

# Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board

Wednesday June 17, 2015; 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm

CVB, 904 East Shore Drive, Ithaca

AGENDA	Start Time
1) Opener	3:00
2) May STPB Meeting Minutes	3:05
• ACTION – Approve Meeting Minutes	
3) Privilege of the Floor	3:07
• Limit of 3 minutes per person for members of the public to address the board	
4) TCAD Presentation – Michael Stamm	3:10
5) Ice Climbing Project Presentation – Todd Miner and Fred Bonn	3:30
6) Chair’s REPORT – Sue Perlgut	3:45
7) Staff REPORT – Tom Knipe	3:55
8) Committee/Project Check-ins (as needed)	4:05
• Wayfinding – Jennifer Tavares	
• Visitor Profile Study Update – Bruce Stoff	
• Others?	
9) 2016 Room Tax Budget Recommendations	4:25
10) VisitIthaca.com Pre-Beta Presentation – Kristy Mitchell	4:45
11) Announcements (time permitting)	

## Agenda Packet

1. May 2015 draft STPB meeting minutes
2. The TCAD 2015 Annual Report is available online: <http://tcad.org/about-2/annual-reports/>
3. 2016 Budget documents (*to be added after 6/15 STPB Budget Committee meeting*)
4. Visitor profile study draft RFP

## Next Meeting

Wednesday, July 15

*No meeting is scheduled for August*



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 – May 2015**

1 **Date:** May 20, 2015  
 2 **Time:** 3:00-5:00pm  
 3 **Location:** CVB  
 4  
 5

**Attendees:**

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

7

8 **Also in attendance:** Martha Gioumousis, Cornell Cooperative Extension Beautification Brigade,  
 9 Ronda Roaring

10 **Meeting Agenda**

- 11 1) Opener  
 12 2) April STPB Meeting Minutes  
 13     • ACTION – Approve Meeting Minutes  
 14 3) Privilege of the Floor  
 15 4) Beautification, Signage and Public Art Program  
 16     • Annual Presentation – Jennifer Tavares, Martha Gioumousis, Gary Ferguson  
 17 5) Chair's Report  
 18 6) Staff Report – Tom Knipe  
 19 7) Committee Check-Ins  
 20     • Agriculinary Tourism Task Force  
 21     • Tompkins Festivals Steering Committee  
 22 8) Room Tax Budget Education – Presentation and Q&A – Tom Knipe  
 23 9) Special ACOD Committee Recommendations – John Spence  
 24     • ACTION – Approve Recommendations  
 25 10) CVB Report  
 26 11) Announcements (time permitting)

27 **The meeting was called to order at 3:05 PM.**  
 28

29 **Opener** – Sue Perlgut opened the meeting by asking members of the STPB to engage in an interactive  
 30 quiz. Members were asked to form groups of 2 and 3 and rate top 10 tourist attractions in Tompkins County  
 31 Sue then shared the results to see which group had the most correct answers.  
 32  
 33

34 **April 2015 STPB meeting minutes were approved** with no changes.  
 35  
 36

37 **Beautification, Signage and Public Art Program** – Jennifer Tavares of the Chamber of Commerce,  
 38 introduced herself, both Chrys Gardner, and Martha Gioumousis of Cornell Cooperative Extension, and  
 39 Gary Ferguson, of the Downtown Ithaca Alliance as partners of the Beautification, Signage and Public Art

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

40 Program. Jennifer went on to provide background on the partners and primary functions. Cornell  
41 Cooperative Extension was noted as handling the implementation of plantings as well as handling rural  
42 grants components. The Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce was focus primarily on the wayfinding  
43 and signage aspect of the program The Downtown Ithaca Alliance focuses primarily on the Ambassador  
44 program. Beautification Committee members range from members of the STPB to stakeholders in the  
45 business community and various other affiliations. Beautification program investments include funding for  
46 plantings and maintenance, the Ambassador/hospitality program, community grants, public art and signage,  
47 strategic planning, and administrative costs.

48  
49 Martha Gioumouis provided background on completed projects within the Beautification Brigade. Through  
50 partnerships and volunteer work, the planter boxes along the Tompkins County Public Library have been  
51 planted as well as Aurora Street triangle at Ithaca College, City Hall, and the Ithaca Commons.

52  
53 Chrys Gardner reported on rural communities grant management program, noting that funding of \$12,000 is  
54 allocated yearly, with average awards of \$1,000 - \$2,000. These awards are set up as matching grants  
55 through volunteer time, donated materials or town or village donated staff support. Funding is primarily used  
56 for plantings and welcome and attraction signs. Recently funded items were noted as welcome signs and  
57 monarch garden in the Village of Dryden, Town of Enfield's carved welcome sign, plantings on Groton's  
58 main street, at both Newfield Elementary and high schools, and at Purity Point on Route 13.

59  
60 Gary Ferguson reported on the Ambassador Program organized by the Downtown Ithaca Alliance. The idea  
61 behind the program was to create a companionship program that will focus on hospitality and keeping  
62 public areas clean and welcoming. The program currently employs 2 staff members per shift that are paid a  
63 living wage. Duties of the ambassador position include concierge services, red kiosk fulfillment, visitor  
64 services, painting, flower maintenance and graffiti removal. Plans for are removable outdoor reading room  
65 on the commons are underway. Contracts with both TCAT and the City of Ithaca are also in process for  
66 cleaning of bus stops and the Commons.

67  
68 Jennifer Tavares reported on the plans to continue the work of the Wayfinding Strategy with an additional  
69 grant allocation through the Tourism program. Feasibility and the scope for funding requests to the State of  
70 NY and local leveraging will be critical actions needed for implementation. Six major goals of the  
71 Beautification, Signage and Public Art Strategic Plan were noted as attractive, welcoming entrances for  
72 primary travel corridors, easy-to-navigate communities, public art, attractive, colorful, and neat public  
73 spaces and amenities in community centers and destinations, increased appreciation, awareness, and  
74 participation in the community beautification projects, and an attractive built environment.

75  
76 **Chair's Report** – Sue Perlcut noted the meeting she attended with Tompkins County Area Transit and  
77 went on to report on her attendance at both the Budget Committee and Heritage Task Force Committees.

