a Comprehensive Inventory of Destination Assets

Probably the most important facet of a Destination Assessment is the compilation of a comprehensive inventory of assets. With a complete understanding of what the destination offers a visitor, the destination can maximize those assets and plan for development of the missing pieces.

The goal is to identify every asset that a visitor to the community could find interesting enough to visit or utilize.

### 4) Analyze all Research

Once all of the intelligence gathering has been completed by the Assessment Task Force, the analysis process begins and includes:

- Destination Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

In addition, the Task Force performs an analysis of its competitors. From the list of competitors, the Task Force then assess whether their community wins, losses or draws in head-to-head competition. As every destination has several aspects of appeal to visitors, the Task Force breaks the comparisons into several experiences.

### 5) Identification of Destination Vision

Once the community's compelling strengths have been identified and the research data analyzed, the Task Force identifies a Destination Vision to drive future initiatives. Short of developing a brand identity, this process establishes the goals toward which the destination will strive.

### 6) Identification and Prioritization of Potential Destination-enhancing Development Projects

With a Destination Vision established, the Task Force can begin to identify and prioritize the types of initiatives that will propel the destination forward in its desire to expand its visitor economy.

## **Marinette Destination Assessment Survey Summary**

One-hundred and fifty-five surveys were completed with 63 from visitors and 92 from residents. The majority of visitors were intercepted at the Marinette Travel Wisconsin Welcome Center in November and December 2016. Resident surveys were completed online in October and November 2016 through a link sent by the City of Marinette. The visitor perceptions gathered through this Destination Assessment represent a narrow scope during a shoulder season. It is recommended that additional visitor research be conducted to guide tourism marketing and development plans.

A majority of visitors surveyed were in Marinette on their way to another destination or were traveling for job related activities. Visitors were primarily from the Midwest, but also from destinations around the United States including an international travel party. Visitors primarily identified Marinette's water resources, including the Bay of Green Bay and Marinette River, as a community asset. However, visitors indicate that current access to the water and utilization of the waterfront are a weakness and that development would encourage a return visit. The Marinette Travel Wisconsin Welcome Center was also identified as an asset by a significant number of visitors which is likely influenced by their presence in the center while completing the survey. Marinette's downtown business district was the most commonly identified weakness citing the overall aesthetic appearance and business inventory.

Resident responses parallel those of the visitor; however, they were more likely to identify non-water based natural resources as assets for the community. Perception research indicates that residents are supportive of additional effort to attract visitors to the community due to the economic impact of visitor spending.

## Visitor Perception Surveys – 63 completed

### What about this community encouraged you to visit today?

- Traveling (20)
  - To Green Bay/Illinois/Minnesota/Oshkosh
- Work (14)
  - Business Interests
  - Job Interview
- Family/Friends (11)
  - Grew Up Here
- Medial Appointment (4)
  - Bellin Clinic
- Seeking Visitor Information (4)
  - ATV Map
  - County Map
  - Visitor Guide
- Events (3)
  - Holiday
  - Library
- Fall Colors (3)
  - Referred by TravelWisconsin.com
- Shopping (2)
- Pay Taxes (1)
- Visit Regularly (1)
- Waterfall Tour (1)
  - Referred by TravelWisconsin.com

### Have you visited this community before?

- Yes (54)
- No (9)

### From your perspective, what are this community's most attractive assets?

- Water (43)
  - Bay of Green Bay
  - Fishing
  - Menominee River
  - Waterfalls
  - Waterfront
- Welcome Center (25)
  - Staff
- Parks (8)
  - Red Arrow Park/Stephenson Island
- History/Museum (5)

- Friendly People (4)
- Scenic Beauty (3)
- Shopping (3)
  - Goose & Gander Shoppe
- Biking/Walking Trails (2)
- Very Clean & Tidy (2)
- Art (1)
- Downtown (1)
- Hunting (1)
- Law & Order (1)
- Library (1)
- Menominee Waterfront Events (1)
- No Traffic Congestion (1)
- Riverside Avenue (1)
- Small Community (1)

