

Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board

Wednesday February 18, 2015; 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm

CVB, 904 East Shore Drive, Ithaca

AGENDA	Start Time
1) January STPB Meeting Minutes	3:00
• ACTION – Approve Meeting Minutes	
2) Privilege of the Floor	
• Limit of 3 minutes per person for members of the public to address the board	
3) Chair’s REPORT – Sue Perlgut	3:05
4) Staff REPORT – Tom Knipe	3:10
• 2015 Staff Work Plan	
5) 2015 STPB Goals - Discussion	3:20
6) CVB Annual REPORT - Bruce Stoff	3:40
7) CVB 2015 Work Plan Presentation – Bruce Stoff	3:55
8) Arts & Culture Organizational Development Grant 2015 awards	4:20
• ACTION – Recommend 2015 awards	
9) Strategic Tourism Implementation funding – Ken Jupiter, Tom Knipe (P&E Report)	4:30
• ACTION – Approve recommended 2015 allocation process	
10) Ag & Culinary Task Force Presentation – Tom Knipe	4:40

Agenda Packet

1. January 2015 draft STPB meeting minutes
2. 2015 Final Committee Assignments
3. Tompkins County Planning Department 2015 Work Plan - Tourism
4. 2015 Tourism Program Calendar – Tompkins County Tourism Program (11x17 printouts to be provided at the meeting)
5. Recommended 2015 STPB Goals
6. CVB 2014 Annual Report
7. 2015 ACOD Grant Recommendations
8. Draft Guidelines - 2015 Strategic Tourism Implementation Grant Funding Opportunity (revised)
9. Agriculinary Tourism Implementation Plan – list of possible actions
10. Agriculinary Tourism Implementation Plan – rubric for selecting priority actions

Next Meeting

Wednesday, March 18th



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)
Meeting Minutes Draft – January 2015**

1 **Date:** January 21, 2015
 2 **Time:** 3:00-5:00pm
 3 **Location:** CVB
 4
 5

Attendees:

Name	✓	Representation
Anne Kellerman	✓	At-Large
Ian Golden	✓	Recreation
Ethan Ash	✓	Arts-Culture
John Gutenberger	✓	Cornell
Lynnette Scofield	A	Lodging
Kelli Cartmill	✓	Lodging
Rita Rosenberg	✓	Agriculture
Andy Zepp	A	At-Large
Stephen Nunley	A	At-Large
Steve Hugo	✓	At-Large
Ken Jupiter	A	At-Large
Mike Mellor	✓	At-Large
Anne Gossen	✓	At-Large
Sue Stafford	A	TC3
Christy Agnese	✓	At-Large

Name	✓	Representation
Sue Perlgut	✓	Arts-Culture
Josh Friedman	✓	Arts-Culture
John Spence	A	CAP, Non-Voting
Bruce Stoff	✓	CVB, Non-Voting
Dwight Mengel	✓	Transportation, Non-Voting
Gary Ferguson	✓	DIA, Non-Voting
Jennifer Tavares	✓	Chamber, Non-Voting
Martha Armstrong	✓	TCAD, Non-Voting
Will Burbank	✓	TC Legislature, Non-Voting
Beverly Baker	A	Associate Member
Carol Kammen	A	Associate Member
Jon Reis	A	Associate Member
Tom Knipe	✓	Staff
Jennifer Turner	✓	Staff

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10 **Also in attendance:** Ronda Roaring

11
12 **Meeting Agenda**

13 Welcome new STPB Members

14 Opener

15 Nominating Committee – Anne Kellerman

- Vote to elect 2015 STPB Officers

17 December STPB Meeting Minutes

- ACTION – Approve Meeting Minutes

19 Privilege of the Floor

20 Chair's Report – Sue Perlgut

- 2015 Draft Committee Assignments
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- STPB Member Roles and Responsibilities

24 Staff Report – Tom Knipe

- 2015 Staff Work Plan

26 STPB Member Goals for – SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION – Christy Agnese

27 Tourism Grant review process changes – Tom Knipe, Christy Agnese

- ACTION – Approve recommendation to combine TMA and NTI/TPG Committees into one Tourism Grant Review Committee

30 Strategic Tourism Implementation funding – Ken Jupiter, Tom Knipe

- ACTION – Approve recommended 2015 allocation process

32 Membership and Bylaws Committee –Lynette Scofield

- ACTION – Recommend appointment of new At-Large STPB member

34 CVB Report – Bruce Stoff

35 Finger Lakes Wine Center REPORT – Christy Agnese

- ACTION – Adopt the report and its recommendations

37 Ticket Center Ithaca REPORT – John Spence

- ACTION – Adopt the report and its recommendations

40 **The meeting was called to order at 3:08 PM.**

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

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Welcome new STPB Members – Josh Friedman and Kelli Cartmill were welcomed as new members of the Strategic Tourism Planning Board. Josh Friedman introduced himself as the Managing Director of the Hangar Theatre. Kelli Cartmill introduced herself as the Director of Sales and Marketing at the Hilton Hotel and noted her experience in the hotel business for over 20 years.

Opener – An interactive exercise was conducted to help members get to know one another.

Nominating Committee – Anne Kellerman made the motion to elect Sue Pergut as Chair and Christy Agnese as Vice Chair. Rita Rosenberg seconded the motion. The slate was approved by unanimous vote.

November 2013 STPB meeting minutes were approved with a friendly amendment.

Chair's Report – Sue Pergut reported on the 2015 Committee assignments and noted the importance of the conflict of interest forms. Tom Knipe went on to provide examples of some of the conflicts such as influence of vote, membership on other boards, and family affiliation on other boards or organizations. It is at the discretion of the Chair as to whether a member of the board should withhold comment or vote.

Staff Report – Tom Knipe reported that he has been working closely with the Chamber of Commerce to discuss possible community partnerships and funding for the Wayfinding Strategy. He reported the a portion of the signage balance of \$5,000 in the beautification fund within the Chamber will be used toward Chamber support to develop a funding and implementation strategy for the Wayfinding Plan in 2015. Jennifer Tavares went on to report that she and Tom had met with the Chamber board where discussions centered on the cost of the project, possible stakeholders, and local, state and federal funding. A funding and implementation strategy will be created this year.

Tom Knipe went on to report the Beautification Program, with leadership from the Chamber of Commerce and Chrys Gardner of Cornell Cooperative Extension, is working on a Beautification Plan. Future community wide outreach and advocacy will be followed by a presentation in the spring. Jennifer Tavares went on to note that there were 3 surveys compiled and went out to tourism, municipal, and business stakeholders for feedback.

A short-term task force will form and will serve as a way to focus on the need for a community meeting conference or meeting facility. An Ag and Culinary Committee meeting will take place on February 6th where members will discuss the 374 possible actions submitted at the event at The Space at GreenStar in order to establish criteria for selection on the key priorities moving forward. The tourism grant workshop took place yesterday with 25 attendees; applications for this grant round are due on February 20th.

STPB Member Goals – Christy Agnese asked members to create 4 groups for the purpose of creating achievable goals for implementation that will coincide with the Strategic Plan. Each group took time to discuss ideas and priorities to work on as a board, and reported out. Ideas will be collated and reviewed by the Planning and Evaluation Committee and brought back to the meeting in February for further discussion.

Tourism Grant Review Process Changes – Tom Knipe delivered a recommendation to combine Tourism Marketing and Advertising grant review committee with the New Tourism Initiative/Tourism Project Grant review committee in order to reduce overlap of the grant review process. This change would allow the awards to be more coordinated between the three programs. Tom Knipe's report served as a motion to recommend combining TMA and NTI. Anne Gossen seconded the motion. The change was approved by unanimous vote.

Strategic Tourism Implementation Funding – Tom Knipe reported on a proposed process for allocation of the \$150,000 in Strategic Tourism Implementation Funds in 2015. Tom Knipe and Ken Jupiter both recommended soliciting letters of inquiry followed by full proposals. It was noted that in 2013, the first time that Strategic Tourism Implementation Funds were allocated, three of eleven applications were funded. The eight unsuccessful applicants put a lot of time and effort into full proposals, which were ultimately not funded. Tom went on to discuss the possible use of a portion of these funds for another in-depth visitor profile ("Chmura") study. He suggested that the funds for this be taken off the top of the STI funding and

**Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB)
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98 that the balance be made available through the Letter of Inquiry – Proposal process described earlier.
99 Further analysis on the estimated cost of the study and the remaining balance for the competitive grant will
100 need to take place prior to acceptance of proposals, but letters of inquiry could be requested earlier.
101 Members were encouraged to read the information and vote on the guidelines for the grant process. A vote
102 on the Strategic Tourism Implementation funding guidelines will be scheduled to take place next month.
103

104 **Membership and Bylaws Committee** – Sue Perlgut reported that the Membership and Bylaws Committee
105 recommends Susie Monagan to continue as an associate member and continue to work with the ACOD
106 Committee. The second recommendation was to appoint David Blake as an At-Large member. Sue Perlgut
107 moved the recommendations which were approved by unanimous vote and will be forwarded to the
108 Legislature.
109

110 **CVB Report** – Bruce Stoff reported that the STR report came out and that it showed revenue up 8.1% for
111 2014. Revenue per available room saw very significant growth although there is room for improvement in
112 occupancy rates.
113

