
*TOMPKINS COUNTY
HERITAGE TOURISM
IMPLEMENTATION
PLAN*

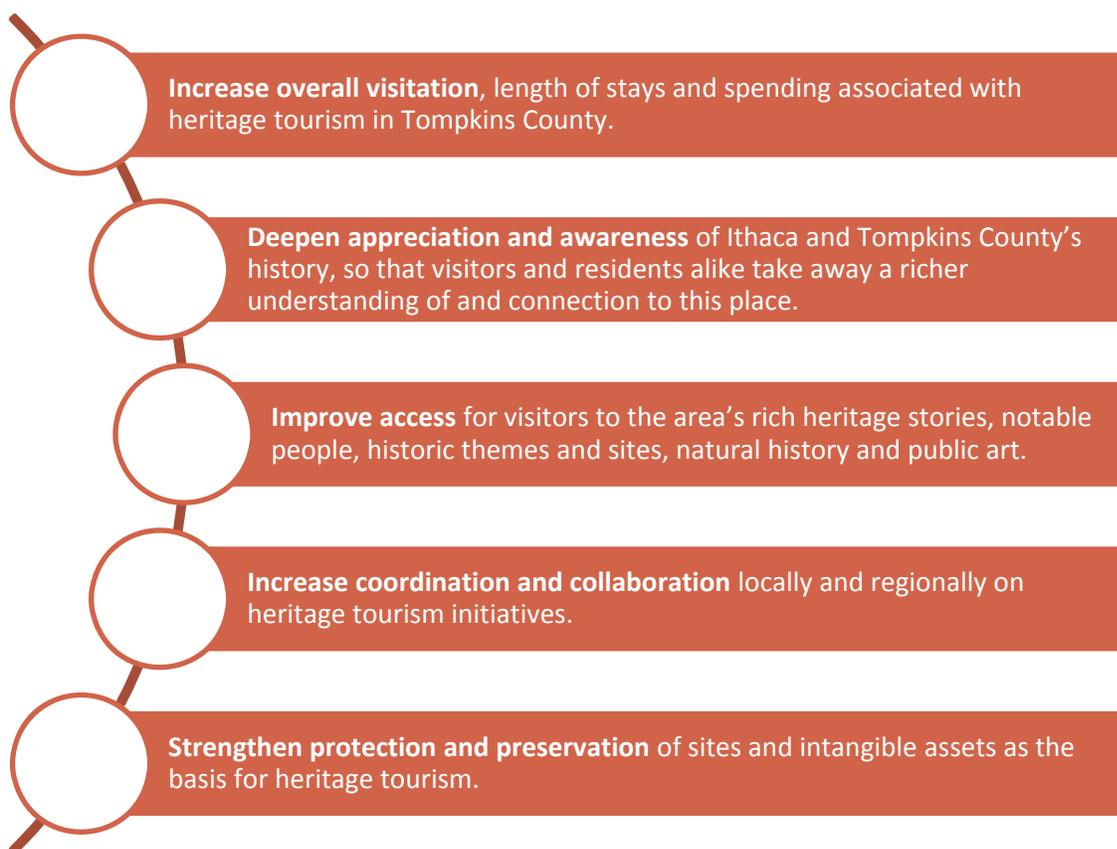
*Expanding Cultural
Heritage Tourism to
Delight and Inspire*

February, 2015
Tompkins County Strategic
Tourism Planning Board

Executive Summary

With world-class educational institutions, spectacular waterways, and a record of cultural leadership, heritage tourism is a natural fit and even an expectation of visitors to Tompkins County. Heritage tourism also showcases the unique richness of life in our area, protects irreplaceable assets, and contributes to our thriving historic and cultural offerings. National survey research demonstrates that cultural heritage visitors travel more frequently, stay in hotels more often, spend more, and stay longer than general leisure visitors.

The goals of this two-year implementation plan are to:



What is Heritage Tourism?

"Heritage tourism is traveling to experience the places, artifacts, and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present. It includes cultural, historic and natural resources."

Strategies and Actions Summary

This plan, the first of its kind in Tompkins County, catalogues potential subjects for long-term heritage tourism development surrounding the people, places, historic themes, organizations and heritage activities of this place while specifying 15 short-term actions in four strategic areas to strengthen this component of our local tourism program. The Plan identifies possible sources and lead organizations, but does not commit future funding to heritage tourism initiatives. The following actions will be completed or initiated by 2017.

Institutional Development: Improve heritage tourism organizations, sites and attractions

- Explore the establishment of a new Heritage Center as a joint project of The History Center and Historic Ithaca.

Interpretation: Package underdeveloped stories, themes, and assets into visitor experiences and amenities

- Establish the MLK Freedom Walkway.
- Establish a public art grant program with heritage elements.
- Provide support and rich interpretive content for current signage projects.
- Implement the History Forge digital interactive historic map project.
- Establish a shared platform for tour development and promote the development of additional tours.
- Support programming being developed by the 2017 Tompkins County Bicentennial Commission to add tourism value.
- Develop regional interpretation themes, such as UGRR, early film, early aviation, etc.

Capacity Building: Enhance the community's capacity for heritage tourism development

- Launch an ongoing Tompkins County Heritage Tourism Group.
- Develop Heritage Tourism Public Programs and Outreach Coordinator position(s) at The History Center and Historic Ithaca.
- Provide tourism training and technical assistance for heritage professionals and heritage training to tourism professionals.
- Organize a heritage tourism exchange between Ithaca/Tompkins County and another community.
- Assist in the integration of heritage themes and activities in events and tourism projects.

Marketing: Promote heritage tourism offerings for success

- Develop a framework and preliminary content for a website to promote heritage tourism attractions and experiences.
- Create a 'Heritage Ambassadors' program.

Acknowledgements

*Tompkins County has a richness of cultural life that belies its quiet location amidst some of the most beautiful scenery in New York. The outpouring of creativity here builds on the foundation of the land, the efforts of the past, and the diverse communities of its past and present. Our collective efforts continually grow the depth of understanding of our stories and experiences. As Tompkins County Historian Carol Kammen states in her immensely influential book *On Doing Local History*, “Local history is the memory of place.” In this document, we seek to cultivate a better understanding of our county’s history and its expression in the present, and bring it to our communities and visitors.*

I am pleased to present our community’s first heritage tourism implementation strategy, a framework for developing our local cultural heritage tourism. The Heritage Tourism Task Force received its mandate from the Strategic Tourism Planning Board, an advisory board to the Tompkins County Legislature.

I would like to thank all the members of the Task Force for their invaluable contributions of time and expertise; Tom Knipe and the Tompkins County Planning Department for their exceptional guidance; the Strategic Tourism Planning Board and Tompkins County Legislature for their support of the county’s cultural heritage; and to all who lent their voices through public comment. I look forward to seeing the implementation of the plan and its growth in future versions. Most of all, I look forward to the continued life and appreciation of this extraordinary place.

The Heritage Tourism Task Force of the Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board gratefully thanks all the individuals and organizations contributing to this implementation strategy and to the tremendous vibrancy of our local heritage offerings.



Anne Gossen, Chair
Tompkins County Heritage Tourism Task Force

Tompkins County Heritage Tourism Task Force

Anne Gossen, Chair	Christine O’Malley, Historic Ithaca, Inc.
Sherene Baugher, Cornell Archaeology	Alphonse Pieper, Historic Ithaca, Inc.
Jeffrey Chusid, Cornell City and Regional Planning	John Spence, Community Arts Partnership
Ian Golden, Strategic Tourism Planning Board	Baruch Whitehead, Ithaca College Music
Rod Howe, The History Center of Tompkins County	Andrew Zepp, Finger Lakes Land Trust
Carol Kammen, County Historian	Katherine Banko, Ithaca Tompkins County CVB

Staff: Tom Knipe, Tompkins County Planning Department

Dozens of other community organizations and individuals with interest and knowledge of heritage tourism also provided information, insights and resources in support of this plan, including: Amanda Bosworth, Anne Kellerman, Brian Frey, Brian McCracken, Bruce Stoff, Caleb Thomas, Carole Schiffman, Caroline Cox, Charlie Trautmann, Cindy Kimble, Debbie Fisher, Diana Riesman, Dylan Tuttle, Ed Marx, Gina Prentiss, Hannah Blake, Hayley Harris, Ithaca Heritage Aviation Foundation, Jay O’Leary, Jean Currie, Jennifer Tavares, JoAnn Cornish, John Wertis, Ken Jaffe, Laura Mandala, Leslyn McBean Clairborne, Linda Lavine, Lynn Thommen, Mark Castiglione, Nagiane Lacka, Nels Bohn, Phil Wilde, Q. Cassetti, Ronda Roaring, Sally Grubb, Sandy Stein, Scott Callan, Sue Poelvoorde and Terry Harbin. Thank you.

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This plan is dedicated in memory of

Stuart W. Stein

Introduction

Vision

Tompkins County has a wealth of cultural heritage resources, but while some history and architectural sites and events currently are featured by local organizations, the full opportunity to create a heritage tourism program has not been developed. This implementation plan proposes subjects for long-term heritage tourism development and short-term strategies and actions to strengthen this component of the tourism offerings in Tompkins County. The Heritage Tourism Task Force envisions a vital heritage tourism scene in Tompkins County highlighting the county's rich historical, natural, and cultural offerings to bring more people here, and enrich the tourist's experience if they came here for other purposes. We seek expanded cultural heritage offerings to delight and inspire visitors to Tompkins County.