**What are this community's greatest weaknesses in your eyes?**

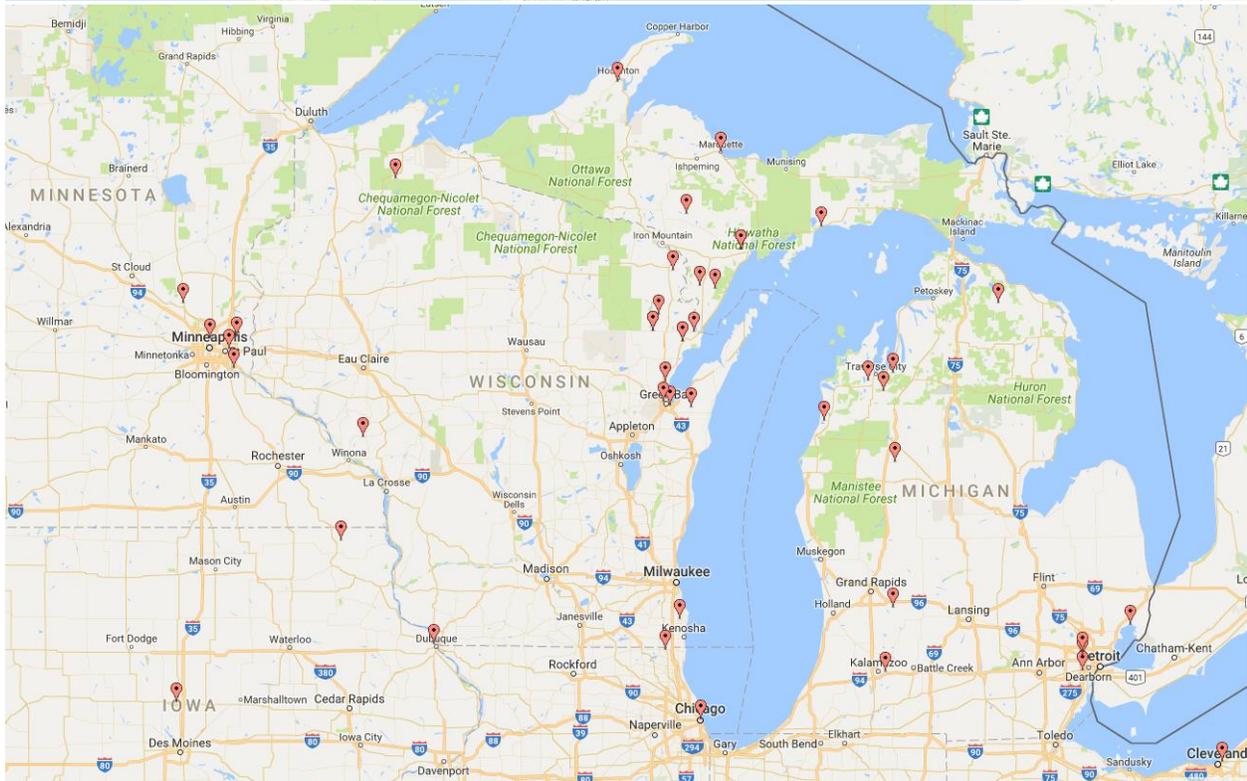
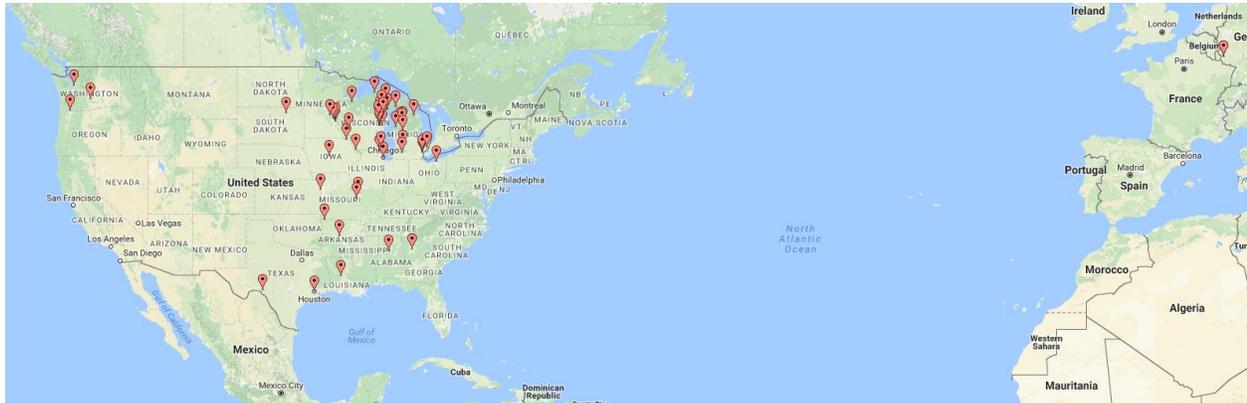
- Downtown (20)
  - Aesthetics
  - Lack of Restaurants, Shops, Attractions
- Underutilized Water Assets (13)
  - Lack of Recreational Rentals
  - Lack of Vision
  - No Beach
  - No Camping on or Near Water
  - Waterfront Development
- Lack of Trails (9)
  - Biking
  - Hiking
- Restaurants (9)
- Hospitality (3)
- Airport (2)
- Culture (2)
- Crime (2)
- Don't Know (2)
- Shopping (2)
- Signage (2)
- Closeminded Residents (1)
- Environmental Concerns (1)
- Publicly Intoxicated People by the Bridge (1)
- Hotels (1)
- Lack of Marketing of Kids Events (1)