114 **Finger Lakes Wine Center Report** – Christy Agnese reported on one amendment to the report giving
115 more precise language on thresholds of funding triggering thorough review. Christy moved the Finger Lakes
116 Wine Center Report and recommendations. Mike Mellor seconded the motion. The report was adopted by
117 unanimous vote.
118

119 **Ticket Center Ithaca Report** – Tom Knipe reported that there was one amendment to the Ticket Center
120 which mirrored the amendment to the Wine Center report. Members discussed the possibility of nominating
121 a member of the board to serve as the reviewer of the pros and cons of a proposed project when it has
122 reached the agreed upon threshold amount. Discussions centered on the damage to organizations involved
123 with the projects and the monetary costs. The percent of the organizations funding stream was noted as an
124 important factor when determining the threshold for a particular project. The recommendation by Sue
125 Perlgut served as the motion to adopt the Ticket Center Report. Rita Rosenberg-Barber seconded the
126 motion. The Ticket Center Report was adopted by unanimous vote.
127

128 **Announcements** - Tom Knipe announced the Bluegrass Festival that will take place over the weekend at
129 multiple venues. The festival has been a multiple year recipient of tourism grants.
130

131 With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:09pm.
132

133 Respectfully Submitted,
134 Jennifer Turner, Administrative Assistant
135 Tompkins County Planning Department
136

137 **Next Meeting Scheduled**
138 Wednesday February 18, 2014

STPB Committee Assignments 2015

Committee	Meetings	Members by appointment	Admin	Chair	Committee Members
Executive	As needed	Former Chairs and Vice Chairs, Budget Chair and Current Chair and Vice Chair	Tom Knipe	Sue Perlgut	Sue Perlgut, Christy Agnese
Standing Committees					
Budget 4 Voting members required		Chair, Vice Chair	Tom Knipe	Christy Agnese	Stephen Nunley, Sue Perlgut, Sue Stafford, John Gutenberger, Andy Zepp
Membership & By-Laws 3 Voting members required	As needed		Tom Knipe	Lynnette Scofield	Sue Perlgut, John Gutenberger Anne Kellerman
Nominating Appointed by vote of the full board	As needed	Appointed by board vote			Anne Kellerman, John Gutenberger
Grant Review Committees (2 voting members required)					
Combined Tourism Grant Review (Tourism Projects, New Tourism Initiatives, and Tourism Marketing and Advertising Grants)	March, November (if needed)		Tom Knipe, Bruce Stoff (Tech Assistance)	Steve Hugo	Jon Reis, Mike Mellor, Christy Agnese, Lynnette Scofield, Stephen Nunley, Anne Kellerman, Kelli Cartmill
Community Celebrations	March, November		Tom Knipe	Carol Kammen	Beverly Baker, Sue Perlgut, Jackie Kippola, Mike Lane, Sue Stafford, Anne Kellerman
Arts and Culture Organizational Development Grant	March	Arts & Culture STPB reps	John Spence	?	Sue Perlgut, Ethan Ash, Anne Gossen, Leslie Ackerman, Susie Monagan, Will Burbank
Tourism Capital Grant	April		Martha Armstrong	Andy Sciarabba	Steve Snyder, Mary Kane, Jennifer Tavares, Steve Hugo, Ken Jupiter, Steve Nunley



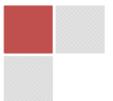
Committee	Meetings	Members by appointment	Admin	Chair	Members
Special Committees					
Planning & Evaluation	Monthly or bi-monthly		Tom Knipe	Ken Jupiter	Anne Kellerman, Sue Perlgut, Mike Mellor, Gary Ferguson, Ian Golden, Jennifer Tavares, Martha Armstrong, Bruce Stoff, Andy Zepp, Josh Friedman, John Spence
Festivals	One or two times/year		Tom Knipe, Gary Ferguson		Gary Ferguson, Josh Friedman, Other community members (currently recruiting)
Marketing Advisory Committee	Quarterly		Bruce Stoff		Tom Knipe, Michael Mellor, Ethan Ash , Christy Agnese, Gary Ferguson, Jennifer Tavares, others appointed by CVB
Beautification, Public Art, Signage			Jennifer Tavares		Ken Jupiter, Gary Ferguson, John Gutenberger, Tom Knipe, Chrys Gardener, Monika Roth, Rick Manning, JoAnn Cornish, others appointed by the Chamber

STPB Working Groups –

Heritage Tourism Anne Gossen (Chair), Ian Golden, Anne Kellerman, Andy Zepp, Carol Kammen, Jean Currie/Rod Howe, Baruch Whitehead, Sherene Baugher, Christine O’Malley, John Spence, Jeff Chusid

Agri-Culinary Tourism Ethan Ash and Rita Rosenberg (Co-Chairs) Lynnette Scofield, Ian Golden, Gary Ferguson, Emma Frisch, Wynnie Stein, Laura Winter-Falk, Frederic Bouche, Kevin Moss, Athena Steinkraus, Sue Stafford, Kristy Mitchell, Sarah Imes, Sarah Kelsen, Talia Watson

Higher Education Tourism (not yet convened) Volunteers: Steve Hugo, John Gutenberger, Christy Agnese



2015-2016 Tourism-Related Work Program – Tompkins County Planning Department

Tourism

Agriculture and Culinary Tourism Strategy

Create an implementation plan for agri-culinary tourism, a focus area in the 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan.

Heritage Tourism Strategy

Create an implementation plan for heritage tourism, a focus area in the 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan.

Cayuga Lake Blueway Trail Implementation

Work with Cayuga and Seneca Counties to implement the Cayuga Lake Blueway Trail Plan.

Tourism Program Administration (Tom, Dariele, Jennifer)

Administer the County's four tourism grant programs (Tourism Projects, New Tourism Initiatives, Community Celebrations, and Tourism Marketing and Advertising) and support management of the two tourism grant programs overseen by others (Arts and Culture Organizational Development Grant program and Tourism Capital Grant Program) and the five programs contracted to others (Beautification, Signage and Public Art Program, Tompkins Festivals Program, Convention and Visitors Bureau, Discovery Trail, and the Tourism Workforce Development Program).

Other Tourism Initiatives

- Tompkins Festivals Program Enhancement - Support the Downtown Ithaca Alliance in preparing detailed recommendations for enhancements to the Tompkins Festivals Program.
- Tourism Partner Award Program - Administer the County's program that recognizes community leadership in attracting tourists to Tompkins County.
- Tourism Product Development - Provide guidance and coordinating support to individuals and organizations that are devising new or improved tourism products in accordance with the Strategic Tourism Plan.
- Tourism Research - Provide support to the Ithaca Tompkins County Convention and Visitors Bureau to complete a new Profile of Visitors to Tompkins County survey-based study and report. To be initiated by the end of 2015 and completed in 2016.
- Strategic Tourism Plan Implementation - Administer Strategic Tourism Implementation funding program. Work with STPB to promote the plan and encourage its integration into Tourism Program activities, and work with community partners to implement the 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan.
- Wayfinding Signage - Work with the Chamber of Commerce to create a funding and implementation strategy for wayfinding signage plan/system that includes physical signage, as well as new technological wayfinding platforms, and that points to major destinations.
- Beautification Strategy - Support the Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce and Cornell Cooperative Extension in developing a five-year beautification strategy.
- Hotel Room Occupancy Tax Policy Review - Review the County's policies on the Hotel Room Occupancy Tax to ensure the appropriate use of tax revenues and for consistency with the Strategic Tourism Plan.
- Program Evaluation System - Develop a system to evaluate local tourism programs in terms of their relationship to the Strategic Tourism Plan.

County Role in Trail Development

Provide leadership for the community's efforts to complete priority trails, including the Cayuga Waterfront Trail and the Black Diamond Trail, and establish a formal role for the County in future trail development.

Tourism Budget Coordination

Administer tourism budget request process among tourism programs, and coordinate budget among various County departments (including County Administration, Planning, and Finance) to develop a budget proposal for 2016.

Board Support

Provide staff support to the operation of, and participate as members* of, the following boards and committees:

Strategic Tourism Planning Board (Tom, Jennifer)

Board Service

Serve as members on the following boards and committees:

Cayuga Lake Scenic Byways Board of Directors (Tom)

Collaborative Partnerships

Participate in collaborative partnerships with others in the community, regionally or in NY State:

Tompkins County Trails Network (Tom)

Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council Tourism Working Group (Tom)