The Task Force subscribes to the Aims for tourism development in Tompkins County which are referenced in the 2020 Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Plan:

- ***Improve and never harm the quality of life*** for local residents, businesses, and institutions. Tourism programs should enrich the lives of all who live here.
- ***Present this unique place*** by building on special characteristics of its people, culture, history, geography, environment, economic activity, and institutions.
- ***Create demand through excellent marketing*** of appropriate tourism sites and services, and cultural and recreational assets in Tompkins County.
- ***Provide memorable experiences and legendary service*** that will educate, delight, and relax visitors, compel them to tell others, and motivate repeat visits.
- ***Improve the economic climate*** through a vibrant tourism program that builds jobs, raises tax revenues, and helps make our county a great place to live, work, and invest.
- ***Encourage development of strong programs and facilities*** to serve as the tourism “infrastructure” upon which future projects can be developed.

A focused effort on heritage tourism development is an ideal strategy for aligning these Aims with our tourism efforts, by attracting and serving more visitors and enhancing their experience of this place, and by enriching the sense of connection and overall quality of life that residents experience as well. Indeed, any community's most strategic asset is its sense of place, and this implementation strategy aims to enhance our ability to bring our rich local history and local culture to light.

Background

In 2014, the Strategic Tourism Planning Board, an advisory body to the Tompkins County Legislature, formed the Tompkins County Heritage Tourism Task Force to develop a focused effort around local heritage tourism. This effort is in service of one of 15 goals established by the Tompkins County 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan:

“Develop Ithaca and Tompkins County as a central arts, cultural and heritage tourism destination in the Finger Lakes”.

The Task Force began meeting in early 2014 to pull together information about local heritage assets and opportunities, and to identify local strengths and challenges around heritage tourism development. The group continued meeting after the death of Stuart Stein, its founding chair, in June 2014. This document is

both dedicated to Stu and serves as a part of a multi-faceted legacy for his work and vision to link economic development and quality of life aims through a community-based approach to tourism development. Members of the task force include individuals knowledgeable about the area's local history and culture, members of the STPB, and the directors of several of the community's main institutions engaged in various aspects of cultural heritage development.

This final implementation plan was completed in fall 2015 following changes and prioritization resulting from feedback from the STPB and community stakeholders. It is intentionally short-term in its focus – covering approximately two and a half years from mid-2015 through 2017. The thinking behind this short timeframe is not to lose sight of big ideas or significant future opportunities, but to be hyper-focused on establishing a small number of timely and strategic initiatives or projects upon which more significant future initiatives could be based.

Goals

The Task Force has set the following goals for this implementation strategy:

1. **Increase overall visitation**, length of stays and spending associated with heritage tourism in Tompkins County.
2. **Deepen appreciation and awareness** of Ithaca and Tompkins County's history, so that visitors and residents alike take away a richer understanding of and connection to this place.
3. **Improve access** for visitors to the area's rich heritage stories, notable people, historic themes and sites, natural history and public art.
4. **Increase coordination and collaboration** locally and regionally on heritage tourism initiatives.

Plan Overview

Definition

What is heritage tourism? The National Trust for Historic Preservation defines cultural heritage tourism as “traveling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present. It includes historic, cultural and natural resources.” There is a growing awareness of this term in the tourism field and growing appreciation for heritage visitors as an important market.

Tompkins County has many cultural heritage offerings as well as dedicated organizations supporting their development. For the purpose of focusing our heritage tourism efforts, the definition employed by this plan does not cover contemporary performing and visual arts or active outdoor recreation. Each of those areas has a rich set of opportunities and affiliated organizations and programs which deserve separate focused attention, whereas opportunities to develop heritage tourism more narrowly defined have historically been underappreciated. We include public art in our definition because of the opportunity that it represents to better interpret the area’s heritage in the public spaces.

Principles

The Task Force endorses the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Five Guiding Principles for successful and sustainable heritage tourism development:

Collaborate: Much more can be accomplished by working together than by working alone. Successful cultural heritage tourism programs bring together partners who may not have worked together in the past.

Find the Fit: Local circumstances determine what our area needs to do and can do in cultural heritage tourism. Programs that succeed have widespread local acceptance and meet recognized local needs.

Making Sites and Programs Come Alive: Interpreting sites is important, and so is making the message creative and exciting.

Focus on Quality and Authenticity: The story of the authentic contributions previous generations have made to the history and culture of where we live is the one that will interest visitors, because that is what distinguishes our area from every other place on earth.

Preserve and Protect: By protecting the buildings, landscape or special places and qualities that attract visitors, we safeguard the future.

The Trustⁱⁱ supports these principles with four steps for implementation:

- Assess the potential for building heritage tourism.
- Plan and organize the human and financial resources.
- Prepare for visitors, protect and manage your cultural, historic, and natural resources
- Market for success.

The Heritage Tourism Visitor and Potential Economic Impact

How big is the heritage leisure travel market, and what are the potential economic benefits of a focus on heritage tourism? According to the US Census Bureau, leisure travelers represent 71% of the U.S. adult population, or about 170 million Americans, with about 76% of these classified as Cultural Heritage (CH) Travelers in a 2013 studyⁱⁱⁱ by Mandala Research. According to this report, nearly 130 million American adults can be classified as Cultural Heritage Travelers (up from 118 million in 2009), with the market segmented further based on level of influence heritage activities had on their travel decisions:

According to several reports and studies, cultural heritage travelers travel more frequently, stay in hotels more often, spend more per trip, and stay longer in a destination community than general leisure visitors. This is particularly so for the Passionate and Well-Rounded/Active CH travelers identified in the Mandala study. Travelers in these two groups combined account for \$114 billion of the estimated \$171 billion in economic impact attributable to cultural heritage travelers across the U.S. In 2013, across all segments the CH travelers spent \$1,319 per trip, compared to \$1,198 per trip for general leisure travelers. The well-rounded active traveler is identified by this report as a particularly important segment for its size and spending potential. They are motivated by CH activities, but also want to do other activities, which creates a case for the importance of packaging and a well-rounded destination. So, our focus should be on passionate & well-rounded CH travelers, but we should not ignore the others, as we can capture their interest with heritage offerings as their passion grows.

The Mandala study also calls out the importance of variety and authenticity to all CH travelers.

1. Participating in a variety of activities
2. Experiencing local fare
3. Bringing back local memorabilia

What motivates CH travelers? According to the Mandala surveys, the top three motivators are:

1. Creating lasting memories
2. Relaxing and relieving stress, and
3. Trying a new experience

Types of Cultural Heritage Travelers

Passionate CH Travelers – 13% of leisure travelers or 23 million. CH activities drive the choice of destination for this group.

Well-Rounded/Active CH Travelers – 14% of leisure travelers or 24 million. Open to experiencing all types of activities while on a trip, including cultural heritage activities. Most are 45 or younger.

Aspirational CH Travelers – 27% of leisure travelers or 46.3 million. Desire to experience and participate in CH activities, but limited recent experience.

Self-Guided/Accidental CH Travelers: 11% of leisure travelers or 18 million. Take advantage of CH activities, but not a driver for destination choices. Most often prefer exploring small towns, galleries and self-guided historical tours.

Keeping it Light CH Travelers: 11% of leisure travelers or 18 million. Don't seek out CH activities, but will attend what they perceive as fun art, cultural and musical events.

Source: Mandala Research

Understanding how CH travelers decide is important. According to the report, 47% hear from friends and family and 55% from a community's official visitor information website. In addition, community newspapers are identified as the preferred print media, followed by magazines. These findings can help guide local heritage tourism marketing investment decisions.

A different study completed in 2010 by the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor^{iv} found that cultural and historic sites in the eastern part of the corridor (between Albany and Rome) brought an estimated \$38 million in sales to local businesses and supported over 500 jobs. The study also found that on average day trip visitors spent about \$33 per trip, while overnight visitors spent much more, in the \$360 range. It was also noted that Congressman Tonko (from the Mohawk Valley) has created a National Heritage Area Caucus in Congress. He has recognized that we have an abundance of historically and culturally significant sites in Upstate NY that can be an economic engine drawing tourists and creating jobs, while boosting local pride.

International travel to the United States is also currently at an all-time high, with an estimated 77.6 million international overnight visitors in 2014 according to the International Trade Administration. International travel to the US is also expected to continue increasing by an average of 4.3% annually through 2020. As such, international travelers could make up a larger set of local visitors in the future and effective heritage tourism programs should bear this in mind.

Attracting and serving more cultural heritage travelers and better interpreting our local heritage assets to enhance the visits of those coming for other reasons are viable means of supporting Tompkins County's overarching goal of expanding local visitor spending to \$265 million and total visitors to 1.5 million by 2020.

Broad Future Trends

It is important for animators of local heritage tourism to maintain an awareness of technological and social trends impacting how visitors will access heritage information and experiences in the future. It is also important to keep these trends in mind as we select local heritage tourism activities and investments. The Center for the Future of Museums (American Alliance of Museums – AAM) publishes an annual *Trendswatch* report highlighting emerging social trends impacting the cultural field. The New Media Center (NMC) also publishes a report for museums on technology trends. These reports and others identify several trends of potential relevance to our efforts.