- No Camping Near Water (1)
- None (1)
- Poor Communication (1)
- Too Many Bars (1)
- Trail Maps (1)

**What addition to this community would make it more likely that you'll return?**

- Waterfront Development (23)
  - Accommodations
  - Activities
  - Beach
  - Camping
  - Improved Boat Launch
  - Parks
  - Plaza
  - Recreational Rentals
  - Restaurants
- Downtown Improvement (13)
  - Restaurants
  - Small, Unique Shops
- Trails (8)
  - Biking
  - Hiking
  - Snowshoe
- Restaurants (7)
  - Outdoor
  - Waterfront
- Events/Activities (5)
- Friendly People (4)
- Hotels (4)
- Attractions (3)
  - Cultural
- Beautifications (3)
- Continued Improvement (3)
- Signage (3)
- Shopping (3)
- Don't Know (2)
- Better Bait Shop (1)
- Business Opportunities (1)
- Community Identity (1)
- Customer Service (1)
- Employee Housing (1)
- New, Consolidated Healthcare Facility (1)

# Zip Codes



## Resident Perception Surveys – 92 completed

### If you did not live here, what about this community would encourage you to visit?

- **Water (68)<sup>1</sup>**
  - Access to Water for Recreation (16)
    - Beaches
  - Bay of Green Bay (15)
  - Fishing (14)
    - Walleye
    - Tournaments
  - Menominee River (11)
  - Waterfront (10)
    - Menominee Waterfront/Marina (1)
  - Waterfalls (2)
- **Natural Resources – Other than Water (16)**
  - Scenic Beauty
  - Scenic Drives
  - Wilderness
  - Wildlife
- **Outdoor Recreation – Other than on Water (16)**
  - Parks (7)
    - Red Arrow
    - Stephenson Island
    - City Park
    - County Parks
  - Biking/Hiking/Walking Trails (6)
  - Hunting (3)
- **Visiting Friends/Family (7)**
- **Don't Know (6)**
- **Events/Festival (4)**
  - Lumberman Fest
  - Menekaunee Days
  - Menominee River Century Ride
- **History (4)**
  - Historic Buildings by the Courthouse
  - Logging Museum on Stephenson Island
  - Lumber
  - Queen Marinette
- **The People (4)**
  - Friendly
  - Kind
  - Welcoming

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<sup>1</sup> Quantity indicates frequency of response. When included for sub-categories, quantity is also represented in the overarching category.

- Employment (4)
  - Business Contacts
- Camping (3)
- Education (3)
- Shopping (3)
- Sports Tournaments (3)
- Cultural Activities (2)
  - Theatre on the Bay
- Library (2)
- Restaurants (2)
  - Mickey Lu's
- Attractiveness of the Community (1)
- Low Cost Things for Children to Do (1)
- Good Roads (1)
- Website (1)

