Partnering for Tourism Development in the Southtowns of Erie County

Phase One:
An Inventory of Tourism Assets

December 2005

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in the Southtowns of Erie County

Phase I: An Inventory of Tourism Assets in the Towns of Evans, Brant, Eden and North Collins, and the Villages of Angola, Farnham and North Collins

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A. Introduction

This report and inventory of tourism assets in the Southtowns area of Erie County have been completed by the Institute for Local Governance and Regional Growth, University at Buffalo, as Phase I of a collaborative effort with the Southtowns Community Enhancement Coalition (representing the Towns of Evans, Brant, Eden and North Collins and the associated Villages of Angola, Farnham and North Collins) to develop a strategic plan for enhancing tourism in the four-town area. The tourism inventory and associated report were made possible by support from the New York State Quality Communities Program.

The overall effort, "Partnering for Tourism Development in the Southtowns of Erie County," seeks to engage the community in building understanding and action around the region's unique and varied tourism assets, and in developing a long-term action plan for tourism marketing, asset development and implementation. The Southtowns of Erie County boast a diverse collection of tourism assets, including architectural landmarks, museums, beaches, farmers' markets, parks and riding stables. With better coordination of, long-term planning for, and investment in tourism development, the area has the potential to become a first-rate tourism destination.

The seven municipalities comprising the Southtowns Community Enhancement Coalition are not only linked by their tourism appeal, but also by their rural heritage and historic character, as well as major transportation routes, including the New York State Thruway. The Southtowns area also benefits from the broader Buffalo Niagara region's tourism appeal, defined by Frank Lloyd Wright architecture and other cultural attractions, wine trails, Amish heritage, ski country, a diverse ethnic heritage and Niagara Falls. At the same time, these municipalities share economic and quality of life challenges such as a threatened agrarian economy, population loss and depressed town and village centers.

Partnering for Tourism Development ultimately seeks to leverage the area's diverse and distinctive assets to promote heritage, cultural, agricultural and eco tourism, preserve environmental resources, strengthen economies, and foster sustained intermunicipal cooperation.

The tourism inventory, provided in database format for ready access and use, is intended to serve as an objective evaluation of the area's tourism potential, a centralized resource of tourism information, and a foundation for the longer-range planning work of Phase II. A catalogue of the four-town area's

wide range of venues and events, the inventory contains a full data profile for assets related to history and heritage, arts and culture, recreation, natural assets and entertainment, as well as hospitality services such as shopping, dining and lodging. The inventory represents a central catalogue of well known assets as well as "hidden treasures" in the four-town area. The inventory was derived from detailed research processes that included chronicling the area's rich fabric of oral history, conducting extensive field work, and examining various resources such as historical documents, community records, and planning and tourism-related reports. In total, the Institute has collected data on **373 tourism assets** in the Towns of Brant, Eden, Evans and North Collins.

This report provides a context for the inventory. It includes an overview of its scope and contents and the research processes that informed it; a summary of inventory findings; and recommendations for applying the inventory for tourism planning and for maintaining and updating the inventory database. Report appendices provide detailed asset reports for each of the seven municipalities and an explanation of the inventory's data entry standards.

The remaining work of Phase I will include a public forum to present inventory findings and a fuller analysis of the region's tourism strengths and weaknesses as revealed by the inventory. The initiative's second phase will engage the public in a broader, longer-term strategic planning effort for tourism development.

B. Inventory Scope and Processes

Types of Assets Inventoried. The inventory encompasses a broad range of tourism and related assets within the four towns of Brant, Eden, Evans and North Collins and the three associated villages.[1] To obtain the most comprehensive picture of tourism resources in the area, the process for compiling the inventory was designed to be more inclusive than exclusive in assessing an asset's relevance to tourism. For instance, existing as well as potential tourism resources are referenced, and venues are catalogued without regard to their current visitor readiness.

Generally, the types of venues and events inventoried fall into 10 general tourism themes which distinguish the unique clusters of tourism resources in the area. Within each theme are several type designations to further classify the venue or event. This system ensures an effective, efficient process for cataloguing and searching inventory holdings. Thus, in the inventory database tourism assets are categorized as one or more types of venues or events, and thereby may be associated with one or more tourism themes. The following matrix represents the organization of the inventory according to the 10 tourism themes:

Themes of Tourism Assets	Types of Tourism Assets
Agricultural	Farm/Farm Retail; Agricultural festival; Garden/greenhouse
Cultural	Arts and Crafts Event; Arts/Cultural Organization; Library; Museum; Theater Event; Art Studio; Music Event
Conference/Meeting Facility	Community Center; Banquet Hall/Conference Center; Retreat Center/Camp
Dining/Eating Out	Bakery; Restaurant/Bar or Eatery; Ice Cream Stand
Historic/Heritage	Historical Tour; Cemetery; Ethnic Festival; Historic Site (further categorized as Private Residence, if applicable); Historical Organization; Architectural Point of Interest; Religious Site; Railroad History
Lodging	Hotel/Motel; Campground; Bed & Breakfast
Natural Asset	Trail; Park; Nature Preserve/Natural Resources Area; Beach
Recreation	Recreational Retail/Service; Fishing Access; Golf Course/Driving Range; Sports and Recreation Facility/Area; Playground; Fishing Service; Recreational Event; Boating Access; Equestrian; Sports and Recreation Organization
Shopping/Retail	Antiques; Art Supplies; Gift Shop; Second Hand Store; Convenience Store; Specialty Retail
Tourism Related	Night Life; Automobile Show; Bingo; Community Event; Movie Theater; Tourism Organization; Holiday Event; Proposed/In Development; Business of Interest

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[1] In that there are few lodging amenities in the four-town area, it was decided that the inventory would include hotels, motels and other lodging facilities in bordering towns, including Orchard Park, Hamburg and Blasdell.

In that the inventory is intended to be a dynamic resource that can adapt to changing priorities, trends and development in the four-town area, leaders in the Southtowns will have the ability to modify, update and add to this inventory as appropriate, cataloguing new businesses and events, creating different tourism niches and themes, and adding other resources not included here. In consulting with the community, several categories of assets for which a tourism link was not readily apparent were suggested for inclusion; these offer areas for future inventory development.[2] Stakeholders referenced several potential tourism assets – most often historical sites and structures – for which factual information was unclear or for which adequate information could not be found. Other physical assets such as cemeteries could not be located.[3] It may be determined at a future point that additional tourism categories and related venues and events will need to be added.

