

Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board

Wednesday October 21, 2015; 3:00 pm – 4:45 pm

CVB, 904 East Shore Drive, Ithaca

AGENDA	Start Time
• September STPB Meeting Minutes	3:00
○ ACTION – Approve Meeting Minutes	
• Chair’s REPORT – Sue Perlgut	3:02
• STPB Nominating Committee	
○ ACTION – Appoint Nominating Committee – Sue Perlgut	
• Privilege of the Floor	3:10
○ Limit of 3 minutes per person for members of the public to address the board	
• Branding & Communications Committee Report and Discussion – Josh Friedman	3:15
• Staff REPORT – Tom Knipe	3:45
• Fall 2015 Grant Award Recommendations	3:55
○ ACTION – Recommend Fall 2015 Community Celebrations Grant Awards – Sue Perlgut	
○ ACTION – Recommend Fall 2015 New Tourism Initiative Grant Awards – Steve Hugo	
• P&E Committee Report and Discussion – Ken Jupiter	4:10
• CVB 3Q report – Bruce Stoff	4:20
• Announcements (time permitting)	4:35

Agenda Packet

1. September 2015 draft STPB meeting minutes
2. USDA Grant Acceptance Resolution
3. Article: 10 Principles of Responsible Tourism – Ed McMahon
4. Fall Tourism Grant Recommendations
 - a. Community Celebrations
 - b. New Tourism Initiatives
5. CVB 3Q Report

To Access Fall 2015 Community Celebrations and New Tourism Initiative Grant Applications

Go to: <https://ctk.apricot.info/auth>

User: tourism@tct.com

Password: Tourism

Instructions: Follow the links to view summary reports and the original grant applications. The password above is case sensitive. Use Safari, Chrome, or Firefox as a browser (not Explorer)

Next Meeting

November 18, 2015



MISSION: The Strategic Tourism Planning Board is charged by the Tompkins County Legislature with providing oversight and strategic direction for tourism initiatives that ***promote economic development*** and ***enhance the quality of life*** in Tompkins County.

**Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB)
Draft Meeting Minutes – September 2015**

1 **Date:** September 16, 2015
 2 **Time:** 3:00-5:00pm
 3 **Location:** CVB/Cayuga Waterfront Trail
 4
 5

Attendees:

Name	✓	Representation	Name	✓	Representation
Anne Kellerman	✓	At-Large	Christy Agnese	E	Ithaca College
Ian Golden	✓	Recreation	Sue Perlgut	✓	Arts-Culture
Ethan Ash	✓	Arts-Culture	Josh Friedman	✓	Arts-Culture
John Gutenberger	E	Cornell	John Spence	✓	CAP, Non-Voting
Lynnette Scofield	✓	Lodging	Bruce Stoff	✓	CVB, Non-Voting
Kelli Cartmill	✓	Lodging	Dwight Mengel	✓	Transportation, Non-Voting
Rita Rosenberg	✓	Agriculture	Gary Ferguson	✓	DIA, Non-Voting
David Blake	✓	At-Large	Jennifer Tavares	✓	Chamber, Non-Voting
Andy Zepp	✓	At-Large	Martha Armstrong	E	TCAD, Non-Voting
Stephen Nunley	✓	At-Large	Will Burbank	✓	TC Legislature, Non-Voting
Steve Hugo	✓	At-Large	Beverly Baker		Associate Member
Ken Jupiter	E	At-Large	Carol Kammen		Associate Member
Mike Mellor	✓	At-Large	Jon Reis		Associate Member
Anne Gossen	✓	Arts-Culture	Tom Knipe	✓	Staff
Sue Stafford	E	TC3	Jennifer Turner	✓	Staff

7

8 **Also in attendance:** Jerry Collins, Owner of Trumansburg Bed and Breakfast
 9

10 **Meeting Agenda**

- 11 1) Announcements
 12 2) July STPB Meeting Minutes
 13 3) Chair's Report – Sue Perlgut
 14 4) Staff Report – Tom Knipe
 15 5) Privilege of the Floor
 16 6) Bike Tour of the Cayuga Waterfront Trail
 17

18 **The meeting was called to order** at 3:03 PM.
 19

20 **Announcements** – Stephen Nunley announced the Kitchen Theatre opened their season with a play called
 21 Buyer & Cellar. Rita Rosenberg announced her family's attendance of the Savor the Finger Lakes event.
 22 Josh Friedman announced that Women of Woodstock at the Hangar Theatre will take place next week.
 23

24 **July 2015 STPB meeting minutes were approved** with no changes.
 25

26 **Chair's Report** – Sue Perlgut expressed her gratitude to Tom Knipe for organizing the Cayuga Waterfront
 27 Trail bike tour, and to the board as a whole for their excellent work. She went on to report that she will be
 28 stepping down as Chair of the board in 2016. Christy Agnese has expressed interest in continuing as Vice-
 29 Chair. A nominating committee will be convened by Sue Perlgut to identify possible candidates. Members
 30 were encouraged to get in touch with Sue if interested in serving on the nominating committee or interested
 31 in the chair position.
 32

33 **Staff Report** – Tom Knipe reported that the draft Heritage Tourism Implementation Plan will be presented
 34 to the Planning and Evaluation Committee in October. The results of the grant application to the USDA for
 35 implementation of the some of the ideas within the Agriculinary Tourism Strategy will be known on
 36 September 30th. From there, a draft of the strategy will be written and reviewed by the Agriculinary Tourism
 37 which completed significant work on it late last year and earlier this year. CFA applications went in for
 38 Wayfinding and the Blueway Trail at the end of July. Award information will be available in November.
 39

**Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB)
Draft Meeting Minutes – September 2015**

40 **Privilege of the Floor** – Jerry Collins introduced himself as the owner of the Black Diamond Diner/Bed and
41 Breakfast located in Trumansburg. Jerry went on to note his background in both banking and commercial
42 real estate, and his interest in tourism, specifically related to convention space and parking.
43

44 With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:20pm.
45

46
47 **Cayuga Lake Waterfront Tour** – STPB members went on a bike tour of the Cayuga Lake Waterfront Trail. A
48 copy of the itinerary and funding history for projects visited are attached to these minutes.
49

50 Respectfully Submitted,
51 Jennifer Turner, Administrative Assistant
52 Tompkins County Planning Department
53

54 **Next Meeting Scheduled**
55 Wednesday October 21, 2015
56
57

DRAFT

Tompkins County Tourism Program Grants for Waterfront Projects 2004-2015

Stewart Park

2008	Tourism Capital Grants	Chamber Foundation	Feasibility Study- Stewart Park Rehabilitation Action Plan	\$15,000
2010	Tourism Capital Grants	Chamber Foundation	Stewart Park Building Study	\$15,000
2012	Tourism Capital Grants	Chamber Foundation	Stewart Park Landscape Rehabilitation Feasibility Study	\$10,000
2013	Tourism Capital Grants	Chamber Foundation	Stewart Park Buildings Phase I	\$70,500
2015	Tourism Capital Grants	Chamber Foundation	Stewart Park Buildings – Five Year Priority Plan	\$20,000
				\$130,500

