



Visitor Assessment
Oak Harbor, Washington

Tourism is an economic development activity

The object is to have people come, spend money, then go home

90% of tourism industry businesses are small businesses.

83% of tourism spending is by visitors with annual household incomes of \$70,000 plus.

Tourism is the nation's fastest growing and the third largest industry at \$555.2 billion in visitor spending - each year.

A tourism-friendly city will spawn non-tourism industries faster than others

Tourism does not only include "leisure travel."

What are we doing and why?



Tourism is all about money.

The idea is to import more than you export.

In Washington tourism is an \$11 billion industry

Island County ranks 18th of the 36 counties in tourism spending

Tourism spending in Island County was \$108.4 million (2002)

San Juan County (#17): \$110.8 million

Cowlitz County (#19): \$97.1 million

Increase in spending - Island County: 3.3%

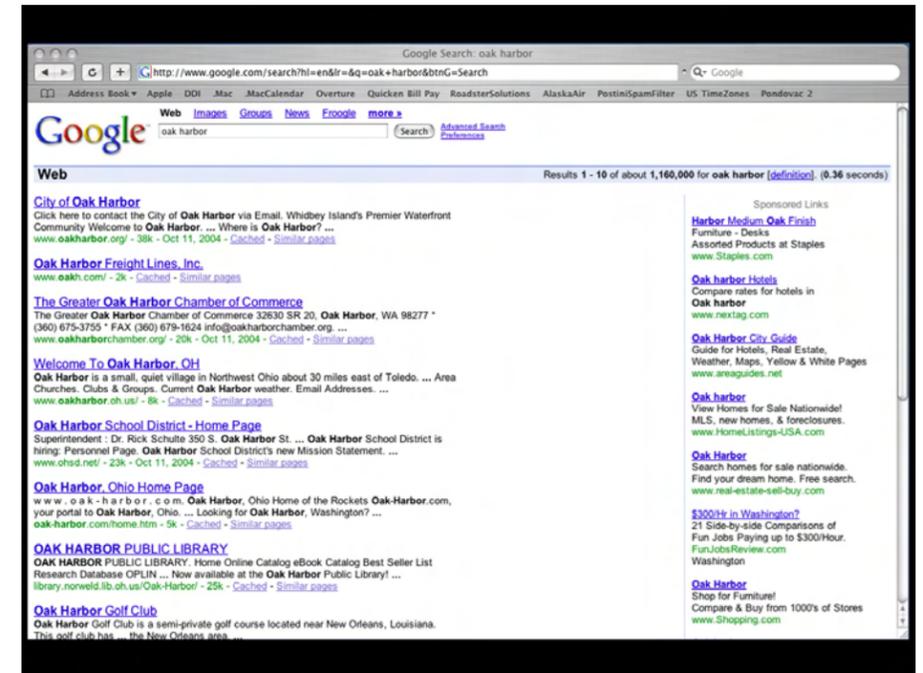
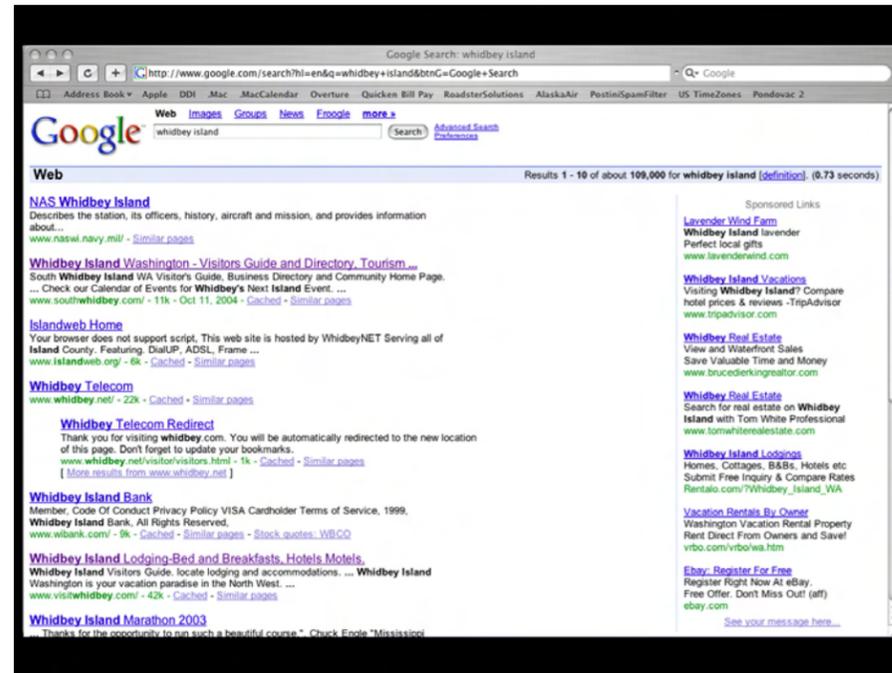
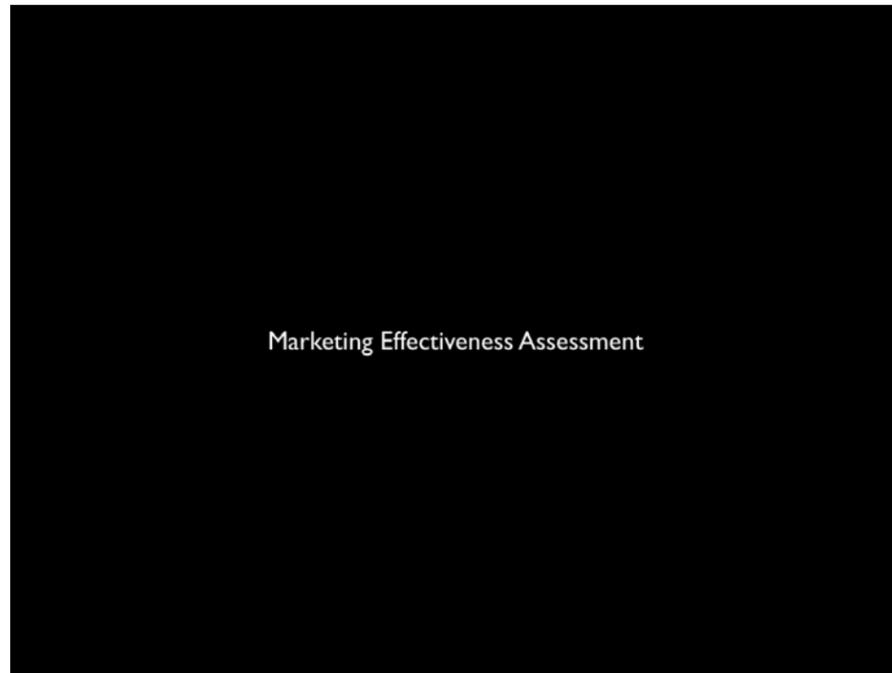
Increase in spending - Washington: 4.7%

Where is the money spent:

- 1. Lodging \$14.9 million
- 2. Food & beverages \$37.6 million
- 3. Shopping \$21.8 million
- 4. Recreation/enter. \$21.2 million
- 5. Groceries, fuel, etc. \$12.9 million