78  
79 **Staff Report** – Tom Knipe reported on his work with the Monika Roth, Kristy Mitchell, Rita Rosenberg, and  
80 Ethan Ash in putting together an application to the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service Farmers Market  
81 Promotion Program in hopes of obtaining grant funding of \$50,000 that requires no match requirement.  
82 Possible initiatives were noted as assessments in readiness for small farm visitor hosting, and a CVB  
83 component that would support another part time staff member who would be in charge of development of  
84 additional tourist packages. Examples of some potential projects were noted as Ithaca Fork Farm Trail, and  
85 Open Farm Weekend. Tom went on to report on the Wayfinding meetings he and Jennifer Tavares have  
86 attended and noted that the next meeting will take place with Ithaca College. Jennifer Tavares noted her  
87 appreciation for the support Tom provides and the valuable partnership related to those efforts. Tom went  
88 on to announce that CFA notice is out; applications are due July 31<sup>st</sup>. A presentation will be given to the  
89 STPB on behalf of Tompkins County Area Development providing information on community services. He  
90 went on to note the local effort of TCAD in collecting white papers for the Regional Economic Development  
91 Council for the Upstate Revitalization Initiative which currently is putting together plans for the  
92 \$500,000,000 contest. Agriculinary tourism and trail provisions are some of the noted areas of focus. Tom  
93 mentioned working towards a lead application for the Blueway Trail that will likely include other projects. A  
94 risk management plan for ice climbing was discussed. Tom further reported on the budget process that  
95 starts next week and noted that the fall notice for funding availability for Strategic Tourism Implementation  
96 funds will likely be in the fall. Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce and Convention and Visitors Bureau

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

97 contract will be reviewed by board members in order to make the final recommendations. The Strategic  
98 Tourism Implementation status report will be reviewed by the Planning and Evaluation Committee and  
99 board members in order to identify a threshold for more thorough review of projects.

101 **Committee Check-Ins** – Ethan Ash reported on the agri-tourism conference he attended in Vermont and  
102 noted the 1-day workshop he would like to host in Ithaca that will focus on educating farmers in marketing  
103 techniques. Rita Rosenberg went on to report that Cornell Cooperative Extension and Healthy Food for All  
104 has applied for a grant and received \$13,000 for a brew and cider fest. The Savor the Finger Lakes Festival  
105 will be held September 3<sup>rd</sup> from 5:00-9:00 p.m. at the Ithaca Farmers Market. Tickets are between \$75.00  
106 and \$100. Gary Ferguson reported that the Festivals Program has actively working and are trying to  
107 reconstitute the Festivals Committee. He noted the survey will go out to the event planning industry to get  
108 feedback on the program. Guidelines for technical assistance with local businesses will also be considered  
109 in order to gage scopes of work. Plans are underway to have a full evaluation of the program in late  
110 summer early fall. Members with interest in joining the Festivals Committee can contact Sue Perlgut or  
111 Gary Ferguson.

113 **Room Tax Budget Education** – Tom Knipe opened his presentation by asking members what sorts of  
114 information would be useful and what specific questions members have about the room tax budget, noting  
115 the information provided will be considered when drafting the tax budget recommendations.

117 Tom went on to report on the current budget, background on reserves, and the budget request process.  
118 The 2016 room tax budget development was also discussed. The growth in room tax revenues have gone  
119 up 6% on average per year since 2003. Members discussed whether the growth in Tompkins County  
120 compared to other college towns, differences were noted as county does not have of convention space or  
121 contracts with outside marketing professionals. To view the full report:

122 [http://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/files/tourism/2016%20tourism%20budget%20presentation\\_STPB.pdf](http://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/files/tourism/2016%20tourism%20budget%20presentation_STPB.pdf)

124 **Announcements** – Sue Perlgut suggested board members send front end employees to the Hospitality  
125 Star program over the weekend. Josh Friedman announced that the 2015 Hangar Theatre magazine has  
126 been published and asked members for ideas on specific place to place them. Gary Ferguson noted the  
127 Ithaca parade next Thursday and Ithaca Festival following over the weekend. He went on to announce the  
128 re-opening of the Commons which is scheduled August 27, 28, and 29<sup>th</sup>. Sue Perlgut announced her  
129 theatre troupe is performing next Wednesday at the Tompkins County Public Library at 5:30 and that her  
130 documentary can be viewed at the Library on June 9<sup>th</sup>.

132 **Special ACOD Committee Recommendations** – John Spence reported that the ACOD Committee  
133 recommendations were initiated by the Friends of Stewart Park. Ken Jupiter noted that the definition of  
134 culture and went on to note that the program for established arts organizations that have been operating for  
135 at least 3 years, and with an audience of 5,000 a year. Members discussed high-level county investments  
136 and suggested including more recreational based events. Anne Gossen moved to adopt the Special ACOD  
137 Committee recommendations, seconded by David Blake. The special ACOD committee recommendations  
138 were approved unanimously.

140 **CVB 2015 Report** – Bruce Stoff reported that the April STR report was up 6.3% and that the ADR was  
141 \$148. He went on to announce the Tourism Fam trip will take place on June 5<sup>th</sup>. Board members can  
142 contact Jodi LaPierre for more information.

145 With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:50pm.

147 Respectfully Submitted,  
148 Jennifer Turner, Administrative Assistant  
149 Tompkins County Planning Department

151 **Next Meeting Scheduled**  
152 Wednesday June 17, 2015



**Tompkins County**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING**

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**TO:** Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB)  
**FROM:** Tom Knipe, Senior Planner / Tourism Coordinator  
**DATE:** June 14, 2015  
**RE:** **2016 Tourism Program Budget - Preliminary Recommendations of the STPB Budget Committee**

### **Action Requested**

The purpose of this memo is to describe the preliminary 2016 Tompkins County Tourism Program budget and the process used to develop it. The STPB will review these recommendations at your June 17<sup>th</sup> meeting and will be asked to vote to recommend the 2016 Tourism Program budget at your July 15<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Link: 2016 tourism budget requests are available through the following page on the County website:  
<http://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/tourism/budget/2016requests>

### **Background – Revenues**

Between April and June, the STPB Budget Committee developed preliminary projections of 2015 and 2016 room tax revenues and associated changes in room tax reserves, with input from tourism program administrators and lodging industry experts. 2015 members of the STPB Budget Committee are Christy Agnese (Chair), Stephen Nunley, Sue Perlgut, Sue Stafford, and John Gutenberger. We are currently modifying the projection of 5% growth for 2015 to 4% and establishing a projection of 6% growth for 2016, using actual 2014 revenues as a base.

2015 and 2016 room tax revenue projections are based on analysis of several sources including actual Tompkins County room tax revenues, local hotel industry data from Smith Travel Research, projected increases in local room supply due to hotel construction, other local conditions, and national industry forecasts by a prominent hotel industry research firm (PKF). Notably, 2016 projections were based on an assumption of increased hotel room supply beginning August 1, 2016 due to the opening of the new Marriot at the East end of the Ithaca Commons. Detailed calculations of the unallocated reserve balance and revenue projections are available upon request.