Cayuga Waterfront Trail

2005	Tourism Capital Grants	Chamber Foundation	Cayuga Waterfront Trail Phase 2	\$5,000
2006	Tourism Project Grants	Chamber Foundation	Waterfront Trail Panels	\$4,000
2010	Tourism Project Grants	Chamber Foundation	Interpretive Panels- Waterfront Trail Phase 3	\$8,000
2012	Tourism Capital Grants	Chamber Foundation	Interpretive Panels for Stewart Park and Cayuga Waterfront Trail	\$20,000
				\$37,000

Ithaca Farmers Market

2004	Tourism Capital Grants	Ithaca Farmers Market	Winterization Ph. 1	\$10,000
2015	Tourism Capital Grants	Ithaca Farmers Market	2015 Ithaca Farmers Market Bathroom Expansion	\$5,000
2015	Tourism Marketing & Advertising	Ithaca Farmers Market	2015 Ithaca Farmers Market Billboard Project	\$2,500
				\$17,500

Wharton Studio Museum / Ithaca Motion Picture Project

2010	Tourism Capital Grants	Ithaca Motion Picture Project		\$5,500
2011	New Tourism Initiative	Ithaca Motion Picture Project	Silent Film Exhibition 2011	\$13,000
2013	New Tourism Initiative	The History Center	2013 BEHIND THE CAMERA: Tompkins County during the Wharton Studio Era	\$6,000
				\$24,500

Cayuga Lake Blueway Trail

2014	Tourism Capital Grants	Tompkins County Planning Department	Cayuga Lake Blueway Trail: Design Study	\$10,000
				\$10,000

Ithaca Children's Garden

2005	Celebrations	City of Ithaca	Turtle Garden Celebration	\$750
2009	Tourism Capital Grants	Ithaca Children's Garden	Phase I Completion	\$14,800
2012	Tourism Project Grants	Ithaca Children's Garden	Bulb Labyrinth Memorial Garden	\$3,600
2012	Celebrations	City of Ithaca	2013 Fire & Ice Festival	\$925
2012	Celebrations	City of Ithaca	2012 "Anarchy Zone" Play Day Extravaganza	\$500
2013	Celebrations	City of Ithaca	2013 International MUD DAY!	\$1,000
2013	Celebrations	City of Ithaca	2014 Fire & Ice Festival	\$1,300
2013	Marketing & Advertising	Ithaca Children's Garden	2013 Fresh Air for Families: Compost to Cuisine	\$2,200
2013	Tourism Project Grants	Ithaca Children's Garden	2013 Fresh Air for Families: Compost to Cuisine	\$8,000
2014	Tourism Capital Grants	Ithaca Children's Garden	Edible Forest Garden-Phase I	\$34,000
2014	Tourism Capital Grants	Ithaca Children's Garden	Edible Forest Garden-Phase I	\$34,000
2015	Celebrations	Ithaca Children's Garden	2015 International Mud Day	\$1,500
2015	Tourism Capital Grants	Ithaca Children's Garden	2015 Very Hungry Caterpillar Boardwalk Study	\$16,000
				\$118,575

Total All Projects 2004-2015 **\$338,075**

9/16 STPB Meeting – Tour of Waterfront Tourism Projects, by bicycle!

See accompanying [Google Map](#) for sites that are part of the tour.

Meeting/Tour Schedule:

- **3:00 - START** Business Meeting of the STPB at the Chamber of Commerce Conference Room
- **3:20 – END** Business Meeting
- **3:20 – 3:30** – Transition to Ithaca Bike Rental (Point B) to check out bikes and to prepare for start of the tour. It's located at the Ithaca Youth Bureau, a stone's throw along the Waterfront Trail from the Chamber of Commerce/Visitors Center.
- **3:30 – START TOUR** at Ithaca Bike Rental.
- **3:40 – LEAVE Ithaca Bike Rental.** Along the way:
 - Future Cayuga Lake Blueway Trail trailhead in Stewart Park East (point C)
- **3:45 – STOP at the Stewart Park Trailhead** of the Cayuga Waterfront Trail (Point D). Rick Manning to provide information and Q&A about tourism-related projects in Stewart Park, including the Large Pavilion (Point E) for which a tourism capital grant supported improvements. Also view panel dedicated to Stuart Stein and pavers for Tourism Partner Award recipients.
- **3:55 – LEAVE Stewart Park Trailhead** of the Cayuga Waterfront Trail. Along the way:
 - Cascadilla Boathouse (Point G)
 - Cayuga Lake Blueway Trail future site (Point F)
- **4:15 – STOP at the Ithaca Farmers Market** (Point I). Talk by Aaron Munzer, Market Manager. Try out the bathroom trailer? (funded in part by a 2015 Tourism Capital Grant)
- **4:20 – LEAVE Ithaca Farmers Market.** Along the way:
 - Final phase of the Cayuga Waterfront Trail recently opened extends south from the Farmers Market, over a new ped/bike bridge across the Cayuga Inlet, across a new bike trail on the route 96 bridge over the flood control channel.
 - DOT site (Point K) – feasibility project underway to explore mixed use redevelopment concept and financial model to allow the DOT site to be moved.
 - Crew Cove Overlook (Point J) – funded by a Tourism Capital Grant
- **4:40 – STOP – Ithaca Children's Garden** (Point L). Tour by Erin Marteau. Several recent tourism grants. Bulb Labyrinth, Edible Forest, Fire & Ice and Mud Day Community Celebrations Grants.
- **4:50 – LEAVE Ithaca Children's Garden** and return to Ithaca Bike Rental / Chamber of Commerce / home at your own pace.

Please RSVP to the bike tour portion of the meeting to tknipe@tomkins-co.org and indicate:

1. Whether you will attend the bike tour
2. Whether you wish to borrow an Ithaca Bike Rental Bike or can bring your own bike*
3. If you wish to borrow an Ithaca Bike Rental Bike, please also tell me your height in inches.

About borrowing a bike from *Ithaca Bike Rental* for the STPB tour:

Ithaca Bike Rental has up to 12 bikes to lend us for our tour. If you can bring your own bike, that will help ensure that we have enough bikes to lend.

If borrowing a bike, you will be asked to sign the mandatory waiver as you arrive at the STPB meeting in order to expedite the bike check out process. Bikes will be pre-assigned by name, and helmets will be provided. Immediately following the business portion of the STPB meeting, please walk to Ithaca Bike

Rental to be fitted for a helmet and to claim your assigned bike. If riding your own bike, please make your way to Ithaca Bike Rental by 3:30pm. The tour starts at Ithaca Bike Rental.

The bike tour will take place entirely on the Cayuga Waterfront Trail; no riding on city streets will be needed. The group will travel at a leisurely, non-athletic pace.