Within the four-town area are many community revitalization and economic development efforts both directly and indirectly related to tourism development. While the inventorying of these proposals is outside the scope of this phase, these efforts provide context for the inventory and will be important to the Phase II planning component. In that regard, some of these efforts are referenced in **Section C** of this report (*Summary of Findings*).

Attribute Data Collected. As part of the effort to catalogue the area's diverse collection of assets, various attribute data were collected for each resource to develop a fuller picture of its tourism relevance and visitor readiness. The attribute data also evaluate the extent of the current tourism activity and venue performance and compile relevant information that may be transferred to other tourism media, such as Web sites and brochures.

Below is a listing of the attribute data sought for each asset:

Contact Information:
1. Name
2. Location, including an affiliation with one of the four towns and, if applicable, one of the three villages; physical and mailing addresses; telephone number/s; fax number; Web site address; e-mail address;
3. Type of Organization (Commercial; Government/Public; Individual Artist/performer/vendor; Not-for-profit)
4. Asset Contact/s such as business owners, site managers and event coordinators

Descriptive Information:
5. Narrative Description
6. Year Founded (for businesses, organizations, events)
7. Year Constructed (if historic structure)

Operational Information:
8. Event Date and Schedule Description (for regularly scheduled events such as festivals, parades and concerts)

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[2] For instance, some suggestions included fire houses, regardless of the fire house building's historical value; and community businesses that primarily serve residents, such as hardware, liquor and grocery stores.

[3] These cemeteries – St. Jacob's in Eden and the Fuller Cemetery in Brant, remain in the inventory, but are categorized as "Possibly Remove," in that physically inaccessible sites would likely not be included in a tourism inventory.

9. Hours of Operation
10. Admission Fees
11. Parking capacity
12. Handicap Accessibility

Performance Data:
13. Annual Attendance
14. Number of Paid Staff
15. Number of Volunteers

Digital Information:
16. GPS (Global Positioning System) Coordinates
17. Image/Photo (one per entry) with photo credits

Database Administrative Information:
18. Administrative Notes
19. Image or Photo Taken (checkbox)
20. GPS Coordinates Collected (checkbox)

Collecting and Entering the Data. The perspective and input of the broader community was perhaps the most important resource in compiling the inventory of tourism assets for Brant, Eden, Evans and North Collins. Through each phase of the inventory process, the Institute worked closely with tourism stakeholders in the four-town area, including: local government officials (town supervisors; deputy supervisors; village mayors; village trustees; town and village historians; planning officials; town clerks; parks and recreation officials); community leaders (in historic preservation, arts and culture, recreation, agriculture, and community event planning); private sector representatives (Chamber of Commerce leaders; business owners; farm owners) and other interested citizens. These participants were integral to adding to the fullness and diversity of the inventory, and ensuring its relevance and accuracy.

The community was consulted initially through three separate meetings with tourism stakeholders in the Towns of Eden, Evans and North Collins (with representatives of the associated villages) to brainstorm potential resources and assets for the inventory.[4] These meetings engaged government officials, town and village historians, business owners, business group representatives, and community leaders. Dozens of follow-up telephone and personal interviews were held with these stakeholders throughout the inventory process. To verify and complete the data profile for each asset, the Institute contacted, where possible, the owner or coordinator for each of the 373 venues and events.

Equally valuable to informing the tourism inventory were several other resources and research processes:

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[4] Due to the busy election campaigns for officials for the Town of Brant and Village of Farnham, several shorter, more focused telephone interviews were conducted in place of a broader stakeholder meeting.

- **Site visits** – the project team photographed and collected a set of Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates for each of the more than 300 venues, and conducted onsite consultations with business owners. Traversing the four-town area on a several-times-per-week basis led to the addition of venues, events and other data to the inventory.
- **Reference Works –** including *An Informal History of Eden*, by Doris Anderson, 1946; *Around North Collins*, by Georgianne Bowman, 2002; *The History of Angola from 1873 to 1973* and (Part II) *The History of Angola from 1973-1998*), by Joan Houston, 1973, 1998; historical video on the Town of Evans.
- **Town and Village Planning Documents –** *Town of Brant Comprehensive Plan*, in conjunction with Village of Farnham (2003); *Town of Evans Comprehensive Plan*; *Village of Angola Comprehensive Plan* (2003); *Town of Eden 2015 Comprehensive Plan* (2000); additional resources such as waterfront and farmland protection plans.
- **Municipal materials** – including maps, event flyers, recreational brochures and other documents on community events and businesses.
- **Newspaper articles**
- **Internet –** consulted for existing lists of related directories (e.g., New York State Department of Agriculture's farm listing for Erie County; informal histories of cemeteries in Erie County); business information; and other background information.

Most data were successfully collected through research, community consultation, field work, site visits and follow-up interviews. However, some data are missing for businesses that were inaccessible (e.g., some business phone numbers were unavailable or not working, calls to certain businesses were never returned, or, in some cases, messages could not be left). Several assets were added to the inventory too late to collect certain data, especially photographs and GPS coordinates. These circumstances are so indicated on the record in the inventory database. Finally, not all data fields are applicable to all venues and events. For instance, "Event Date" applies only to events, while "Type of Organization" applies only to venues and business.

In the process of collecting and entering the above data, several exceptions and special circumstances arose. A reference guide of these exceptions, as well as a listing of data standards and style guidelines (**Appendix A**) has been developed to ensure a standardized process for data entry and inventory maintenance.

The Inventory Database. The vast amount of data collected for the **373 venues and events** required a sophisticated information management system. The database relies on **Microsoft Access** to store, organize and analyze the inventory data. Microsoft Access functions as a dynamic, central repository for large amounts of information. Its applications are varied, and include several different *data displays* (e.g., as a data entry form, as a datasheet, or as a Microsoft Word report); *organizing and querying the data* according to analysis needs. For example, users may query the database to view only those tourism assets within a specific municipality, or only those assets categorized as a certain tourism theme. Queries may also provide counts of the total number of particular assets, such as the quantity of agricultural assets in Eden, or recreational assets in Evans. The findings resulting from these data analysis tools are reviewed in the following section (**Section C)** of this report. For future modification and management of the inventory's database system, technical training for the Southtowns Community Enhancement Coalition may be necessary (see **Section D** for more information).