**From a visitor's perspective, what are this community's most attractive assets?**

- Water (100)
  - Menominee River (23)
  - Bay of Green Bay (20)
  - Waterfront (18)
    - Menekaunee Harbor
    - Menominee's Waterfront/Lighthouse (1)
  - Fishing (8)
  - Access to Water for Recreation (6)
    - Beaches
    - Boating
  - Waterfalls (4)
- Outdoor Recreation – Other than on Water (31)
  - Parks (24)
    - Stephenson Island (15)
    - Red Arrow Park (9)
    - City Park
    - County Parks
    - Recreation Areas
  - Trails (3)
    - Biking
    - Cross Country Skiing
    - Snowshoeing
    - Walking
  - Hunting (4)
    - On Bay of Green Bay

- **Natural Beauty (17)**
  - Environmental Quality
  - Fall Colors
  - Green Space
  - Riverside Avenue
  - Scenic Beauty
  - Wildlife
  - Woods
- **Restaurants (6)**
  - Craft Brewery
  - Fast Food
  - Micky Lu's
- **Indoor Activities (5)**
  - Movie Theaters
- **Downtown (5)**
  - Menominee (4)
  - Marinette (1)
- **People (4)**
  - Welcoming
  - Sense of Community
- **Employment (4)**
  - Business Opportunities
- **Shopping Centers (4)**
  - Lauerman's Department Store
  - Mall
- **Education (3)**
  - UW Campus
- **Events (3)**
  - Car Show
  - Community Programs
- **History (3)**
  - Historical Buildings
  - Logging Museum
- **Sporting Events (3)**
  - New Sports & Event Center
  - Peterson Ball Field
- **Accommodations (2)**
  - Laurman House B&B
- **Welcome Center (2)**
- **Architectural Aesthetics of Buildings (1)**
- **Artwork on Display (1)**
- **Big Chicken (1)**
- **Camping (1)**

- Can't Think of Anything (1)
- Family (1)
- Library (1)
- Not a Large City (1)
- Sense of Rural Community with Amenities Close By (1)
- Shipyard Building Ships for Navy (1)

**What are this community's greatest weaknesses in being able to attract visitors?**

- Negative Aesthetic Appearance of the Community (37)
  - Downtown
    - Aged Appearance
    - Empty Store Fronts
    - Lack of Restaurants/Shops
    - Not Pedestrian/Bicycle Friendly
    - Parking
  - Housing & Commercial Property
  - Way-Finding
    - Assets are Hidden from the Visitor
- Not Enough Things to Do (26)
  - Art Centers
  - Entertainment
  - For Youth, Young Adults, and Families
  - Historical
  - Museums
  - Other Than Taverns
  - Nightlife
  - Trails for Biking/Hiking
- Lack of a Destination Attraction/Event (16)
- Waterfront (16)
  - Lack of Developed Things to Do
  - Not Enough Beaches for Families
  - No Watersport Rentals
  - Underutilized
- Shopping (15)
  - Need for Higher End Options
  - Lack Options Downtown
- Perception of Community Drug Problem (11)
- Accommodations (7)
- Lack of Advertising (7)
  - City Visitor Guide
  - Awareness of Assets
  - Name Recognition
  - Community Identity

- Ineffective City Website
- Lack of Camping (6)
  - Full Hook Ups for RVs
  - Near Water
- Restaurants (6)
- Unwelcoming Residents (6)
  - Businesses
  - Gritty Reputation
  - Poor Customer Service
- No Event Center (4)
- Traffic (4)
  - No Public Transportation
- Access to Natural Resources/Green Space (2)
- Lack of Professional Career Options (2)
- Menekaunee Area (1)
- Discouraging People (1)
- Educational Institutions (1)
- Lack of Diversity (1)

**What addition to the community would make it more attractive to visitors?**

- Improve Overall Community Appearance (35)
  - Downtown Revitalization
  - Entrances to Community
  - Fill Empty Buildings
  - Homes
  - Rest Center South of City
  - Wayfinding
- Things to Do (35)
  - Outdoor Recreation (16)
    - Biking/Hiking Trails through the Community
    - Winter Sports
    - Connect Snowmobile Trails to City
  - For Youth, Young Adults, and Families (9)
    - Amusement Park
    - Children’s Museum
    - Green Space
    - Zoo
  - Entertainment
  - Nightlife
- Waterfront (24)
  - Access
    - Attractions
    - Beaches