Drive Option

STPB members who are unable to join the full tour by bike may still take part in aspects of the tour by traveling by car to the stopover locations on the tour with the following meeting times:

1. 3:30 pm - Ithaca Bike Rental (walk over...right next to the Chamber)
2. 3:45 pm - Stewart Park Cayuga Waterfront Trail Trailhead
3. 4:15 pm – Ithaca Farmers Market
4. 4:40 pm – Ithaca Children’s Garden

RESOLUTION NO. ___ -- ACCEPTANCE OF GRANT FROM THE FARMERS MARKET PROMOTION PROGRAM OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE'S (USDA) AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE FOR AGRITOURISM DEVELOPMENT

WHEREAS, Tompkins County was the applicant to the United States Department of Agriculture Agricultural Marketing Service's Farmers Market Promotion Program (USDA-AMS-FMPP) for the purpose of increasing direct farm sales through agritourism, and

WHEREAS, the County has been awarded grant funds from the USDA for this purpose, and

WHEREAS, the Department of Planning is prepared to work jointly with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County, the Ithaca Tompkins County Convention and Visitors Bureau, and other contractors to complete this project, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Economic Development Committee, That the County hereby accepts USDA-AMS-FMPP funds in the amount of \$49,390,

RESOLVED, further, That contracts for services described in the grant application be authorized with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County and the Ithaca Tompkins County Convention and Visitors Bureau, pending approval of USDA,

RESOLVED, further, That the County Administrator or his designee be authorized to execute any contracts related to this project.

SEQR ACTION: TYPE II - 20

cc: Finance
Planning
Administration



Tompkins County
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

121 East Court Street
Ithaca, New York 14850

Edward C. Marx, AICP
Commissioner of Planning
and Community Sustainability

Telephone (607) 274-5560
Fax (607) 274-5578

TO: Economic Development Committee, Tompkins County Board of Legislators
FROM: Tom Knipe, Senior Planner / Tourism Coordinator
CC: Sue Perlgut, Strategic Tourism Planning Board Chair
DATE: October 5, 2015
RE: **Acceptance of USDA-AMS-FMPP grant for agritourism development**

A resolution is being submitted to the Economic Development Committee for review and approval. Pertinent information related to the resolution is as follows:

1. Action Requested

The proposed resolution accepts a grant in the amount of \$49,390 from United States Department of Agriculture Agricultural Marketing Service's Farmers Market Promotion Program (USDA-AMS-FMPP). A request for related budget adjustments will occur later, once the 2016 County budget has been adopted.

2. Background

Tompkins County was the lead applicant for a Farmer's Market Promotion Program grant from the United States Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service in partnership with the Ithaca Tompkins County Convention and Visitors Bureau and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County. The purpose of this project is to increase direct farm sales through agritourism development and promotion in Ithaca and Tompkins County, New York.

The USDA has announced its intention to contract with Tompkins County for the purposes identified in the grant application:

1. Evaluating farm establishments to assess their tourism readiness and support them in becoming more visitor ready;
2. Training farm businesses to improve their capacity to host visitors;
3. Building tourism packages including a new farm trail, a new open farm weekend, and other packaging opportunities; and
4. Promoting opportunities via an agricultural tourism website (Ithaca Fork) and associated marketing and advertising investments.

Local farms and food producers will be supported in expanding their capacity to serve visitors through a professional workshop in early 2016 and in-depth farm assessments for 40 farms (20 a year over two summer seasons in 2016 and 2017). As a result, it is expected that at least 10 farms will implement improvements to expand their capacity to host visitors. By spring 2017, a new farm trail and open farm weekend event, and several other agritourism packages will be developed. All of these efforts

will be supported with targeted marketing investments. The expected result will be a doubling of direct sales for participating farms during the two year life of the grant (October 2015 to September 2017) and increased recognition for the role for “agriculinary tourism” as a focus of local tourism development.

The project will be overseen by the Tompkins County Planning Department with support from a steering committee with representatives from the Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB), CVB, and Cooperative Extension. The implementation of this project will coincide with release of an Agriculinary Tourism Implementation Plan in early 2016. A task force of the STPB began working on this plan 12 months ago. The initiatives funded by this grant include several ideas which arose during the planning process and which will be incorporated into the final plan.

Tompkins County’s role will be to provide overall management of the project and to support outreach and program development efforts by the CVB, Cooperative Extension and other partners.

3. Budget Implications

The total project cost is \$53,390. The sources of funding are as follows:

- USDA-AMS-FMPP Grant \$49,390
- Program Income – 100 workshop attendees at \$40 each \$4,000

No matching funds are required.

The commitment being made by the County is to manage this project which will require staff time to be devoted by the County Planning Department. USDA grant funds are expected to cover all or most of the costs associated with managing this project. \$4,490 in USDA-AMS-FMPP grant funds are to be provided to the Tompkins County Planning Department for project management, accounting, printing, etc.

4. Contact

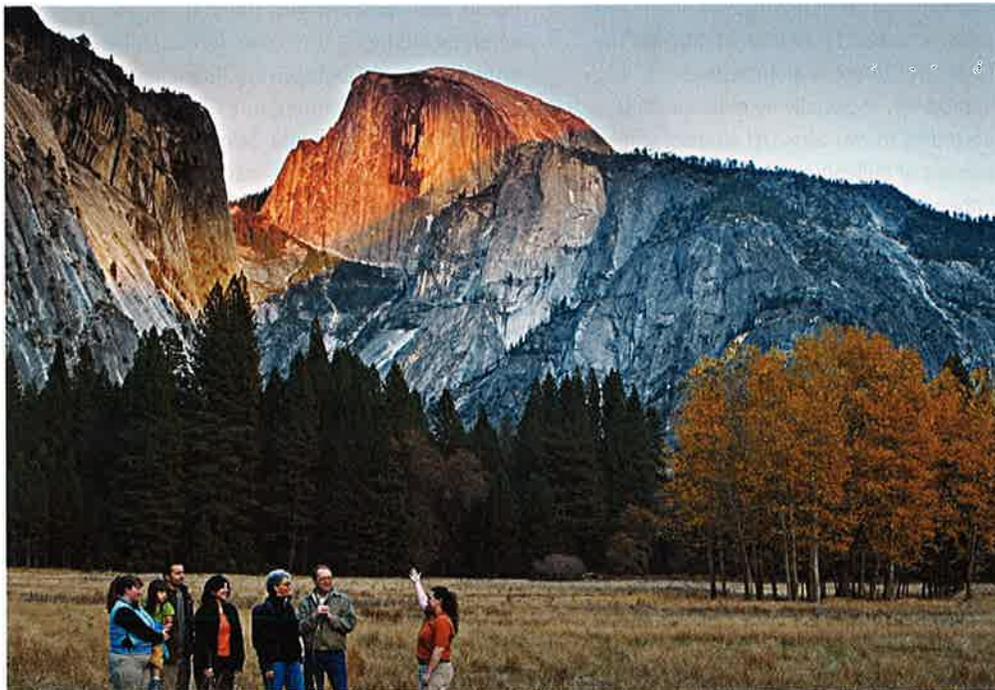
Tom Knipe, Senior Planner/Tourism Coordinator, tknipe@tompkins-co.org, 607.274.5560. Copies of the grant proposal are available upon request.