C. Summary of Findings

The process of inventorying tourism assets in the four towns and three villages has confirmed what many already know – the Southtowns area of Erie County boasts a diverse collection of tourism assets, including architectural and historical landmarks, museums, beaches, farmers' markets, parks, restaurants and shopping amenities. Indeed, the area has the potential to become a first-rate tourism destination with advanced planning and investment in this tourism base. In that regard, this inventory work has laid a strong foundation for developing a strategic approach to advancing tourism in the four-town area, and progressing toward the effort's overall goals to promote agricultural, historic, cultural and eco tourism, preserve environmental resources, create robust economies, and sustain intermunicipal cooperation.

The tourism inventorying effort collected data on **373total venues and events** in the Towns of Brant (and its Village of Farnham), Eden, Evans (and its Village of Angola) and North Collins (and its Village of North Collins). (Also included in this total are 10 hotels and motels in the outlying Towns of Blasdell, Hamburg and Orchard Park. This exception to the scope of the inventory was due to the relatively low number of such hospitality services in the four-town area).

Several patterns emerge for preliminary inventory analysis.[5] Of the 373 assets in the four-town area, nearly half, or 148, can be found in the Town of Evans, an expected finding in that this is the most populous and urbanized of the four towns (**Table 1**). The least populous towns – Brant and North Collins – contain the fewest tourism assets, or 44 and 78, respectively.

Table 1:

Total number of assets by municipality (*note that the count of assets in each of the three Villages is already represented in the total number of assets for the respective town*):

Municipality	Total Number of Assets
Town of Brant	44
Village of Farnham	*15*
Town of Evans	148
Village of Angola	*71*
Town of Eden	93
Town of North Collins	78
Village of North Collins	*26*
Town of Hamburg	6
Town of Blasdell	2
Town of Orchard Park	2

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[5] This preliminary analysis of inventory findings is primarily on counts of assets in the four-town area. Future and more detailed analysis may consider the assets' visitor readiness, number of visitors served and other more qualitative characteristics.

In terms of the types of assets in the overall area (**Table 2**), historic/heritage assets, including historic sites, cemeteries and churches, dominate the inventory at 141. Agricultural, recreational and dining venues are also dense in the four-town area. The towns' smallest tourism clusters are in the areas of Culture, Lodging, Shopping/Retail and Conference/Meeting Facilities.

Table 2:

Overall distribution of tourism assets by the 10 tourism themes (*in order from most to fewest*):

Tourism Theme	Total Number of Assets
Historic/Heritage	141
Dining/Eating Out	77
Recreation	46
Tourism Related	60
Agricultural	52
Natural Asset	38
Shopping/Retail	19
Conference/Meeting Facility	18
Cultural	19
Lodging	15

In taking a closer look at the specific municipalities, many of the same trends emerge. Historic/Heritage assets are the most prevalent tourism resources in all municipalities with the exception of Evans and the Village of Angola, where Dining/Eating Out is the largest category of tourism assets (although historic/heritage resources are a close second). Other relatively strong tourism areas in the four towns include Agricultural and Tourism Related assets, a diverse group including Night Life and Bingo venues, Movie Theaters, Community Events and Automobile Shows. Lodging is scarce throughout the four-town area, with no such facilities in Eden and the Village of Farnham, and only 2 in each of Brant and Evans (with 1 in Angola), and 1 in the Village of North Collins. Generally, there are few Cultural assets, Shopping/Retail venues and Conference/Meeting Facilities across the four-town area. Expected trends in the village areas are that there are few Natural Assets, Recreation and Agricultural venues and relatively more Shopping/Retail centers.

Table 3:

Concentration of tourism themes for each of the seven municipalities (in order from most to fewest):

a. Town of Brant	
Historic/Heritage	*26*
Agricultural	*10*
Tourism Related	*8*
Natural Asset	*6*
Recreation	*4*
Dining/Eating Out	*3*
Conf/Mtg Facility	*2*
Lodging	*2*
Cultural	*2*
Shopping/Retail	*0*

b. Village of Farnham	
Historic/Heritage	*12*
Agricultural	*3*
Recreation	*2*
Tourism Related	*2*
Natural Asset	*2*
Dining/Eating Out	*1*
Cultural	*0*
Lodging	*0*
Recreation	*0*
Shopping/Retail	*0*

c. Town of Eden	
Historic/Heritage	*43*
Agricultural	*21*
Recreation	*14*
Tourism Related	*9*
Dining/Eating Out	*9*
Natural Asset	*8*
Shopping/Retail	*8*
Cultural	*4*
Conf/Mtg Facility	*2*
Lodging	*0*

Table 3 (con't):

Concentration of tourism themes for each of the seven municipalities (in order from most to fewest):

d. Town of Evans	
Dining/Eating Out	*53*
Historic/Heritage	*36*
Tourism Related	*31*
Recreation	*23*
Natural Asset	*17*
Agricultural	*10*
Conf/Mtg Facility	*8*
Shopping/Retail	*7*
Cultural	*7*
Lodging	*2*

e. Village of Angola	
Dining/Eating Out	*25*
Tourism Related	*21*
Historic/Heritage	*20*
Recreation	*6*
Cultural	*5*
Agricultural	*5*
Shopping/Retail	*4*
Natural Asset	*3*
Lodging	*1*
Conf/Mtg Facility	*0*

f. Town of North Collins	
Historic/Heritage	*36*
Dining/Eating Out	*12*
Tourism Related	*12*
Agricultural	*11*
Natural Asset	*7*
Cultural	*6*
Shopping/Retail	*4*
Recreation	*4*
Conf/Mtg Facility	*3*
Lodging	*1*

g. Village of North Collins	
Historic/Heritage	*12*
Dining/Eating Out	*7*
Tourism Related	*4*
Conf/Mtg Facility	*2*
Shopping/Retail	*2*
Cultural	*2*
Lodging	*1*
Natural Asset	*1*
Agricultural	*0*
Recreation	*0*

Within themes, tourism assets concentrate by type, led by several in the Historic/Heritage area (Historic Sites, Architectural Points of Interest, Cemeteries, Religious Sites). Restaurant/Bars or Eateries and Farm/Farm Retail venues follow as the most densely populated tourism cluster in the four-town area. The more specific tourism types – Holiday Events, Bakeries, Fishing Access points and Art Studios – have the fewest assets.