- **Expanding the Concept of Visitors.** The digital revolution has created an expectation that all content should be digitized and freely accessed. (AAM, NMC) *Opportunities:* Provide virtual visits and online engagement; reach different audiences.
- **Location-Based Services** are now able to provide content that is “dynamically customized according to the user’s location” (NMC). *Opportunities:* Develop interactive site-specific wayfinding, content, and app-based tours.
- **Open Sourced Networks** (NMC, AAM). Online peer networks are vastly increasing civic engagement and driving the narratives of cultural topics but eroding the deep understanding provided by experts. *Opportunities:* Incorporate community and visitor contributions in heritage interpretation. Encourage cultural institutions to act as facilitators among audiences rather than gatekeepers and to add value such as scholarly knowledge or immersive experiences.
- **Visitors expect a high level of professionalism** in cultural sector business practices. (AAM) *Opportunities:* Provide centralized support in administrative and other areas to small cultural institutions.
- **Big Data can analyze and predict behavior with great accuracy.** (NMC) *Opportunities:* Generate personalized incentives to visit. For instance, visitors providing access to their Facebook profile could receive a customized itinerary and coupons to restaurants, hotels and businesses from the CVB, all modeled on their personal interests. Or point of sale info, smart-phone opt-ins, beacons, etc. could analyze attendance and demographic information to aid cultural organization planning.

Local Assets and Opportunities Overview

Our community has a variety of rich assets and stories, and the collective capacity to tell them well. There are a number of individuals and long-established local organizations in the county that already have heritage concerns as their primary responsibility including The History Center, Historic Ithaca, the County and Local Historians, as well as the Preservation League of NYS. The Tompkins County Tourism Program could partner with them to expand existing programs or build new ones that are aimed specifically at attracting and serving tourists. However, in order to be successful these organizations must develop partnerships with other organizations such as businesses, institutions of higher education, arts organizations, hotels, restaurants, and more.

The Heritage Tourism Task Force has identified the following strengths, opportunities and challenges related to developing and promoting heritage tourism specifically in Ithaca and Tompkins County.

Overarching Strengths:

- Tompkins County has a wide range of sites and content suited to heritage tourism.
- Local institutions possess a strong information base about local heritage.
- Local heritage institutions collaborate well.
- The Ithaca Tompkins County Convention and Visitors Bureau has marketing expertise and resources.

Overarching Challenges:

- Many heritage sites are underdeveloped. Much of what “explains” the past and present of Tompkins County in terms of its history and culture is not ready for visitors, and development is costly in terms of time, expertise, creation and upkeep.
- Much local heritage is not currently packaged or promoted as experiences.
- Internal administrative limitations exist within heritage organizations: technical expertise, turnover, time to devote to new initiatives, audience awareness, and funding.
- There is a lack of coordination between heritage sites in some areas.
- Ithaca is not directly accessible from an interstate highway, and there may be a perception that sites within the county are not near each other.
- Difficult winter travel limits programming for that season; other seasons are crowded with programming, especially on weekends.
- There may be limited incentive for Ithaca College and Cornell to coordinate on the development of new heritage efforts. Partnership with the campuses often requires going to individual departments and offices.

Overarching Opportunities:

The following overarching opportunities have been identified. More detailed opportunities to develop heritage tourism around priority subjects are identified in the next section. Finally, actions for short-term implementation are translated from these overarching opportunities as well as the opportunities identified by theme, and contained in the Strategy-Action section of this document.

- Develop a feasible and sustainable approach to promote the many existing assets.

- Explore underutilized heritage sites and further develop existing sites. Signage with info and hours is key, along with searchable online data for historic sites.
- Develop a hierarchy of visitor-readiness and align marketing with it.
- Connect marketing and packaging efforts and build tours of sites linked by theme.
- Consider aligning themes with the Path Through History themes for the Finger Lakes (Military History, Commerce and Innovation, Settlements, Education, Transportation, Civil Rights, Women's Rights, Sports History, Arts & Culture, U.S. Presidents, Natural History), and add content to the Path Through History website.
- Utilize new technology for marketing and projects. For example, plug-and-play mobile optimized websites for the development of walking tours have proliferated. These could easily be used, as relatively low cost, to provide map-based self-guided tours for a variety of heritage themes. Mock-ups have already been created. See: <http://actionxl.com/Parks/> and <http://actionxl.com/artwalk/> for examples using a version of the ESRI Story Maps platform. <http://storymaps.arcgis.com/en/> PocketSights – www.pocketsights.com - is a new Ithaca-based firm operating out of the Rev incubator which specialized in building self-guided walking tours for mobile users. It has been noted that adding a physical element, such as something as simple as a colored stripe on the sidewalk, to any digital self-guided tour will greatly enhance its visibility and use.
- Market Tompkins County as centrally located, not centrally isolated, with easy local access between places within the County and develop a unique marketing voice for heritage tourism.
- Create and market regional heritage tours and activities.
- Leverage the expertise of Cornell and IC to provide content, and recognize that Tompkins County has a great strength in its ability to provide education.
- Connect specific theme-based sites and activities to relevant marketing outlets and PR opportunities. An example of this could be an ad for the Ice Cream Sundae heritage event in Edible Finger Lakes.

Assets and Opportunities

Detailed by Subject

Subjects for heritage tourism development are proposed by the Heritage Tourism Task Force based on their relative long-term potential to be developed and promoted over time as tourism draws and activities. The following pages describe our local heritage tourism assets in detail by subject.

Two subjects have been identified as having particularly high potential for local heritage tourism development: Natural History and the History of Higher Education. Additional subjects are sorted into three categories: people, places, and other heritage themes. Additionally, other organizational efforts and activities are noted for their contributions to heritage tourism.

Some, but not all of the subjects below are woven into actions in the Strategy-Action section of this document. This is due to the short term focus of this implementation plan. However, the full range of subjects described here can serve as an ongoing resource to be referenced as heritage efforts progress.

High Potential Subjects for Heritage Tourism Development

- Natural History
- History of Higher Education

People

- African American Heritage
- Ithaca as a Progressive Community
- Native American Heritage
- Notable Figures and our Demographic Heritage
- Women's Rights

Places

- Archaeology
- Architecture
- Historic Sites
- Public Art
- Public Spaces

Other Heritage Themes

- Commerce, Innovation and Industrial History
- Food and Agriculture
- Transportation

Organizational Activities

- Heritage Institutions
- Heritage Related Conferences, Heritage Societies, and Cultural Groups
- State, Regional and National Efforts

High Potential Subjects for Heritage Tourism Development

Natural History

Tompkins County hosts four beautiful state parks, numerous gorges and waterfalls, along with many scenic vistas. Municipal parks such as Cass Park, Stewart Park, East Shore Park, and Myers Point Park provide public access to Cayuga Lake. Cornell Plantations has a diverse network of nature preserves, trails, gardens, and natural history collections, and holds and preserves the gorges surrounding the Cornell campus. The recently restored trail in Cascadilla Gorge connects downtown to Collegetown and provides an amazing and easily accessible way for visitors to experience first-hand what makes Ithaca “gorges.” Several State Forests and Finger Lakes Land Trust preserved lands form the “Emerald Necklace”, a network of natural lands around the southern half of Tompkins County, and intersect the Finger Lakes Trail. The recently completed Cayuga Waterfront Trail provides public access to the Ithaca waterfront and efforts are under way through the Tompkins Priority Trails Strategy to expand this network of multi-use trails.

High-quality museums interpret the area’s natural history and biodiversity - the Museum of the Earth, the Cayuga Nature Center, the Nevins Welcome Center at Cornell Plantations, and the welcome center at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. The County’s Unique Natural Areas inventory and Scenic Resources inventory further highlight important scenic and natural assets. Indeed, in the words of Louis Agassiz at the University’s opening ceremony in 1868, no other area can compete with Cornell’s surroundings in opportunities for the study of natural history.

Challenges

Numerous organizations with differing signage and public programming styles operate in the realm of natural history, potentially making it difficult to have an integrated interpretive approach.

Opportunities

- The County Tourism Program has provided considerable grant support to the Museum of the Earth and Cayuga Nature Center allowing the two organizations to merge and improve the quality of exhibits, facilities and programming.
- Online mapping projects are currently being undertaken by the Finger Lakes Land Trust and the Tompkins County Parks and Trails Network; these hold potential to improve visitor access to trails and natural areas.
- The Tompkins County Wayfinding and Interpretive Signage Plan and the Cayuga Lake Blueway Trail Plan both offer opportunities for new interpretive signage featuring natural history.
- A Cayuga Lake Birding Trail has been proposed, featuring prominent visitor-ready sites around the lake and anchor institutions at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology in Ithaca and Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge at the north end of the lake.
- Institutions could develop programming interpreting natural history sites through the lens of ethnicity and cultural history (e.g. CCC role in the development of state parks).

History of Higher Education

Tompkins County holds a place in the educational vanguard of the state and nation with Cornell University, Ithaca College and Tompkins Cortland Community College. Nearly half of all visitors to Tompkins County come to visit our institutions of higher education.