Ten Principles for Responsible Tourism

EDWARD T. McMAHON

If a destination becomes too crowded, too commercial, or too much like every other place, then why should tourists bother to go there?

Half Dome rises above Yosemite Valley in Yosemite National Park, California.



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

WHERE DID YOU GO ON YOUR last vacation? Was it rewarding and satisfying? Would you recommend it to a friend? Did the destination meet your expectations, or were you disappointed? Did traffic congestion, dirty air, crowded beaches, slipshod service, or excessive commercialism leave you feeling frustrated and cheated?

Tourism is big business. Americans spend more than \$800 billion a year on travel and recreational pursuits away from home. Tourism is one of the three largest industries in every American state and a critical factor in the U.S. and world economies.

However, tourism is also a double-edged sword. On one hand, it provides communities with many benefits: new jobs, an expanded tax base, enhanced infrastructure, improved facilities, and an expanded market for local products, art, and handicrafts. In short, it can be an important tool for community revitalization. On the other hand, it can create problems and burdens for communities such as crowding, traffic congestion, noise, increased crime, haphazard development, cost-of-living increases, and degraded resources.

“The impacts of tourism on a community can be beneficial if planned and managed, or extremely damaging if left without controls,” says Michael Kelly, former chair-

man of the American Planning Association’s tourism planning division.

Mass-Market and Sustainable Tourism

How does a community maximize the benefits of tourism while minimizing the problems? First, communities need to recognize the differences between mass-market tourism and sustainable tourism. Mass-market tourism is all about “heads in beds.” It is a high-volume, high-impact but low-yield approach. A classic example is Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Tourism is about more than marketing. It is also about protecting and enhancing the product communities are trying to promote.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Fort Lauderdale was the “spring break capital” of America. City officials thought it was a great idea to invite hundreds of thousands of college students to visit for a few weeks each year. What they did not count on was that the college kids would sleep six to eight to a room and that the only thing they would spend money on was beer. The city had to hire extra police and cleanup crews, and soon Fort Lauderdale had a reputation as an out-of-control town full of drunken college kids.

Today, Fort Lauderdale is no longer the spring break capital. It may not have as many tourists as it once did, but the tourists who do visit are older and more affluent. They sleep two to a room; they dine at fancy restaurants and shop in high-end stores; their presence does not require the city to hire extra police and cleanup crews. Sustainable tourism is lower volume and lower impact, but has a higher yield.

In order to understand mass-market tourism, think about mega-hotels, theme parks, chain stores, and the new generation of

enormous (4,000- to 5,000-passenger) cruise ships. Mass-market tourism is focused on *quantity*; it is also about environments that are artificial, homogenized, generic, and formulaic. In contrast, sustainable tourism is about high *quality*; its focus is on places that are authentic, specialized, unique, and homegrown. To understand sustainable tourism, think about unspoiled scenery, locally owned businesses, historic small towns, and walkable urban neighborhoods.

Local and state tourism agencies spend millions of dollars each year on tourism marketing and promotion. Marketing is important because it promotes visitation and helps create demand. It identifies and segments potential visitors and provides information about a community and its attractions.

Yet, tourism involves a lot more than marketing. It also involves making destinations more appealing. This means identifying, preserving, enhancing, and/or restoring a community's natural and cultural assets—in other words, protecting its heritage and environment. It is, after all, the unique architecture, culture, wildlife, or natural beauty of a community or region that attracts tourists in the first place.

In today's global marketplace, competition for tourists' spending is fierce. If the destination is too crowded, too commercial, or too much like every other place, then why go? The best marketing a community can have is by word of mouth. This occurs when the reality of the place meets or exceeds the mental image that visitors have been sold through marketing and promotion. Creation of a false image can spoil a vacation. What's more, it can reduce repeat visitation. Tourists may come once, but they will not come back.

The truth is, the more a community comes to look and feel just like everywhere else, the less reason there is to visit. At the same time, the more a community does to enhance its uniqueness, the more people will want to visit. This is the reason why local land use planning, historic restoration, and urban design standards are so important.

To attract and retain tourists, local officials need to become much more aware of the overall character of their community. This is because studies reveal significant differences between resident and tourist perceptions of a community. Tourists are open and receptive to everything they see, while longtime residents tend to tune out the familiar environments along the roads they travel day in and day out.

Ten Recommendations for Responsible Tourism

How can a community attract tourists and their dollars without losing its soul? Ten recommendations follow.

1. Preserve and restore historic buildings, neighborhoods, and landscapes. A city without a past is like a person without a memory. Preservation of historic buildings is important because they are the physical manifestations of the past. They tell us who we are and where we came from. Saving the historic buildings and landscapes of a city is about saving the heart and soul of the community. It is also about economic competitiveness. Travel writer Arthur Frommer put it this way: "Among cities with no particular recreational appeal, those that have preserved their past continue to enjoy tourism. Those that haven't receive almost

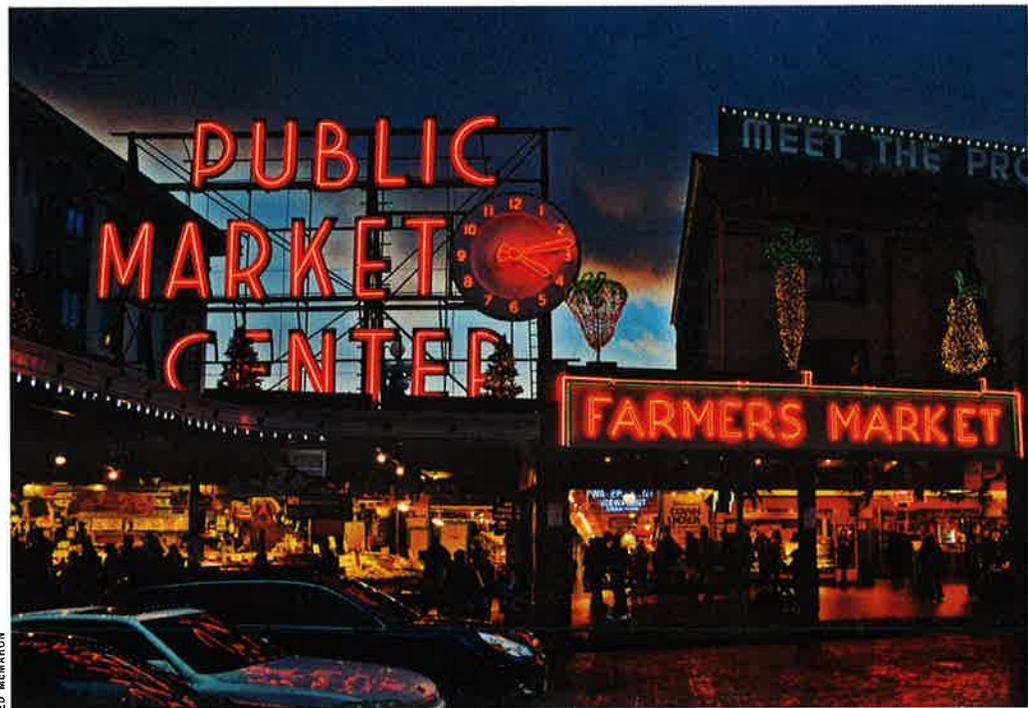
no tourism at all. Tourism simply won't go to a city or town that has lost its soul."