Table 4:

Distribution of tourism assets by tourism types (*in order from most to fewest*):

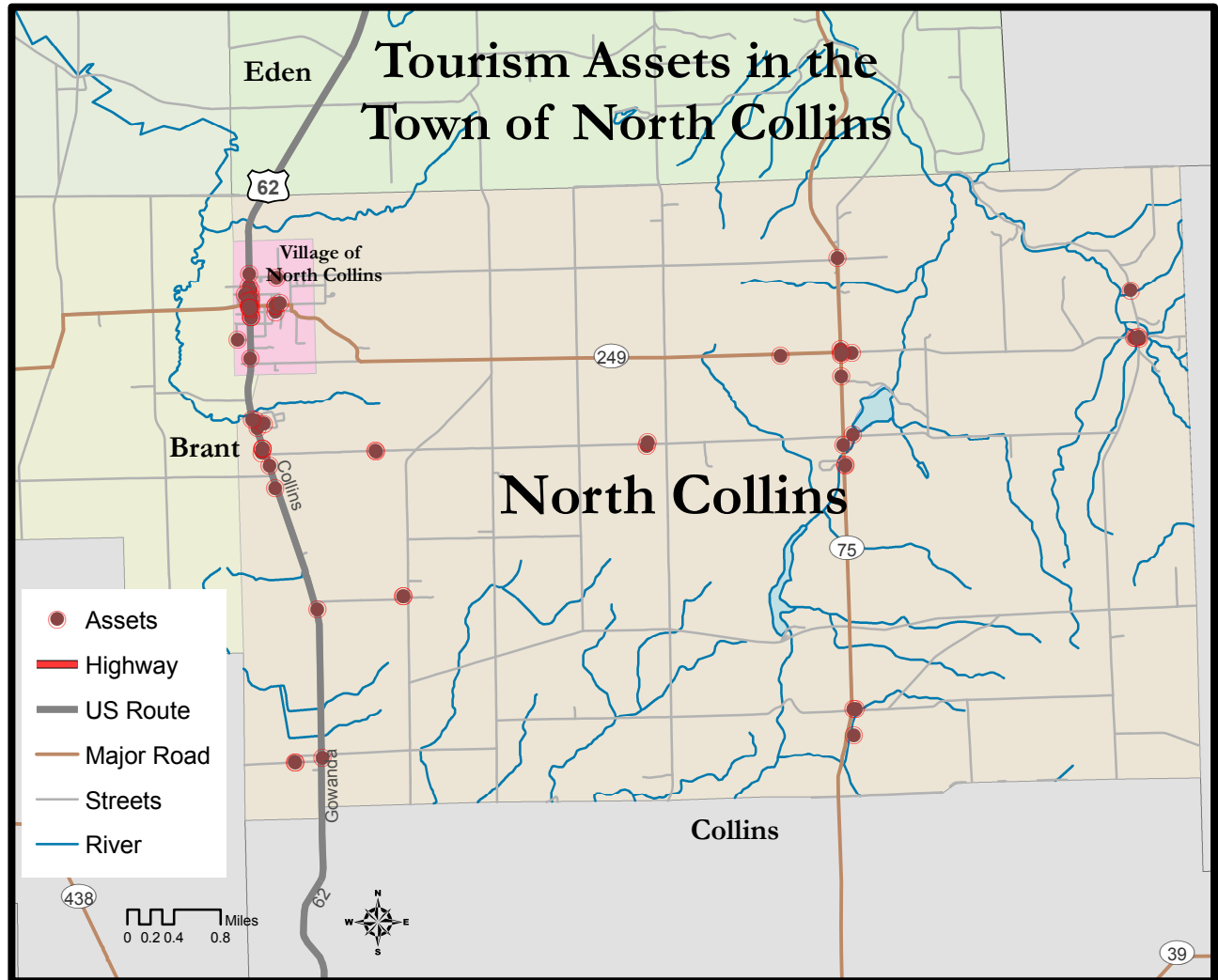| Type of Asset	# of Assets	Type of Asset	# of Assets
Historic Site	113	Automobile Show	4
Restaurant/Bar or Eatery	73	Retreat Center/Camp	4
Farm/Farm Retail	49	Gift Shop	4
Architectural Point of Interest	45	Ice Cream Stand	4
Cemetery	34	Library	3
Sports and Recreation Facility/Area	33	Arts and Crafts Event	3
Park	29	Campground	3
Community Event	29	Bingo	3
Religious Site	26	Golf Course/Driving Range	3
Private Residence	21	Business of Interest	3
Playground	16	Sports and Recreation Organization	3
Hotel/Motel	12	Fishing Access	3
Out of Business/For Sale	12	Tourism Organization	3
Banquet Hall/Conference Center	12	Agricultural Festival	2
Specialty Retail	11	Possibly Remove	2
Community Center	10	Arts/Cultural Organization	2
Gardens/Greenhouses	10	Movie Theater	2
Antiques	7	Holiday Event	2
Railroad History	7	Bakery	2
Nature Preserve/Nat. Res. Area	6	Historical Tour	2
Beach	6	Boating Access	2
Historical Organization	6	Fishing Service	1
Convenience Store	5	Second Hand Store	1
Equestrian	5	Art Studio	1
Music Event	5	Ethnic Festival	1
Museum	5	Recreational Retail/Services	1
Night Life	5		
Trails	4		

**Please note:* *Out of Business/For Sale* assets remain in the inventory only to preserve the record in the case that new ownership takes place or the business reopens. *Possibly Remove* assets – two cemeteries on private land – are kept in the database so as to be counted as Historic/Heritage assets but marked for possible removal in that they are on private property.*