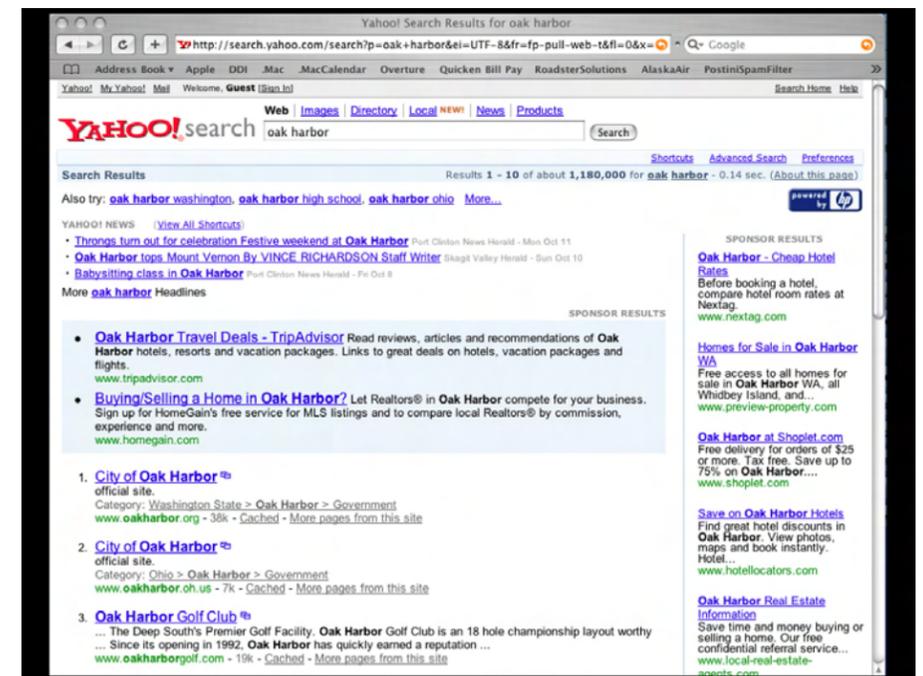
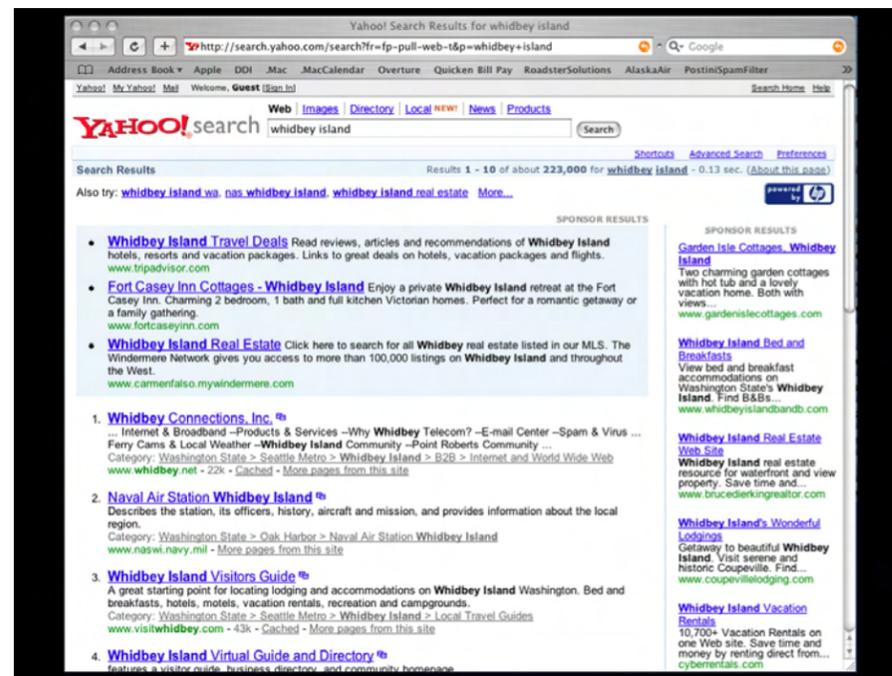
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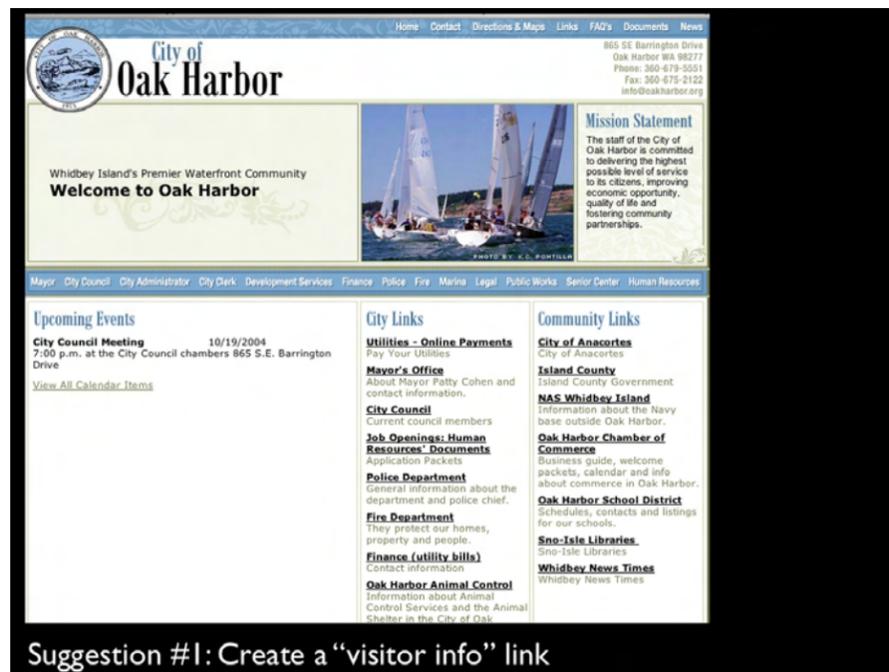
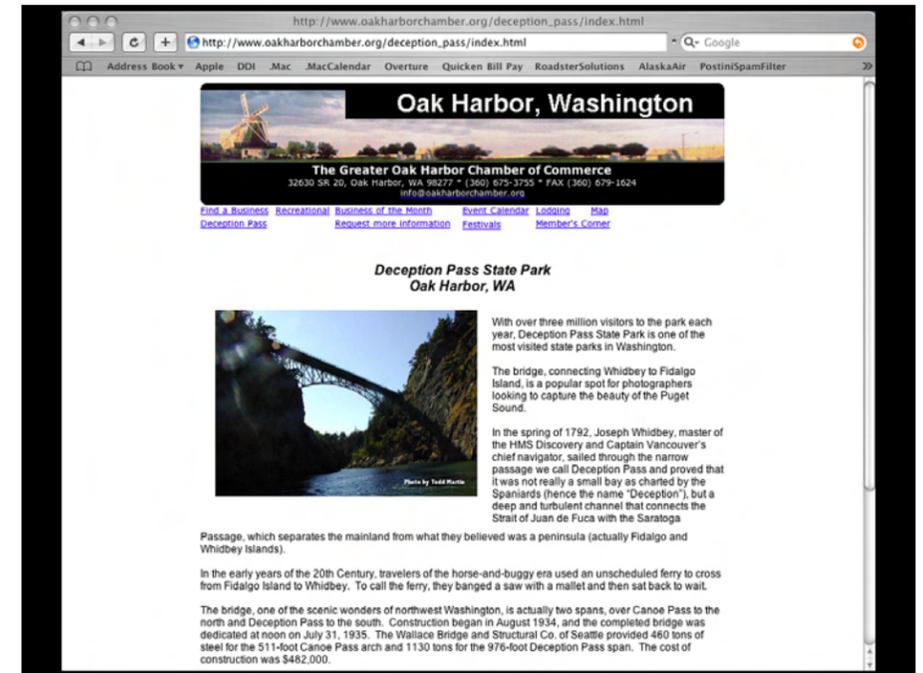
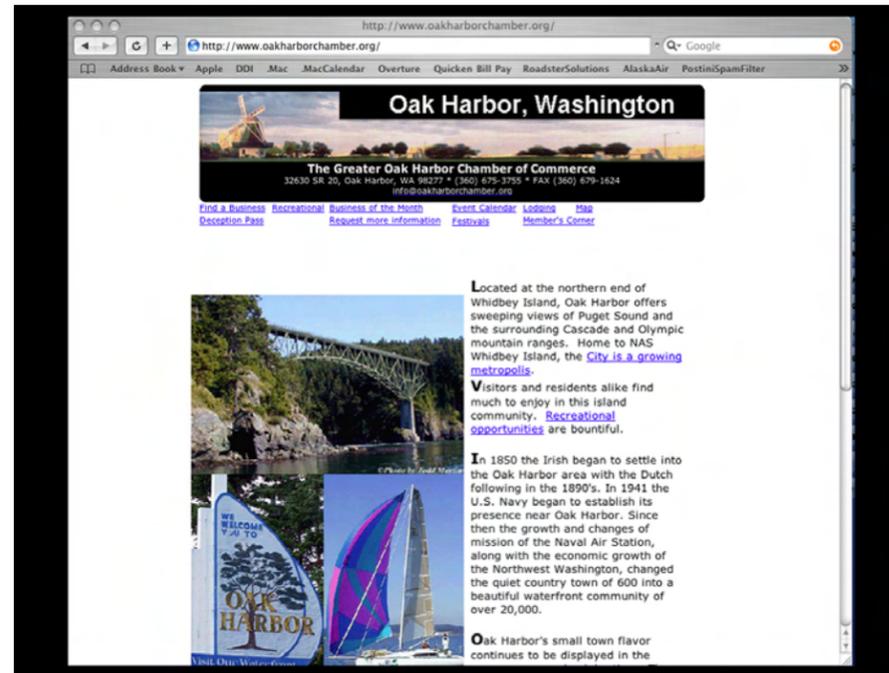
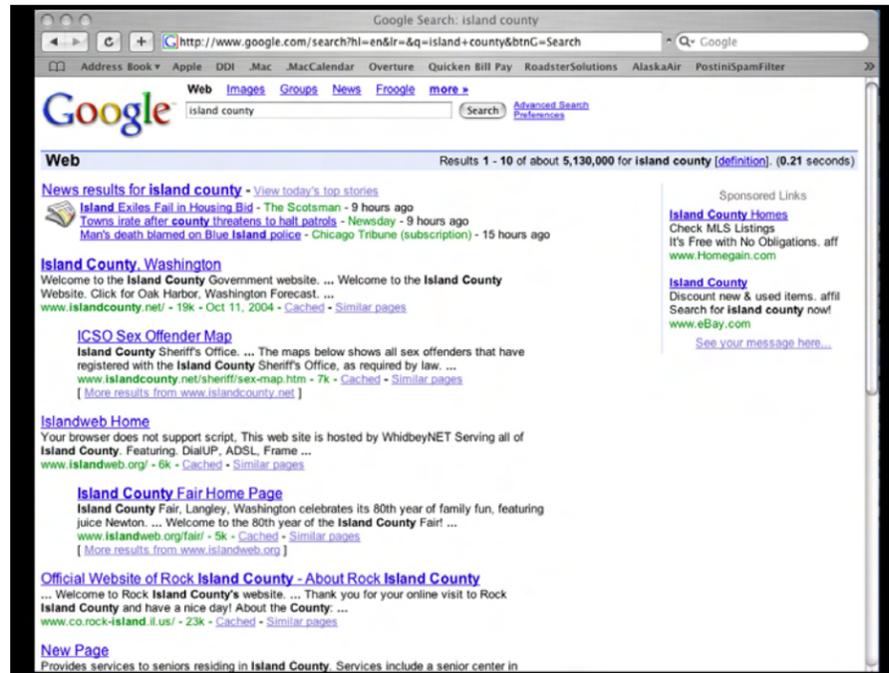
1. Visitor Assessment Findings & Suggestions
2. Interviews with local and regional stakeholders
3. Research and review of past and current studies and efforts
4. Additional interviews and site visits
5. Preparation of the Action Plan:
 - Branding initiatives
 - Product development
 - Marketing
6. Review and feedback
7. Presentation of the final plan