Try to imagine, San Francisco without Alcatraz; Alexandria, Virginia, without its Old Town; New Orleans without the French Quarter; or Seattle without the Pike Place Market. These communities would be lesser places, and they would be diminished as tourist destinations.

Preservation-minded communities like Santa Barbara, California; Charleston, South Carolina; Savannah, Georgia; Santa Fe, New Mexico; Miami Beach, Florida; and Quebec City in Canada are among North America's leading tourist destinations precisely because they have protected their unique architectural heritage. By contrast, cities that have obliterated their past attract few tourists or their money.

2. Focus on the authentic. Communities should make every effort to preserve the authentic aspects of local heritage and culture, including food, art, music, handicrafts, architecture, landscape, and traditions. Sustainable tourism emphasizes the real over the artificial. It recognizes that

Pike Place Market in Seattle, Washington.



ED MCMARON

the true story of a place is worth telling, even if it is painful or disturbing.

For example, in Birmingham, Alabama, the Civil Rights museum and historic district tell the story of the city's turbulent history during the civil rights era. This authentic representation of the city's past adds value and appeal to Birmingham as a destination, and the museum and sur-

3. Ensure that tourism support facilities are compatible with their surroundings. Tourists need places to eat and sleep, and they appreciate dependable levels of service and accommodation. But wherever they go, tourists also crave integrity of place—something not provided by homogeneous, “off-the-shelf” corporate chain and franchise architecture, which

the centerpiece of a 76-room hotel within walking distance of historic downtown Lexington.

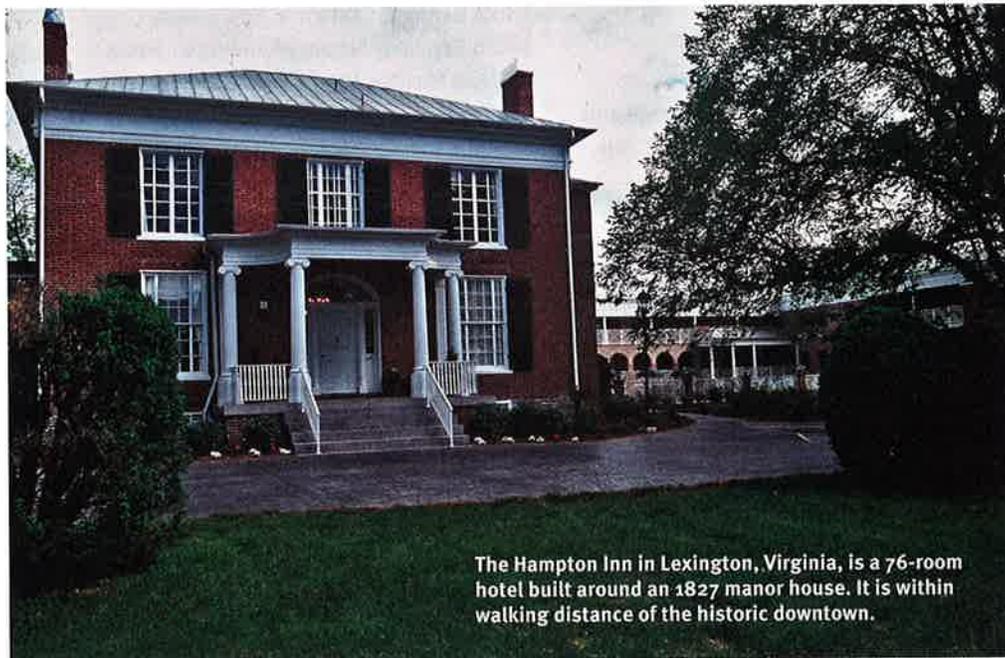
In some cases, historic hotels can be the centerpiece of downtown revitalization efforts. The Mission Inn in Riverside, California; the Martha Washington Hotel in Abingdon, Virginia; and the Peabody Hotel in downtown Memphis are three examples.

Executives at Marriott estimated in 2014 that up to 20 percent of the company's new Courtyard hotels that year would be in repurposed older buildings, and the trend is not confined to hotels. “When a chain store or franchise comes to town, they generally have three designs—A, B, and C—ranging from Anywhere, USA, to unique (sensitive to local character),” says Bob Gibbs, a leading real estate market analyst. “Which one gets built depends heavily upon how much push-back the company gets from local residents and officials about design and its importance.”

Design is critically important for communities trying to compete in the tourism marketplace. Tourism is the sum of the travel experience. It is not just what happens at a museum or a festival; it also involves the places that tourists eat and sleep, the roads they drive down, the main streets they shop on, and so forth.

Every new development should have a harmonious relationship with its setting. Tourism support facilities should reflect the broader environmental context of the community and should respect the specific size, character, and function of their site within the surrounding landscape. A community's food and lodging facilities are part of the total tourism package. Hotels and restaurants should reflect a city and not each other. Hotels in Mississippi, for example, should be different from those in Maine, Missouri, Montana, Morocco, or Malaysia.

4. Interpret the resource. Education and interpretation are other keys to sustainable tourism. Visitors want information about what they are seeing, and interpretation can be a powerful storytelling tool that can make an exhibit, an attraction, even an entire community come alive. It can also result in better-managed resources by



The Hampton Inn in Lexington, Virginia, is a 76-room hotel built around an 1827 manor house. It is within walking distance of the historic downtown.

ED McMAHON

rounding historic district have proved popular with visitors from all over the world.

In Virginia, the Crooked Road Heritage Music Trail is another great example of an authentic attraction rooted in local tradition. The driving route along U.S. Route 58 connects major heritage music venues in southwest Virginia, showcasing the traditional gospel, bluegrass, and mountain music indigenous to the region. Annual festivals, weekly concerts, live radio shows, and informal jam sessions abound throughout the region and attract locals and tourists alike.

A third example is the Manzanar National Historic Site at the foot of the Sierra Nevada near Independence, California. It was established to preserve the stories of the nearly 120,000 Japanese Americans interned during World War II and to serve as a reminder to this and future generations of the fragility of American civil liberties.

reduces a community's appeal as a tourist destination. “Travelers don't want consistency and reliability to come at the expense of authenticity,” notes Henry Harteveltdt, at the time a travel analyst for the research firm Hudson Crossing.