Asset Mapping. Tourism assets for which GPS coordinates were collected (coordinates were not collected for events) are represented in the following series of maps to display the geographic distribution of assets across the four-town area (**Map 1**); and across the Town of North Collins and the Village of Angola as examples of smaller scale cluster maps (**Maps 2-3**). Also presented are maps of tourism assets categorized in four of the 10 tourism themes – Agricultural, Historic/Heritage, Shopping/Retail and Dining Establishments (**Maps 4-7**). These prototype maps, which display the distribution of larger groupings of tourism assets, are useful in portraying the general clustering of tourism assets across the four-town area, and reveal in broad terms the area's strengths and weaknesses in tourism. As visual representations of the area's tourism strengths and weaknesses, and the general concentration of various categories of tourism assets, these maps will serve as planning tools for Phase II of this initiative.
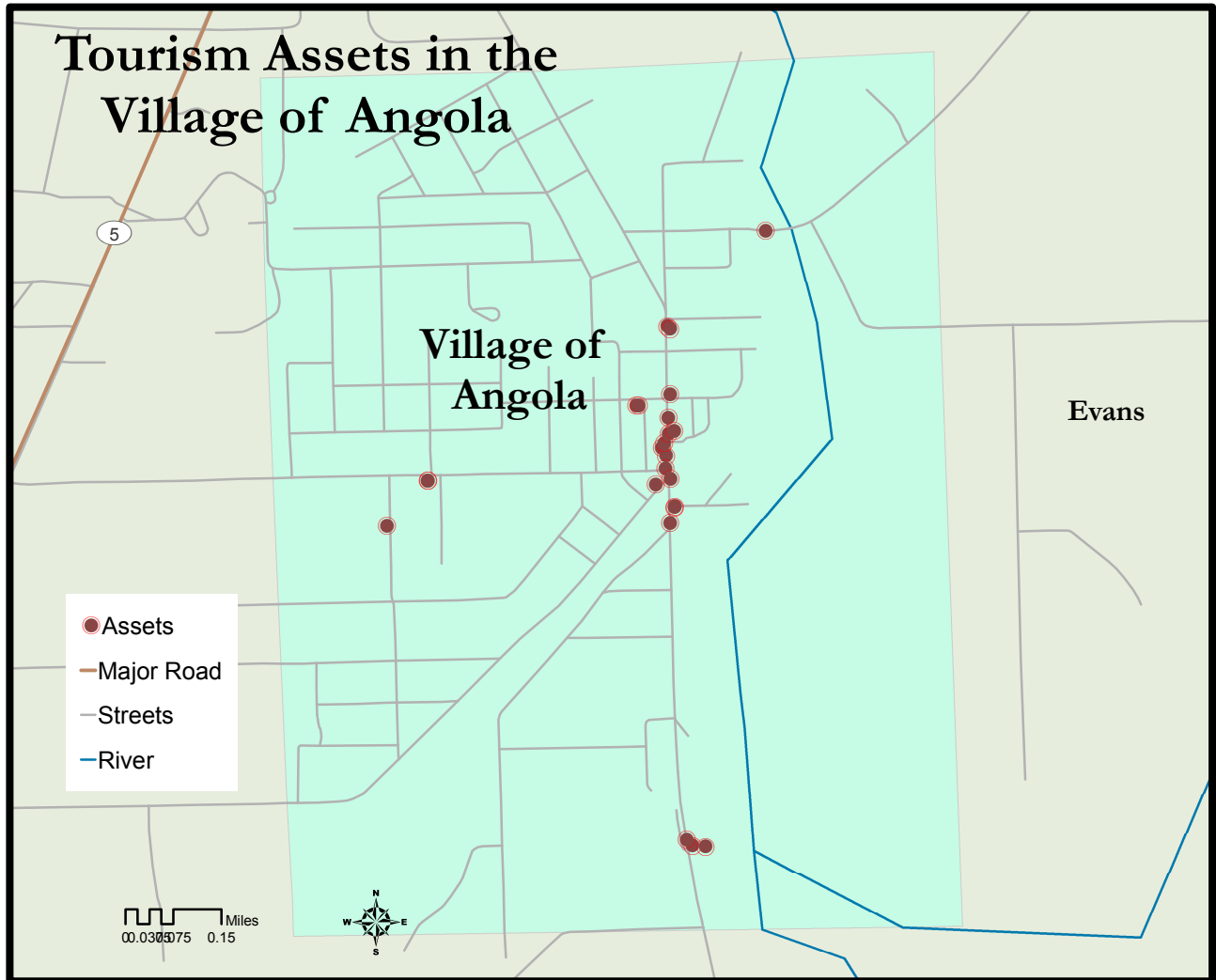
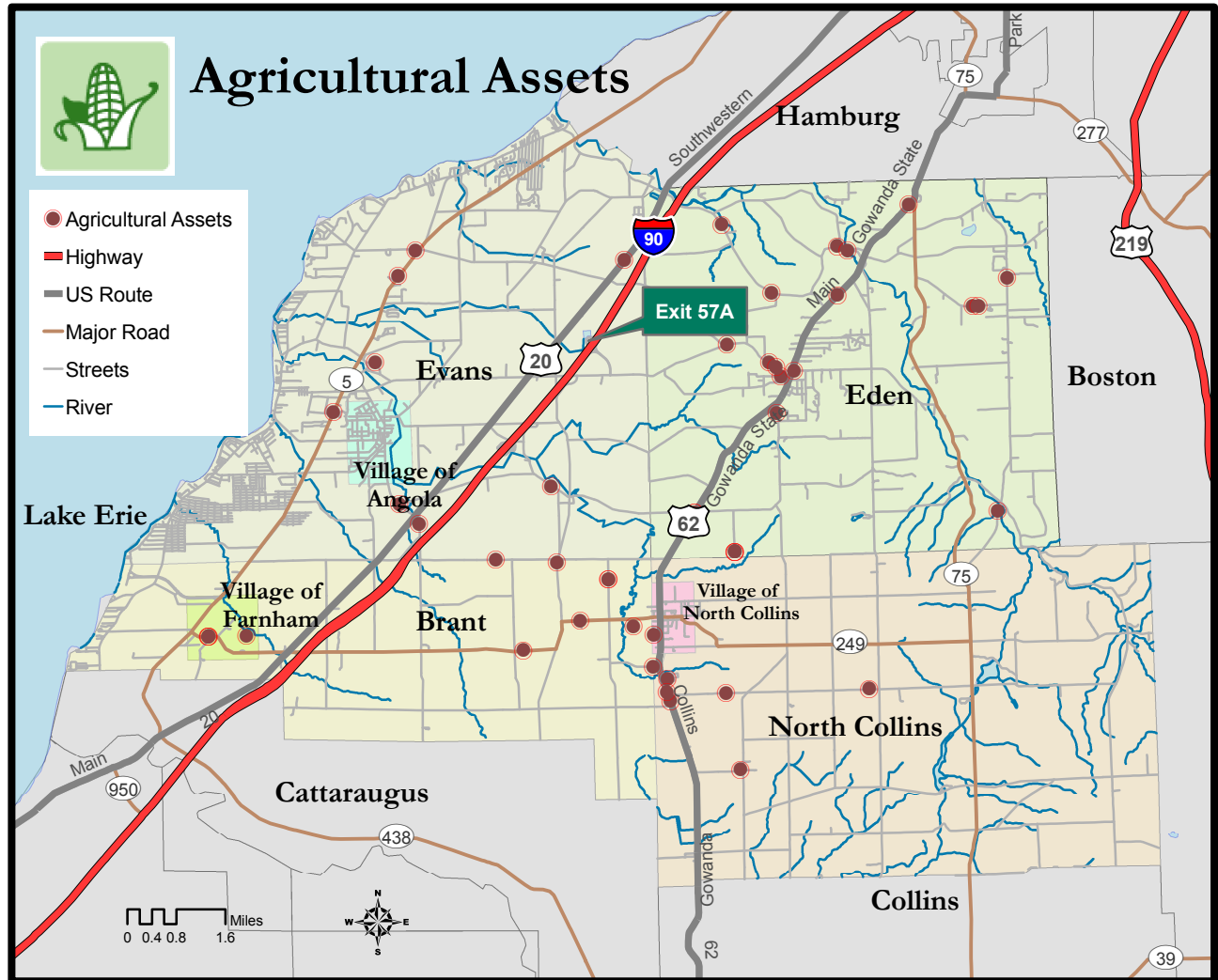# Map **1.** Representing **All Tourism Assets** in the **Seven Municipalities**