We will be watching the room tax revenues closely over the next month. Although the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter was slower than anticipated, signs are beginning to point to a strong spring and summer. We expect to have second quarter room tax results available before the 7/17 meeting when STPB will be asked to vote on a recommended budget.

## **Background - Reserves**

The current unallocated reserve balance is just over \$131,000 (from County Finance). This is after meeting the County's 2015 obligation of \$60,000 to TCAD from room tax. Given a reduction in the 2015 room tax revenue projection and 2015 budget adjustments to reallocate unspent 2014 funds in the ACOD and Tourism Capital Grant Programs, the unallocated reserve balance is expected to be at \$97,000 by the end of 2015. The recommended 2016 budget places room tax spending at about \$31,000 more than revenues which will have the effect of reducing reserves to about \$66,000 in 2016, which is 2.7% of revenues.

## **Budget Request Process**

The Tompkins County Tourism Program solicited budget requests from tourism programs and heard presentations from each program at a May 27<sup>th</sup> meeting at Ithaca College. Program administrators and committee chairs were asked to limit their 2016 requests to a 3% increase from their adopted 2015 room tax allocations. All programs with the exception of Community Celebrations responded to the budget target guidance, and each budget request included:

- Standard budget request form and budget worksheet template.
- Information on how the requested budget will support implementation of the 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan.
- Clear program goals and measures of achievement.

Following budget presentations, the STPB Budget Committee explored several possible budget schemes, weighed opportunities presented by each program and developed preliminary 2016 budget recommendations.

## **Outline - 2016 Tourism Budget Recommendations**

- The following programs are funded at requested levels of around or slightly less than 3%: Beautification, Signage and Public Art; Tompkins Festivals Program, Hospitality Workforce Development, Discovery Trail, and Market the Arts.
- The CVB is recommended to be funded at the requested amount minus a small sum of just over \$1,000 which is the amount of an adjustment based on a minor calculation error.
- Several lines are increased slightly above the requested amounts in order to fill needs in those programs: Arts and Culture Organizational Development, Tourism Capital Grants, CAP Operating Assistance, Community Celebrations Grants, Tourism Project Grants, Tourism Marketing and Advertising Grants, and New Tourism Initiative Grants.
- The County Historian stipend and Tourism Partner Award lines are maintained flat, as requested.
- \$165,000 is set aside for Strategic Tourism Implementation (see summary below).
- \$900 in funding for STPB board development (travel, training, etc) is made available again in 2015. These funds will go through the tourism administration budget within the Planning Department.
- Strategic Planning and Staffing – This line is increased 5.4% due to the addition of \$1,875 in matching funds for an intern stipend. The position will be filled by a graduate student in the Department of City and Regional Planning at Cornell and will support tourism planning and program development work in summer 2016. A 75/25 split between program funds and "County 10%" funds to support tourism administration services by the Tompkins County Planning Department is maintained.
- TCAD – The room tax contribution in 2016 is \$125,000 and is shown in the "County" section of the tourism budget. It will rise to \$200,000 in 2017 and \$205,000 in 2018.

### **Strategic Tourism Implementation funds**

A special budget line is recommended again in 2016 to be funded for Strategic Tourism Implementation. The guiding concept is to set aside a flexible portion of room tax funds to take advantage of timely and meaningful opportunities to implement the 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan. Three projects were funded in 2013 through this line: the IthacaFork.com Farm to Fork Culinary Tourism Initiative, electronic kiosks for the new Ithaca Commons and the Tompkins County Wayfinding and Interpretive Signage Plan. \$150,000 is budgeted in 2015 for Strategic Tourism Implementation, which will be made available in fall 2015 for projects that directly implement *Critical Actions* from the 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan or projects coming directly out of related implementation plans (Wayfinding Signage, Agriculinary Tourism, Heritage Tourism). In addition a portion of these funds will be used to do repeat the Visitor Profile (“Chmura”) Study in 2016. Combining funds from 2015 and 2016, a total of \$315,000 will be available in the next year and a half for Strategic Tourism Implementation.

### **Contact Information**

Tom Knipe, Tompkins County Planning Department, 607-274-5560

Christy Agnese, STPB Chair and Budget Committee Chair, [cagnese@ithaca.edu](mailto:cagnese@ithaca.edu)

Tompkins County Tourism Program website: <http://www.tompkins-co.org/tourism/>

### Attachments:

- Tompkins County Tourism Program Descriptions (one page)
- 2016 Tourism Program Recommended Budget – Detailed (three pages)
- Draft 2015 Strategic Tourism Implementation funding guidelines.

## Current Programs

The Tompkins County Tourism Program currently funds the following programs.

### **Product Development (known as the 40%)**

- **Beautification, Signage & Public Art** improve way finding signage to direct travelers to key destinations and beautify communities to welcome visitors, especially at gateways.
- **Arts & Culture Organizational Development Grants** strengthen large existing arts and culture organizations with long term financial planning and development tools.
- **Community Celebrations Grants** support observances, commemorations, jubileations, inaugurations, presentations, or other “red letter days” or salutes that have meaning for the community.
- **Workforce Development/TC3 Customer Service** creates a career ladder for entry-level jobs in the tourism industry and provides training to improve the visitors’ experience.
- **Community Arts Partnership – Assistance with CAP Operating Expenses** strengthens the visibility of Tompkins County’s thriving arts community.
- **Festivals Program** provides technical assistance, coordination, and resource sharing for local festivals at a macro level to enhance their effectiveness.
- **Tourism Project Grants** support tourism-generating single projects.
- **County Historian** provides a historical connection to today’s tourism events and projects.
- **Strategic Planning and Staffing** maximizes tourism program effectiveness and reduces volunteer STPB workload on program administration through sustainable staffing, leadership and research.
- **Tourism Capital Grants** expand major visitor-generating facilities, and fund feasibility studies for potential projects.

### **Marketing (known as the 60%)**

- **Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB)** enhances economic development through promotion of local activities and assets to visitors as well as residents. The CVB is the County’s designated Tourism Promotion Agency.
- **Tourism Marketing and Advertising Grants** help promote events and projects likely to attract visitors in a manner consistent with the CVB’s marketing strategy.
- **Discovery Trail** provides collective marketing for eight local organizations that have a dual mission of education and tourism promotion: PRI- Museum of the Earth, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Cornell Plantations, Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cayuga Nature Center, Sciencenter, The History Center, and Tompkins County Public Library.
- **New Tourism Initiative Grants** support significant new tourism generating initiatives that flow from and are consistent with the Strategic Tourism Plan.
- **Market the Arts** collectively markets Tompkins County’s artists and features them on one website to allow them to sell their work; includes but is not limited to the members of the Greater Ithaca Art Trail.
- **Tompkins Tourism Partner Award** recognizes volunteer efforts to attract large groups, meetings or conventions to Tompkins County.