Today, reusing and recycling old buildings is becoming much more common in the hotel industry. Hotel chains are repurposing numerous existing buildings like warehouses, hospitals, and office buildings. The Cotton Exchange Hotel in New Orleans is one example; the Chatwal Hotel in New York City, fashioned from the former Lamb's Theatre, is another.

A small-town example of a chain hotel that fits in with a historic community is the Hampton Inn in Lexington, Virginia. Instead of building a generic chain hotel out by the interstate, the owners of the Lexington Hampton Inn converted an 1827 manor house, the Col Alto Mansion, into

explaining why they are important. Interpretation instills respect and fosters stewardship. Education about natural and cultural resources can instill community pride and strengthen sense of place.

Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, developed a communitywide interpretation program that involves public art, wayside exhibits, and interpretive markers that tell the story of the town and its role in the Civil War's Battle of Gettysburg. The city did this after it realized that most tourists were driving around the national military park and then leaving town without realizing that



Sign clutter, common in many tourist-focused communities, is ugly, ineffective, and expensive.

ness, accepting it as an inevitable side effect of progress. More-enlightened communities recognize that community appearance is important. It affects a community's image and its economic well-being.

For instance, a first visit to New Market, Virginia, in the 1970s revealed it to be a Norman Rockwell sort of town in the Shenandoah Valley. But a visit a decade later proved very disappointing: giant new fast-food and gas-station signs towered over the town's historic buildings, obliterating the scenery and diminishing the town's appeal as a tourist destination.

Downtown is the heart of most communities, but the commercial corridors leading to downtown are the front door. Corridor enhancements are critical to making a good first impression. Commercial corridors also offer some of the best redevelopment opportunities. Arlington County, Virginia, for example, has used a form-based code to incentivize redevelopment along Columbia Pike. Unsightly automobile-oriented development is now being displaced by walkable, mixed-use development. Other communities like Cathedral City, California; Carmel, Indiana; and Charlotte, North Carolina, have used corridor overlay zoning to improve the character of new development along entry corridors.

6. Control outdoor signs. Protecting scenic views and vistas, planting street trees, and landscaping parking lots all make economic sense, but controlling outdoor signs is probably the most important step a tourism-oriented community

can take to make an immediate, visible improvement in its physical environment. Almost nothing will destroy the distinctive character of a community faster than uncontrolled signs and billboards. Sign clutter is ugly, ineffective, and expensive. When the streetscape becomes overloaded with signs, the cumulative effect is negative: the viewer actually sees less, not more. Almost all of America's premier tourist destinations have strong sign ordinances because they understand that attractive communities attract more business than ugly ones.

7. Enhance the journey as well as the destination. As noted, tourism is not just what happens at the destination; it involves everything that people see and do from the time they leave home until the trip is over. Getting there can be half the fun, but frequently it is not.

Though there are many great destinations in America, very few noteworthy journeys remain. Except for a few special roads like the Blue Ridge Parkway or the Natchez Trace Parkway, a drive along a typical American highway can be a profoundly depressing experience. The late author and television commentator Charles Kuralt put it this way: "Thanks to the interstate highway system, it is now possible to drive across the country from coast to coast



Interpretation results in better-managed resources.

the town itself was a big part of the story. Since the interpretative program was completed, the number of visitors spending time and money in downtown Gettysburg has measurably increased.

Richmond, Virginia, is another community that has done a great job of telling its story. The Richmond Slave Trail, for example, is a walking trail that chronicles the trade of enslaved Africans from Africa to Virginia until 1775 and away from Virginia until 1865. There are numerous historic markers along the route that explain the various sites and cast new light on a dark chapter of U.S. history.

5. Protect community gateways. First impressions matter. Just as when meeting a person for the first time, a good first impression is important and a bad first impression is hard to change. Some communities pay attention to their gateways. Other do not. Many communities have gotten used to ugly-

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without seeing anything.” Tourists want to see places that are different, unusual, or unique. This is why it is in the interest of state and local officials to encourage development of heritage corridors, bike paths, rail trails, greenways, and scenic byways.

8. Get tourists out of their cars. If you design a community or development around cars, you will get more cars. But if you design a community or development around people, you will get more pedestrians. Walkability is very good for business, especially tourism-oriented businesses. In

become a coherent and powerful attraction. The Blues Highway in Mississippi—a.k.a. U.S. Route 61—connects Memphis to New Orleans and passes through numerous small towns in the Mississippi Delta. Each of these small towns tells a part of the story of America’s musical history, but few of them would attract tourists on their own without being part of a bigger story.

Birding trails, wildlife trails, literary heritage trails, and Civil War heritage trails are all examples of this linkage concept. The Katy Trail in Missouri—running 240 miles

residents and the eventual destruction of the very attributes that attracted tourists in the first place. Too many cars, tour buses, condominiums, or people can overwhelm a community and harm fragile resources.

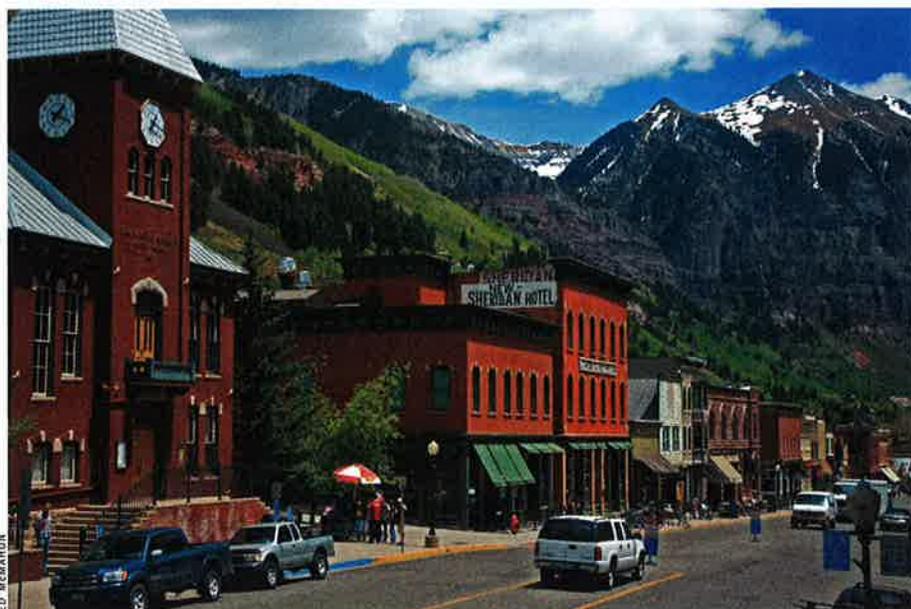
Sustainable tourism requires planning and management. Annapolis, Maryland; Charleston, South Carolina; and Williamsburg, Virginia, are examples of communities with tourism management plans. Charleston, for example, bars large tour buses from the neighborhood south of Broad Street, known as the Battery. It also directs travelers to the city’s visitor center, which is located well away from historic residential neighborhoods that were being overrun by tourists. It has also built new attractions, like the South Carolina Aquarium, in underserved areas of the city instead of concentrating everything in one or two overcrowded neighborhoods.