Tourism Assets in the Southtowns
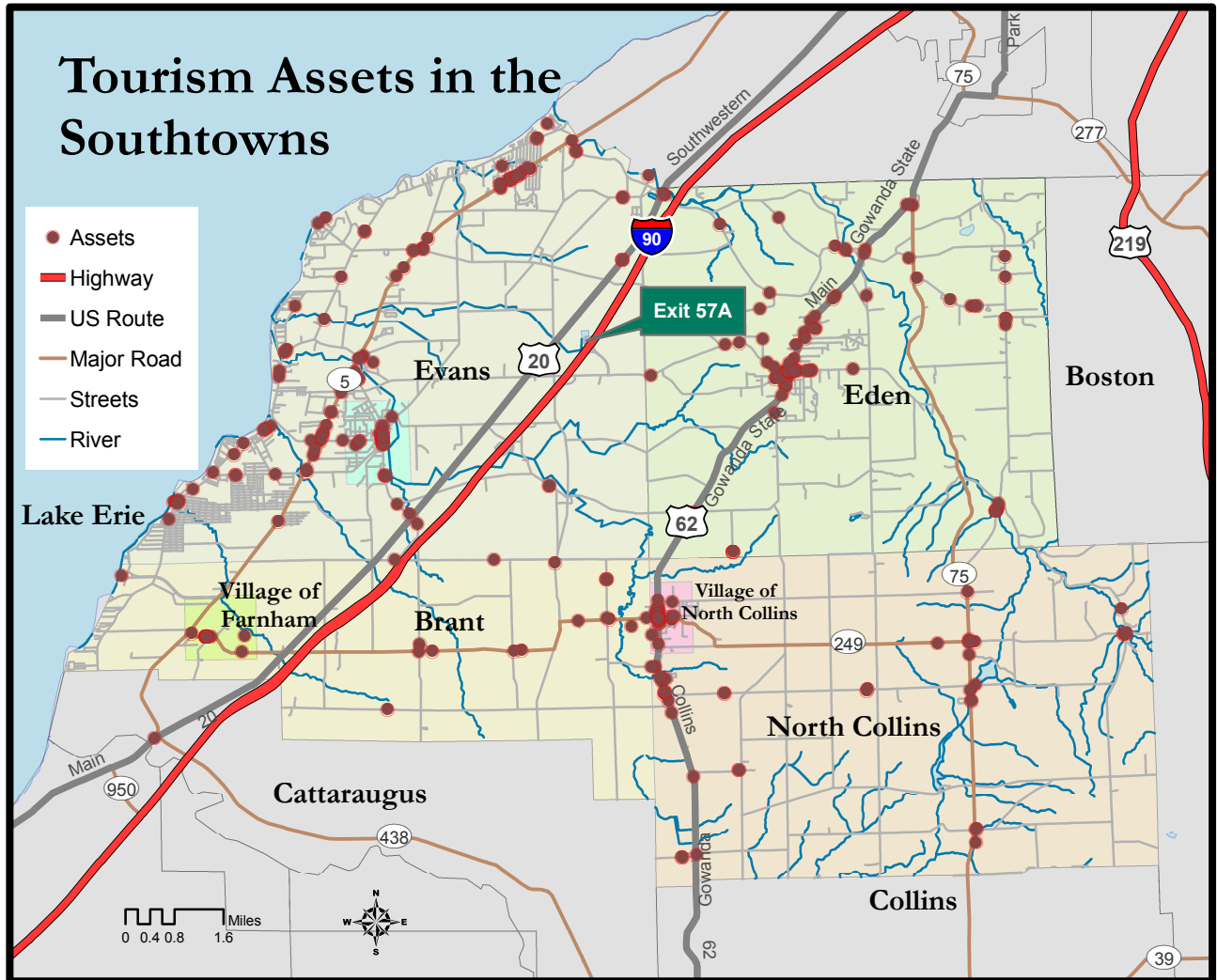
Map **2.** Representing **Tourism Assets** in the **Town of North Collins**