- Marina
  - Watersport Rentals
- New Event Center (13)
  - Sporting Tournaments
  - Waterpark
- Festivals/Events (11)
- Shopping (11)
  - Revitalized Mall
  - Unique
- Restaurants (7)
  - Variety
- Campgrounds (7)
  - One the Water
  - At Red Arrow Park
- Lodging (4)
- Boost the Pine Tree (1)
- Community Identity (1)
- Don't Know (1)
- Improve Drug Problem (1)
- Improved Customer Service (1)
- Improved Schools (1)
- Increased Cultural Sensitivity (1)
- Jobs (1)
- Promote Natural Beauty (1)
- Promote Theatre on the Bay (2)
- Promote UW Campus (1)

**Knowing what you do about the economic impact of additional visitors to your community, do you support efforts to consider new ways to attract them to town...and why or why not?**

- **Yes (79)**
  - Economic Impact of Visitor Spending
  - Visitors Experiences Introduce Potential Residents/Business Owners to the Community
  - Increase Quality of Life for Residents
  - Increased Cultural Diversity
  - Jobs
  - Retention of Young People
  - Stimulate Economic Growth
  - Support of Local Businesses
- **Maybe/No Opinion (7)**
  - Concerned about Increased Traffic
  - Concerned about Problems Associated with More People in Community
  - If it Includes a Focus on Area Beaches
  - If it is done in an Environmentally Sustainable Way
  - Need to Begin by Attracting the Interest of Locals
- **No (1)**
  - Need to Focus on Manufacturing for Jobs, Overall Community Economic Health and Quality of Life for Residents

## Destination Asset Inventory

Local= Drawing local residents

Regional= Day trips; people coming short distances from around the area

Destination=Drawing overnight visitors

Cultural & Heritage Attractions					
Asset	Location	Local	Regional	Destination	N/A
Historical Museum and Research Center	Menominee	X			
Historical Walking Tour	Riverside Avenue	X			
Library	Stephenson Library	X			
Marinette County Historical Museum	Stephenson Island	X			
Public Monuments and Statues	Various Locations around Marinette	X			
Queen Marinette Historical Marker	Riverside Avenue & Mausoleum in Forest Home Cemetery	X			
Fishing Heritage	No Developed Experience				X
Railroad Depot	Privately Owned without Public Access				X

Recreational Attractions					
Asset	Location	Local	Regional	Destination	N/A
Baseball and Softball Fields	Peterson Park, Higley Field, High School	X	X	X	
Marina	Nest Egg Marine (Marinette), Menominee Marina	X	X	X	
Snowmobiling	County Trails (Not Connected to Marinette Businesses)	X	X	X	
Fishing (Walleye)	Menominee River, Bay of Green Bay	X	X	X	
Ice Boating	Bay of Green Bay	X	X	X	
Kayaking	Menominee River, Bay of Green Bay	X	X	X	
Sailing	Bay of Green Bay	X	X	X	
Golf	Four Courses in Mainette & Peshtigo	X	X		
Beaches	Red Arrow Park (Two More in Menominee)	X			
Bowling	Three Alleys (Marinette, Peshtigo, Menominee)	X			
Frisbee Golf	City Park	X			
Hockey Rink	Rec Center	X			
Ice Fishing	Bay of Green Bay	X			
Outdoor Equipment Outfitter	Wind Rose North	X			

Pavilions	Various City Parks	X			
Playgrounds	Various City Parks	X			
Pool	Rec Center	X			
Skatepark	Rec Center	X			
Sledding	City Park	X			
Tennis Courts	Rec Center	X			

<b>Nature Based Attractions</b>					
<b>Asset</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Local</b>	<b>Regional</b>	<b>Destination</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Fall Foilage	Shore Drive, Hwy 180, Hwy 35 (Michigan)	X	X	X	
Waterfalls	Marinette County	X	X	X	
Green Island	Bay of Green Bay (Not Developed, Point to Sail Around)	X			
Shoreline Walk	Red Arrow Park (Bay of Green Bay)	X			