More Than Marketing

In recent years, American tourism has had steadily less to do with America and more to do with mass marketing. As farmland, forests, and open lands decrease, advertising dollars increase. As historic buildings disappear, chain stores proliferate. As Main Streets come back to life, congested commercial corridors spread on the outskirts of towns. Unless the tourism industry thinks it can continue to sell trips to communities clogged with traffic, look-alike motels, overcrowded beaches, and cluttered commercial strips, it needs to create a plan to preserve the natural, cultural, and scenic resources on which it relies.

Tourism is about more than marketing. It is also about protecting and enhancing the product communities are trying to promote. Citizens, elected officials, and developers alike can take a leadership role in creating a sustainable tourism agenda that will strengthen the American economy and at the same time preserve the natural and cultural assets that make the United States unique. **UL**

EDWARD T. McMAHON is a ULI senior resident fellow and the Charles Fraser Chair for Environmental Policy.



Promoting tourism means protecting authentic destinations, such as Telluride, Colorado.

fact, it is hard for people to spend money when they are in a car, so getting tourists out of their cars is a key to sustainable tourism and increased business. The best way to get people out of their cars is to create places where people can safely walk and bike in attractive settings. The Embarcadero in San Francisco, the Inner Harbor in Baltimore, Beale Street in Memphis, and the River Walk in San Antonio are all destinations that demonstrate how walkability increases profitability.

9. Link sites. Though very few rural communities or small towns can attract out-of-state or international visitors on their own, linked with other communities, they can

(386 km) from Machens near St. Louis to Clinton in western Missouri—is considered one of the best rail trails in the country. This multipurpose trail has brought thousands of tourists and new life to an economically distressed part of the state. Similarly, the Journey through Hallowed Ground Heritage Area in Maryland and Virginia has provided a framework for promoting and interpreting nine presidential homes, numerous Civil War sites, more than 30 historic Main Street communities, and numerous other historic and natural attractions.

10. Recognize that tourism has limits and must be managed. Savvy communities always ask how many tourists are too many. Tourism development that exceeds the carrying capacity of an ecosystem or that fails to respect a community’s sense of place will result in resentment by local

**Community Celebrations Grants
Fall 2015 Award Recommendations**

Municipality	Celebration	Group Name Requesting Grant:	Request	Award Rec.	Committee Comments
Town of Dryden	A Black History Month Celebration	Dorothy Cotton Jubilee Singers	\$862	\$500	Administrator to ensure that event is promoted as free and open to all, not only members of the TC3 community. Committee recommends an ad in <i>The Shopper</i> for advertising to the Dryden community.
Town of Lansing	East Shore Festival of The Arts	East Shore Festival of The Arts	\$1,650	\$1,200	Strong historical element. History of strong attendance and success.
City of Ithaca	Festival of Fire & Ice	Ithaca Children's Garden	\$1,550	\$1,300	Winter activity. Strong application. Strong past performance.
Village of Groton	Groton Winter Festival- Cabin Fever	Groton Recreation	\$750	\$750	Winter activity. Valuable opportunity to create community in Groton. History elements are encouraged to have a stronger representation. Recommend announcing an alternate date in case of inclement weather.
City of Ithaca	Kwanzaa	Southside Community Center	\$1,100	\$1,000	Cultural festival to return after a hiatus. First application from the Southside Community Center since the start of the new director.
Village of Trumansburg	Moog Day (A Robert Moog Commemoration)	Village of Trumansburg	\$2,000	\$1,168	Unique historical components celebrating the beginning of electronic music. Projected attendance seems low for the request. Organizers are encouraged to work to increase attendance by inviting the music community to attend. Supports Trumansburg.
Town of Lansing	Salt Point Educational Kiosk & Celebration	Friends of Salt Point	\$2,000	\$1,300	Recommended award supports \$1,300 of the \$1,500 cost of the interpretive kiosk. Strong historical element celebrating geology, industrial history, and natural history. Part of the future Cayuga Lake Blueway Trail.
		Available	Requested	Awarded	
		\$7,218	\$9,912	\$7,218	
		Difference	(\$2,694)	\$0	

**New Tourism Initiative Grants
Fall 2015 Grant Award Recommendations**

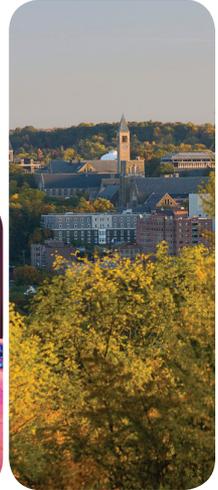
Applicant Organization	Project Title	Request	Award Rec.	Committee Comments
Ithaca Youth Bureau	2016, Ithaca Bike Rental	\$5,000	\$5,000	Project has been well implemented so far. Expansion to Cass Park is positive. Marketing and promotion will be key to use and success, and continued partnership with the CVB is encouraged. Would like to see information distributed to hotel properties and recommend direct outreach to front desk staff. Idea: offer to let front desk staff try the bikes complementary on day off through an "industry partner voucher". Start with approaching downtown hotels.
Ithaca Festival	2016 Ithaca Festival Art in Light	\$4,080	\$4,080	Permanent installation. Could create ongoing interest and color at night, in winter. A "tourism infrastructure" type of investment. The committee has questions about the locations and use. Also, the committee want to make sure that there is a well-articulated selection process for the art. The example given in the application of a trail or walkway (Netherlands example) is great. Is the Waterfront Trail a possible location? Please consider as criteria: broad appeal to visitors, enhances the value tourism attractions like the Ithaca Commons, Trail, Cayuga Lake, etc. Possible connection to Heritage Tourism is also applauded.
Ithaca Shakespeare Company Inc	2016 HENRY V at the Hangar Theatre	\$14,485	\$11,920	This request is primarily for special effects and equity actor. Teachers Week timing is good. Enhancing quality of production increases the likelihood of Shakespeare expanding our community's reputation as a theatre destination. Use of Hangar Theatre in the winter is positive.
City of Ithaca	2016 Ithaca Skate Jam	\$14,000	\$14,000	Strong draw. Strong potential for financial sustainability. This is the third year of tourism funding, and it is expected that the need for room tax funds will decrease significantly or go away after this year.
	Available	Requested	Awarded	
	\$35,000	\$37,565	\$35,000	
	Difference	(\$2,565)	\$0	



Ithaca/Tompkins County Convention & Visitors Bureau

Q3 2015 Report
Nine Months, Ending September 2015

[Learn more >](#)



A Message from Bruce Stoff, Ithaca/Tompkins County Convention & Visitors Bureau Director

With a busy summer in the books and a strong fall in the works, we close another positive quarter for Tompkins County Tourism with all key measures of performance up in the quarter and year to date. Once again, the CVB's Group Sales, Marketing and Visitor Services departments all had a hand in the success.