Cornell, considered by many to represent the “Birth of the American University”, and its outsized role in the history of higher education may be the single strongest subject for heritage tourism development in Ithaca and Tompkins County. Among the university’s notable contributions to this history are its egalitarian ideals, non-sectarian approach, liberal curriculum, and school motto as remembered from Ezra Cornell’s’s inaugural

speech in 1865, "I would found an institution where any person can find instruction in any study." Cornell was among the first American universities to admit women alongside men, and was first of the Ivies to do so. It is a unique institution in that it is both a private university and encompasses New York State's public land grant colleges. In addition, Cornell has direct connections to the founding of the first Greek letter fraternity for African-Americans and prominent civil rights organizations.

An extremely rich variety of stories, notable people, historic events, historic architecture and the like from Cornell's diverse colleges and fields of study also serve as opportunities for heritage interpretation. Some of these are referenced in other sections of this document. Just one such example of a heritage interpretation opportunity related to Cornell is Hu Shih, an alum who held a long career as a revered statesman and academic in China. This connection has been interpreted for Chinese visitors in a bilingual book produced by the Ithaca Tompkins County Convention and Visitors Bureau, coinciding with the 100th anniversary of his graduation in 2014.

The history of the founding of Cornell by the self-made Ezra Cornell, its important place in the history of American education, and important events throughout its 150 year history are well documented in books, films, websites and exhibits, including the book *Cornell: Glorious to View* by County Historian Carol Kammen and the documentary film *Cornell: Birth of the American University*.¹ The 150th anniversary was celebrated recently with a variety of special events and exhibits being produced including two exhibits by the Tompkins County Public Library: "Cornell in the Community" and "Montage Histories". A recent short film celebrating the sesquicentennial of Cornell's founding is also of note: <http://150.cornell.edu/glorioustoview/>.

This heritage of leadership in higher education has been carried forward through the evolution of the Ithaca Conservatory of Music, founded in 1892, into Ithaca College, a liberal arts college nationally-renowned for its excellence in film, music, and other areas.

Further, the development and expansion of Tompkins Cortland Community College (TC3) and its innovative approaches to learning continue to support our county's mantle of educational leadership. A recent example is TC3's forward-thinking farm to bistro educational program incorporating organic farming, culinary arts, hospitality, and food and wine marketing.

Higher education has been an overarching theme influencing the community's development and inextricably entwined with the community's identity.

Challenges

Cornell's diverse organizational structure could add difficulty to coordination with community efforts around heritage tourism development. Also, since the set of stories which can be told about the history of Cornell and IC and their many accomplished alumni and faculty is so rich and diverse, it could be a challenge to focus on a cohesive narrative around Ithaca's history as a college town and the importance of Cornell in the history of higher education.

Opportunities

- Coordinate the history programming efforts of CU/IC/TC3 with other organizations' heritage efforts and marketing, and provide mutual support for marketing.
- Develop narrative campus tours geared toward the general visitor highlighting the history of Cornell, key people and scientific and cultural achievements

¹ <https://ecommons.cornell.edu/handle/1813/36232>

- Identify highly visited hubs, sites and events at CU, IC and TC3 to introduce history of higher education theme; for example, at Cornell the Johnson Art Museum, Day Hall, Cornell Plantations, Lab of Ornithology, Big Red Store, Cornell Dairy Bar.

People

African American Heritage

The County has a rich African American history. There are several Underground Railroad (UGRR) sites of importance including Hayts Chapel in the Town of Ithaca. Nearby counties also have some significant sites (Harriet Tubman House and Seward House in Auburn, the John Jones house in Elmira, Frederick Douglass and various Rochester sites, Pres. Millard Fillmore and the Fugitive Slave Act, etc.) The Harriet Tubman House and surrounding lands were established as a National Historical Park in 2014. The State and the National Park Service have undertaken an extensive study of the UGRR in Upstate NY, with contributions from the Tompkins County historian. Tompkins County sites could be promoted and linked to other sites in the region with Ithaca as the hub.

Local African American history and heritage focuses on Cleveland Avenue in Ithaca and the AME Zion Church which is on the National Register of Historic Places. An effort is underway by the City of Ithaca to develop the MLK Freedom Walkway, with Northside and Southside Ithaca routes highlighting sites of historical importance in the community's African American history. Future development could include loops in other areas in the City, including East Hill. For most of the Northside and Southside loops, data has been gathered, a draft brochure has been developed, an anchor sculpture for the Ithaca Commons depicting MLK has already been created and plans are ready for walking tours, sculptures and interpretive kiosks at the Southside Community Center and GIAC. The Southside Community Center was dedicated in a ceremony attended by the First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt in 1938.

There is also an interesting academic history of the black student community at Cornell. Alpha Phi Alpha, the first black college fraternity, was at Cornell, and the first meeting place of their early social study group was recently designated as a local historic landmark (2015). In the 1960's, Cornell was in the national spotlight because of the protests and demands from black students.

Notable local African Americans include Jerome "Brud" Holland, a Cornell All-American football star who went on to become president of Delaware State College, US ambassador and member of the NYSE board of directors. The Dorothy Cotton Institute is named after local civil rights champion Dorothy Cotton, a close associate of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Several local community celebrations actively promote aspects of the community's African American heritage including the Congo Square Market, Juneteenth and Kwanzaa (organized by the Southside Community Center) and the GIAC Festival (organized by the Greater Ithaca Activities Center.) Finally, the Village of Trumansburg has also recently hosted a celebration that included installation of a plaque commemorating the life of Lloyd Dorsey, an enslaved individual who left Maryland to seek freedom in Trumansburg around 1843 where he settled, bought land, voted, and raised a family.

Challenges

Funding for the MLK Freedom Walkway has been difficult for the City and its partners to secure.

Opportunities

- Support the development of the MLK Freedom Walkway.
- Create a narrative campus tour at Cornell focused on African American history, launched from the Africana Center.
- Develop partnerships in the region to develop a regional UGRR trail and promotional program including Tompkins County and significant regional sites such as the Harriet Tubman National Historical Park in Auburn.

- Apply to have sites in Tompkins County be recognized by the National Park Service as UGRR sites through the Network to Freedom: <http://www.nps.gov/subjects/ugrr>.

Ithaca as a Progressive Community

Ithaca is known as a progressive college town with a long history of reformist ideas, politics, organizations, developments and movements. A heritage tourism program could pull together stories and programs acknowledging Ithaca’s reputation as a progressive community to distinguish our community as a destination. Moreover, a regional theme might be developed reflecting the emergence of progressive thinking and activism in this part of Upstate NY during the 19th century, linking Ithaca (the “American University”), Seneca Falls (Women’s Rights) and Auburn (Abolitionism.)

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Ithaca’s role in progressive social movements – women’s rights, civil rights, environmentalism, and sustainability
- Cornell as the first secular, inclusive, liberal university of its kind in the nation
- Ithaca’s history of progressive political leaders and politics, including one of a handful of communities to have hosted a Socialist mayor in the late 20th century - Ben Nichols
- Counter-culture groups such as hippies, back-to-the landers, and more
- LGBT community in Ithaca and Tompkins County
- Strong local food and co-op movement, represented by Moosewood and others
- Civic organizations like the Tompkins County Worker’s Center
- Civic assets like the Ithaca Commons and the unique Ithaca Festival

Challenges

Leveraging this subject for heritage tourism development is primarily a branding and messaging activity.

Opportunities

- Weave “Ithaca as a Progressive Community” into narratives shared through the marketing assets of the CVB.
- Create interpretative programs and displays at the proposed Heritage Center.

Native American Heritage

Several Tompkins County Cayuga settlement archeological sites are listed on the National Register of Historic Places; however, their locations are not made public in order to protect them. The book “Old Indian Trails of Tompkins County” could be used as a resource for developing tours, signs, and brochures. Any interpretation of these sites would have to be in concert with the Cayuga Nation, and carefully account for the continued protection of the sites.

The Cornell American Indian Program occupies a building on campus (Akwe:kon) that could be a visitor attraction. Akwe:kon's distinctive building and landscape were designed with extensive input from Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) people, incorporating symbols that reflect the theme of communal spirit. Also, the First People’s Festival takes place in downtown Ithaca each fall, and a mural of the Two-Row Wampum is prominently displayed in a bus waiting area on Seneca St.

Challenges

There are currently no visitor-ready sites associated specifically with Native American heritage, and as such interpretation opportunities may be limited. In general, there is presence of Native Heritage (street names, etc.) but no visible narrative.

Opportunities

- Develop a driving and cycling tour of important Native American trails in Tompkins County.
- Select one prominent site that could be made visitor ready to interpret the Cayuga settlements in Tompkins County.

Notable Figures and our Demographic Heritage

Our county has a considerable number of county, state, and regional historical figures. We have the capacity as a community to tell the stories of these notable people well, as well as the stories of lesser-known people contributing to the community's demographic heritage, and to tie them to specific places/sites in the community in tourism products.