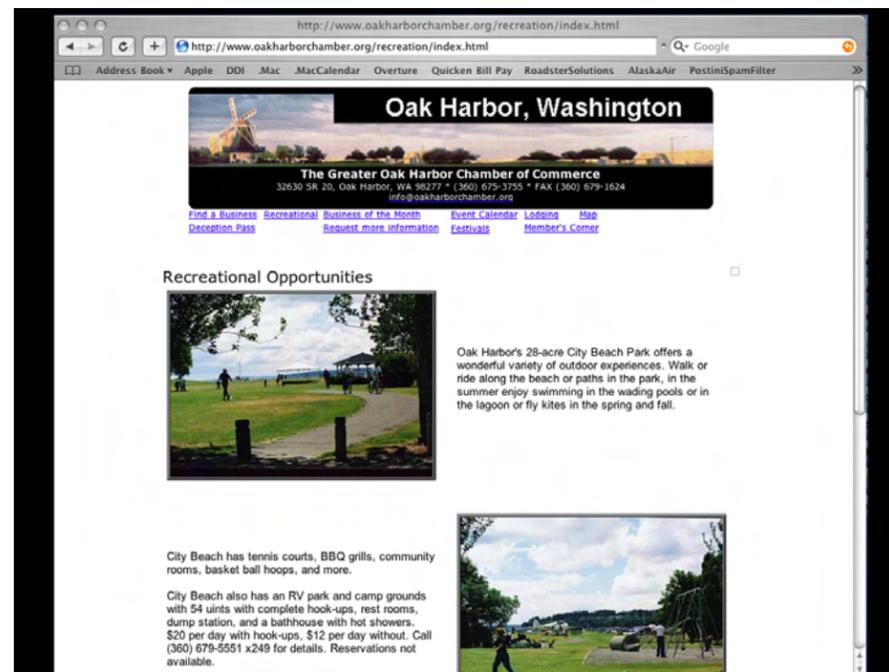
Let Your Fingers Do the Walking
The rule of websites

- 68% of households have immediate web access
- 94% use the internet as their primary travel resource
- 68% have difficulty finding what they are looking for
- 76% find on-line advertising a major nuisance
- 38% will pay up to 20% more for customized products, services, & upgrades





Suggestion #1: Create a "visitor info" link



What to do:

Make sure your marketing materials are good enough to close the sale

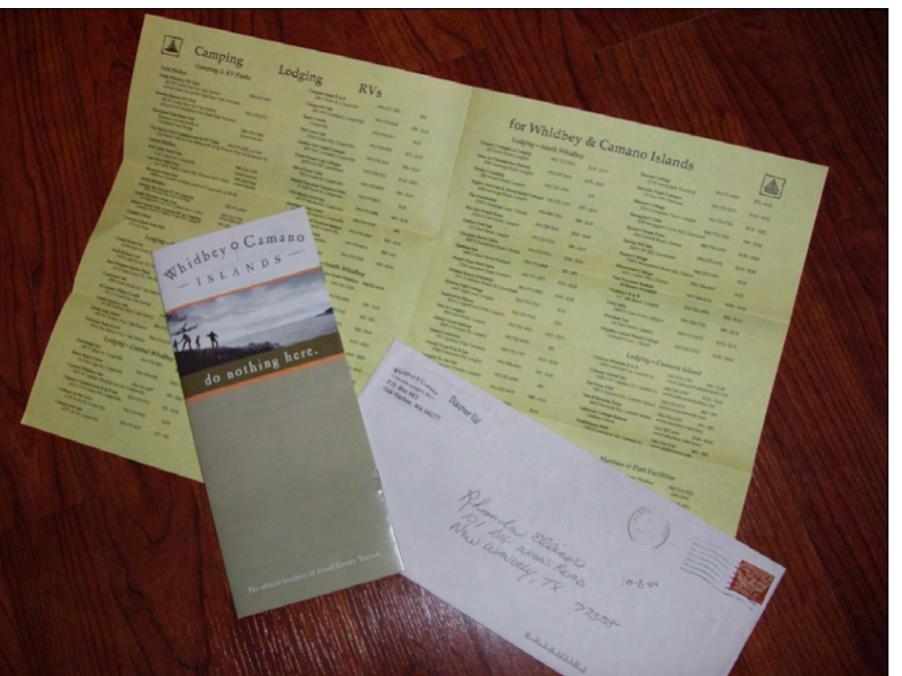
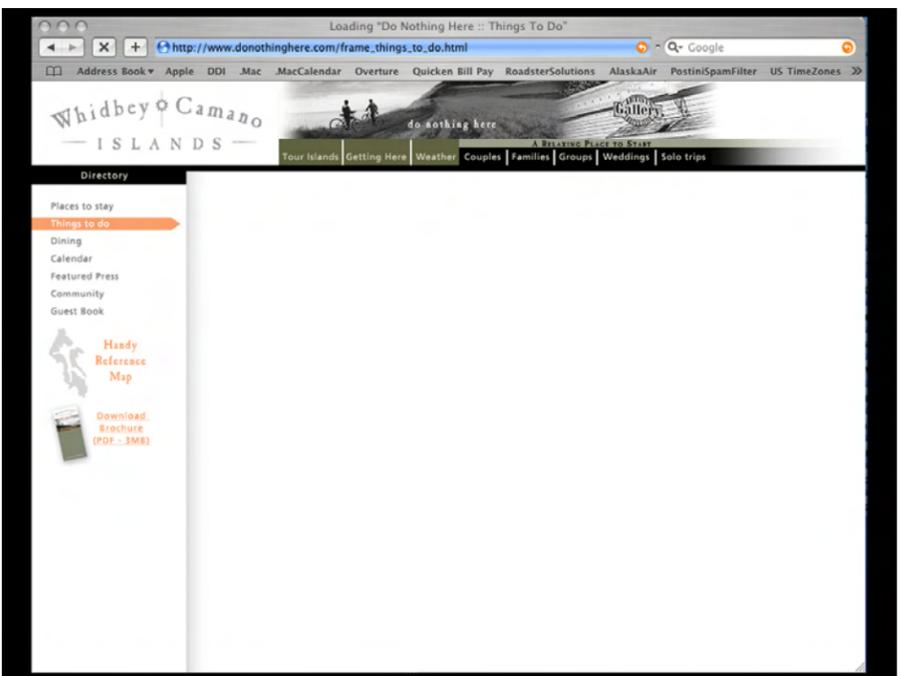
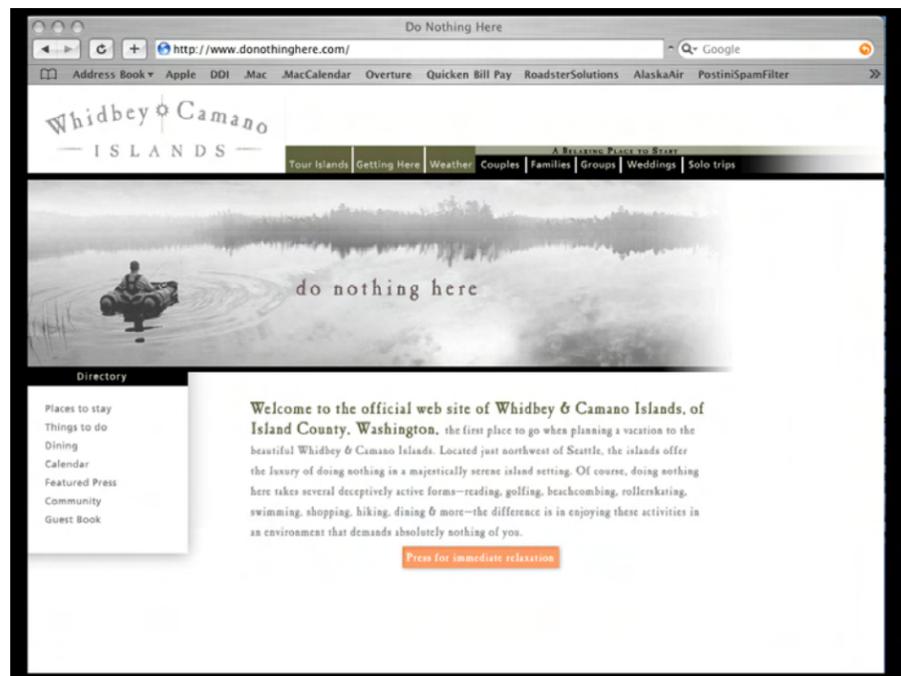
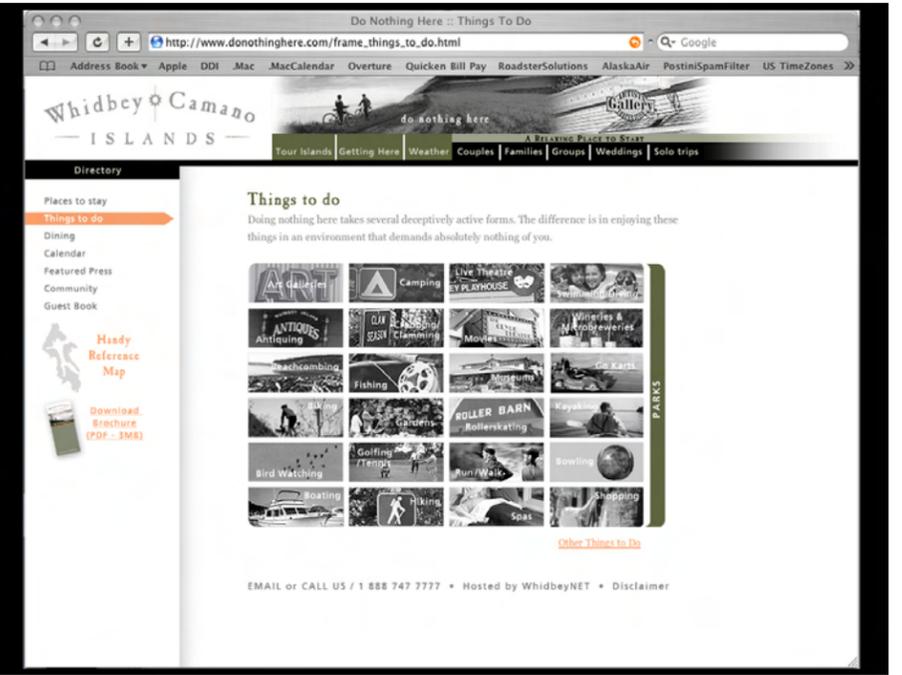
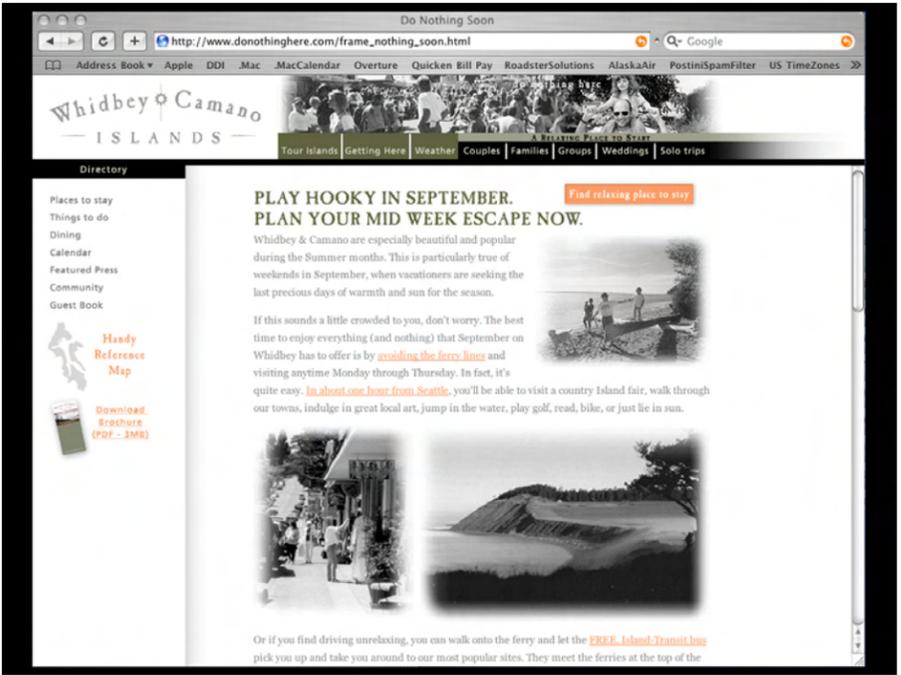
- This includes your website
- Check out others. How do you stack up?