<b>Special Event Attractions</b>					
<b>Asset</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Local</b>	<b>Regional</b>	<b>Destination</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Fishing Tournaments	Bay of Green Bay	X	X	X	
Menominee River Centry Bike Ride	Road Routes	X	X	X	
Porterfield County Music Festival	Porterfield	X	X	X	
Sailboat Regetta	Bay of Green Bay	X	X	X	
Sports Tournaments	Various City Parks/Rec Center	X	X	X	
Art for All	Menominee	X	X		
Car Shows	Several Annually	X	X		
Concerts in the Park	Stephenson Island	X	X		
Logging & Heritage Fest	Stephenson Island	X	X		
Menominee Waterfront Festival	Menominee	X	X		
Sturgeon Research	Menominee River	X	X		
Christmas in Marinette	Downtown Marinette	X			
Peshtigo Historical Days	Peshtigo	X			
River Cities Concerts	Menominee	X			
Theatre on the Bay	UW Marinette Theatre Program	X			
Weekly Concerts	Marina Park (Menominee)	X			

<b>Other Attractions</b>					
<b>Asset</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Local</b>	<b>Regional</b>	<b>Destination</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Business Travel	Several Area Manufacturers	X	X	X	
Peshtigo Fire Museum	Peshtigo	X	X		
Wineries	Forgotten Fire (Peshtigo), Falling Waters (Crivitz), Yooper (Menominee)	X	X		

Cheese Shop	Sequin's Cheese Shop, Joe's Cheese Shop	X			
Harmony Gardens (Botanical & Children's)	Harmony Gardens (Botanical/Children's Garden)	X			
Lighthouse	Menominee	X			
Marinette Farm Market	Stephenson Island	X			
Movie Theatres	Marinette	X			
Peter Brook Herb Farm	Porterfield	X			
Ship Launches	Marinette Marine	X			
Wild Rice Planting	Menekaunee Harbor	X			

Access Inventory	Location	Local	Regional	Destination	N/A
<b>Lodging</b>					
Bed & Breakfasts	Three in Marinette	X	X	X	
Hotels	Marinette (6), Menominee (2)	X	X	X	
Public Campgrounds	Marinette (1), Menominee (1), Peshtigo (1)	X	X	X	
Camping	City Park (9 Sites)	X			
<b>Dining</b>					
Casual/Bar & Grill	Numerous	X			
Fast Food	Numerous	X	X		
Fine	Limited	X	X		
<b>Shopping</b>					
Antique Shops	Several in the Area	X			

### Top Marinette Assets

1. Waterfront
2. Bay of Green Bay
3. Menominee River
4. Manufacturing Industry
5. Festivals/Events/Tournaments

**Competitive Overview: Win, Lose, Draw**

This is an exercise to analyze how the destination fares against the competition by reflecting on the assets as being better, the same or inferior.

Competitive Destination: Crivitz

Top Assets	Win	Lose	Draw
Waterfront	X		
Bay of Green Bay	X		
Menominee River	X		
Manufacturing Industry	X		
Festivals/Events/Tournaments	X		

Competitive Destination: Marquette, MI

Top Assets	Win	Lose	Draw
Waterfront		X	
Bay of Green Bay		X	
Menominee River	X		
Manufacturing Industry	X		
Festivals/Events/Tournaments		X	

Competitive Destination: Fox Cities

Top Assets	Win	Lose	Draw
Waterfront		X	
Bay of Green Bay	X		
Menominee River			X
Manufacturing Industry		X	
Festivals/Events/Tournaments		X	

Competitive Destination: Green Bay

Top Assets	Win	Lose	Draw
Waterfront			X
Bay of Green Bay	X		
Menominee River	X		
Manufacturing Industry			X
Festivals/Events/Tournaments		X	

## Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

### Strengths

Water Resources
Small Community
Natural Resources
Pass Through Traffic
Sporting Tournaments
Hidden Secrets
Healthcare Facilities
Speciality Shops
Highway Access
Lake Michigan Circle Tour
Business Travel
Diverse Manufacturing Industry
Marinette Welcome Center
Airport
UW Marinette
NWTC
Theater on the Bay
Road Infrastructure

### Opportunities

Silent Sport Trail Development
Waterfront Development
Downtown Revitalization
Wayfinding
Maritime Heritage Experience
Accommodations/Camping
Connecting City with Motorized Recreational Trails and Waterfalls
Development of Marketing and Promotional Resources
Identification and/or Development of a Destination Marketing Office
Leverage Walleye Tournament
Development of Red Arrow Park/Stephenson Island
Stakeholder Collaboration

