Heritage Tourism

Benefits and Challenges for Municipalities
Why Heritage Tourism?

“Sustainable Tourism”

- Makes use of existing assets
- Beneficial to residents and visitors alike
- Attracts “quality not quantity”-type visitation
“Heritage tourism is traveling to experience the places, artifacts, and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present. It includes cultural, historic and natural resources.” – NPS
Who Is The [Cultural] Heritage Tourist?

- Nearly 130 Million Americans (according to 2013 Mandala Research Study)
- CH Travelers travel more, stay longer and spend more
- Focus on CH varies from passionate to accidental
What are other kinds of tourism?
What is Missing?
What is your Heritage?

Jot down five history/heritage attractions in your community
Definitions Revisited

- "Heritage tourism is traveling to experience the places, artifacts, and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present. It includes cultural, historic and natural resources." - NPS

- "Heritage tourism focuses on the story of people and places told through interpretation of cultural landscapes and preservation or restoration of historic structures." - National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers

- "Heritage tourism is travel directed toward experiencing the heritage of a city, region, state or country. This travel enables the tourist to learn about, and be surrounded by, local customs, traditions, history and culture." - Texas Historical Commission

- "An activity in which people enjoy the discovery of a place's unique identity derived from its history... A form of tourism based upon the enhancement and protection of cultural resources as an element of tourism resources." - Utah State Historical Society
In groups of three, use the attractions you listed to make a case to your peers that they should visit your community as heritage tourists.
Heritage Tourism: Strategies and Plans
First Steps

- Asset Inventory
- Partner and Stakeholder Identification
- Collaborative Discussions: getting everyone on the same page
  - Heritage stories are already being told in most communities. Municipalities often simply need to facilitate the collecting and presentation of those stories
Interpretation

- Institutions are important
  - Provide a central meeting place and brain trust
  - Many visitors like traditional museums and centers
- But...
- Creativity in interpretation is also key
  - Resident involvement
  - Technology
  - Events
  - Etc...
A “Community Building Approach” to HT

- Approaches the topic as one with both tangible (economic) and intangible (community-building) benefits
- Thus, two goals: attract tourists, and develop attractions that residents see as celebrating their culture
- Community control of the planning process, from the beginning, is key
- But it is also essential for Heritage professionals and community members to be open to learning from tourism and marketing pros
Designing a Heritage Tourism Plan

- Short term or long term?
- Balancing Development and Marketing
- Recognizing what can be controlled, and what cannot
- The importance of vertical connections
  - I♥NY, Path Through History, NPS, etc.
Case Study: Tompkins County

- Heritage Tourism Plan originated in comprehensive planning
- Wide net was cast to bring in any and all partners
- History Center leadership, County Planning Department in an advisory role
- Initial two-year implementation plan to lay groundwork
- Potential for longer-range plan in the future
  - Long-range plan often more regional in nature
The Implementation Plan

- Recognizes importance of institutional development
- Prioritizes universal branding and marketing strategy
- Embraces the potential of technology
- Seeks to develop existing resources in realistic ways
- Seeks partners to lead individual actions
  - maintains community connection
Hearing From You

What are your communities doing to sustainably develop heritage resources?

How are your communities working to improve access to these resources for visitors and residents?
Conclusions

- Cultural Heritage Tourism: Authenticity and Appeal
PocketSights, http://pocketsights.com/

Tompkins County Heritage Tourism Implementation Plan

Cultural Heritage Tourism, Partners for Livable Communities

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