2015 Tourism Program Calendar - 1/29/15 Draft

3rd Wednesdays	Week	Month	STPB Meetings	Presentations to STPB	EDC / Legislature	Budget Committee	Tourism Grants (CC, TPG, NTI, TMA, Implementation)	ACOD	Tourism Capital Grants	Festivals Program	Planning and Evaluation	Other
		1 January			EDC resolution - approval of contracts (Chamber, CAP)		NOFA out, update grant applications, post to web; schedule and market grant workshop					
		2 January								Event Organizers Calendar set		
1st STPB Meeting		3 January	Vote in officers, COI disclosures, committee assignments				Spring round grant workshop					
		4 January	Review workplan, goals					ACOD grant apps/reports due				
		1 February					Coach tourism grant applicants					Ag & Culinary Tourism Task Force
		2 February	Establish schedule			Administrators meeting - year-end recon. and preliminary look at budget process		ACOD grant review committee meets			CVB Evaluation Plan review	
2nd STPB Meeting		3 February	Recommend ACOD grants, approve Strategic Tourism Implementation grant process	CVB annual report and annual marketing plan			Tourism grant applications due	STPB recommends ACOD grants				
		4 February								Technical Review of Grant apps		
		1 March			EDC recommends ACOD grants, CVB annual marketing plan presentation		Collect applications, read, summarize, & distribute					
		2 March					Grant review committees meet					
3rd STPB Meeting		3 March	Recommend spring tourism grants, consider draft Agriculinary Tourism Implementation Plan, adopt ACOD program review committee	Hospitality Workforce Development Program annual report	Legislature awards ACOD grants	Administrator compiles STR results, room tax reserves, trends, analysis, other parameters		ACOD program review committee reports to STPB on changes to eligibility requirements and grant guidelines	Tourism Capital Grant apps due		Grant workshop Day 1	Draft of Ag & Culinary Tourism Implementation Plan
		4 March							TCG review committee meets		Grant workshop Day 2	
		1 April			EDC recommends Spring tourism grants	Horizon meeting with administrators and committee						Heritage Tourism Implementation Plan Draft?
		2 April				Budget committee meeting to develop revenue projections, finalize budget request form	Strategic Tourism Implementation Letters of Inquiry due					
4th STPB Meeting		3 April	STPB recommends Tourism Capital Grants, STPB adopts Agriculinary Tourism Implementation Plan	Beautification Program annual report, Beautification Program strategy, CVB Q1 Report	Legislature awards Spring tourism grants	Final budget request form sent to administrators		release 1/2 payment	STPB recommends TCGs			STPB approves Ag & Culinary Tourism Implementation Plan
		4 April					POs, contracts, award letters, vouchers, denials					
		1 May			CVB Q1 Presentation, EDC recommends Tourism Capital Grants				PDEQ recommends TCGs			
		2 May				Budget requests due						
5th STPB Meeting		3 May	Adopt Beautification Plan?	CAP Market the Arts and General Operating Support annual report	Legislature awards Tourism Capital Grants	Budget request presentations			Legislature awards TCGs			
		4 May										
		1 June				Administrator works up scenarios/ numbers	Implementation proposals due?					CFA for Blueway Trail Implementation, other projects
		2 June				Committee finalizes recommendations				All evaluation plans review		
6th STPB Meeting		3 June	Budget committee presents recommendations			STPB receives initial budget committee recommendations						
		4 June										
		1 July					Present draft budget to EDC - optional					
		2 July										
7th STPB Meeting		3 July	STPB Votes on Budget	CVB Q2 Report, Discovery Trail Annual Report		STPB votes on recommendations						
		4 July					NOFA out, schedule and market grant workshop					
		1 August			CVB Q2 Presentation, EDC Votes on Budget	EDC votes on budget						
Meeting		2 August										
		3 August	Meet only if a voting matter									
		4 August										
		1 Septembe					Fall round tourism grant workshop					
		2 Septembe						release 2nd payment				
9th STPB Meeting		3 Septembe	Annual TPA designation, elect nominating committee				Fall round tourism grant applications due					
		4 Septembe										
		1 October	Recruit 2014 STPB Members		EDC multi-year capital grants award, TPA designation resolution.				Multi-year capital grants resolution to EDC			
		2 October					Grants committees meet					
10th STPB Meeting		3 October	Tourism Partner Awards, recommend fall tourism grants	CVB Q3 report	Leg. Multi-year capital grants resolution		STPB recommends fall tourism grants					
		4 October								Technical review of grant apps		
		1 November			CVB Q3 Presentation, recognition awards, 2014 STPB new member appointments, Fall Tourism Grant recommendations		EDC reviews tourism grants					
		2 November	Membership & bylaws interviews									
11th STPB Meeting		3 November	STPB recommends new members		Legislature approves tourism budget, Leg: Fall tourism grants awarded, 2014 STPB Members appointed	Legislature approves budget	Legislature awards tourism grants.	POs, contracts, award letters, vouchers, denials				
		4 November										
		1 December										
12th STPB Meeting		2 December	Usually little or no business - celebratory meeting with innkeepers?									
		3 December										
		4 December	Chair/Vice-chair working on next year committee assignments									

Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB) Goals

What goals should the STPB establish for itself as a board, for 2015?

1/18/15 Brainstorm results with additions and feedback of the STPB Planning & Evaluation Committee. This is a draft list of goals to support discussion at the 2/18/15 STPB meeting.

Goals are separated into Action-Oriented Goals and Policy-Driven Goals. Goals recommended for inclusion in the list of board goals for 2015 by the Planning & Evaluation Committee are listed first.

On 2/18, the board will consider whether to move any goals from the "POSSIBLE" list to the list of goals to establish for the board. Another suggestion is to revisit the list of possible goals in July 2015, and consider additions at that time. In the words of P&E Chair Ken Jupiter, by then "we will know if what we have bitten off we have been able to digest".

RECOMMENDED 2015 Action-Oriented Goals

- Complete the Agriculinary Tourism Implementation Plan by May 2015 and create a tangible program by the end of the year. (Lead: STPB Agriculinary Tourism Task Force)
- Convene a meeting facility task force and report to the board by June 2015. (Lead: STPB Meeting and Conference Facility Task Force)
- Complete program modifications and revised ACOD grant guidelines by mid-year 2015. (Lead: CAP, ACOD Program Review Committee)
- Complete the Heritage Tourism Implementation Plan by September 2015. (Lead: STPB Heritage Tourism Task Force)
- Fund and ensure appropriate scope and representation on client committee for a new comprehensive visitor profile study for Tompkins County. (Leads: CVB, STPB P&E Committee, Study Client Committee)
- Develop a concerted approach to enhancing the demographic diversity of the STPB and associate membership. (Lead: STPB Membership & Bylaws Committee)

RECOMMENDED Policy-Driven Goals

- Identify a threshold of tourism program investment that triggers a more thorough review of an organization or project, and a framework for assessing risk for new initiatives, to follow up on recommendations of the Ticket Center and Wine Center reports. (Lead: P&E Committee)
- Support the CVB as they envision what a visitor center looks like in Ithaca, NY.

POSSIBLE Action-Oriented Goals

- Convene a Higher Education Tourism Working Group.
- Create a communications plan for the Tompkins County Tourism Program.
- Convene an Outdoor Recreation Tourism Task Force
- Monitor the program evaluation planning efforts of all programs funded by Tompkins County room tax using the program evaluation planning model recently used by the CVB.

POSSIBLE Policy-Driven Goals

- Review board makeup for adequate recreation representation.
- Examine Arts and Culture support in other communities to understand our community's support for the arts relative to other communities and our goals.
- Critically examine the tourism program policy around purely generating new tourism through our investments versus starting with the assumption that we need to build our tourism products with local support and investment first in order to have successful community-based tourism.
- Examine the possibilities for increasing revenues for the Tompkins County Tourism Program from a variety of sources

REMOVED from list of Possible 2015 Goals

- Conduct a detailed review of tourism program funding by sector and report on the level/quality of alignment of funding and priorities.
 - Reason for removal: staff-driven, ongoing.
- Use a new "Chmura" study to analyze different sectors' role in the tourism industry, including recreation.
 - Reason for removal: inherent in the study process itself; and doing the study is already a recommended goal.
- Encourage each grant committee to review guidelines to ensure they align with the 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan and are funding the most strategic projects.
 - Reason for removal: staff driven, ongoing.

Year in Review: Four Things to Know

-  **A record year in tourism**
-  **Redesigned Travel Guides saves \$30,000**
-  **Group Sales brings \$2m in visitor spending**
-  **Online chat pays dividends for Visitors Center**

Best ever: 356,000 room-nights and \$53.6 million in hotel revenue.

Efficient mini format is a hit with travelers, 100,000 copies distributed, second printing required.

Motor coach sales and hard-won Food Security Conference lead to 73% increase in booked business.

New service doubles customer outreach, generating 861 bookings worth \$166,000 in room revenue.

2015 Outlook: Here's What's Ahead

Another record breaker on tap for local tourism

Cornell 150th, busy IC Events Center, multiple conferences and strong economy point to a banner year.