### **Government Tax Administration**

- **County 10% NYS law** permits the County to retain 10% of room tax collections for administration and auditing of room tax funds.

## 2016 Tompkins County Tourism Program Budget

### 6/15/15 STPB Budget Committee Recommendations

#### PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2015	2015	2016	2016	% change
	<u>Modified Budget</u>	<u>Modified Budget</u>	<u>Modified Budget</u>	<u>Adopted</u>	<u>Adjustments</u>	<u>Modified</u>	<u>Requested</u>	<u>Recommended</u>	<u>2015 adopted to 2016</u>
<b>Function</b>									
Arts and Cultural Organizational Development									
Direct Funding	178,673	198,210	196,755	189,519	7,654	197,173			
Program Management (CAP)	<u>22,100</u>	<u>10,000</u>	<u>10,000</u>	<u>10,000</u>		<u>10,000</u>			
Subtotal	200,773	208,210	208,654	199,519	7,654	207,173	205,505	210,000	5.3%
Beautification, Public Art & Signage									
Direct Funding	121,009	124,398	128,081	123,616		123,616			
Program Management (Chamber)	<u>8,000</u>	<u>8,200</u>	<u>8,495</u>	<u>8,180</u>		<u>8,180</u>			
Subtotal	129,009	132,598	136,576	131,796		131,796	135,443	135,443	2.8%
Tourism Capital Grants									
Direct Funding	175,788	187,950	186,493	179,966	18,976	198,942			
Program Management (TCAD)	<u>19,532</u>	<u>14,832</u>	<u>20,722</u>	<u>19,996</u>		<u>19,996</u>			
Subtotal	195,320	202,782	209,370	199,962	18,976	218,938	205,959	207,000	3.5%
Community Arts Partnership-Operating Asst.	37,000	38,110	39,250	37,876		37,876	39,012	40,000	5.6%
Community Celebrations	26,600	35,024	32,548	32,548		32,548	34,175	34,200	5.1%
Tourism Project Grants	69,103	76,013	78,300	78,300		78,300	80,700	84,000	7.3%
Festivals	25,000	25,000	25,750	24,849		24,849	25,594	25,594	3.0%
WIB/TC3 Customer Service Program	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000		30,000	29,818	30,900	3.0%
County Historian	<u>5,000</u>	<u>5,500</u>	<u>5,500</u>	7,500		7,500	7,500	7,500	0.0%
Subtotal	214,458	231,402	211,348	211,073		211,073	216,799	222,194	5.3%
Grand Total-Product Development	739,560	774,992	765,948	742,349		768,979	763,706	774,637	4.3%
% of total	40.8%		40.3%	40.4%		41.3%	40.4%	40.7%	

<b>MARKETING</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2016</b>	<i>% change</i>
<b>Function</b>	<b><u>Modified Budget</u></b>	<b><u>Modified Budget</u></b>	<b><u>Modified Budget</u></b>	<b><u>Adopted</u></b>	<b><u>Adjustments</u></b>	<b><u>Modified</u></b>	<b><u>Requested</u></b>	<b><u>Recommended</u></b>	<i><u>2015 adopted to 2016</u></i>
<b><i>Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB)</i></b>									
CVB Tourism Marketing Operations									
Personnel (salaries and fringe)	436,001	485,203	468,946	485,900		485,900			
Supplies and Materials	65,995	69,075	72,500	63,200		63,200			
Downtown Visitor Center Rent	<u>11,330</u>	<u>11,670</u>	<u>12,020</u>	<u>14,000</u>		<u>14,000</u>			
Subtotal	513,326	565,948	553,466	563,100		563,100			
Chamber Support									
Staff	39,563	36,785	39,426	39,340		39,340			
Facilities	<u>87,199</u>	<u>88,843</u>	<u>90,619</u>	<u>86,700</u>		<u>86,700</u>			
Subtotal	126,762	125,628	130,045	126,040		126,040			
Program Costs:									
Marketing	277,250	270,200	366,250	287,950		287,950			
Public Relations	4,350	16,750	3,000	5,200		5,200			
Visitor Services	11,100	11,500	26,500	30,400		30,400			
Group Sales	<u>38,750</u>	<u>44,250</u>	<u>46,450</u>	<u>50,320</u>		<u>50,320</u>			
Subtotal	331,450	342,700	442,200	373,870		373,870			
Gross CVB Budget	971,538	1,034,276	1,130,711	1,063,010		1,063,010			
Less: Program Revenue/Applied Reserves	<u>75,750</u>	<u>120,500</u>	<u>168,211</u>	<u>139,010</u>		<u>139,010</u>			
Subtotal--CVB Allocation	895,788	913,776	962,500	924,000		924,000	950,000	948,822	2.7%
<b><i>Other Marketing Programs</i></b>									
Marketing and Advertising Grants	50,699	54,444	52,220	48,000		48,000	49,400	52,000	8.3%
New Tourism Initiative Grants	66,445	73,090	75,300	75,300		75,300	77,500	79,000	4.9%
Discovery Trail	36,270	36,270	37,360	36,055		36,055	37,137	37,137	3.0%
Recognition Awards	3,000	2,000	2,000	1,000		1,000	1,000	1,000	0.0%
Market the Arts	<u>10,000</u>	<u>10,300</u>	<u>10,600</u>	10,200		10,200	<u>10,500</u>	<u>10,500</u>	2.9%
Sub-total Other Marketing	<u>177,914</u>	<u>188,103</u>	<u>177,480</u>	<u>170,555</u>		<u>170,555</u>	<u>175,537</u>	<u>179,637</u>	5.3%
Grand Total--Tourism Marketing	1,073,702	1,101,879	1,134,980	1,094,555		1,094,555	1,125,537	1,128,459	3.1%
% of total	59.2%		59.7%	59.6%		58.7%	59.6%	59.3%	