Map **3**. Representing **Tourism Assets** in the **Village of Angola**

Tourism Assets in the
Village of Angola

Village of
Angola

Evans

5

Assets
Major Road
Streets
River
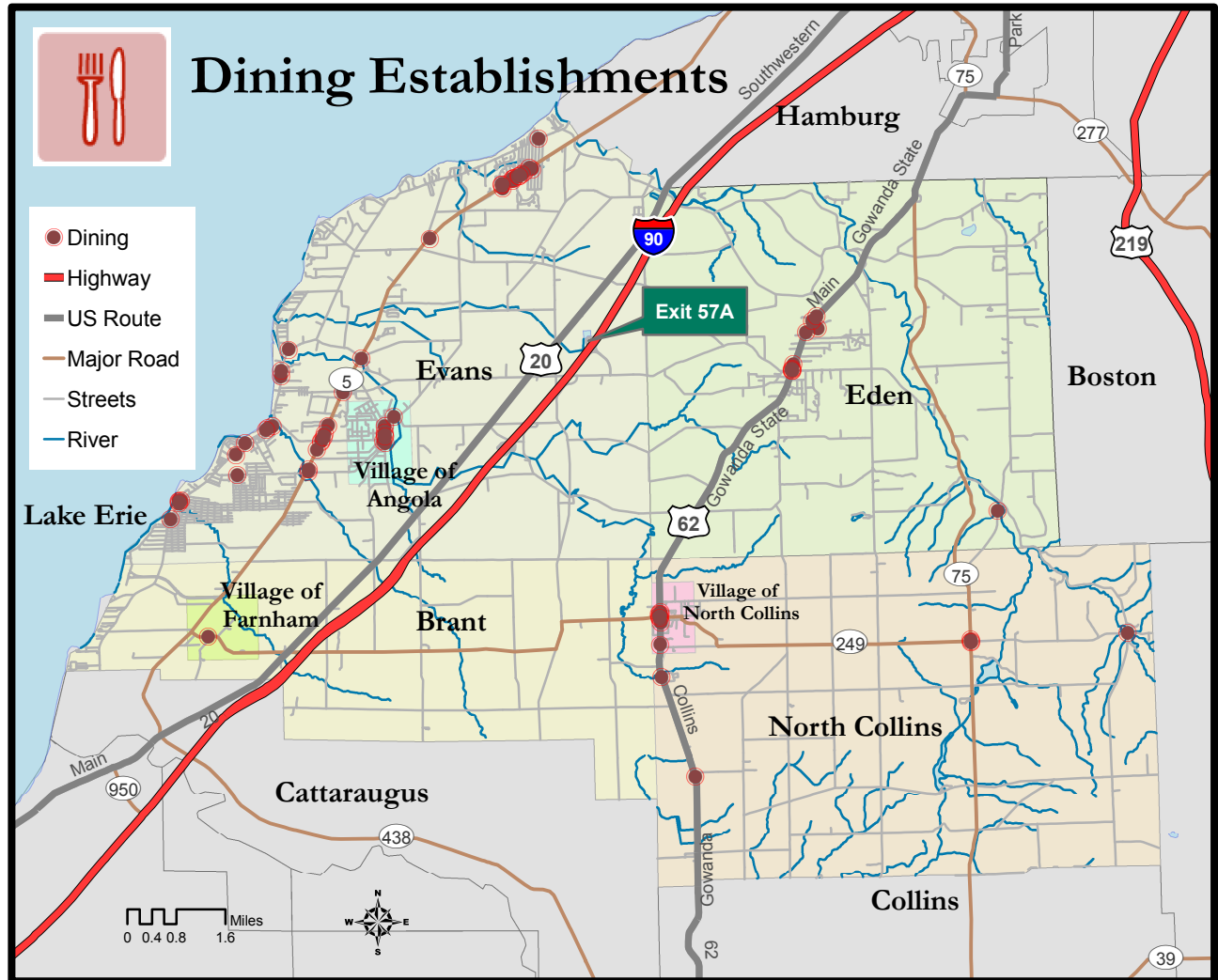
Miles
0 0.0375 0.075   0.15

N
W   E
S

Map **4**. Representing All **Agricultural Assets** in the Seven Municipalities

Map 5. Representing All **Historic/Heritage Assets** in the Seven Municipalities

Map 6. Representing All Dining Establishments in the Seven Municipalities

Map 7. Representing All Shopping/Retail Venues in the Seven Municipalities

Shopping/Retail Venues

Legend:
- Shopping
- Highway
- US Route
- Major Road
- Streets
- River

Hamburg

Exit 57A

Eden

Evans

Boston

Village of Angola

Lake Erie

Village of Farnham

Brant

Village of North Collins

North Collins

Cattaraugus

Collins

Miles
0 0.4 0.8 1.6

Proposed Tourism Development in the Southtowns Area. There are several proposed developments and ongoing initiatives related to tourism in the four-town area. Although not catalogued in this inventory, they are important to the area's tourism strengths and opportunities. These include:

Overlook Vista in the Town of Eden
Located at East Church Street, near Highland Avenue, this vista provides stunning views of the City of Buffalo, Lake Erie and Canada. Located on private property, Supervisor Glenn Nellis of the Town of Eden is seeking to acquire (or have donated) the land for public use.

Tourism Proposals in the Town of Brant
The Brant Preservation, Development and Revitalization Committee, formed in 2001, crafted a report (*Redevelopment Master Plan for the Town of Brant*) that proposes a 10-year plan for several tourism and economic development initiatives which would build on the unique character and strengths of Brant and its Village of Farnham, as well as the Cattaraugus Indian Reservation within its borders. The goals of the plan are to reverse the community's economic decline by creating agricultural and historical themed centers in the town. Specific proposals in the plan are: to refurbish the area's many historical sites and link them through trails, events and signage; preserve existing farmland and link these enterprises with tourism ventures including farm tours, retail stands, farmers markets and themed dining; build on the region's railroad history through a trolley tour; develop a school of agriculture; and secure public, private and nonprofit sector support for these initiatives.

Old Lake Shore Road Bike Path
The Town of Evans is pursuing the development of a multi-use recreational pathway along Old Lake Shore Road from Wendt Beach Park to Evans Town Park. Additionally, the town is seeking to expand the pathway from Evans Town Park to the Lake Erie Beach Park area, and to develop an extension along Lake Street from Old Lake Shore Road to Erie Road (Route 5).

Nickel Plate Railroad Depot (the existing depot has been inventoried as an historic site)
The Angola Depot Preservation Committee is working to form a railroad history museum in the large depot that once served as a stop on the Nickel Plate Line. The wooden depot is the last of its kind in the region.

Bluff's Project in the Town of Evans
In development for the Town of Evans is a grant for a passive recreation area on the bluffs off the Sturgeon Point Marina.

Inventors in the Town of Eden
Eden's history of entrepreneurs and inventors could be the basis for development of an historical museum in the town. Spencer Kellogg invented the Aries Press, which moved to the Town of Eden from Buffalo in the 1920s. Burt Hickman invented tortion air ride and tractor seat (most of his artifacts are in the Smithsonian museums or in the Hamburg Historical Society). Leland Richardson invented the outdoor grill.

Farm Museum in the Town of Eden
The Town of Eden recently (March 2005) conducted a feasibility study of developing a regional farm museum within the town. The report assesses Eden's strengths as a location for such a museum, offers a vision statement for the farm museum in the context of the town's and region's rural character and quality of life and economic development priorities. Finally, the report makes several recommendations for the location, focus and unique attributes of such a museum.

D. Next Steps

Beginning the Planning Process. The inventory is the first and foundational step to the Southtowns' broader Partnering for Tourism Development effort. It is primarily a planning tool. The initiative's next steps include the presentation of inventory findings to stakeholders at a public forum in early 2006, and more detailed assessment of inventory finding and of the area's tourism strengths, weaknesses and opportunities. With this inventory, the strong intermunicipal partnership among the seven municipalities, and their compelling vision to leverage tourism assets for economic development and improved quality of life, historic appreciation and agricultural and environmental preservation, the community has a strong basis on which to pursue strategic planning for tourism development. Such an effort should consider recommendations on strategies for asset development and visitor readiness, tourism marketing, and the improvement of infrastructure, including transportation and signage. In addition to the inventory, the planning effort should consult local and out-of-area best practices, stakeholder input, and existing municipal and regional planning documents such as comprehensive plans, farmland protection plans, waterfront revitalization plans, and strategies for economic development.