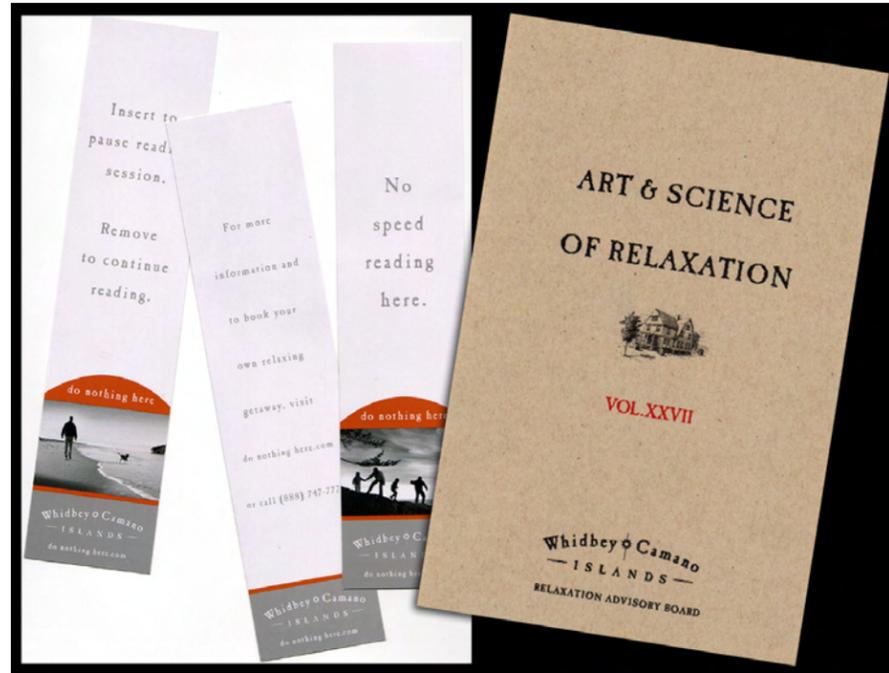
- How's your distribution program?

- What image do your materials portray?
- Empathy: Do they make you want to go there? (If you had a choice)

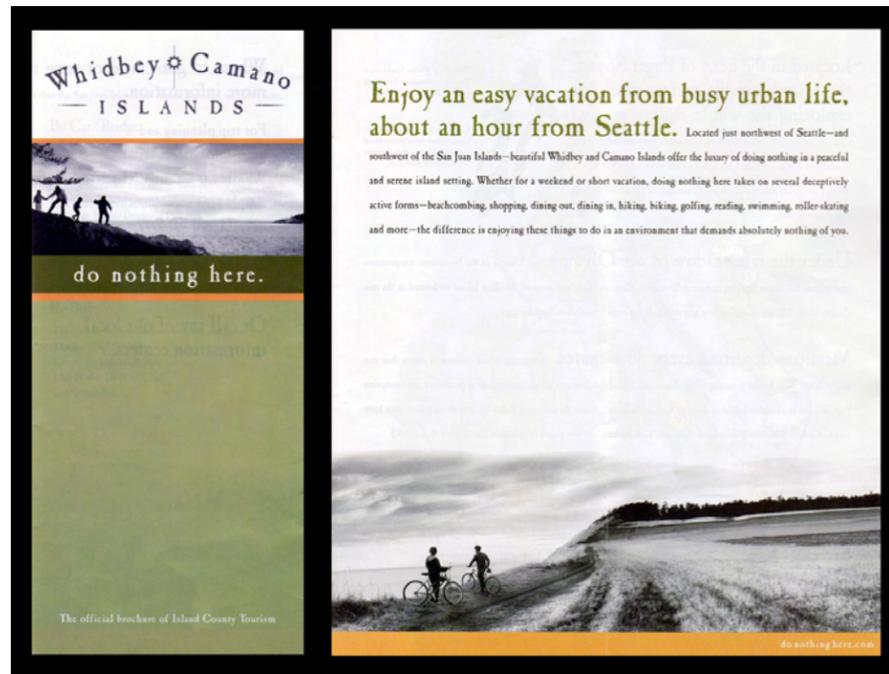
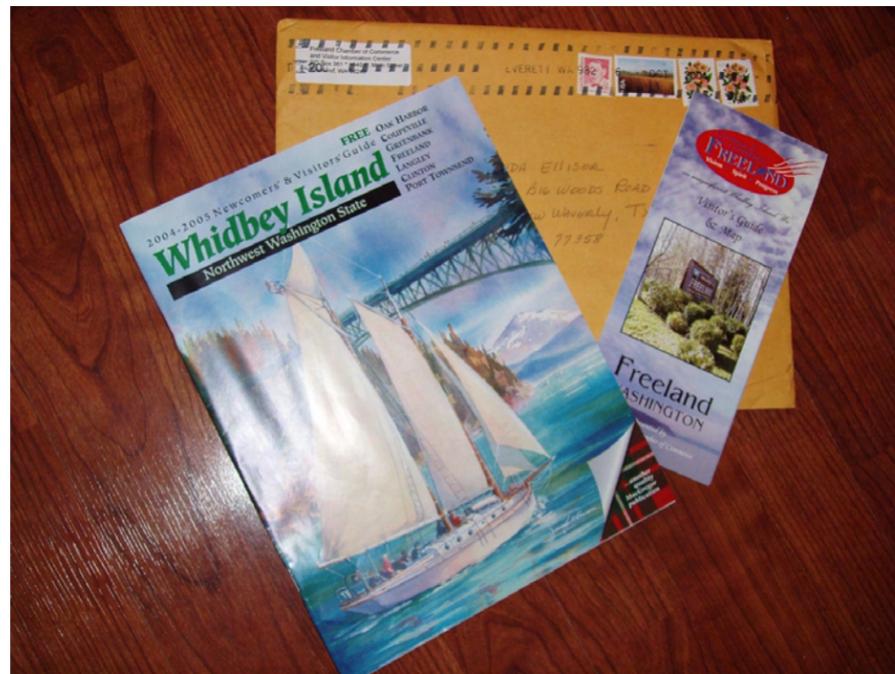
- Does the top 3" of your brochure jump in a rack full of other brochures?