Stories of notable people could be told based on themes with which they are associated. Examples of notable people include but are not limited to:

- Scientists: Nobel Laureates, Manhattan Project scientists, Carl Sagan, Bill Nye, and notable scientists featured in The Sciencenter Community Room exhibition.
- Naturalists: Louis Agassiz Fuertes, Liberty Hyde Bailey. A short video on Liberty Hyde Bailey was recently produced by WSKG: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-kB4ATYEPBw>
- Literary: Vladimir Nabokov, Thomas Pynchon, Kurt Vonnegut, Toni Morrison, Alex Haley, E.B. White, others.
- Women: Nobel Laureates Pearl S. Buck, Barbara McClintock and Toni Morrison; Connie Cook, Ruth Bader-Ginsberg, Janet Reno, Martha Van Rensselaer - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-kB4ATYEPBw> - others.
- Sports: Pop Warner.
- Political Leaders: Hu Shi (Chinese reformer and diplomat), Lee Teng-hui (president of Taiwan), Mario Garcia Menocal (president of Cuba), Jamshid Amuzegar, Paul Wolfowitz, and more.
- Famous Cornellians: There are many, across a variety themes.
- Civil Rights heroes and notable African Americans: Visitors including Martin Luther King, Jr. and Frederic Douglass; and residents including Jermain Wesley Loguen, Dorothy Cotton, Alex Haley, and Brud Holland.
- Early cinema: Frances X. Bushman, Pearl White, Lionel Barrymore, the Whartons, Irene Castle, and more.
- Nursing: Four women from Tompkins County served as nurses in the Civil War. A monument to these early nurses whose participation helped lead to the profession of nursing in the United States will be erected at TC3, which has a highly-praised nursing program.
- Crime: Edward Rulof was a famous, 19th century Ithaca criminal whose unusually large brain was preserved for public viewing at Cornell University following his 1871 hanging, the last public hanging in New York State.
- Rod Serling – creator of the Twilight Zone

The History Project of Cayuga Heights has recently created a searchable online map of notable figures who have lived in the village, including architectural information on their homes:

<http://cayugaheightshistory.weebly.com/maps.html>

Challenges

Currently, a visitor would have very little opportunity to learn about any of the notable people associated with our community; the opportunity is highly underdeveloped. Not all notable people can be associated with specific sites, and even if they can, the sites would be private homes or businesses and locations on the college campuses.

Opportunities

- Develop digital map-based tours based on sites associated with notable people across a set of themes.
- Develop other interpretive information related to notable people and demographic history.

Women's Rights

Tompkins County has a strong history of higher education for women and support for women's rights. Sage Hall, Johnson Museum of Art, and Day Hall are related to Cornell's admission of women in 1871. The Suffrage Party, which is now the League of Women Voters, began as part of the Women's Club in Ithaca, and there are local ties to the Women's Suffrage and the Women's Rights movements. The City Federation of Women's Organizations (CFWO) was formed in 1910 to band together several active women's organizations and has an interesting history of supporting a variety of causes of importance to member organizations. Our local history could link to the Women's Rights National Historical Park in Seneca Falls. Juanita Breckenridge Bates, an early female minister, and other local women were very impactful. Cornell Nobel Prize recipients include Pearl Buck, Barbara McClintock, and Toni Morrison.

Challenges

An organization to work on this theme may not be clearly identifiable, although the CFWO could potentially play a role here.

Opportunities

- Local tours and interpretive programming could be developed and promoted around the theme of women's rights, and/or notable women.

Places

Archaeology

Tompkins County's strongest archaeological site is Enfield Falls, a former village in Upper Enfield Glen at Robert Treman State Park. It has been partially excavated and has stone markers showing the location of buildings from an early settlement around the mill. The site is interpreted with signs and a brochure. The historic mill, now a museum, contains permanent archaeological exhibits. Visitors are welcome to come to the continuing excavations in September and October each year.

Another, unexcavated archeological site exists in Danby State Forest from which the government relocated a rural community. A stone house foundation and a recently maintained cemetery are accessed by the gravel Bald Hill Road and the popular Finger Lakes Trail. The Danby Town Historian, Finger Lakes Trail Conference and Historic Ithaca have more information on the site's history.

The Eight Square Schoolhouse, owned and operated by The History Center in Tompkins County, has an archaeological site on the schoolhouse grounds. The schoolyard contains archaeological material associated with the 19th and early 20th century history of the school, the teachers, and children.

Challenges

There are few if any active archaeological digs at any given time in Tompkins County. The yearly summer college excavations usually do not permit tourists to visit the sites.

Opportunities

- Small groups of archaeology buffs and students have participated in excavation efforts at local sites. These edu-tourism and volunteerism activities could be further developed and promoted.
- Work with the Friends of Robert Treman State Park and NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) to enhance interpretation at the Enfield Falls village site.
- Work with the History Center in Tompkins County to promote and increase visibility for their summer Public Archaeology Program.

Architecture

Tompkins County is home to buildings of architectural importance and interest, and interpretation of this architectural heritage could be improved as part of a heritage tourism strategy. Historic Ithaca's architectural tour brochures highlight the broad range of local architectural styles, but they do not cover each of the city's historic districts. These could be updated and presented in a digital platform. Historic Ithaca also holds spring neighborhood house tours (East Hill, Bryant Park/Belle Sherman, etc) and fall tours highlighting a specific research effort (Carriage Houses of Tompkins County, Modernist Architecture). These events draw people from around central NY and the Southern Tier, and with targeted promotion could draw even more. Book talks, Ithaca City Cemetery tours, and specialized workshops also draw participants from around the region. The History Center also developed a digital app several years ago that provides historic photos of Ithaca, some with architectural interest.

Tompkins County architectural assets include:

1. Religious architecture: Information from the County Historian's website, municipal historians, and other sources could be featured in new brochures or apps. St. James A.M.E. Zion Church is perhaps the most important asset in this category. Forest Home Chapel has just published its history in celebration of 100 years.
2. Public Architecture: Highlight the Old Courthouse (now the Daniel D. Tompkins Building), the New Courthouse (now the present courthouse), the Town of Ithaca Hall, town halls around the county,

firehouses, and bridges (especially the covered bridge in Newfield, the only remaining covered bridge in Tompkins County.) Interpretation of public architecture could also include the demolition of the Old City Hall during urban renewal as an example of the possible mistakes of that era. Also building of Woolworths and conversion to new library.

3. Domestic Architecture: Tompkins County offers many Greek Revival houses, a few noteworthy Gothic buildings, some Italianate, Empire, Queen Anne, and many hybrids. The county's stunning modernist houses are private but can be incorporated into architectural content. The Southworth House (Dryden Town Historical Society) is a Federal Style home on the National Register of Historic Places and is open to the public on limited weekend hours and by appointment.
4. Other Architectural assets include the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, an iconic I.M. Pei building; Milstein Hall, the Rem Koolhaas-designed home of the Department of Architecture at Cornell; a variety of Frank Lloyd Wright inspired structures; and the State Theatre, a restored historic theatre in downtown Ithaca.
5. Barns: Local heritage organizations have inventoried historic barns in the county and this information could be developed into a tour and interpretive resource.

Challenges

Although Tompkins County may not possess big stand-out must-see architectural wonders, our community maintains a very high level of historical integrity in terms of multiple intact streetscapes and a continuum of period architecture covering many periods and styles.

Opportunities

Tompkins County architecture is diverse and notable. Its buildings convey important stories and lend themselves to high quality photographs for promotional materials. Cornell's College of Art, Architecture and Planning and its Architecture Department could be leveraged to better interpret our local architectural history, perhaps beginning with stories of Cornell buildings.

- Develop and upgrade self-guided architectural tours in digital and pamphlet formats, and promote to tour companies.
- Partner with the Preservation League of NYS on interpretive materials and tour development.
- Establish a Year of Local Architecture project as a means of engaging multiple institutions to create unique visitor experiences to appeal to a variety of audiences. There are already several architectural walking tours documented by Historic Ithaca and The History Center.
- Historic B&Bs could be another opportunity to share local history with visitors; a program to market historic B&Bs could be developed by the CVB or B&B Association.
- Establish a "Doors Open" event to showcase historic properties, building on the success of the house tour model. See Lowell, Massachusetts event as an example: <http://www.doorsopenlowell.org/>
- Consider architectural art as a theme for one of the downtown Ithaca Gallery Nights.

Historic Sites

The Eight-Square Schoolhouse was built c. 1827 and it currently interprets its use in 1892. It is a strong and rare architectural example and The History Center is interested in expanding its audience as a visitor attraction through events, festivals, and classes.

The Southworth House in Dryden is an historic house recently gifted to the Dryden Historical Society. This house is rich in both cultural and architectural history. Currently its open hours are from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm on Saturdays. Other potential sites include Hayts Chapel and the Garret Road Farm House, and the "The Treman Mill and its Nineteenth-Century Farm Community" at Robert H. Treman State Park.

The restoration and development of Stewart Park is an important and significant city and county resource that has the potential to promote and foster architectural, cultural and recreational heritage with current events and other activities. It is the location of the Wharton Studio Building, and also touches on themes of education (Cascadilla school boathouse), natural history, and transportation.

Challenges

Organizations working to develop the historic sites listed in this section are relatively small. Also, aside from perhaps Cornell University, the County does not have an historic site which by itself would be the primary reason to travel to Tompkins County for a large numbers of out of county visitors.

Opportunities

- Encourage grant applications for site development and interpretation at historic sites.
- Support the Stewart Park Rehabilitation Action Plan, including by reincorporating historic uses such as concessions, in the park.