Digital, social and tightly targeted

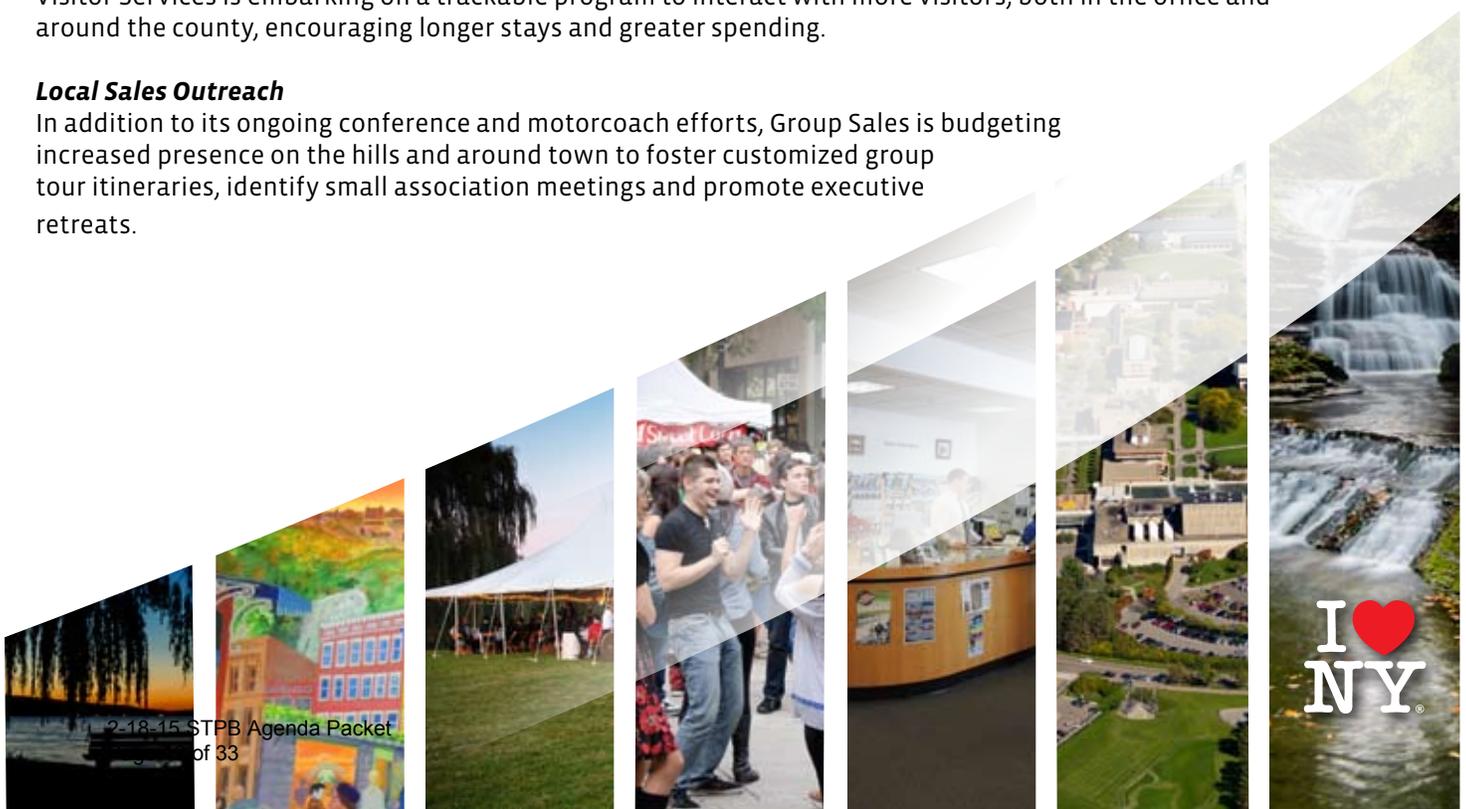
A new adaptive website, targeted social media and an increasing emphasis on digital advertising will allow the Marketing Department to deliver messaging more efficiently than ever before—including in-market advertising to support tourism events.

Upselling for ROI

Visitor Services is embarking on a trackable program to interact with more visitors, both in the office and around the county, encouraging longer stays and greater spending.

Local Sales Outreach

In addition to its ongoing conference and motorcoach efforts, Group Sales is budgeting increased presence on the hills and around town to foster customized group tour itineraries, identify small association meetings and promote executive retreats.



Visitors Bureau Leads the Community to a Record Year in Tourism

- CVB Generates Minimum \$2.6m in Tourism Spending
- 73% Increase in Group Business Booked
- Visitors Spend \$177m in Tompkins County



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

Your CVB is proud to report that Tompkins County enjoyed a record tourism season in 2014 with 356,000 overnight hotel stays generating \$53.6 million dollars in room revenue. Combined with dining, shopping and activities, total tourism spending will exceed \$177 million (when reported later this spring).

CVB staff took a leadership role in the effort, implementing efficient new ways to market the community, finding new digital tools to enhance visitor services and selling hard to close the deal on 73% more conference, motorcoach and wedding group leads.

While we can't track total visits generated by our \$1.1 million 2014 budget, we did count 8,628 overnight stays booked or contracted directly through CVB programs. Using these sales as the most conservative possible measure of performance, we can confidently say the CVB's work led to a minimum of \$2.6 million in total tourism spending. Bottom line: Tompkins County saw a minimum return of \$2.36 for every dollar invested in its CVB.

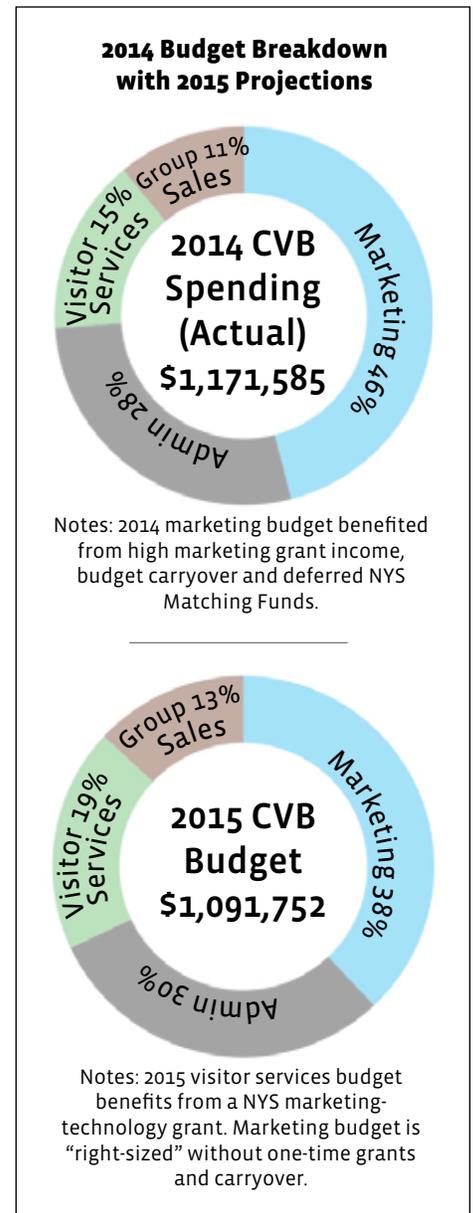
Clearly the CVB's impact extended beyond this simple measurement and if we tracked conversions on the millions of consumer impressions generated through web, PR, print, email, and individual contacts, the ROI would be higher still. But for now, we're good reporting \$2.36. We only wish our retirement accounts performed as strongly.

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

2014 Lodging Market Performance (STR)

	Ithaca-Tompkins	NYS Ex NYC	USA
OCC Rate*	58.9%	-0.4%	60.1%
Avg Daily Rate**	\$150	4.5%	\$112
RevPar	\$89	4.1%	\$67
Supply	604,290	3.9%	0.8%
Demand	356,062	3.5%	2.1%
Revenue	\$53.6mil	8.1%	3.8%

*Occupancy Rate **Revenue per available room





Supporting the County's Strategic Tourism Plan

- ✓ Data-Driven Evaluation Program Completed
- ✓ Established Tourism Types Promoted
- ✓ Downtown Supported as a Tourism Hub

The Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Plan guides the county's tourism efforts. In 2014, your CVB actively supported the plan through:



360-Degree Evaluation

Data-driven evaluation is a core policy of the Tourism Plan. The CVB supported this with a year-long internal and external evaluation program coordinated by Cornell's Office for Research Evaluation. The process has refined the CVB's operations and is influencing its goals and reporting, in this report and beyond.



Advancing Culinary Tourism

With promotion and management of the IthacaFork.com website and more than 100 hours of staff support for the county's Agri-Culinary Tourism workgroup, the CVB took a major role in advancing this tourism priority in 2014.



Supporting Emerging Tourism Markets

The CVB actively promoted birding, gardening, sustainability, heritage, LGBT and sports tourism options through marketing and group sales efforts. Success came with bookings of gardening and birding tours, along with multiple room blocks for sports groups.



Tourism Foundation

Efficient marketing and strong visitor services are foundations of the county tourism plan. The CVB supported this with: marketing coordination and consultation for 10 organizations funded through county tourism marketing grants, a 29% increase in year-over-year web traffic, a three-year 81% decrease in travel guide costs and a two-fold increase in offsite visitor outreach via a new online chat service.



Promoting Outdoor Recreation

The tourism plan lists expanding outdoor recreation as a primary goal. Focusing tourism efforts on lakes, trails, parks and gorges was a year-round PR effort in 2014, with the CVB earning Ithaca the title of Outdoor Magazine's #4 "Best Town," and Travel + Leisure's title of "America's Best Swimming Holes."



Downtown Ithaca Support

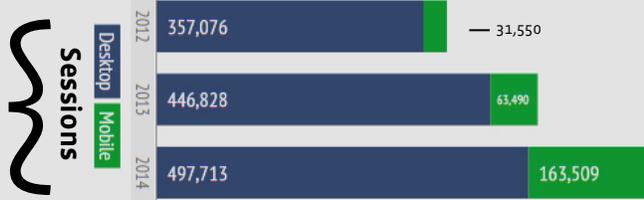
Enhancing Downtown as a tourism hub is a goal of the plan and with Commons construction spanning all of 2014, the Ithaca CVB team focused on supporting downtown with media attention. Nicole Alper of Yahoo! Travel, Jim Byers of the Toronto Star, and David Atlanta of The Rainbow Times all shopped, dined, stayed and reported on downtown.

2014 Marketing Roundup: Striving for Multi-Platform Efficiency & Impact

- ✓ Visit Ithaca Web Traffic Up 29% YoY
- ✓ Digital Advertising Brings 50k+ Web Hits
- ✓ 2,640,000 Desktop & Mobile Page Views

2015: A Year of Digital Growth

While desktop traffic consistently grows, mobile traffic has spiked—the shift to mobile now accounts for 33% of all traffic. Digital ad campaigns yielded over \$50k web hits.