Further Defining the Scope and Purpose of Inventory. As the planning phase of the initiative progresses, new perspectives on the scope and purpose of the inventory may develop. The inventory is intended to be a dynamic tool that can adapt to the changing needs of the community. The community is encouraged to modify the inventory accordingly to better inform the planning process and, in the longer term, to adapt to new trends in tourism development, and to facilitate the development of new tourism tools such as visitor maps and brochures and a regional tourism Web site. The inventory should serve the community as a tool for the ongoing assessment of the area's tourism strengths, weaknesses and areas of opportunity, for tracking and analyzing venue performance data, and for supporting asset and resource protection.

Maintaining the Inventory. In transferring the database to the Southtowns Community Enhancement Coalition, it is essential that the communities commit to maintaining the accuracy and relevance of the asset database. Such a task requires the dedication of human and financial resources for data upkeep and for training in Microsoft Access to ensure a sustainable and self-sufficient program of database management and inventory advancement. Also, the Coalition is encouraged to designate a single entity, such as one of the municipalities or a specific office within that municipality, to coordinate the ongoing process of managing and maintaining the tourism asset inventory for all seven municipalities. Specific training in Microsoft Access should be pursued.

Appendix A

<u>Data Entry and Style Guidelines</u>

<u>Contact Information:</u>
- **Name:** name of the asset or title of the event. Franchises have their town name appended, e.g. "Subway - Eden", "McDonald's – Evans." Names that start with "The" are handled similarly to a library book, "Enchanted Glass Heart, The;" "Fox's Den, The."
- **Location** names reflect an affiliation with one of the four towns and, if applicable, one of the three villages; also included are physical and mailing addresses; telephone number/s; fax number; Web site address; e-mail address:
  - When entering the **physical address**, the entity is first designated as one of the seven municipalities and second as a more specific "hamlet" (if applicable). For instance, Graycliff is technically in the Town of Evans, but its "city" field in the database indicates "Derby." Business owners and venue contacts were given discretion in this reference to their location. (The drop-down menu for the seven municipalities should *not* be affected by this).
  - When an address is an intersection, it is indicated as the "Corner of X Street and Y Avenue" Corner is capitalized, and the major street is named first.
  - When entering street information for the mailing and **Physical Address**, all designations are spelled out, including North, South, East and West. Also, if the road has a Route #, this is put in parentheses after the road name. Hence: "555 Erie Road (Route 5)" or "4546 South Main Street (Route 62)."

- **Type of Organization** (Commercial; Government/Public; Individual Artist/ performer/vendor; Not-for-profit) – not indicated for historic sites or events
- **Asset Contact/s** – includes business owners, site managers and event coordinators. For parks, the government owner is listed as the contact; for historic sites and cemeteries, the Town/Village historian and other relevant contact are listed; for events, the event coordinator is listed.

<u>Descriptive Information:</u>
- **Narrative Description** – business owners and others contacted for data updates were asked to provide any unique descriptive information about their business or event. Otherwise, descriptive information was obtained from other resources including literature, municipal documents and field work observation.
- **Year Founded** – collected for businesses, organizations, events
- **Year Constructed** – indicated only if structure is historic.

<u>Operational Information:</u>
- **Event Date** – for regularly scheduled events such as festivals, parades and concerts
- **Schedule Description** – this allows for a more detailed description of the event schedule; for instance, the Eden Corn Festival occurs on the first full weekend in August. Months are abbreviated into three letters.

- **Hours of Operation** – entered for businesses and as further detail for events. The following is the format used for entering such data: "*Mon-Thurs: 9am-6pm; Sun: 9am-4pm.*" All days of the week are abbreviated ; there are no periods on am, pm. Exception: When an event occurs regularly on a certain day of the week, it is spelled out - e.g., Mondays 7pm-9pm.
- **Fees –** collected only where applicable (largely for events or for business that host tours); the field is left blank if the entry is a business/venue that wouldn't typically charge fees.
- **Parking capacity –** described generally as "street parking," or "parking lot," and left blank if status is unknown.
- **Disability Access** – self reported by business owners or observed during process of field work; text field indicates extent of accessibility (whether there are ramps or parking slots or accessible restrooms).

Performance Data:
- **Annual Attendance** – attendance figures to regular events and, where possible, to other venues.
- **Number of Paid Staff** – many family-owned businesses are designated as such, rather than count family members as paid staff.
- **Number of Volunteers** – data collected where applicable; left blank if there are none.

Digital Information:
- **GPS Coordinates** - collected for all venues through the use of handheld GPS units. These were not collected for events and for some assets added too late in the process. These coordinates are maintained separately in the software program Arc GIS, which the Institute employed to map the assets.
- **Image/Photo** – one per entry, with photo credits. Image was obtained for all venues and events where possible. Many summer, spring and winter events do not have photographs, which will need to be added at the point of the event. Some assets added late in the process do not have images.

Database Administrative Information:
- **Administrative Notes** – Represents relevant administrative notes about the asset.
- **Image or Photo Taken** (checkbox) – indicates whether the asset has a photograph
- **Record Complete:** Indicates record has been satisfactorily completed according the scope of this initiative (and is accurate as of December 16, 2005).

Other Special Circumstances and Database Guidelines and Standards:
- For Private Residences, the Hours are noted as "Private residence; drive-by only." Organization is "Other," and Parking is left blank.
- If a mailing address exists for an abandoned cemetery (for instance, if there is a cemetery association attached), this is listed as the mailing address; otherwise an address is not included. The contacts for these cemeteries are the Town/Village historian and the cemetery association contact, if applicable.
- If the cemetery is affiliated with a church, and it's not at the church address, the church address is listed as mailing address. The church is always listed as the contact for those church-affiliated cemeteries.

- Parks do not have a mailing address, only contact names and information; historic sites do not have a mailing address; the Town/Village historian and their phone number are listed as contact information;
- For events, Town or Village sponsored events have the Town Hall or Village Hall as the mailing address; other church or nonprofit sponsored events have that nonprofit as a contact.

Appendix B

Comprehensive Listings of Tourism Assets:

- **Town of Brant**
- **Village of Farnham**
- **Town of Eden**
- **Town of Evans**
- **Village of Angola**
- **Town of North Collins**
- **Village of North Collins**