Public Art

Murals, sculpture and other public art displays have blossomed in the past twenty years and could be documented to enhance appreciation and awareness. Many examples incorporate heritage themes. This can be further encouraged by County participation in local public art groups and programs.

Challenges

Labor and expense would be required to catalog information and better promote public art.

Opportunities

A significant amount of high-quality public art already exists locally. Public art is easily consumed and can fit into almost any visitor itinerary. It may be beneficial to focus public art efforts on the places visitors frequent such as downtown Ithaca. Functional public art like art on bike racks, bus shelters/benches, and signage could serve as a vehicle for heritage interpretation and place-making.

- Self-guided walking tours of local public art.
- Caleb Thomas of the Ithaca Public Art Commission is working currently to create a printed map of murals in Ithaca; this project could be supported.
- The 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan identified the creation of a formal public art grant program as a “Critical Action.” The Beautification Plan currently under development by the Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce and CCETC is considering this. A heritage focus could be encouraged, heritage organizations could be promoted as resources for artists, and a member of the forthcoming Tompkins County Heritage Tourism Group could advise on the heritage content of proposed artworks.
- An expanded definition for public art could involve adding artistic elements to functional public furniture, such as trash cans, signs, bike racks, recycling bins, etc.
- Murals of famous Ithacans could bring exposure to these important figures in the community’s heritage.
- A mural to honor Muslim culture is currently in the works. This could serve to play into the narrative of Ithaca as a progressive community, honor heritage, showcase an art subject that isn't readily available, as well as welcome Muslim visitors.

Public Spaces

Tompkins County’s public spaces include DeWitt Park, The Commons, Stewart Park, the state parks, small parks in the towns, spaces on the lake, walking trails, the Waterfront Trail, The Sagan Planet Walk, Ithaca

Falls and more. Places of protest like the 1907 Tailors Strike, the 1969 Willard Straight takeover, protests in front of the Post Office, and the march down Seneca Street could be highlighted.

The airport is a county-owned facility that includes some heritage interpretation and could possibly include more.

Public buildings such as municipal office buildings, post offices, and libraries along with several types of businesses with interior publicly accessible spaces like banks, restaurants, retail stores, hotels, theatres, and not-for-profit offices incorporate aspects of local history into their spaces. One primary way this is done is by displaying reproductions of historic photographs, such as those offered for sale by The History Center.

Ithaca Falls is an important visitor site which is likely to be developed by the City of Ithaca over the next couple of years. The small park at the entrance to the natural area will get some landscaping improvements in 2016 and the City also has plans to develop an overlook on a site on the edge of the gorge near the former Ithaca Gun factory. These improvements should enhance public access to Ithaca Falls and they also provide a unique opportunity for heritage interpretation.

Many cemeteries in the County are open to the public and hold the graves of historic or interesting local figures. The History Center has hosted an exhibit on cemeteries in the County and has interpreted many stories. The Friends of the Ithaca City Cemetery, a group affiliated with Historic Ithaca, works on “preserving and promoting the history, landscape and enjoyment of Ithaca’s oldest cemetery”. They also host an annual Halloween Graveyard Tour and Ithaca City Cemetery Sprint running event which could be promoted as potential visitor draws.

Challenges

Coordination of interpretation opportunities in public spaces could be difficult, given the large number of jurisdictions.

Opportunities

- Public spaces are primary sites for interpretation based on a variety of other themes identified in this plan.
- The Heritage Tourism Group could evaluate and potentially enhance their interpretation.
- An effort could be developed to promote The History Center’s historic photograph program to incorporate more historic images and perhaps timelines of historic events and people into displays in publicly accessible buildings.
- A larger heritage display, such as a timeline of notable events and people, could be created for the Airport.
- At the Ithaca Falls site:
 - Develop a master plan of Ithaca Falls natural area, with focus on public access (trails, overlook) and historical interpretation signage/guide.
 - Archeological research and interpretation to uncover mill/factory resources & possibly restore stone walls and raceway structures.

Other Heritage Themes

Commerce, Innovation and Industrial History

Tompkins County has a rich industrial history, with some well interpreted sites and others with interpretation under development.

The Thomas Morse Scout, a World War I training aircraft, was manufactured in Ithaca, and three original manufacturing sites are still standing. The Ithaca Aviation Heritage Foundation is restoring an original plane, and a half size reproduction hangs in the Ithaca Airport Terminal. In addition, the Hangar Theatre – the site of the old Ithaca airport—hosted historic landings by Amelia Earhart and others.

Ithaca was also home to silent film production by the Wharton Brothers at the still-standing Wharton Studio building in Stewart Park. The Wharton Studio Museum is a project to convert the old building – now the site of the Parks Maintenance facility for the City of Ithaca – into a museum highlighting the community’s important role in the early motion picture industry.

Other local industries of note include:

- Smith-Corona typewriter factory in Groton (buildings no longer standing).
- Moog Synthesizer invention by Robert Moog in Trumansburg (the role of Cornell graduates in 20th century music, including Moog, is related and includes Mike Matthews, Electro-Harmonix, and avant-garde composer Steve Reich). Site: The History Center.
- Original flour mill works at Robert Treman State Park.
- Ithaca Gun
- Ithaca Calendar Clock
- Morse Chain/Emerson
- Roy Park, Duncan Hines; Hines-Park foods, Park Communications
- Boat building
- Salt – Salt Point on Cayuga Lake at Salmon Creek is a possible interpretive site. Salt underlies the entire region and has had a significant cultural and economic effect.

Challenges

These assets are not yet well-developed as visitor experiences. The Wharton Studio Museum project would require major investment.

Opportunities

- This history could be interpreted through digital self-guided tours.
- The Wharton Studio Museum project is interested in partnering with Case in Auburn and Eastman in Rochester to co-promote and create a regional trail of early film production, and the State Theatre is already part of a regional historic theatre trail.
http://eriecanalway.org/explore_things-to-do_art_historic-theaters.php
- The Wharton Studio Museum intends to operate the historic studio in Stewart Park as a museum, and is in discussions with other non-profits to explore space-sharing.
- The Tommy Scout should find a home in Ithaca where it can be enjoyed by visitors, perhaps either at the Tompkins County Airport or in a new Heritage Center.
- The Lake Street Bridge project currently being undertaken by the City of Ithaca, and the Gun Hill condominium project both provide interpretation opportunities for Ithaca Gun and early mills on Fall Creek.
- The Chain Works multi-use redevelopment project offers opportunities to interpret the largest historical industrial complex in Ithaca.

Food and Agriculture

The Tompkins County Tourism Program is currently in the process of developing an Agriculinary Tourism Implementation Plan. As part of that effort there may be opportunities to interpret the area's agricultural heritage and food history. Examples include the history of native American food; wine, beer, and cider production in the region; and Ithaca as an historical center of strong local and organic food movements, highlighted by the internationally renowned Moosewood Restaurant and long-running Ithaca Farmer's Market. The recently published *Culinary History of the Finger Lakes: From the Three Sisters to Riesling*, by Ithaca resident Laura Winter Falk, could serve as a guide.

Challenges

The history of food and agriculture is diverse and not necessarily in the domain of any single organization.

Opportunities

- Weave heritage elements into local agriculinary tourism development efforts, focusing on what is unique to our region.
- Encourage culinary trail organizations (wine, beer, cheese, cider, etc) to incorporate heritage elements into their marketing and programs.
- Further promote Ithaca as the birthplace of the Ice Cream Sundae.

Transportation

Many streets and roads still in use today evolved from Iroquois footpaths to cart roads and turnpikes to paved roads for automobiles. "Indian Trails of Tompkins County" is a resource for this history.

The Erie Canal's southernmost point on Cayuga Lake is Ithaca, and as such Ithaca features in the history of water transportation.

Railroads are represented by abandoned beds in various stages of conversion to rail-trails, particularly the Black Diamond Trail, Gateway Trail, South Hill Recreation Way Extension, Jim Schug Trail and Ithaca-Dryden Trail (East Hill Recreation Way Extension). As the trails are developed, the visitor experience along these trails could be enhanced with interpretive offerings with heritage. Cell phone tours such as those used at Catharine Valley Trail in Schuyler County, and signs could interpret the history of rail transportation, including the interesting history of short lines, along with other cultural heritage themes along each trail.

The local history of aviation could be featured at The History Center, Historic Ithaca and the airport. Ithaca is part of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, which as program division of the National Park Service, offers technical assistance and with marketing programs.

Challenges

Trail projects tend to each have different responsible agencies and different implementation timelines. Coordination of themes and having a common design for heritage interpretation is a challenge. Funding could potentially address these challenges.

Opportunities

- Work the transportation theme into heritage signage programs and heritage tours which are developed. Encourage use of best practices, such as those listed in the National Park Service's resource document for design of interpretive signage:
<http://www.nps.gov/hfc/pdf/waysides/Wayside-Guide-First-Edition.pdf>

Organizational Activities

Heritage Institutions

The History Center in Tompkins County, with roots back to 1863 and Ezra Cornell, helps people use the tools of history to understand the past, gain perspective on the present, and play an informed role in shaping the future. The organization preserves and encourages access to its research library, archives and unique collections, while designing learning experiences and services that create opportunities for people to learn about themselves and their place in the world. It hosts regular public hours, organizes exhibitions and educational programs, and partners with a diverse range of non-profit organizations throughout Tompkins County to bring original, research-based educational services to the public. It is part of the Discovery Trail – a partnership of eight educational sites in Tompkins County - and Kids Discover the Trail through its Eight Square Schoolhouse. The History Center networks with the County’s municipal historians and local historical societies.