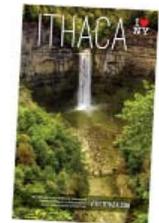
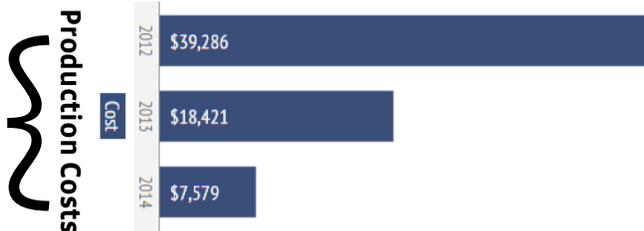


+157.5%
Mobile Traffic

+11.3%
Desktop Traffic

Seeking a No-Cost Travel Guide

The Travel Guide is celebrated annually as the #1 tourism marketing piece. We can now celebrate an 81% decrease in cost over a three-year period.



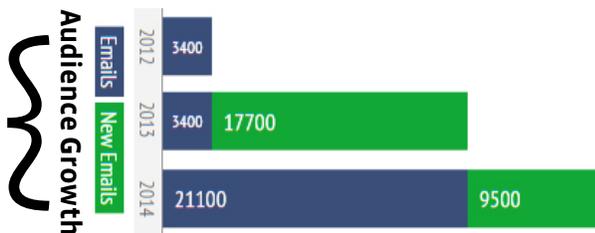
Midweek Advertising Success

In an effort to promote off-peak room sales, the CVB invested in midweek travel banners. With 1,800 click-throughs to purchase, the campaign ROI was as much as \$300,000.*



Maximizing Email Marketing

After a banner year of trade show marketing and contesting, the active email list grew to 19,800 recipients, with open rates 45.4% higher than industry average.**

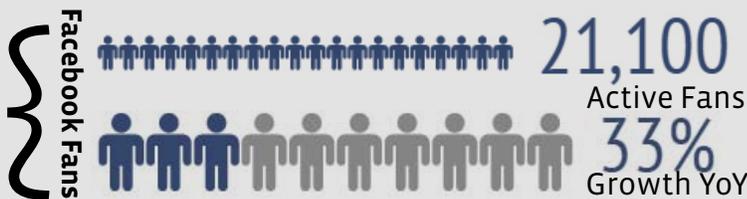


30%
Open Rate

12%
Click-Through Rate

Amazing Facebook Growth

Reaching 21,100 fans, Facebook is a powerful outlet for social influence. With 88% of fans outside Ithaca and 76% women, it reaches a prime tourism audience.



*based on \$150 ADR from Smith Travel Research Study **based on Constant Contact Industry Open Rate Study

A Year of Top Tens: Major Success in Public Relations & Media



14 Journalists Hosted



460 Million Impressions



62 National Ithaca Press Stories



Notable 2014 Stories Include:



Ithaca Locavore and Craft Cider Scene Hits the New York Times

"Ithaca was a decadent couple of days...a spectacular three-course cider pairing dinner at Hazelnut Kitchen...might alone have been worth the five-hour drive from the city." **Market - Nationwide | Impressions - 57,395,455**



CVB PR Pushes Ithaca to #4 in Outside Magazine "Best Town" Competition

"Many move to Ithaca to get an education...but they stay because they're smart enough not to leave."

Market - Nationwide | Impressions - 3,087,091



Hosted: Toronto Star Lead Editor Delivers Major PR Hit

"The tourism folks put me up at the Argos Inn . It's a smack-dab fabulous property...The downtown is terrific, with cool brewpubs, restaurants and nice shops in carefully crafted, older buildings of solid brick." —Jim Byers, Editor, Toronto Star

Market - Toronto + Canada | Impressions - 3,814,968

Welcome! Visitor Services Innovates to Reach More Travelers



- ✓ Walk-In Traffic Rebounds to 17,000 Visitors
- ✓ Online Chat Doubles Travel Inquiries
- ✓ +35% Travel Guide Distribution

New Online Chat Service Doubles Visitor Inquiries

Implementation of a new chat feature doubles the number of visitor inquiries since implementation. Aug-Dec inquiries shown.

Phone vs Chat Inquiries



2014 Overnight Gross Sales from Chat Inquiries (Based on \$150* ADR)

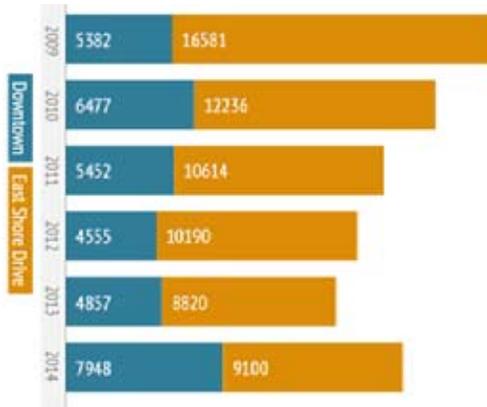
\$129,150
Short-Term Stays

\$36,450
Long-Term Stays

Visitor Center Walk-In Traffic At All-Time High on Commons

The Downtown Visitor Center saw it's highest foot traffic ever. This bodes well for the future with Commons construction wrapping up in 2015.

Downtown & ESD Traffic



+39%
Downtown Visitor Traffic

+3%
East Shore Visitor Traffic

17,000
Total 2014 Walk-in Visitors

Visitors Services Outreach Grows

The team takes it on the road with increased Visitor Services booth presence at college graduation, student return and major tourism events.

Outreach Increase

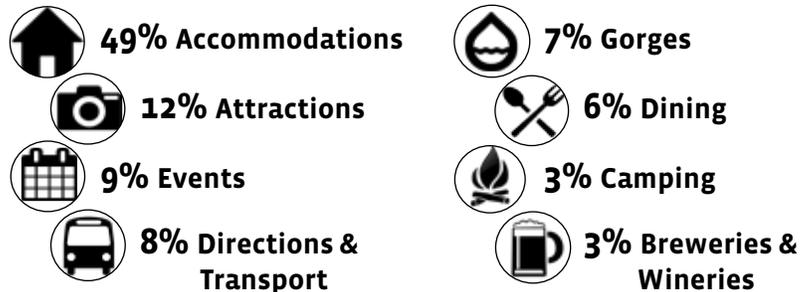


Knowing What Visitors Want

Transcripts from the newly implemented chat service allow the Visitors Services Team to identify top visitor questions with statistical precision.

Here's what visitors ask us:

Top Visitor Questions



*based on \$150 ADR from Smith Travel Research Study

Booked! Group Sales Succeeds with Large Conferences & Diverse Itineraries

- ✓ Group Sales Team Meets with 111 Tour Operators
- ✓ Food Security Conference Brings \$500k Impact
- ✓ +75% Leads Distributed
+25% Leads Contracted

The Ithaca CVB Group Sales Department exceeded expectations in 2014 in the following areas:



Motorcoach group midweek business

The Sales team attended six appointment-based trade shows and met with 111 tour company owners and decision makers.



Tour Company Bookings

Thirteen tour companies booked tours to Ithaca for 2014-2015 as a direct result of this activity.



International Marketing Efforts

Group sales continues pursuing the inbound Chinese tourist market and business leadership groups. We are presently coordinating programs with Shanghai University and Cornell Business School to bring business groups here twice annually.



Global Food Security Conference Booked

The 2nd International Conference on Global Food Security will bring 700 scientists to Ithaca during Cornell fall break in October, 2015. Group Sales worked hard to land the conference for its local economic impact (\$500,000) and for its international prestige.



Shoulder-Season Athletic Events

Large athletic events play a key role in filling hotel rooms during shoulder season (November-March). The group sales department works closely with organizers of large meets like the Speedo Swim Championships and Turkey Shoot Lacrosse Tournament to ensure these groups will return to Ithaca each year.

In 2014, 96 leads were sent from the sales department to our hotel partners with 64 of those leads resulting in booked business. This is more than a 25% increase over 2013.





Looking Forward: 2015 Goals

- More Local Outreach
- More Efficient Marketing
- More ROI from Visitors Services

Group Sales:

- * Emphasize midweek group tours to meet or exceed the 13 tour companies that included Ithaca itineraries in their catalogs in 2014.
- * To increase local service and maximize potential conference bookings, conduct 24 biweekly sales blitzes on campus at Cornell, Ithaca College, TC3 and in the community.

Visitors Services:

- * Encourage longer stays and increased visitor spending (upselling) by instituting an incentivized sales program.
- * Expand its reach by attending more local events and by using new outreach technology.

Marketing:

- * Report individual ad campaigns, click-through rates, share rates and web visits to increase consumer engagement and effectiveness.
- * Continue to promote midweek room sales to surpass the \$300,000 generated in 2014.
- * Increase impressions of web impressions, social media impact, and public relations exposure.

Ithaca/Tompkins County Convention & Visitor's Bureau Staff

Bruce Stoff • Director
bruce@visitithaca.com

Kristy Mitchell • Integrated Marketing Manager
kristy@visitithaca.com

Mary Rachun • Director of Sales
mary@visitithaca.com

Jodi LaPierre • Visitor's Services Manager
jodi@visitithaca.com

Sarah Imes • Sales Manager
sarah@visitithaca.com

Rachael Atkins • Asst. Visitor's Services Manager
rachael@visitithaca.com

The ACOD Review Panel convened on Friday, February 6th at 3:30 PM in the Old Jail Conference Room for the purpose of reviewing the year-end reports required of current grantees, and the agency audit of the Hangar Theater prepared by Jack Little.