- Nothing sells tourism as well as photography





- Far to urban - not a fit for Whidbey Island
- Do nothing here - VICs apologetic, terrible campaign slogan
- Black & white materials - no visual appeal or pull
- Too generic, combines Camano Island and Whidbey as one destination
- Cutsey, but does not close the sale
- Text too small, site hard to read, no pull into the site



Marketing effectiveness: [on a scale of 1 to 5]

Internet visibility:	
Oak Harbor	5
Whidbey Island	2
DoNothingHere	0
Internet ability to close the sale:	
Oak Harbor	2
Whidbey Island	2 (other communities)
DoNothingHere	2
In-person contact:	
Oak Harbor	2
Whidbey Island	4 (other communities)
Marketing materials:	
Oak Harbor	2
Whidbey Island	1
DoNothingHere	1

Overall ability to close the sale: 2
Actual drawing power of the community: 2
Actual drawing power of the island: 4+



Suggestion #2: You MUST sell the whole package



The park is a terrific amenity, but not the primary draw to the island.

- Far too generic - provide specifics
- Too much stuff, not enough info
- Need professional photography - “wow” photography
- Separate Camano Island from Whidbey Island



Suggestion #3: Create and use a professional photo library

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic downtown • Fine restaurants • A variety of lodging options • Theater and/or music • Specialty shopping • Antiques • Galleries • Museums • Lakes, rivers or beach nearby • Trails and trail systems • Hiking and biking • Special events • State parks nearby • Wineries • Camping • Fishing • Golf • Kayaking • Outdoor recreation 	<p>What town is this?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Friday Harbor Bellingham Blaine Mt. Vernon Anacortes LaConner Ferndale Ocean Shores Walla Walla Olympia Port Townsend Poulsbo Tacoma Seattle Spokane Yakima Oak Harbor
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Find your niche and promote it like crazy

- Don't be all things to all people!
- Don't copy others - unless they're at least 500 miles away
- Remember: "outdoor recreation," wineries, golf, old west, and Bavarian are the most overused marketing themes.
- If you don't have something - create it.

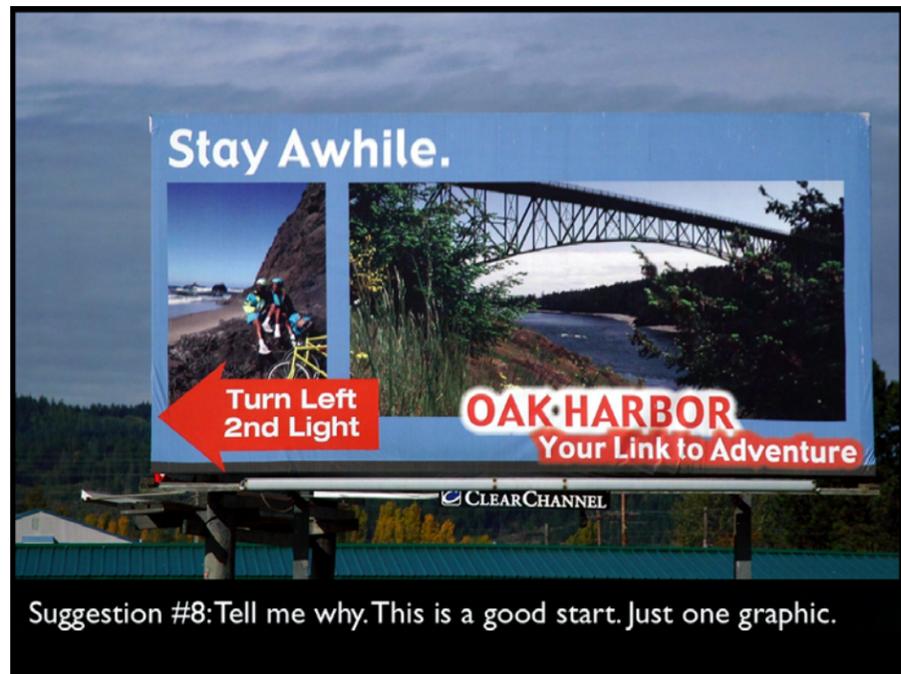
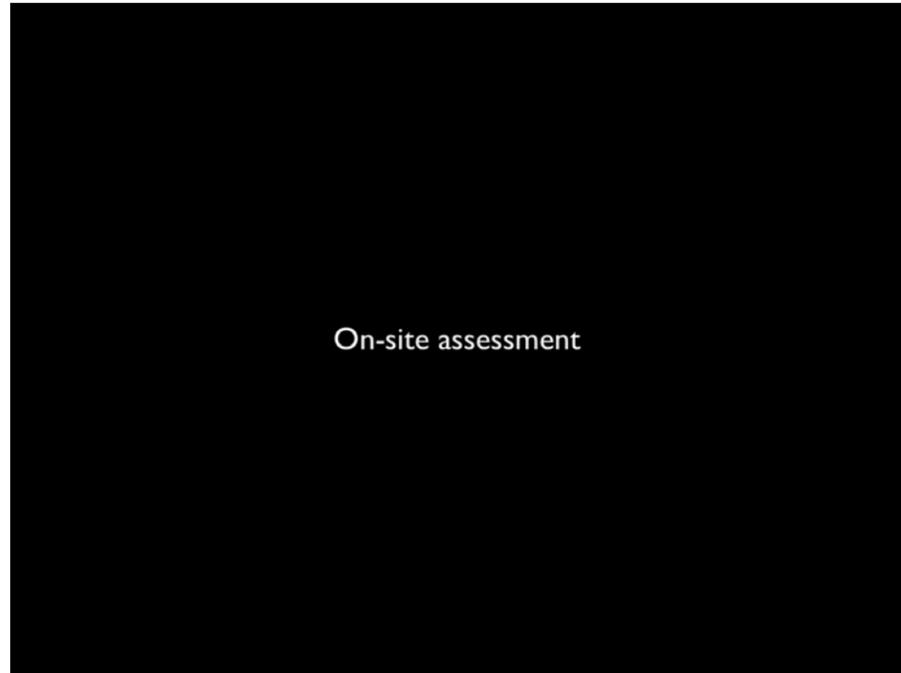