Along with completing final preparations for the Global Food Security Conference, the CVB Group Sales department attended 3 shows, and processed 28 leads. The CVB Marketing Department launched a totally redesigned VisitIthaca.com while supporting the celebration of the new Ithaca Commons with ad campaigns and PR outreach in key target markets. Our efforts yielded a glowing story in the New York Times reaching millions of readers. Visitor Services was likewise busy helping 400% more online chat guests, plus a steady flow of walk-ins and off-site guests in our offices and at events on both campuses.

With fall foliage in full swing, we anticipate Q4 to echo our year to date success and close out a record-breaking 2015.



Bruce Stoff, Director
Ithaca/Tompkins County
Convention & Visitors Bureau

**STR report
to follow**



Nearly \$200k in economic impact from chat booking fulfillment

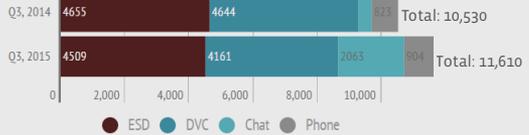
Chat increases 400% in Q3 YoY

10% increase in overall visitor touchpoints in Q3 2015 YoY

Visitor Touchpoints Increase 10% in Q3, YoY

The Visitor Services team is busier than ever, taking on a steady number of walk-in visitors, plus a huge boom in online chat inquiries, bringing total touchpoints to 11,610.

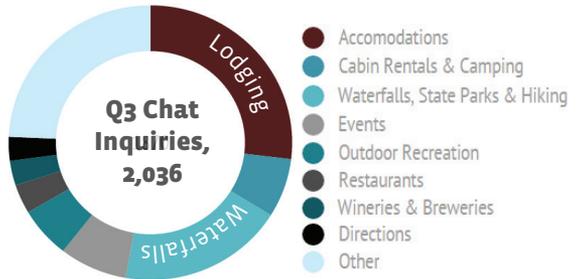
Total Visitor Touchpoints



Chat Positively Impacts Q3 Overnight Reservations

With the new online chat service, nearly 600 overnight stays were generated, resulting in nearly \$200k in economic impact. 2,036 chats were conducted in Q3 alone - a 400% positive increase in chats YoY.

Chat Inquiries



Emphasis on Local Outreach

Off site booths at several local events have increased the number of overall visitor engagements and email marketing touchpoints. A major push to bring campus visitors in to town is also achieved via off site campus visits and outreach sessions.

★ 6

Off-site booths in Q3, 2015

👤 1470

Emails collected for marketing

👤 845

People engaged in conversation

★ 1050

Partner brochures distributed

★ 631

Travel guides distributed



✓ VisitIthaca.com receives nearly 1million impressions, a 18.5% increase YoY

✓ Facebook is the #1 referrer to VisitIthaca.com with 8.25% of all traffic

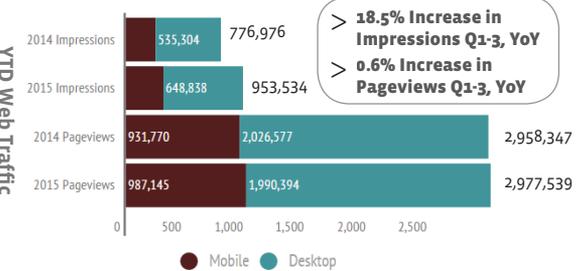
✓ Email marketing contact growth exceeds 46% YTD

Views Steady, Impressions Spike

Site traffic continues to grow, with a huge 18.5% increase YoY.

Efficiencies in the new VisitIthaca.com will likely cause page views to drop, as visitors will need to navigate to fewer pages to find the information they need.

YTD Web Traffic



> 18.5% Increase in Impressions Q1-3, YoY
> 0.6% Increase in Pageviews Q1-3, YoY

Facebook is the #1 Referrer to VisitIthaca.com

The power of social media is here to stay. Visit Ithaca received over 8.25% of all traffic from Facebook. For very little budget investment, this social tool is our biggest advertising asset.

Facebook Influence

▲ 15% Increase in 2015

Our Facebook audience continues to grow at a rapid pace.

👤 Our #1 Referrer

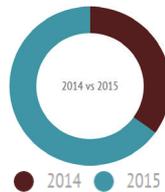
For \$2,000 Facebook brought nearly 43,000 hits to Visit Ithaca - that's about 0.04 per engagement

Facebook hits 25,000 likes

Email Marketing Success

It takes as much time to send a Visit Ithaca email to 37 people as it does to send to 37,000 - so that's why we increased the emphasis of growing our lists, and succeeded in 46% growth.

Email Growth YTD



46% email marketing contact growth YTD

PR News:

Uncovering the Commons for the NYT

The launch of the new Ithaca Commons deserved major media coverage so the CVB pulled out all the stops to make it happen. Working with Downtown, City Hall, local businesses and PR firm Quinn and Co, the CVB succeeded in getting the Commons featured in the New York Times. Its story "Ithaca Remakes Town Square" (Sept. 2) reached an audience of 2 million print edition readers and another 70 million online viewers monthly.

The New York Times

Building for Future, Ithaca Remakes Town Square

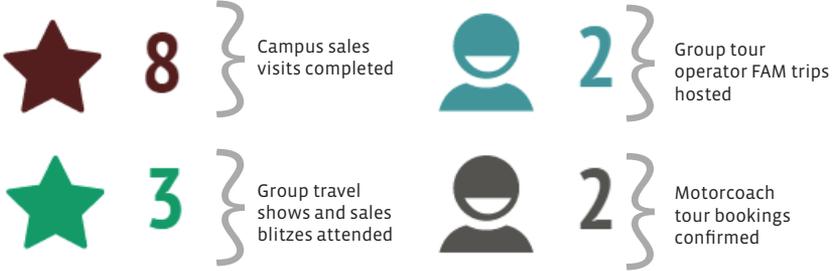
SEPT. 1, 2015



The Commons in Ithaca, N.Y., had not changed much in the 40 years since its creation. On Saturday, the city held an official opening for the plaza after its \$15 million makeover. *Steve Liss/Staff for The New York Times*

- ✓ Both leads and bookings increase by 4% YTD YOY
- ✓ Emphasis on conference business fueled 8 sales visits to campuses
- ✓ Nearly \$163k in estimated impact

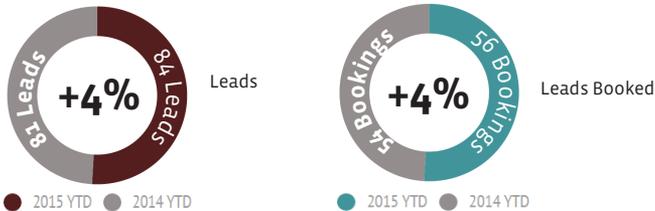
Ithaca Q3 Sales Outreach by the Numbers:



Ithaca Q3 Sales Activity by the Numbers:



YTD Ithaca Sales Activity YOY:





TOMPKINS COUNTY
CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE

Visit
ITHACA

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