**COMBINED PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT & MARKETING**

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2015	2015	2016	2016	% change
	<u>Modified Budget</u>	<u>Modified Budget</u>	<u>Proposed Modified</u>	<u>Adopted</u>	<u>Adjustments</u>	<u>Modified</u>	<u>Requested</u>	<u>Recommended</u>	<u>2015 adopted to 2016</u>
<b>County</b>									
Contribution to County for programmatic support and tax administration (County 10%)	203,672	213,855	226,034	237,335		235,407	249,531	249,531	5.1%
STPB Staff/Tourism Coordination	74,386	77,834	80,169	79,106		79,106	82,974	83,374	5.4%
Tompkins County Area Development (TCAD)	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>150,000</u>	<u>60,000</u>		<u>60,000</u>	<u>125,000</u>	<u>125,000</u>	108.3%
Grant Total-- County	278,058	291,689	456,203	376,441		374,513	457,506	457,906	21.6%
Strategic Tourism Implementation		<u>147,000</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>150,000</u>		<u>150,000</u>	<u>150,000</u>	<u>165,000</u>	10.0%
Product Development and Marketing	1,813,262	1,876,872	1,900,928	1,836,904		1,863,534	1,889,243	1,903,096	3.6%
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	2,091,320	2,315,561	2,357,131	2,363,346		2,388,048	2,496,749	2,526,002	6.9%
<b>REVENUES AND RESERVES</b>									
Projected Room Tax Revenues	2,036,716	2,152,700	2,260,335	2,373,352	2,354,070	2,354,070	2,495,315	2,495,315	5.1%
Projected Use of Reserves	<u>54,604</u>	<u>162,861</u>	<u>96,796</u>	<u>-10,006</u>		<u>33,977</u>	<u>1,435</u>	<u>30,687</u>	
Total Budget Available to County and Programs	<u>2,091,320</u>	<u>2,315,561</u>	<u>2,357,131</u>	<u>2,363,346</u>		<u>2,388,048</u>	<u>2,496,749</u>	<u>2,526,002</u>	6.9%
Unallocated Reserve Balance (From County Finance)		Balance 1/1/13			Balance April '15				
Projected Year-End Unallocated Reserve Balance	251,111	156,276	62,863	72,869	131,042	97,065	95,630	66,377	
% of revenues	12.3%	7.3%	2.8%	3.1%		4.1%	3.8%	2.7%	

## Tompkins County Hotel Room Occupancy Tax Revenues 2001-2014

Quarter	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Q1	80,227	82,981	125,579	146,117	154,478	166,984	190,237	224,245	185,733	205,629	198,559	249,508	246,795	239,394
Q2	159,057	188,101	269,348	302,502	306,373	357,732	389,309	425,802	411,982	450,117	462,564	515,379	530,995	518,257
Q3	237,120	325,523	402,308	439,543	459,899	532,705	609,916	652,904	613,173	642,496	688,976	712,305	742,300	791,531
Q4	173,243	252,605	321,522	350,683	396,604	434,023	506,389	500,553	482,818	493,815	566,231	558,170	586,547	607,263
<b>TOTAL</b>	649,646	849,209	1,118,757	1,238,845	1,317,354	1,491,443	1,695,852	1,803,504	1,693,706	1,792,057	1,916,329	2,035,361	2,106,637	2,156,446
ADDITIONAL TAX	12,651	1,268	18,028	1,107	28,210	32,791	42,400	-8,616	(22,625)	-8,759	5,102	45,069	42,079	107,084

COLLECTED DURING QUARTER (i.e. NOT FOR CURRENT QUARTER)

<b>TOTAL Revenue</b>	662,297	850,477	1,136,784	1,239,952	1,345,564	1,524,234	1,738,251	1,794,887	1,671,081	1,783,299	1,921,431	2,080,430	2,148,716	2,263,529
<b>Budgeted Revenue</b>	617,850	683,300	1,115,530	1,220,000	1,349,200	1,328,865	1,461,752	1,773,138	1,552,161	1,700,000	1,859,659	2,036,716	2,152,700	2,260,335
<b>Revenue Growth</b>		28.4%	33.7%	9.1%	8.5%	13.3%	14.0%	3.3%	-6.9%	6.7%	7.7%	8.3%	3.3%	5.3%

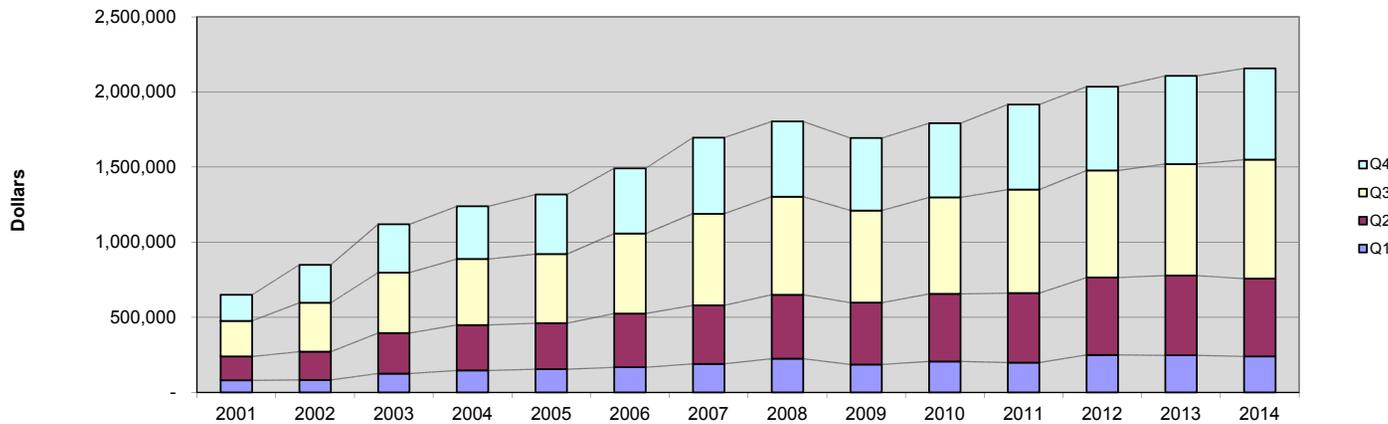
**INTO RESERVES** (Actual revenue less budgeted revenue; does not include expenditure side)

	44,447	167,177	21,254	19,952	(3,636)	195,369	276,499	21,749	118,920	83,299	61,772	43,714	(3,984)	3,194
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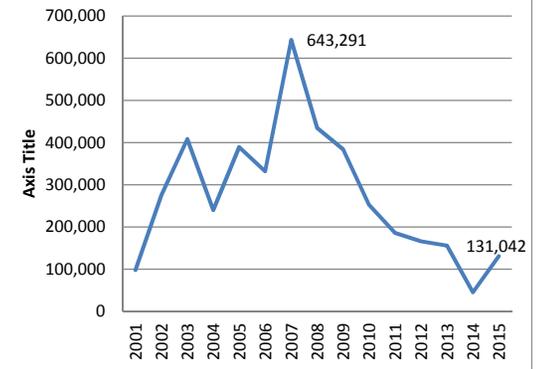
**Reserve Balance** (Reserve balances from County CFO)

