SUMMARY
East Jordan Downtown Development Authority
Strategy Session
May 30, 2006

Members of the East Jordan Downtown Development Authority Board of Directors met in order to brainstorm issues related to long range planning. The meeting was facilitated by Bryan Crouch, with assistance from Richard Lewis.

GOALS FOR THE MEETING
To Build Cohesiveness
Get Directions
Develop a Sense of Place with Concepts to Move Forward
Community Plan Development
Stir Creative Juices
Deal with City/DDA/Planning Commission Directives – get on “same page”

IDENTIFICATION OF STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES & THREATS – (S.W.O.T)

STRENGTHS
Tourism
Proximity to Boyne and other Regional attractions
History
Place to Roam
North Central College
Snowmobile Trails & Dealerships
Beachfront
Parks
Motorcycle Shops
Lady Biker Days
Quilt Retreat
Freedom Festival
Urban Outfitters Canoe Livery
Year Round Local Shopping
Water Service Infrastructure
Band shell
Marina
Natural Environment
Water
Friendly People
Art Center
Churches
Public Services
Diversity of Business
Governmental Cooperation
One Traffic Light
Good School District
Iron Works
Reputation
Jordan Valley
Artsy People
Civic Clubs
Cooperation: Government, Civic Organizations, Chamber

WEAKNESSES
Not all on the same page
Business Hours
Lack family shopping
Lack of "third places"
Higher cost of local government because of economy of scale
Not a destination
Limited lodging
Lack of wayfinding information
Lack of connectivity; walkability
Industry downtown
Lack of community pride
Perception is that of a seasonal community

OPPORTUNITIES
Improve Community Self Image
Improve Communication/Community Involvement
Develop Marketing Plan
Promotional activities
Infrastructure built in scale to handle growth
Reach out to Seasonal Resident – time & resources
Downtown housing
Internet sales
Local’s shopping
Connections to casinos
History of Ironworks
Hometown atmosphere
Promotion of activities at Sportsman Park
Promotion of Recreation – Natural environment – river & lake
Party Store – snacks, coffee
Bookstore
Artist showcase
Improve wayfinding/communications
Improve communications with community
THREATS
Fuel prices
National & Michigan Economy
Loss of businesses
Higher taxes keep people out
Globalization – Ironworks and all industry
Internet sales
Auto Plants closing
Increased property values = higher rents
Non profit use of land
Difficulty attracting investors
Casino growth

MAJOR GOAL IDENTIFICATION

Based on issues raised in SWOT analysis, the group identified major goals and then prioritized them as follows:

6 votes – Vision Development
3 votes – Historic Guidelines
3 votes – Marketing Plan
2 votes – Increase Community pride
1 vote – Develop Parks Plans
1 vote – Fill vacancies

Other important goals identified but not receiving votes:

Improve internal communications
Address walkability issues
Develop promotional materials
Survive road construction
Encourage investment
Encourage housing

NEXT STEPS – MAJOR GOALS
The group spent time identifying next steps that would be needed in order to move forward the top two identified goals:

VISION DEVELOPMENT

Two key strategies were created:

1. Develop plans that mesh – all governmental units, major organizations & constituencies
2. Use a process that maximizes community input and creates ownership
Next Steps:

1. Communicate this work to all potential partners (City, Chamber, Planning Commission, Parks & Recreation…) with a goal of building consensus on the need for vision development.
2. Obtain a facilitator to assist in moving the process forward
3. Facilitator to conduct community assessment & processes for community input

HISTORIC GUIDELINES

Next Steps:

1. Research model guidelines and ordinances - seek input from State of Michigan
2. Research other related sources – TC Chamber of Commerce New Designs for Growth Guidebook, Michigan Downtown Association, and others
3. Include historic guidelines or an ordinance as part of the community input process above.