JETTISON THE GENERIC

Suggestion #7: Provide specifics - not generalities

Own a word in the mind of the customer

<p>WORD GAMES</p> <p>Vehicles:</p> <p>Safety - Volvo</p> <p>Driving - BMW</p> <p>Products:</p> <p>Cavities - Crest</p> <p>Services:</p> <p>Overnight - FedEx</p>	<p>Avoid the Generic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discover • Explore • We have it all • The 4 season destination • The center of it all • Gateway • Outdoor recreation • Escape • Adventure headquarters • Start your adventure here
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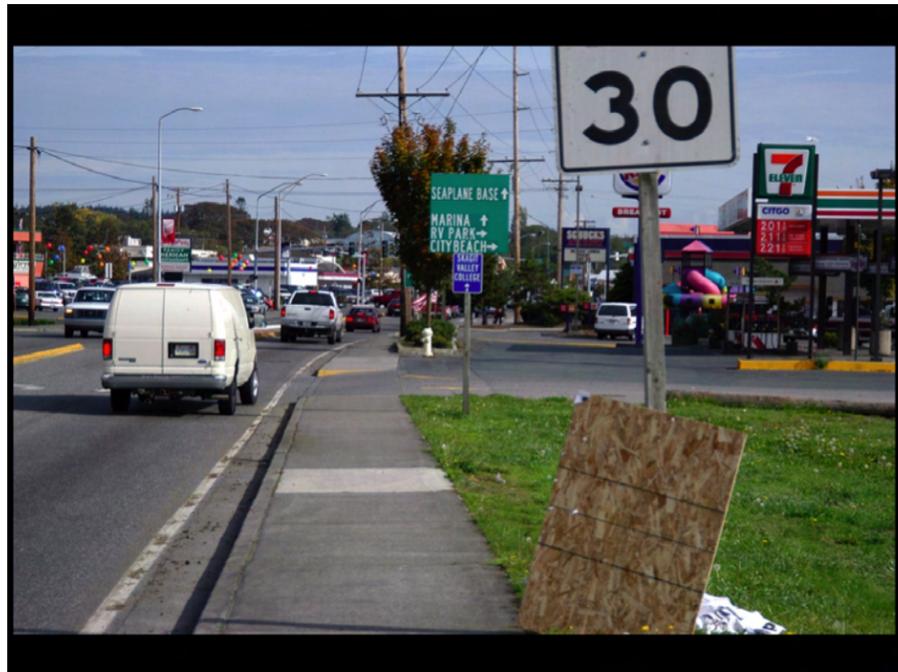


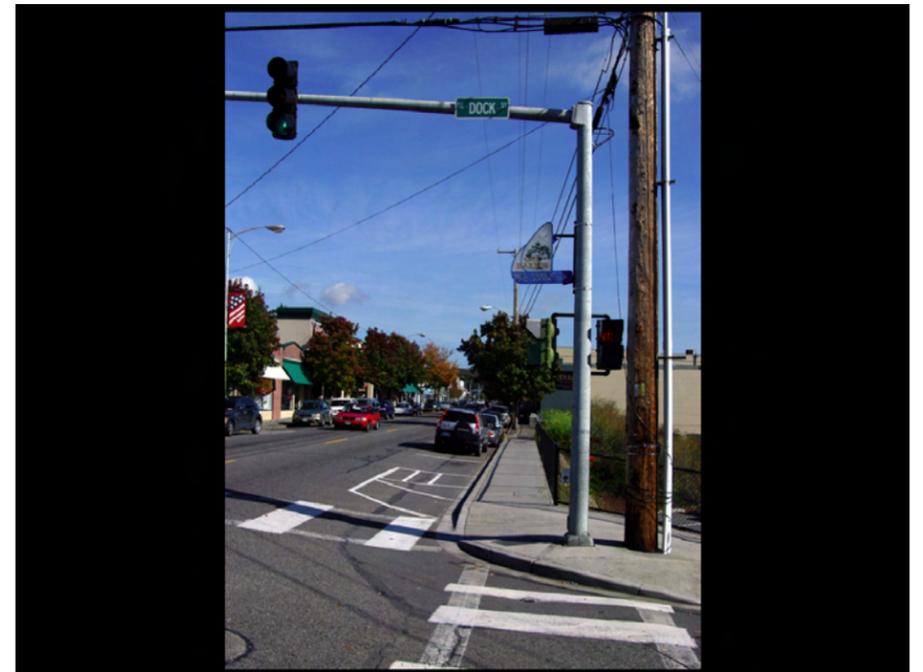
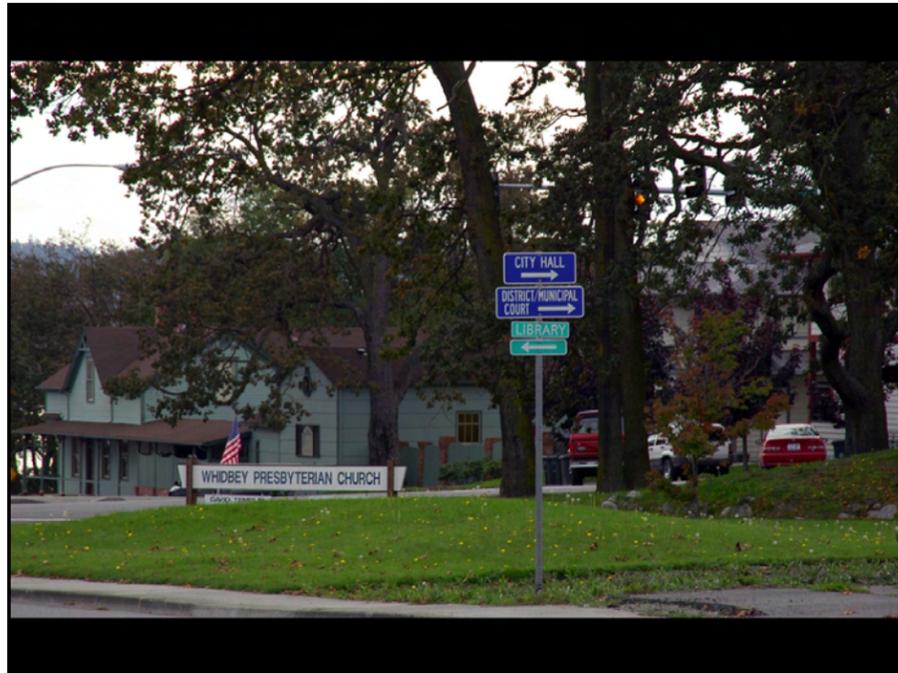
Suggestion #8: Tell me why. This is a good start. Just one graphic.



Suggestion #9: Consider painting the Oak Harbor blue









There were no signs to:

- Visitor information
- Downtown shopping district
- Waterfront park(s)
- Fort Casey and other major attractions
- Theater, other amenities, visitor services
- Golf, other beaches and parks...
- Public restrooms



Suggestion #10: Develop and implement a Gateway, Signage & Wayfinding Action Plan

- Wayfinding
- Gateways & entries
- Attractions
- Amenities
- Billboards and marketing displays

- Less than 5% of visitors stop at visitor information centers - IF they can find that!



Since you've got them, flaunt them!



Open for public play?
Suggestion #11: Redevelop the sign so it's readable



No visitor information about the area at the course.



Suggestion #12: Add visitor information to these panels



Suggestion #14: Work with Island Transit. Visitor information?



Suggestion #13: Make this an Eagle Scout project. Plexiglas covers with hinges, visitor information.



Suggestion #15: Build a number of these and spread them around the area:

- At the Chamber office
- 2 or 3 in City Beach Park
- In mall area parking lots
- At Deception Pass
- Downtown (Pioneer Way)



Suggestion #16: Add visitor information to these panels or install a information kiosk here as well



The visitor information center is far too easy to miss



Suggestion #17: See if State Parks will allow a brochure holder on park fee-station or interpretive signs