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
	97,973	275,409	408,360	239,978	389,484	332,253	643,291	434,692	384,202	252,411	186,228	165,892	156,000	45,162

**Tompkins County Hotel Room Occupancy Tax By Quarter 2001-2014**

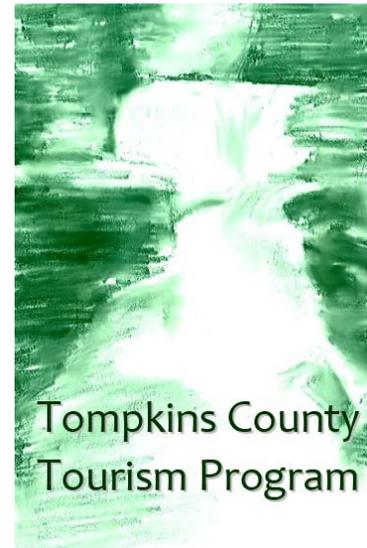


**Tompkins County Room Tax Reserve Balance History**



# 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@tomkins-co.org](mailto:tknipe@tomkins-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](http://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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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.

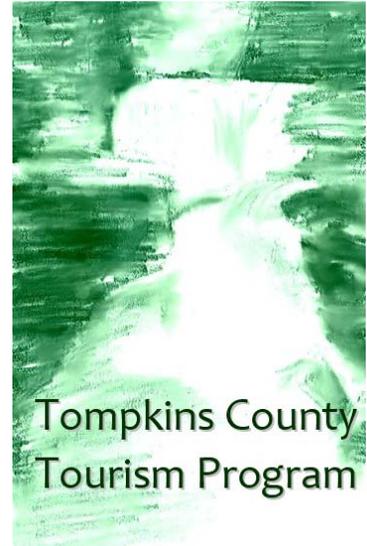
### **Assistance**

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](mailto: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 1<sup>st</sup>**.

**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](mailto: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!**

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## Request for Proposals

### PROFILE OF VISITORS TO TOMPKINS COUNTY

#### Consultant Services

## NOTES:

Copy in **BLACK** is unchanged from 2008

**Highlighted** Copy is new for 2010

~~Strikethrough~~ copy is deleted 2008 material

Dates presented are possible...but require overly quick turnaround

**Due AUGUST X, 2015**

**Tompkins County  
Request for Proposals  
PROFILE OF VISITORS TO TOMPKINS COUNTY  
Consultation Services**

SEALED PROPOSALS for **PROFILE OF VISITORS TO TOMPKINS COUNTY RFP** will be accepted at the Tompkins County Administration, 125 East Court Street, Old Jail Building, 3rd Floor, Ithaca, NY 14850 **until 11:30 a.m. on DATE, 2015**. Responders are expected to submit 1 original and eleven (11) copies.

Specifications may be obtained upon registration at the following website: [www.govbids.com/scripts/cnyp/public/home1.asp](http://www.govbids.com/scripts/cnyp/public/home1.asp), or by contacting Lisa Jehu, Buyer at (607) 274-5500, [ljehu@tom-pkins-co.org](mailto:ljehu@tom-pkins-co.org).

Tompkins County and reserve the right to reject any or all proposals and to negotiate with any company submitting a proposal.

DRAFT

## PROFILE OF VISITORS TO TOMPKINS COUNTY RFP

### BACKGROUND

Tompkins County is issuing this RFP on behalf of the Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB). If there are questions pertaining to this RFP, they must be received by **DATE, 2015** and be sent in writing to the liaison of the STPB as follows:

Mr. Thomas Knipe  
Senior Planner, Tompkins County Planning Department  
125 East Court Street  
Ithaca, NY 14850  
Or  
[tknipe@tompkins-co.org](mailto:tknipe@tompkins-co.org)

Since October 1989, the Tompkins County Legislature has supported its tourism industry through collection of a room occupancy tax. The 18-member Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB), appointed by the Tompkins County Legislature, is charged with making recommendations for the County's tourism development efforts using these funds. Collected funds are directed to tourism marketing initiatives, supporting product development and subsidizing administration of these efforts. STPB's mission is to provide oversight and strategic direction for tourism initiatives that promote economic development and enhance the quality of life in the County. **The efforts are guided by the "2020 Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Plan"** which includes specific action steps for product development, infrastructure improvement, marketing and government initiatives. The plan is available for download at <http://tompkinscountyny.gov/tourism>.

Support of the sector through marketing and product development programs has contributed to growth in Tompkins County tourism. Lodging supply has increased in recent years with the opening of a variety of national chain properties as well as independently operated establishments. As home to major institutions of higher education and extensive outdoor recreational assets, the county is a dynamic marketplace with active university, leisure and meetings & conventions visitor segments.

**In order to continue to make informed decisions supporting the tourism sector and the county overall, the Strategic Tourism Planning Board developed a comprehensive visitor profile program in 2008. The program was designed to establish a viable, focused and ongoing visitor profile every five years (budget permitting). Priorities outlined in the initial proposal included: gathering visitor demographics, understanding visitor motivation, analyzing visitor behavior, measuring economic impacts and documenting trends. The program's benchmark report, the "2010 Tompkins County Visitor Profile" is available for download at <http://tompkinscountyny.gov/files/tourism/docs/TompkinsCountyFinalPresentation.ppt>.**

### Market Information

The initial Visitor Profile documented Ithaca and Tompkins County as a unique, largely seasonal destination that's highly influenced by its major institutions of higher education, Cornell University and Ithaca College. Along with higher-ed visitors, Tompkins County thrives on a complex patchwork of seasonal group and independent travelers with a sizeable visiting friends and relatives (VFR) component. The area's diverse range of nature-based, cultural, educational and athletic activities provides visitors with multiple tourism offerings.

## OBJECTIVES OF THIS PROJECT

The 2015 Visitor Profile will continue monitoring the baseline work begun in the benchmark 2010 study, with additional breakout information to:

- Refine the marketing efforts and aid in the evaluation of the Ithaca/Tompkins County Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB)
- Support the Discovery Trail T/C
- Support the Friends of Stewart Park/Waterfront Trail T/C

Primary motivation for travel to the area is only understood anecdotally. It is generally observed but not measured that the demographics of visitors in July are quite different than visitors staying in the area during October and February. A thorough indicator of visitor satisfaction is lacking. What visitors plan versus what they actually do is a further point of query. To date, these key indicators of visitor activity have yet to be comprehensively quantified. This project should look specifically at the Tompkins County visitor including, but not limited to, who is coming to Tompkins County, what is their primary motivation and what they do. This will be achieved through creating a process which can be replicated and adapted as necessary for on-going monitoring.