In attendance:

- Panel members: Sue Perlgut, Susie Monagan, Leslie Ackerman, Will Burbank. Panel members unable to attend were Ethan Ash and Anne Gossen
- Invited guest: Tom Knipe, Tompkins County Planning Department / Tourism Program
- Administrator: John Spence, Community Arts Partnership

Process

Prior to meeting on the 6th, all of the panelists were provided with: 1. PDF copies of year-end reports from the Cayuga Chamber Orchestra, the Hangar Theatre, the History Center, the Kitchen Theatre, the Paleontological Research Institution, the Sciencenter, and the State Theatre. 2. A summary of each organization's original application for funding to identify the approved objectives of their current ACOD funding. 3. A copy of the report on the Hangar Theatre from the accounting consultant Jack Little. 4. A summary of observations made by program administrator John Spence.

Tom Knipe received copies of all documents as well.

There were no new applications for funding to be considered.

The discussion

- It was agreed that all of the grantees met the current eligibility guidelines to receive funding. Tom confirmed that the requirements of their current contracts with the County had been met.
- Tom also confirmed that the condition of the ACOD budget was such that the County was in the position to cover the contracted amounts for each organization on the condition of approval of a 2015 budget adjustment allowing 2014 allocated but unspent ACOD funds to be added to the 2015 ACOD budget. (See below)
- Much of the discussion then focused on the concern that, while some organizations are doing well, others seem to be struggling for financial stability after years of receiving consistent funding through this program, which is designed to provide Stabilization Grants followed by Audience/Capacity-Building Grants. There was acknowledgement that members of the assembled panel were perhaps more sensitive to issues relating to financial stability given the STPB's recent efforts to understand the closing of the Wine and Ticket Centers.
- Two issues were at the core of the discussion. 1. There was a disconnect between some of the written reports which offered a positive view of the organization's condition and the same organization's Profit & Loss Statements which documented significant losses. 2. There is a concern that some organizations might have lost sight of the organizational development aspect of the Arts and Culture Organizational Development (ACOD) funding. The purpose of the funding goes beyond general operating support. The application, year-end reports, and the required independent agency audit all look for evidence of stabilization moving into capacity building.
- Because there are no guidelines or policies allowing the panel to withhold some or all funding from any organization that meets the program's eligibility criteria, and because no organization

was seen to have egregiously misrepresented themselves, the panel voted to recommend full funding for each in 2015, with some hesitation. 2015 is the last year for all of the current contracts. For 2016 all organizations will have to reapply for ACOD support and the panel felt there would be an opportunity to reemphasize the purpose of the funding provided and introduce policies that give the review panel more leverage to hold funded organizations accountable to that purpose.

Recommendations of the Panel

- All grantees, the Cayuga Chamber Orchestra, the Hangar Theatre, the History Center, the Kitchen Theatre, the Paleontological Research Institution, the Sciencenter, and the State Theatre should be funded at the levels specified in their contracts.
- Each agency will receive a letter from the ACOD administrator informing them of the outcome of this process. Each letter will be individualized, stating the amount of funding to be awarded and reminding the recipient that the purpose of the funding is to ensure the financial stability of the organization and that to the degree that their policies, actions, or lack of action weakens their organization, they put their future ACOD funding at risk.
- 2015 ACOD budget adjustment - The panel recommends increasing the 2015 ACOD program budget by \$7,654, which is the amount of the allocated but unspent funds from the previous year. (See the attached document)

The agreed upon recommendations for 2015 funding are as follows:

CCO - \$27,000	Hangar Theatre - \$27,000	History Center - \$27,000
Kitchen Theatre - \$27,000	PRI/CNC - \$40,000	Sciencenter - \$17,000
State Theatre - \$27,000	Accounting Consultant - \$3,000	Administrator - \$10,000

2015 ACOD Program budget	\$199,519
Previous years allocated but unspent funds to be added to the 2015 budget	\$7,654
Total 2015 Budget with recommended adjustment	\$207,173

2015 ACOD Grants	\$192,000
2015 Admin & Accounting Consultant	\$13,000
2015 Total Expenses	\$205,000

2015 Expected Budgeted/Unspent	\$2,173
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Future actions:

There is an ACOD taskforce that has been charged with making recommendations for changes to strengthen this program going forward. Their recommendations are scheduled to come before the STPB in the second quarter of 2015.

Submitted by
 John Spence
 Executive Director
 Community Arts Partnership

**Tompkins County Arts Culture Organizational Development Grant Programs
History of Grant Awards 2004-2015**

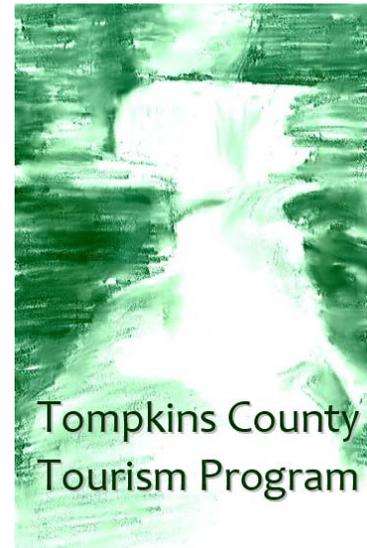
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Cayuga Chamber Orchestra	\$20,000	\$25,000	\$20,000	\$22,000	\$23,275	\$18,700	\$21,373	\$21,800	\$22,236	\$27,000	\$27,000	\$27,000
Cayuga Nature Center	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$28,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	merged	\$0	\$0
Hangar Theatre	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$32,500	\$37,500	\$24,000	\$22,600	\$23,052	\$23,513	\$27,000	\$27,000	\$27,000
History Center	\$20,000	\$30,000	\$23,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$23,200	\$21,458	\$21,887	\$22,325	\$27,000	\$27,000	\$27,000
Kitchen Theatre	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$35,000	\$39,680	\$34,000	\$22,400	\$21,264	\$21,689	\$22,123	\$22,000	\$23,000	\$27,000
PRI/MOTE	\$0	\$0	\$20,000	\$25,000	\$30,000	\$18,000	\$15,000	\$15,300	\$15,606	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000
Sciencenter	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$10,000	\$16,000	\$16,320	\$16,646	\$17,000	\$17,000	\$17,000
State Theatre	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$37,000	\$16,000	\$17,000	\$22,850	\$23,307	\$11,887	\$27,000	\$27,000
Light in Winter	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$22,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Grant Totals	\$125,000	\$140,000	\$158,000	\$179,180	\$191,775	\$160,300	\$159,695	\$167,898	\$170,756	\$171,887	\$188,000	\$192,000

Organization Twelve-Year Totals 2004-2015

Cayuga Chamber Orchestra	\$275,384
Cayuga Nature Center	\$103,000
Hangar Theatre	\$334,165
History Center	\$302,870
Kitchen Theatre	\$318,156
PRI/MOTE	\$258,906
Sciencenter	\$109,966
State Theatre	\$302,044
Light in Winter	\$22,000

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

2015 Strategic Tourism Implementation Grant Funding Opportunity



Deadline

Applications will be accepted in a two-step process.

- STEP ONE: Letters of interest with a maximum length of two pages will be accepted through **MONTH, DAY, 2015**.
- STEP TWO: The Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB) will review the letters of interest and then select applicants from whom to invite full proposals.

A goal is to make final funding awards by **MONTH, DAY, 2015**

Contact:

Tom Knipe, Senior Planner/Tourism Coordinator
Tompkins County Planning Department
121 E. Court St. Ithaca, NY 14850
607-274-5560

Email letters of interest by **MONTH, DAY, 2015** to: tknipe@tompkins-co.org

Summary of Funding Opportunity

\$150,000 is available in the 2015 budget of the Tompkins County Tourism Program for Strategic Tourism Implementation. The Tourism Program is funded by the County's hotel room occupancy tax. A portion of 2015 Strategic Tourism Implementation funds is recommended to be used for local tourism industry research, specifically to update the "Profile of Visitors to Tompkins County" study which was last conducted in 2009. The final amount available through the Strategic Tourism Implementation grant process described in these grant guidelines will be established prior to inviting full proposals. The overarching purpose of these one-time funds is to support significant implementation of *critical actions* identified in the 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan.

The minimum amount that may be requested is \$25,000; the maximum amount is \$100,000. There is no match requirement, but proposals demonstrating community support by way of matching financial and in-kind support, and demonstrating potential to leverage other funding may be rated more highly. The total number of individual awards made through this funding opportunity will likely be between two and four. Grant awards will be made through a competitive process. Both existing programs/projects and new programs/projects are eligible to submit Letters of Interest. This funding opportunity is not subject to the 60/40 split for tourism marketing/product development that is currently used as an annual budgeting guideline by the Tompkins County Tourism Program. This funding opportunity is designed to be flexible in terms of the types of proposals that will be considered and at the same time focused on direct implementation of *critical actions* and plans identified as *critical actions* by the 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan along with local tourism program/industry research priorities. It does not replace any existing grant program of the Tompkins County Tourism Program.

Critical Actions

Please refer to the Tompkins County 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan for a complete description of *critical actions*. The plan is available here: www.tompkinscountyny.gov/tourism. A concise list of *critical actions* may be found on pages 36 and 37 of the Plan; letters of interest from organizations other than those referenced as *lead organizations* will be considered.