### Weaknesses

Downtown
Restaurant Diversity
Shopping Options
Activities for Youth
Activities for Young Professionals
Collaboration
Availability and Appearance of Housing
Inconsistency of Building Aesthetics
Lack of Silent Sport Trails
Signage
Public Transportation
Lack of a Public Bike Program
Snowmobile/ATV Trail Access from Lodging
Community Awareness of Advocacy Groups/Projects
Self-Interested Stakeholder Views
Lack of Progress
Lack of Regional Collaboration
Lack of an Organization Leading Tourism Promotion/Tourism Development
Location of Manufacturing on Waterfront
Manufacturing Culture
Funding (Annual Room Tax Collection of \$200K)
Understanding of Room Tax Parameters

### Threats

Climate
State/National Legislation
Competing Destinations
Economy
Consumer Trends

## Marinette Development Opportunities

Opportunities	Ranking by Priority/Importance	Easy, Medium, Difficult to Achieve	Timeline (Years) 0-2, 3-5, 6+	Who Owns It?
Leverage Walleye Tournament to Promote Marinette as a Fishing Destination	1	E	0-2	City of Marinette, Marinette County, Private Businesses, WI Department of Tourism, Civic Organizations
Stakeholder Collaboration	1	M	0-2	City of Marinette, Marinette County, Chamber of Commerce, Civic Organizations
Identification and/or Development of a Destination Marketing Office	1	M	0-2	City of Marinette, Chamber of Commerce, Marinette County, Marinette Welcome Center
Development of Marketing and Promotional Resources	1	M	0-2	Destination Marketing Office
Connecting City with Motorized Recreational Trails and Waterfalls	1	M	0-2	City of Marinette and Marinette County
Silent Sport Trail Development	1	M	0-2	Tri-Cities Regional Active Community Coalition (TRACC), City of Marinette, Marinette County
Wayfinding	1	M	0-2	City of Marinette, Marinette County, City of Menominee
Develop Waterfront Visitor Experience	1	M	3-5	City of Marinette, Marinette County Land & Water Conservation Committee, DNR, Private Investors, DOT, Destination Marketing Office
Downtown Revitalization	1	D	6+	Private Businesses, City of Marinette, WEDC Main Street Program
Accommodations/Camping	2	M	3-5	Private Business, City of Marinette, Marinette County
Development of Red Arrow Park/Stephenson Island	2	M	3-5	City of Marinette
Maritime Heritage Experience	3	D	6+	City of Marinette, Marinette Historical Society, Destination Marketing Office, Private Business

## **Destination Vision Summary**

What is a destination? A destination is essentially the ending point for any trip. There are as many different kinds of destinations as there are people who visit them. The important point is that you know who you are and the destination assets that appeal to your visitors and potential visitors. The challenge is determining what about Marinette differentiates it from the competition.

Here is what the Task Force thinks the ideal visitor destination and community looks like:

The Task Force thinks that the ideal visitor destination and community is one that utilizes its assets to create family friendly experiences year round. A strong inventory of lodging, restaurants, retail shops and attractions are present. The community waterfront is accessible and highlighted. Outdoor recreational opportunities include fishing, boating, swimming, camping, parks, and motorized and non-motorized trails. Unique and interactive activities, events and entertainment are available and engaging. The community is progressive in its appearance with clean and attractive buildings and public infrastructure. Public transportation is available but the community is also walkable.

Here is what the Task Force thinks the City of Marinette will look like because of authentic tourism growth:

By 2018, Marinette stakeholders are working collaboratively to accomplish identified destination development priorities through a coordinated plan. Visitors notice collaboration through printed publications promoting Marinette's visitor assets. Specific initiatives are underway to enhance Marinette's existing visitor assets as well as to recruit new businesses offering visitor services.

By 2020, Marinette has a collaborative marketing and communication plan with a clear and specific brand strategy. Visitors experience improved access to Marinette's top assets and newly developed visitor experiences are established including recreational trails, downtown businesses and the waterfront. Visible destination development is the result of past discussion and planning.

By 2022, Marinette has a vibrant downtown and the community is successfully highlighting its top assets. Opportunities for continued destination development are identifiable and community collaboration and resources are present to support these. Marinette has an established marketing and communication strategy in action and is delivering on its brand promise.