Questions to be answered through this project are summarized below:

*Who are you?*

Tourist demographics/profile such as place of residence, income, household type  
Type of traveler (business, leisure, university related segmentation)

*Why are you here?*

Primary motivator and purpose of visit; Tompkins County as sole destination or part of an itinerary

*Booking process*

Use of travel planning resources (including CVB websites, ads, travel guide, etc.) and booking patterns

*What have you done?*

Length of stay (overnight vs. day tripper); meals in restaurants; attractions visited; and shopping

*What have you spent?*

Lodging; food & beverage; activities (recreation, entertainment such as arts, attractions, festivals, etc); retail; travel/transport

*Satisfaction?*

Expectations before visit , Quality of experience (including pleasant surprises and disappointments)

Findings will be analyzed to estimate annual visitors by segment and season. Collected data and analysis will be shared by the STPB with industry suppliers, tourism operators and the community overall to inform funding policies and strategic development.

Specifically, the outcomes of this project will be utilized to:

- profile who is coming to Tompkins County in order to develop relevant tourism products and services
- **continue establish** a baseline which highlights how STPB-recommended expenditures are supporting the visitor industry
- provide a basis for moving forward with action steps as identified in the **2020 Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Plan**, which is available for download at [Tompkins-ee.org/etyadmin/tourism/](http://Tompkins-ee.org/etyadmin/tourism/)
- inform future efforts guiding sustainable tourism visitation such as comparing tourism sector activities with similar communities and building a quality destination brand

## TASKS

The following tasks have been developed to meet the goals of this contract in an efficient manner. The consultant may propose alternate strategies for consideration by the consultant selection committee. Note: all Deliverables will be conveyed to Tompkins County in a Microsoft Office format.

**Task #1:** Evaluate the current Tompkins County Visitor Profile program and suggest modifications for improvement.

The contractor will become familiar with the Tompkins County tourism product and the existing Visitor Profile study through review of previous visitor research. It is anticipated that the contractor will interview STPB members, client committee members, innkeepers, the CVB staff, attraction operators. A mix of standard indicators and innovative measurements unique to the Tompkins County market place contributing to a comprehensive profile of visitors will be developed and presented to the STPB for comment.

**Deliverable:** A presentation of proposed modifications to the Visitor Profile project, particularly changes to the individual visitor survey instruments, survey locations and survey timetables. The contractor is encouraged to report or recommend new methods of data collection (new technologies), if available, that could lead to more accurate, more cost-effective data collection.

**Task #2:** Create research design

Using the findings above, along with input from the client committee, the contractor will finalize 2015 survey instruments, survey locations and survey timetables. If new data collection methods are available and advisable, the contractor will provide survey instruments and data-collection plans appropriate to the recommended technology/methods. The contractor will ensure that data collection will be designed to enable simple replication of process in 2-3 years and will build upon the existing baseline data.

**Deliverable:** Finalized research instrument(s) and implementation plan.

**Task #3:** Conduct initial phase of research implementation

After the initial run of primary research, findings and process will be shared with the client committee and the STPB. In consultation, revisions will be incorporated.

**Deliverable:** Presentation of initial findings and recommendations for revision as necessary.

**Task #4:** Repeat primary research to develop a one-year visitor profile

Through seasonal administration at multiple sites and/or through various instruments (as appropriate) develop a statistically valid sample of responses.

**Deliverable:** Research results in electronic format with summary tables and charts in a format which enables replication of research at a later date.

**Task #5:** Synthesize findings and recommendations

In a streamlined and focused manner, present findings to STPB members. Discussion of results will include **application comparison** of findings to regional and national trends as well as assisting with the identification of market opportunities to attract segments currently NOT coming to Tompkins County.

**Deliverables:**

- A. Complete Visitor Profile report summarizing approach and findings and PowerPoint presentation, which can be utilized by STPB to share findings with the County legislature, tourism industry and community. Information in the report will be presented in a manner to facilitate comparison with prior findings from the 2010 Visitor Profile.
- B. Sub-report detailing consumer assessment & aiding in the evaluation of the Ithaca/Tompkins County CVB, specifically the impact of the CVB's online and print marketing materials, and the impact of its visitor centers, **details to come.**
- C. Sub-report detailing the Discovery Trail, **details to come**
- D. Sub-report detailing the Friends of Stewart Park/Waterfront Trail, **details to come**

**Task #6:** ~~Travel Directory~~

~~This portion of the research will engage users of the Travel Directory to gain an overall perception of the piece and then to identify what type of information / content contained in it is:~~

- ~~A. — Must or need to have information~~
- ~~B. — Information that needs to be expanded on~~
- ~~C. — Information that should be included in the directory but is not.~~
- ~~D. — Information that is not necessary.~~

~~Research will assist in determining what content is necessary and how (format) it can best be delivered.~~

## SCHEDULE

The schedule for this project is anticipated to be a total of 14 months from the notice to proceed through project completion.

### Preliminary Schedule

Date	Action
June X, 2015	RFP release
August X, 2015	Proposals due
September X, 2015	Review and selection of consultant(s) completed
September X, 2015	Contract commencement
December X, 2015	Reporting of initial findings
November 3, 2016	Reporting of year-round findings
Depends upon method of data collection	Presentation of final report and completion of contract

## CONTENTS OF PROPOSAL

Proposal should include:

1. Project approach
2. List of specific services to be provided
3. Statement of qualifications/experience with similar projects
4. Names, positions, and responsibilities of key personnel involved in the project, including their resumes
5. Budget for entire scope, disaggregated by component
6. Billing rate schedule
7. Estimated budget for travel and other reimbursable expenses
8. Three references, including contact names and telephone number and/or email address
9. Target schedule, including timeframes for STPB input
10. Availability to meet with STPB Committee for an interview between August X, 2015 and September X, 2015
11. Completed attachments