The story of The History Center has always been one of growth and change. By periodically re-evaluating the community's needs, as well as its own role in the community, The History Center continues to be a central component to the cultural health and well-being of Tompkins County.

Historic Ithaca (HI) is Ithaca’s historic preservation organization and provides several resources and programs of potential interest to visitors. HI has recently re-established its Library for the Built Environment which is used mostly by individuals researching the history of their homes and to learn how best to maintain them. Historic Ithaca has established a conservation lab used as part of its jobs training program and to repair donated items. They provide several preservation and conservation education programs such as book talks, tours and workshops.

Historic Ithaca provides a range of educational opportunities from the Preservation Basics Series to window restoration classes attracting professionals from the Hudson Valley, Syracuse and New Jersey. In February 2015, Historic Ithaca held a conference at the Hangar Theatre on Traditional Millwork with 90 attendees and speakers coming from Pennsylvania, Rochester, Syracuse, Auburn, Ithaca and other regional communities. Supported by a grant from the Historic Preservation Education Foundation and sponsorship from local businesses, this single-day conference was successful in drawing people to Ithaca during the winter months. This conference was aimed at local millwork practitioners, architects, and dedicated amateurs. Working with the Southern New York chapter of the American Institute of Architects, Historic Ithaca awarded continuing education credit to participating architects. Positive feedback from attendees indicates that these types of single-day conferences have great appeal for a targeted audience and can result in overnight stays.

Historic Ithaca is developing a fall 2016 symposium with Cornell University to celebrate Historic Ithaca’s 50th anniversary, the 50th anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act, and the 40th anniversary of the Historic Preservation program at Cornell. This conference could also attract architects seeking continuing education credits. Historic Ithaca has the potential to attract a wider audience by continuing to develop its programming in sustainable and traditional building skills.

House tours in the fall and spring also attract a local and regional crowd. In June 2014, over 200 people attended Historic Ithaca’s That Old House tour in Brooktondale, and over 360 people attended the June 13, 2015 Cayuga Heights house and garden tour.

Several other “memory keeping” assets exist throughout the County including the Caroline History Room, the Dryden Historical Society’s Southworth House, Lansing Historical Association: The Historian’s building,

Ulysses Historical Society and the Tompkins County Historian's website. While these organizations have historic artifacts and exhibitions, in general they are not well promoted or prepared for large numbers of visitors. A key to aiding these organizations might be through the Municipal Historians of Tompkins County who meet monthly.

The History Center is one of eight sites which is part of Ithaca's Discovery Trail; each of the other seven Discovery Trail sites also play an important role in Heritage Tourism in our community. The Cayuga Nature Center, Museum of the Earth, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Cornell Plantations and the Sciencenter all interpret different aspects of our natural history. The Sciencenter's wall of scientists includes many notable scientists with an Ithaca connection. The Tompkins County Public Library is a major downtown center which hosts a variety of exhibits and also serves as an information source for heritage interpretation. The Library also has a heritage story all its own which firmly links in Cornell. Finally, the Johnson Museum of Art, besides being housed in an architecturally significant building, hosts rich artistic exhibits on a variety of heritage themes.

Challenges

Our heritage organizations are relatively small, and while both THC and HI see great value in creating educational and experiential opportunities for both residents and visitors, tourism has not historically been a primary mission of these institutions. The lease for the current location of the History Center ends in 2018.

Opportunities

- The History Center has expressed willingness to provide leadership for an ongoing Heritage Tourism effort.
- There may be real opportunities for attracting funding through the State's Consolidated Funding Application process.
- HI can build and promote its preservation workshops and tour programs as educational tourism programs.
- The History Center and other institutions serve as centers of genealogical research. These resources could be further developed and promoted to attract and serve genealogy buffs.
- The Library can serve as a centrally located information hub.
- The History Center's current location has both challenges and opportunities and its Board of Trustees has undertaken a process to decide whether to stay there. THC is excited about the possibility of being co-located with Historic Ithaca in a "Heritage Center" that would highlight Tompkins County's mix of place-based offerings from natural to cultural amenities. This would be an opportunity for the organizations to continue doing what each does so well while taking advantage of combined public spaces, a united research library, a retail store, joint programming and shared employees in strategic areas.

THC and HI would provide an anchor and portal to authentic experiences of Tompkins County. It would help to build an appreciation and understanding of our local history and built environment while integrating other themes such as food and agriculture, land and nature, and art. The space would be visible, accessible, inviting and welcoming. With support and marketing it could become a regional center. Historic Ithaca would continue to use its current site for education, workshops, hands-on classes, furniture repair and conservation of building materials.

Heritage Related Conferences, Heritage Societies, and Cultural Groups

The history and preservation architecture fields include many specialty groups that meet to discuss mutual interests. Some of these annual meetings could be attracted to Ithaca by the Group Sales Department at the CVB. Some of these include: The Antique Doorknob Collectors of America, Association for Preservation Technology International, International Preservation Trades, Early American Industries Association. In the past Historic Ithaca has hosted the Preservation League of NYS and the NYS Barn Coalition annual meetings.

Heritage tourism involves more than architectural and historic-event history; it also includes historic crafts, foods, music, etc. The History Center's Rhiner festival, prior to its cancelation, and the Scottish festival are examples highlighting cultural heritage. The Finger Lakes Finns, Latino Civic Association of Tompkins County, Ithaca Asian American Association, etc. provide opportunities for ethnic heritage to be celebrated. The Community Celebrations Grant Program encourages the incorporation of local history and culture into over two dozen local community celebrations. A list is here:

http://tompkinscountyny.gov/files/visit_tompkins/Community%20Celebrations%20description%20for%20County%20website.pdf

Tompkins County hosts several antique stores and auction houses which could enhance visits. They include Significant Elements, Found, the Ithaca Antique Center, the Tompkins County Area Antique Dealers Association, and more.

Challenges

It is both a challenge and an opportunity that many of these groups tend to be small and tightly networked.

Opportunities

- Heritage groups and local cultural organizations organizing events and conferences can be supported with technical assistance and financial support to grow and expand their activities and promote them to visitors.

State, Regional and National Efforts

Very few people realize that Ithaca is a port on the Erie Canal system and within the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor. As part of the National Park Service, the ECNHC may be able to bring recognition and resources such as tie-in marketing, technical advice, and use of the Erie Canal/NPS logo on local sites. Local museums and cultural sites can become members of the Canalway's "Partner Program" (The History Center is the only current local partner.) Stuart Stein was a long-serving member of the Commission and Frank Proto, former Tompkins County legislator, is now the county's local representative on the Commission.

State agencies could assist with local heritage tourism development in various ways. There may be grant programs for historic-site signage, or for feasibility studies for development of a canal-related site. NY State has a separate Corporation as a subsidiary of the Thruway Authority which awards grants to canal communities through the CFA process. The Department of State has a Local Waterfront Revitalization Program which has provided funding to help plan and develop waterfront resources, including the Cayuga Lake Blueway Trail.

The Path Through History (PTH) is an initiative of Governor Andrew Cuomo led by the I Love NY program, launched in 2013. The initiative includes special signage and promotion for two Tompkins County heritage sites: Robert Treman State Park, and The History Center. Itineraries, maps and information on a variety of historical themes is also available through the PTH website: <http://paththroughhistory.iloveny.com/>. Out of

our regional Path Through History Strategic Plan came a series of short videos on aspects of local history developed by WSKG. Tompkins County based sites featured in the videos include: Cornell University, Ithaca College, the Johnson Museum of Art, Museum of the Earth, Robert H. Treman State Park, The History Center in Tompkins County, The Sciencenter and Wharton Studio Museum. Visit <http://wskg.org/program/path-through-history/> or WSKG's Youtube channel for PTH videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLkEiFS5w2pdnAkfQSKJHSg-bqkx92u7SC>. These are currently being expanded upon through two new additional grants to WSKG.

The Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance is currently working with Senator Kirsten Gillibrand on an initiative that could lead to the establishment of National Heritage Area designation for the Finger Lakes. The first step would be to have the US Congress pass a bill to direct the National Park Service to conduct a feasibility study to see if the Finger Lakes area qualifies. The legislative effort is currently stalled and may require grassroots support to move it forward. It is usually an eight year process to receive such a designation, which could provide significant benefits to local heritage tourism efforts should it come to pass.

Challenges

Ithaca's distance from the main line of the Erie Canal makes it potentially difficult to tap into this connection for marketing purposes, although the connections for technical assistance and grant support can still be leveraged and use of ECNHC marketing materials can be increased and/or supplemented. The Path Through History website currently does not provide strong local links and its value to local efforts is limited to sites that meet the PTH criteria. We also have the challenge of being in the Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council, but most of our regional assets and formal tourism region lies with the Finger Lakes, which can make grant-writing and regional project coordination a challenge.