Suggestion #18: Work with WaDOT to get visitor info signage



Suggestion #19: Change the sign header to Visitor Info



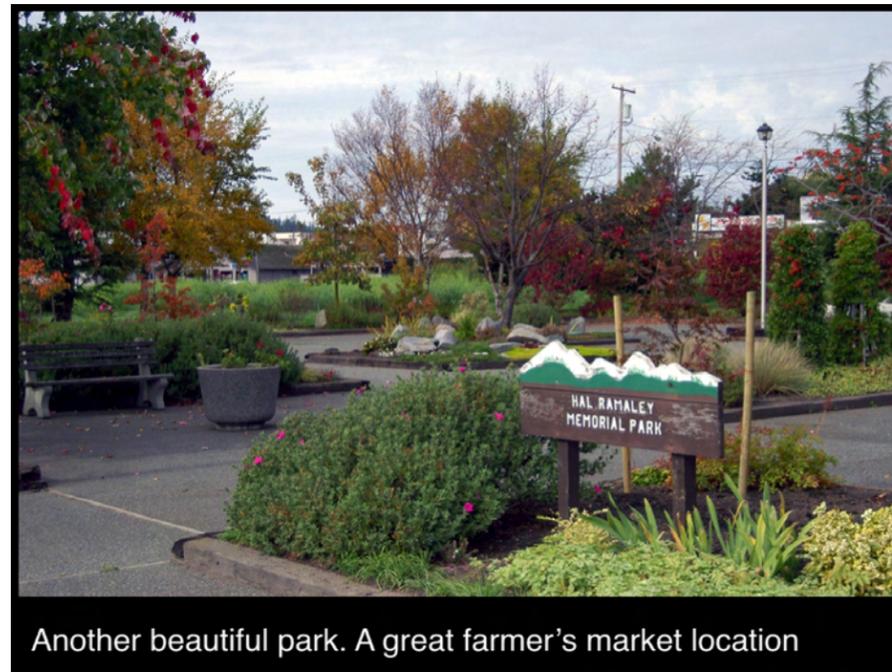
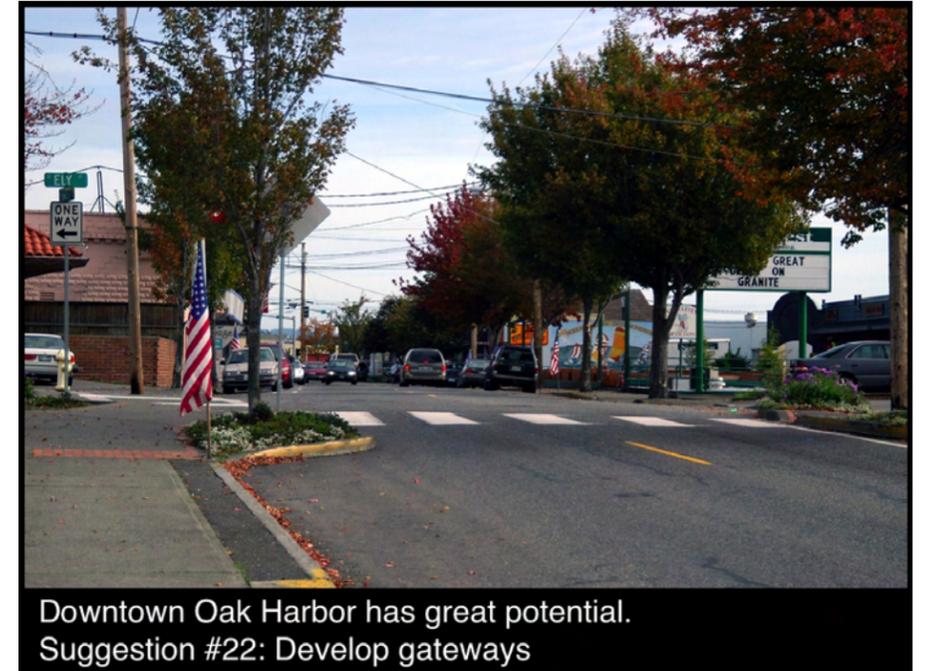
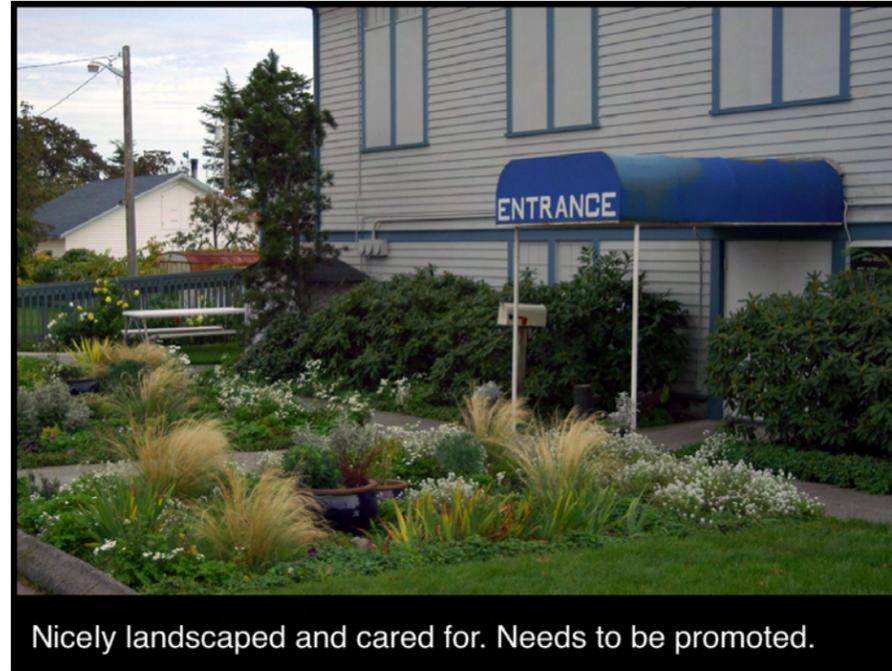
Possibly another great location for a visitor information kiosk at the gateway to the downtown shopping district



Suggestion #20: Add to sign, move to front or light the area



The waterfront park(s) are excellent. A terrific amenity.





Suggestion #23: Develop an architectural theme



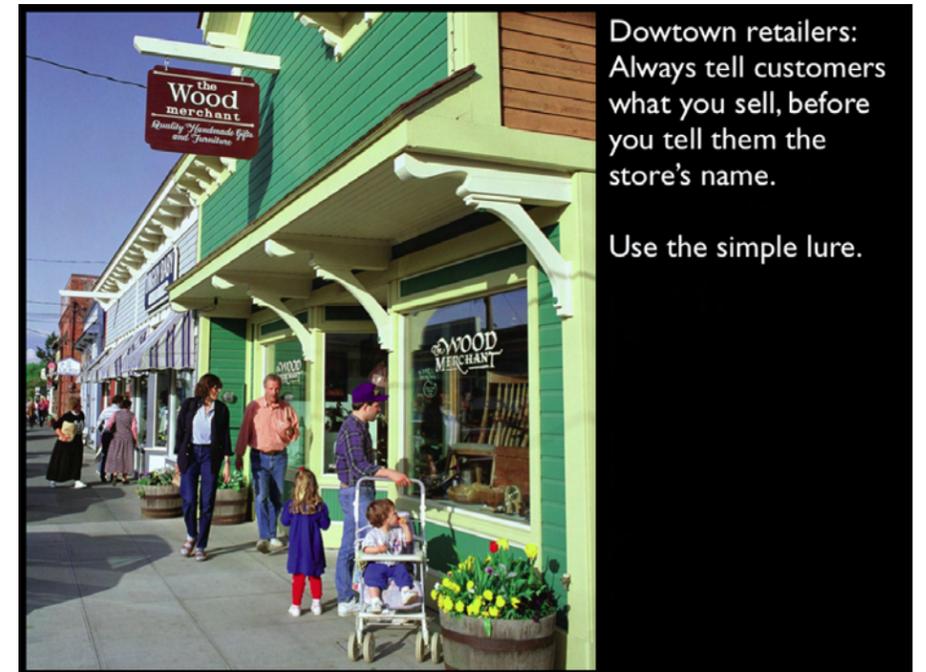
Suggestion #25: ...or Dutch Harbor Village



Suggestion #24: Give it a distinct name: Oak Harbor's Seaport Village, Regatta Plaza...



Suggestion #26: All signs lead to the "shopping district," not "city center" or "downtown"



Downtown retailers:
Always tell customers what you sell, before you tell them the store's name.

Use the simple lure.