## EVALUATION CRITERIA

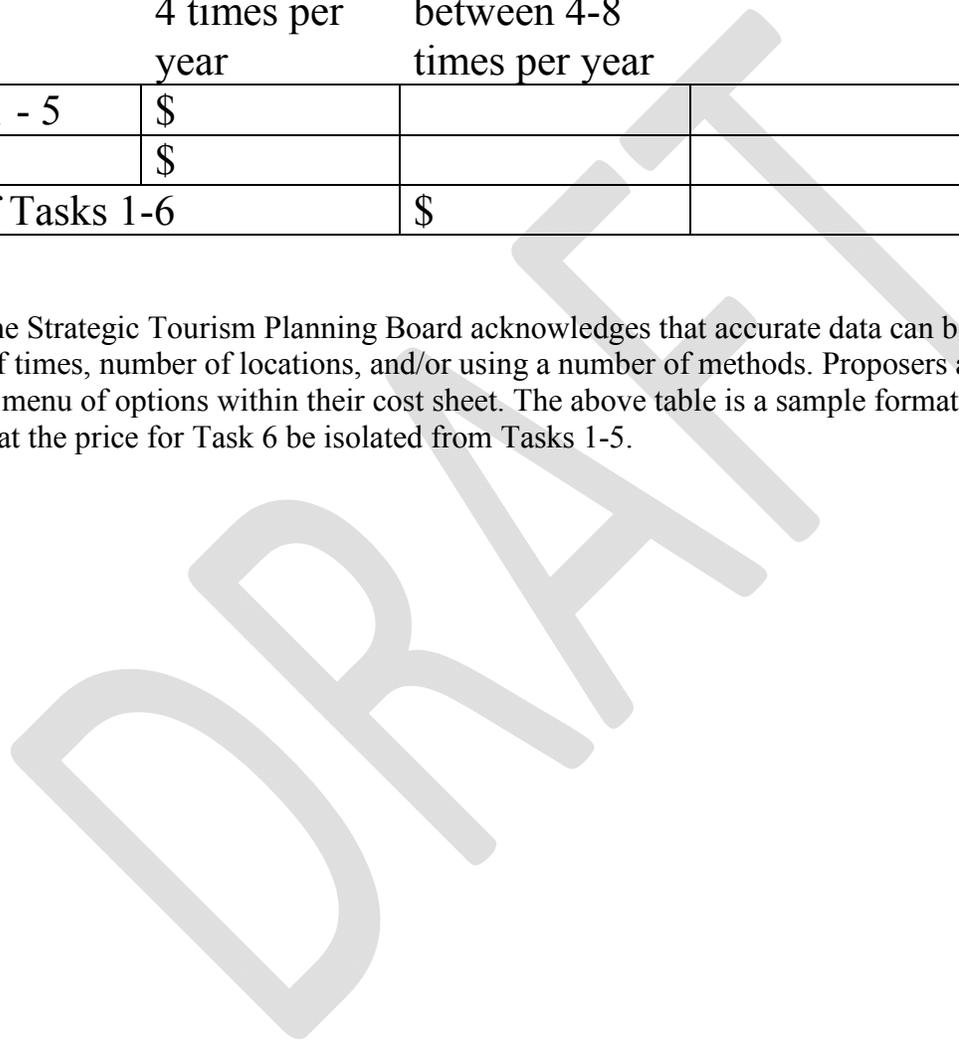
Consultant(s) will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. The firm's experience with similar projects
2. Ability to propose creative solutions and achieve efficient, high-quality implementation
3. Credentials and qualifications of staff who will be specifically responsible for fulfillment of this contract and their experience with similar projects
4. Quality of past projects
5. Ability to meet schedule
6. Cost of services
7. Proposal is in the best interest of Tompkins County

**COST PROPOSAL SHEET**

	Proposal Amount- Survey up to 4 times per year	Proposal Amount – Survey between 4-8 times per year	Total Proposal *
Tasks 1 - 5	\$		
Task 6	\$		
Sum of Tasks 1-6		\$	

\*Note: The Strategic Tourism Planning Board acknowledges that accurate data can be collected at a number of times, number of locations, and/or using a number of methods. Proposers are encouraged to provide a menu of options within their cost sheet. The above table is a sample format. However, we do require that the price for Task 6 be isolated from Tasks 1-5.



## OTHER ATTACHMENTS

2008 Survey Instruments  
2008 Intercept Schedule  
2015 Survey Suggested Updates  
2015 Discovery Trail Additional Questions  
2015 Waterfront Additional Questions

## GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. Proposals shall be submitted in a sealed envelope marked with the name of the respondent and the words “**Sealed Proposal- Visitor Profile RFP**” and the proposal title marked on the outside of the envelope. Respondents must submit **one** original with original signatures and **eleven (11)** copies of their proposals.
2. Respondent assumes the risk of any delay in the mail. Whether sent by Mail, Courier Service, or Personal Delivery, respondent assumes responsibility for having the proposal deposited on time at the location indicated in the Request for Proposals. Any proposals received after the designated time stated in the Request for Proposals will not be considered and will be returned to the respondent unopened.
3. The proposal, as presented, shall remain valid for a period of ninety (90) days from date that it is due. No respondent may withdraw their proposal within forty-five days after the responses are due, however proposals may be withdrawn at any time prior to the closing time indicated in the Request for Proposals.
4. No charge shall be allowed for federal, state, municipal sales, and excise taxes from which the County is exempt. Exemption certificates will be forwarded to the successful bidder upon request.
5. Proposal pricing is to include all costs associated with delivery. In the event that a product requires installation, proposal pricing is to include all costs associated with installation.
6. Specifications that indicate manufacturers name and/or model numbers do so to indicate the quality and workmanship acceptable to Tompkins County. Proposals for items other than those specified must be accompanied by evidence of equivalency. Deviations to the specifications are to be so noted and fully explained. Deviations will be analyzed and if deemed to be in the best interests of the County may be waived.
7. It shall be the responsibility of each respondent to call to the attention of the County any apparent discrepancy in the specifications or any question of interpretation thereof. Failure to do so constitutes acceptance as written.
8. The County reserves the right to “Revise” or “Amend” the bid specifications prior to the proposal due date by “Written Addenda” up to four (4) calendar days prior to the due date. It is the responsibility of the respondent to ascertain whether any addenda have been issued by checking with the Purchasing Office.
9. Respondent are advised that all items proposed are to be new (unless otherwise specified), unused, and first quality. Any material delivered by a contractor which is not in accordance with specifications or is otherwise unsatisfactory, in the opinion of the County, may be retained and, if necessary, used until it is replaced with satisfactory material.
10. Where a delivery date or timeframe (ie; 5 days a/r/o) is specified, respondents are to make deliveries in accordance with the specifications.
11. Proposals submitted for consideration must include the “Proposal Signoff Sheet” and all required documents listed on that sheet.