Several detailed plans and strategies have grown directly out of *critical actions* from the 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan. As such, Letters of Interest for projects which will significantly implement any the following tourism-related plans will also be considered:

- a. Cayuga Lake Blueway Trail Plan
- b. Tompkins County Agriculinary Tourism Implementation Plan
- c. Tompkins County Heritage Tourism Implementation Plan
- d. Tompkins County Wayfinding and Interpretive Signage Plan
- e. Tompkins Priority Trails Strategy

Eligibility

Not all entities are eligible to receive funding from Tompkins County government. In general, a County government may award a grant to another municipality and certain not-for-profit agencies. Before applying, please consult with your accountant or attorney to confirm that your entity is legally eligible to receive money from a County government.

Organizations currently funded through ongoing room tax budget allocations are eligible, and entities proposing new projects that are not currently funded through ongoing tourism budget allocations are also potentially eligible. Proposals for capital projects are potentially eligible. If you are unsure about your eligibility, please consult with the grant administrator.

Limitations

This is a one-time funding opportunity. Proposals must demonstrate how the project will have an impact with one-time funding. Proposals that are funded in this new one-time grant category may be eligible to apply for additional funding through a different grant program of the Tompkins County Tourism Program or through a future annual budget request, but no continuation of funding will be guaranteed.

While proposals must implement a *critical action* identified in the 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan or address a specific research need, not all projects that would support implementation of a *critical action* qualify. The following types of projects are **do not qualify to apply** for Strategic Tourism Implementation funds; rather, these may qualify to apply for funding through one of the existing grant programs of the Tompkins County Tourism Program, or through the annual Tourism Program budgeting process.

- New Tourism Initiatives whose total one time request is less than \$25,000.
- An ongoing event or project that has been funded in the past through a Tourism Project Grant, New Tourism Initiative Grant, and/or Tourism Marketing and Advertising Grant and is not proposing a significant new offering.

- Projects that are part of the current work plan of an existing program that is funded by the Tompkins County Tourism Program, and where a critical action will be best implemented through an alignment of existing resources.

Programs that are currently funded by the Tompkins County Tourism Program who wish to apply for Strategic Tourism Implementation funds must demonstrate that their proposal represents a significant new offering that falls outside the existing core work plan. However, projects must fall within the mission and purpose of the applicant organization. Projects not within the recognized scope of the applicant's mission are discouraged.

Please refer to the Tompkins County Tourism Program's website for information about other grant programs of the Tompkins County Tourism Program: www.tompkinscountyny.gov/tourism. Other grants may be available in these program categories:

- Arts and Culture Organizational Development
- New Tourism Initiatives
- Tourism Projects
- Tourism Capital
- Tourism Marketing & Advertising
- Town Beautification
- Community Celebrations

Application Timing

A funding opportunity announcement will be made by X DATE, 2015. Two-page Letters of Interest will be due by X DATE, 2015. Full proposals will then be invited from among projects for which a Letter of Interest was received. The STPB and legislative review process and decisions will likely take place by early X MONTH, 2015. Adhering to this schedule will allow successful applicants to begin putting these funds to use in 2015.

Review Committee and Award Process

A Strategic Tourism Implementation Review Committee (IRC) will be formed to review, score and rank Letters of Interest and full proposals based on the criteria below and recommend awards to the STPB. The final decision regarding grant awards will be made by the Tompkins County Legislature. Applicants are strongly discouraged from soliciting support from review committee members, STPB members or members of the legislature outside of this objective application and review process. In accordance with STPB bylaws, the chair of the STPB will appoint review committee members. The size of the IRC will be between five and eight members. Committee membership will consist of:

- At least two members of the Planning & Evaluation Committee of the STPB,
- At least one member of the Tourism Capital Grant review committee,
- At least one member of the New Tourism Initiative/Tourism Project Grant review committee, and
- At least one member of the Marketing and Advertising Grant review committee.
- In any case, a majority of review committee members shall consist of voting STPB members, but not all IRC members need be STPB members.

- Potential review committee members will be asked to disclose their organizational ties in order to limit conflicts of interest.

All Letters of Interest and full proposals will be evaluated together as a pool. After Letters of Interest are reviewed, the IRC will issue a letter to each applicant either inviting the applicant to submit a full proposal or not. Applicants invited to the proposal stage are not guaranteed funding, but will have a higher likelihood of being funded than if submitting a full proposal blind. After awards are approved by the Tompkins County Legislature, funds will be disbursed pursuant to a contract with the County. Awards are not intended to be on a reimbursement basis; they will be made up-front.

Evaluation Criteria

Full proposals will be evaluated and scored by the Strategic Tourism Implementation Review Committee (IRC) based on how well they respond to the criteria below.

Project Readiness. Does the proposal demonstrate readiness to use the grant funds and implement the proposed project within 12 months of being funded?

Implements Critical Action or Strategic Priority. Does the proposal implement a critical action of the 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan or a strategic priority of the STPB in a significant way?

Project Benefits. How significant is the potential for direct, measurable tourism impact in Tompkins County? If developed, will there be economic benefits in Tompkins County in the form of additional hotel/B&B room nights and visitor spending? Are the expected economic benefits likely to be realized, given other constraints or barriers? Are there additional significant quality of life benefits? Measurable benefits may occur in years subsequent to 2015.

Project Outcome and Cost. Is the overall project cost justified based on the expected benefits? Relative to the project cost, how significant are the potential benefits? How appropriate are the applicant's cost share contributions (sources and amounts) with respect to the degree of risk, potential to benefit from the work, and financial status of the proposing organization and project team?

Organizational Capacity. Is the proposed schedule of work clear and technically feasible? Does the project team that has been assembled have the right skills and experience to deliver? Does the project team have a demonstrated history of success in carrying out similar projects?

Demonstration of Community Support. Does the project demonstrate potential to leverage funds from regional, state, private, and/or local sources other than room tax? Are matching cash and in-kind contributions secured or likely? Is evidence of partnerships provided? Although no match is required, applications demonstrating community support by way of matching financial and in-kind support will be rated more highly on this criterion. Does the proposal contain Letters of Commitment from participants, co-funders, and related businesses and other organizations?

Other Considerations. Proposals will be reviewed for eligibility and to determine if they reflect the Tompkins County Tourism Program's overall objectives, including: encouragement of diversity and sustainability, coordination with similar ongoing or completed tourism projects, the general distribution of tourism projects among organizations and among focus areas identified by the strategic tourism plan, and the geographical distribution of projects within Tompkins County.

Requirements. Proposals must meet the following requirements:

- ✓ Have the potential to directly implement a critical action identified by the Tompkins County 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan or a strategic priority of the STPB.
- ✓ Document the potential for economic benefits through additional room nights and visitor spending in Tompkins County.
- ✓ Provide additional quality of life benefits to residents of Tompkins County.

Attachments. For those projects invited to the full proposal phase, a Budget Worksheet and a Statement of Work are required as attachments. In addition, you may include any qualifications, drawings or ancillary information that is necessary to support your proposal. If appropriate; also include:

Letters of Interest or Commitment. If you are relying on any other organization to provide services, equipment or cost share, include a letter from that organization describing their planned participation. However, due to their active sponsorship of this solicitation, Letters of Interest or Commitment should not be solicited from Strategic Tourism Planning Board members, members of the Tompkins County Legislature or staff of the Tompkins County Tourism Program. Also include letters of interest or commitment from team members, businesses or other organizations critical to the success of the project.

STEP ONE Application Directions – Letter of Interest

The Letter of Interest should be no more than two pages long and should be provided on the organization's letterhead. At a minimum, it should provide a description of the project and organization, a statement about the need or opportunity, and a description of how the project implements a critical action from the 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan or specific local tourism research need. It should also state a specific dollar amount or range that would be requested and other sources of funding and support. Submit your Letter of Interest via email to tknipe@tompkins-co.org.

STEP TWO Application Directions – Full Proposal

If invited to submit a full proposal, please provide complete and concise answers to all questions in the application narrative. You may use as much space as needed, up to a maximum of 10 pages for the narrative. There are two required attachments: a Budget Worksheet and a Statement of Work. There is no page limit for attachments. Applicants are encouraged, but not required to submit letters of support/commitment from key partners. Do not submit the proposal *guidelines* with your proposal; the application cover page should be the first page of your proposal. **Submit one .pdf file containing your entire proposal via email to tknipe@tompkins-co.org.**

Program Budget Worksheet – Required Attachment for Full Proposals

Full proposals are required to include a program Budget Worksheet alongside the narrative. This is not the organizational budget, but a budget for the project for which you are requesting grant funding. Please start with the Budget Worksheet Template that is provided as a Microsoft Excel document. All major categories of expenses should be listed. In addition, if your project will receive funding or in-kind support from sources other than the Tompkins County Tourism Program, please list revenues from other sources and/or the value of in-kind support in the designated space. An overall organizational budget is not required, but please do provide the percentage of your organization's overall annual budget that the project would constitute.

Statement of Work – Required Attachment for Full Proposals

Applicants invited to submit full proposals must include a Statement of Work. The Statement of Work should, at a minimum, include project start and end dates, a project schedule, deliverables, and roles and responsibilities of key people or organizations. Strong proposals will also include specific measures of success and means of tracking progress towards those. This is the document that describes how you will implement your proposed project, and achieve the objectives that you have set out for the project.