## Recommendations

### 1) Identify and/or develop a destination marketing office

A destination marketing office (DMO) is the lead organization in a community responsible for tourism promotion and tourism development. The key tasks commonly associated with a DMO include managing the destination brand to market and promote the community to target audiences, developing and distributing visitor information collateral materials, developing and maintaining a digital and social media presence, and servicing the meetings and conventions market. The work of a DMO is often accomplished through a chamber of commerce, municipal tourism office, convention and visitor bureau or economic development corporation. The board of directors should be made up of hoteliers, restaurateurs, retailers and attractions, but also individuals from the arts community, manufacturing, finance, healthcare, media and education. Funding for a DMO can be provided through a combination of room tax revenues, municipal investment, member dues, co-op advertising programs and sponsorships. The DMO can serve as the conduit through which collaborative efforts can be formulated. Destinations of like size and asset base can be a resource when evaluating what DMO structure would be most appropriate for the City of Marinette.

### 2) Develop regional collaborations

The ability for the City of Marinette to succeed as a visitor destination is directly influenced by its relationship with regional partners including Marinette County, Peshigo and Menominee, Michigan. Communities in the region share a variety of key assets including recreational trail systems, lodging, dining, retail and attractions. Establishing or continuing mutually beneficial relationships between these communities will allow each to offer its visitors a stronger tourism product.

- Marinette County has a significant ATV trail network as well as one of Wisconsin's largest collections of waterfalls. These present competitive advantages for Marinette County that can be leveraged by the City of Marinette by aligning with these assets.
- The Rule of Four<sup>2</sup> – A visitor needs four hours of activity for each hour that they travel. Collaborating to promote key assets within the region will strengthen the appeal of the area to visitors in existing target markets and provide an opportunity to draw visitors from new markets or those which are a greater distance from the region.

### 3) Leverage water assets

Based on visitors research completed through this Destination Assessment, visitors perceive the Bay of Green Bay and Menominee River as the primary assets for the City of Marinette. This perception is supported by Wisconsin Department of Tourism primary research which identifies water and other outdoor recreation as travel motivator and a competitive strength for Wisconsin. However, Marinette visitors surveyed also identify limited access to these water resources as one of the greatest weakness, which improved, would encourage a return visit. A successful long term tourism development plan should involve the enhancement of the visitor experience along the waterfront. The Menominee Harbor development currently in progress will provide a crucial first step by improving access to the Menominee River.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid

#### **4) Create an opportunity for visitors to experience Marinette's maritime heritage**

The City of Marinette has a strong maritime heritage which provides significant publicity and recognition for the destination; however, a visitor experience celebrating this does not currently exist. City of Marinette leaders and stakeholders should collaborate to envision an experience which would leverage its maritime heritage to create a unique visitor experience.

#### **5) Develop a "First Impressions" program to help promote a thriving downtown**

A strong component of the area's development vision should focus on revitalizing the downtown area. The heartbeat of small towns is found in its people and in the vitality of its downtown. Research indicates opportunities for improving Marinette's downtown. Keep in mind, if the locals don't want to hang out downtown, likely neither will visitors.

- Buildings painted and tidy
- Appealing welcome and directional signage placed appropriately
- Landscaping and flowers placed appropriately throughout the downtown
- Debris and unwanted eye sores removed

Focus on the 10-10-10 "rule of critical mass"<sup>3</sup>. According to Roger Brooks, in just three lineal blocks, you must have a minimum of ten places that serve food. Examples include a soda fountain, bistro, café, bakery, coffee shop or restaurant to name a few. The second ten are destination retail specialty shops and might include art galleries, wine shops, book or antique stores. And finally, ten places open after 6:00 p.m.

#### **6) Focus on delivering exceptional customer service**

Delivering exceptional customer service is imperative for every business and especially for hospitality businesses where the product is the experience delivered by each and every employee. Engage business owners in the importance of creating great customer service experiences utilizing the Wisconsin Department of Tourism customer service program as a tool in this effort.

- Hold two annual community based customer service seminars, one in the spring and one in the fall, leading up to busy summer and winter travel seasons.
- Identify businesses with a significant number of hospitality based staff members and offer in house customer service seminars.

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<sup>3</sup> Destination Development Inc. Amazing Facts About Downtowns, June 2, 2011