Reporting

Successful applicants will be required to file a grant report or reports - format to be provided.

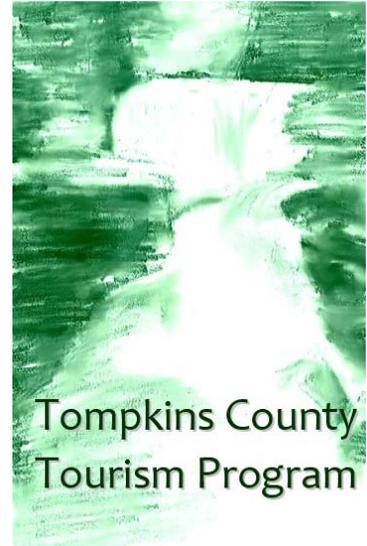
Assistance

Please call or email the grant administrator if you have any questions or need help putting together your application. Submission of drafts for review and feedback prior to the application deadline is strongly encouraged.

Tom Knipe, Senior Planner/Tourism Coordinator
Tompkins County Planning Department
121 E. Court St; Ithaca, NY 14850
tknipe@tompkins-co.org, 607-274-5560

APPLICATION (FULL PROPOSALS)

2015 Strategic Tourism Implementation Grant Funding Opportunity



I. BASIC INFORMATION

Project/Proposal Name: _____

Applicant Organization: _____

Contact Person: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Request: \$ _____

Instruction: You may use up to 10 pages to answer the questions in the narrative section.

II. PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION

Describe your proposed project.

III. STRATEGIC TOURISM IMPLEMENTATION

Document how your proposal responds to goal(s) and action(s) of the Tompkins County 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan and/or a Strategic Priority of the STPB. Describe how your proposal aligns with the aims and policies of the Tompkins County Tourism Program.

IV. EXPECTED BENEFITS

Describe, in as much detail as possible, the specific economic and quality of life benefits that you expect this project to deliver.

V. ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION

Provide a description of the applicant organization(s), its mission, board/governance, annual budget, year founded, key staff, how this proposal fits with other activities, and record in implementing similar types of projects.

VI. BUDGET NARRATIVE

Describe how you propose to use the requested funds.

VII. IMPACT OF FUNDING

What would be the specific impact(s) on the project of receiving less funding than you are requesting?

ATTACHMENTS

____ Attachment A - Budget Worksheet – **REQUIRED (template provided)**

____ Attachment B – Statement of Work – **REQUIRED (no template)**

____ Other Attachments - **OPTIONAL**

Qualifications, letters of commitment/support, drawings or ancillary information

This page is for your information only. Please do not submit it with your proposal.

PROPOSAL CHECKLIST

Please review the following checklist prior to submitting your funding request.

- 1) ____ A Letter of Interest is submitted by no later than **11am, Wednesday April 1st.**

If invited to submit a full proposal, continue to #2. If not invited to submit a full proposal, stop here.

- 2) ____ Questions I through VII are answered completely and concisely, in no more than ten pages (proposal narrative)
- 3) ____ The budget worksheet is completed using the template (required attachment)
- 4) ____ The Statement of Work is complete and accurate (required attachment)
- 5) ____ Optional attachments are provided as needed
- 6) ____ The proposal narrative, required attachments, and any optional attachments are compiled into **a single .pdf file.**
- 7) ____ **Email this proposal file electronically** to tknipe@tompkins-co.org **no later than** the deadline. Mailed, faxed or hand-delivered proposals will not be accepted. Upon receipt of your complete proposal, you will receive an email confirmation of receipt.

If you do not receive a confirmation via email by the end of business on the day the letter or proposal is due, please follow up to ensure that your letter or proposal was received!

Tompkins Count Agriculinary Tourism Implementation Plan

Possible Actions

Strategy	Action
Institutional	Establish and fund a backbone/umbrella/parent organization or program including dedicated staff to support, coordinate, and lead implementation of agriculinary tourism branding, marketing and product development efforts.
Institutional	Conduct a study of consumer preferences and the local market to prioritize agriculinary tourism investments.
Institutional	Identify and promote existing tourism-ready facilities and infrastructure to accommodate more agriculinary tourism.
Institutional, Relationship	Maintain and continually update an inventory of existing and emerging agriculinary tourism products, experiences, partners and facilities for use in promotional efforts as well as facilitating internal linkages and partnerships.
Relationships	Develop an assessment, training and technical assistance program to assist established and emerging agriculinary products (events, products, chefs/restaurants, farms, markets, and partnerships - e.g. the culinary trails) with tourism product development and marketing.
Relationships	Develop a series of ongoing business to business networking events focused on building relationships between farmers, producers, chefs, restaurants, tourism industry professionals, event producers, and allied organizations.
Relationships	Provide support for / facilitate coordination and packaging between agriculinary tourism events and products.
Marketing	Develop an integrated digital marketing platform (App or mobile-optimized website) to pull together and promote food, farm and beverage - based experiences across various themes and audiences; to include an interactive map with calendar, walking tours, multimedia content and user engagement.
Marketing	Establish standards to use in design and delivery of collective and partner marketing efforts - across multiple platforms, applications, and responsible agencies.
Marketing	Develop and implement a cohesive agriculinary-focused branding and marketing strategy which identifies priority messages, audiences, channels, partnerships, content creation opportunities, social media, SEO, automated marketing procedures, and active-engagement marketing techniques and events.
Marketing	Invest in agriculinary PR with content creation and pitches across a variety of media; web, print, radio, TV.
Marketing	Target college audiences (alums, parents, students, event attendees) for agriculinary tourism messaging.
Marketing	Invest in key partners, such as Ithaca Fork, as the primary agriculinary tourism branding and marketing platform for the greater Ithaca region.
Marketing	Develop and promote a list of must-do farm, food and beverage based experiences (possibly through a passbook program)
Marketing	Lead the development of a regional agri-culinary tourism branding and marketing strategy for the Finger Lakes (not just Tompkins County).
Policy	Establish criteria for selecting businesses and experiences to include in promotion that respond to consumer experiences for which Ithaca and Tompkins County are central, but which are not tied exclusively to County borders. (Include businesses outside Tompkins County in promotional efforts as long as the hub for the experience for most people is Ithaca/Tompkins County).

Tompkins Count Agriculinary Tourism Implementation Plan

Possible Actions

Strategy Action

Policy	Advocate for / represent small producers in County and State planning and policy discussions.
Policy	Establish a new agriculinary tourism focused grant program to award small funds to new projects or businesses with potential to generate additional tourism and support agriculinary tourism development goals.
Policy	Modify tourism funding eligibility to allow private businesses to apply for tourism grants for ag & culinary tourism projects.
Product	Link with Higher Education Alumni Associations to offer agriculinary tour to higher ed alumni that focus on our region.
Product	Develop one or two major new agriculinary focused events that tie together regional agriculinary themes, products and experiences.
Product	Develop and promote foodie tour packages.
Product	Develop and promote a week-long cooking and farm program.
Product	Support the development of local value-added local products; business development support.
Product	Develop a unified system of distribution of locally produced food to restaurants.
Product	Develop adult ag and/or culinary education classes, workshops, retreats/camps, and experiences.
Product	Identify local nonperishable foods that can be mixed-and-matched for an Ithaca-themed gift basket in time for holiday giving.
Product	Expand and promote farmstays, B&Bs on the farm.
Product	Develop and promote farm and culinary tours.
Product	Develop and promote more "dinner-on-the-farm" type events.

Selecting Priority Actions for the Tompkins County Agriculinary Tourism Implementation Plan

Rubric

		Critical	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Importance	Transformation	Holds potential to be a transformative project. Could significantly shift local ag & culinary tourism.	Leads to incremental change in local ag & culinary tourism.	No significant change likely.
	Tourism	Likely to drastically increase overnight stays and additional visitor spending.	Somewhat likely to increase overnight stays and additional visitor spending, OR a small increase expected.	Measurable relationship to tourism is small or impossible to assess.
	Fit	Shows strong alignment/fit with our existing local strengths and assets. OR is intentionally designed to better knit together / leverage our existing assets.	Connects or fits with existing assets, but not necessarily comprehensively or by design.	Does not fit with or tie together existing assets well.
	Breadth	Supports a broad set of stakeholders across both ag and culinary realms. Ties together multiple groups and themes in a way that makes the whole greater than the sum of individual parts.	Supports multiple stakeholders ; addresses multiple themes, but limited to either ag or culinary , without tying them together.	Supports a narrow theme or a narrow and small set of stakeholders.
	Audience	Reaches and serves an audience identified as a priority target audience .	Reaches a clear audience, but perhaps one which is a secondary priority	Does not reach a clear target market.

		Highly Feasibly	Somewhat Feasible	Not Feasible
Feasibility	Funding	Outside sources of funding and support can be identified.	Only internal sources of funding and support can be identified.	No or little source of funding is currently identified.
	Partner	A partner is eager to take it on.	Potential partners can be identified and would be willing to take it on.	No partners are currently identified to take it on.
	Timeliness	Highly timely. The timing meshes well with needs, opportunities and other activities.	Somewhat timely. The timing does not conflict with other needs, opportunities and activities.	The timing isn't right.
	Champion	There is a strong champion (or strong champions) for the action who is (are) committed to and capable of seeing it through to implementation.	There is a champion who will advocate for the idea, but may not be able to independently see it through to completion.	There is no clearly identifiable champion or set of champions.