Opportunities

- In general, coordinate with other regional, state and national heritage tourism efforts and conversations.
- Keep abreast of the activities of these organizations to take advantage of any source of funding that may become available.
- Partner with Department of State on the Cayuga Lake Blueway Trail Plan.
- Promote the Uniquely New York videos through our local heritage tourism marketing efforts, and those of the institutions covered; they are well done, but haven't proliferated.
- Work with WSKG to identify and align themes for the next round of PTH videos.
- Continue to identify state and regional efforts on other themes that align with Tompkins County's heritage and explore opportunities.
- Support regional efforts to explore National Heritage Area designation for the Finger Lakes.
- Become involved in upcoming regional/state/national celebrations and commemorations around Women's Rights, Canals (2017 International Canals Conference in Syracuse), and Historic Preservation.

Strategies and Actions

This plan identifies the following 15 actions for heritage tourism development between mid-2015 and the end of 2017, with each action corresponding to one of four strategies: Institutional Development, Interpretation, Capacity Building and Marketing. These have been selected from a long list of possible actions based on their fit with the Aims of the Tompkins County Tourism Program and the Principals for Heritage Tourism Development referenced earlier in this document. Also, feasibility is a key factor in selecting actions for implementation. The selected actions are intended to provide a foundation upon which future heritage tourism activities can be built. A matrix describing each action in more detail along with the associated timing, lead organization(s) and possible funding source(s) follows this summary. The STPB and the Heritage Tourism Working Group will monitor progress towards implementation. At the end of 2017, these groups will assess next steps regarding future Heritage Tourism planning and development.

Strategy A – **Institutional Development:** Improve heritage tourism organizations, sites and attractions

1. Explore the establishment of a new Heritage Center as a joint project of The History Center and Historic Ithaca.

Strategy B – **Interpretation:** Package underdeveloped stories, themes, and assets into visitor experiences and amenities

2. Establish the MLK Freedom Walkway.
3. Establish a public art grant program with heritage elements.
4. Provide support and rich interpretive content for current signage projects.
5. Implement the History Forge digital interactive historic map project.
6. Establish a shared platform for tour development and promote the development of additional walking, cycling and driving tours.
7. Support programming being developed by the 2017 Tompkins County Bicentennial Commission to add tourism value.
8. Develop regional interpretation themes, such as UGRR, early film, early aviation, etc.

Strategy C – **Capacity Building :** Enhance the community's capacity for heritage tourism development

9. Launch an ongoing Tompkins County Heritage Tourism Group.
10. Develop Heritage Tourism Public Programs and Outreach Coordinator position(s) at The History Center and Historic Ithaca.
11. Provide tourism training and technical assistance for heritage professionals and heritage training to tourism professionals.
12. Organize a heritage tourism exchange between Ithaca/Tompkins County and one or more communities from whom we can learn, and vice-versa.
13. Assist in integrating heritage themes and activities in events and tourism projects.

Strategy D – **Marketing:** Market heritage tourism offerings for success (to follow A, B & C)

14. Develop a framework and preliminary content for a website to promote heritage tourism attractions and experiences.
15. Create a 'Heritage Ambassadors' program.

Tourism Program Support for Heritage Tourism Initiatives

Funding for heritage tourism initiatives is expected to come from a variety of sources, including federal and state grants as well as support from local and regional foundations. The Tompkins County Tourism Program, which is funded by the Tompkins County hotel room occupancy tax, and for which the Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB) provides oversight and strategic direction, hosts several grant programs which are possible funding sources for heritage tourism initiatives.

In addition, a new Heritage Tourism Internship in Stuart Stein's name has been established in partnership with the Cornell Department of City and Regional Planning and the NY Upstate American Planning Association. The first intern will be hosted in summer 2016 in the Tompkins County Planning Department, and the intern will focus efforts on supporting implementation of this Plan.

Adoption of this plan by the STPB, with the strategies and actions above, does not constitute a guarantee of funding for any of the actions listed. Each possible local tourism grant funding source has a grant application and review process. Potential heritage tourism initiatives must compete based on their how well they respond to the evaluation criteria of the grant program to which an application is made. Additional details about the following programs may be found on the Tourism Program's website:

www.tompkinscountyny.gov/tourism.

New Tourism Initiative Grants and Tourism Project Grants support tourism projects that demonstrate likelihood of generating significant visitor participation and overnight stays in County hotels, motels and Bed & Breakfasts. Tourism Project Grants are for projects that have been in active operation for more than three years at the date of application, and New Tourism Initiative Grants are for projects that have occurred less than three years in a row and that support implementation of the County's 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan. The maximum award is \$25,000.

Tourism Marketing and Advertising Grants provide a dollar for dollar match for marketing and advertising expenses for campaigns that target potential tourists whose visit is likely to result in an overnight stay. The maximum award is \$5,000.

Arts and Culture Organizational Development Grants strengthen and grow the capacity of established museums and performing arts organizations, as a partnership between tourism and the arts. The average annual award is approximately \$25,000.

Tourism Capital Grants provide support for feasibility studies and up to one third of capital costs for attractions. Tompkins County Area Development administers this program on behalf of the County Tourism Program. The minimum award is \$25,000.

Community Celebrations Grants provide assistance to events and programs endorsed by a municipality that are free and open to all and planned by community members as a benefit to the community. Community celebrations grants have a particular focus on celebrating aspects of a community's local history. The maximum award is \$2,000.

Strategic Tourism Implementation Funding is a flexible funding source which primarily supports implementation of Critical Actions identified in the 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan and local tourism research in support of strategic planning. Approximately \$150,000 is expected to be available in 2016.

Matrix of Strategies and Actions

#	Strategy	Action	Tasks/Notes	Lead(s)*	Timing	Possible Funding*
1	Institutional Development	Explore the establishment of a new Heritage Center as a joint project of The History Center and Historic Ithaca.	The History Center and Historic Ithaca are currently in conversation about establishing a new joint Heritage Center which would combine the resources of these organizations to provide a stronger, more visible, more accessible site for both organizations and tie together the various aspects of local heritage into tourism experiences. It would anchor tour packages, trails, tours, educational experiences and historic sites. The County Historian and local heritage partners such as the Dorothy Cotton Institute and the Ithaca Aviation Heritage Foundation could also be housed at the new joint site. As part of this effort, partnerships with the CVB, Downtown Ithaca Alliance, Cornell and Ithaca College on co-location of a new Downtown Visitors Center with activities, exhibits and retail should be explored.	THC, HI	2016-17	THC, HI, STI, TCG
2	Interpretation	Establish the MLK Freedom Walkway, as cornerstone to a larger effort to interpret African American heritage in Tompkins County.	Build Phase One components of the Northside and Southside loops of the MLK Freedom Walkway - a project interpreting African American history in the City of Ithaca - in the next two and a half years. Phase One includes a brochure, sculptures, walking tours, and interpretive kiosks, and all content is ready. A later phase will involve markers.	City of Ithaca, SSCC, HI, GIAC	2017	NYS, NTI, STI
3	Interpretation	Establish a public art grant program with heritage elements.	Establishing a public art grant program is a critical action in the Strategic Tourism Plan. It's also included in the Beautification Plan under development. New public art program guidelines will encourage the incorporation of heritage tourism content into the artwork, highlight heritage resources for artists, and include a HTG member on the Commission to advise on heritage content in proposed artworks.	TCPD, Chamber, CAP, DIA, TCPD, HTG, PAC	2016	TCTP
4	Interpretation	Provide support and rich interpretive content for current signage projects.	Several signage projects being developed within the next two years have substantial interpretive components. The Heritage Tourism Group and its members will support content development for these interpretive sign opportunities, especially the Tompkins County Wayfinding and Interpretive Signage Project and the Cayuga Lake Blueway Trail. There may be additional opportunities to coordinate with the Finger Lakes Land Trust, TC Parks and Trails Network, the City of Ithaca, and the City Cemetery on other upcoming interpretive signage opportunities.	HTG	2016-17	THC, TCG, STI
5	Interpretation	Implement the History Forge digital interactive historic map project.	The History Center in Tompkins County is starting a new initiative called History Forge that will result in a working prototype of a dynamic, interactive web-based interface to Ithaca and Tompkins County history using historic maps as portals to exploring local history. It will allow users to trace individuals and buildings across time, and will connect to a Tompkins County bicentennial initiative for house and building markers. The project will promote the role of The History Center as a community and regional anchor by engaging the entire Tompkins County community as well as visitors in active participation with local history and historical documents.	THC	2016	NEH

6	Interpretation	Establish a shared platform for tour development and promote the development of additional walking, cycling and driving tours.	The Heritage Tourism Group will select an online/mobile tour mapping platform for use in developing additional tours and updating existing print-format tours.	HTG, THC, TCPD	2015-2017	NTI, TMA other grants
7	Interpretation	Support 2017 Tompkins County Bicentennial Commission program development to add tourism value.	The 2017 Tompkins County Bicentennial Commission has identified several projects to develop around the County's bicentennial. These could be linked with heritage tourism efforts. Specifically, an update of the Town-by-Town historical brochures, and an effort to install new historic markers should be supported, such as including a tourism marketing person on the commission.	Historian, HTG	2015	TMA, TPG
8	Interpretation	Develop regional interpretation themes, such as UGRR, early film, early aviation, etc.	Early exploration of partnerships with attractions in other communities to develop regional interpretation themes for UGRR, early film, and early aviation, to possibly include regional trails and/or regional tourism marketing partnerships.	HTG	2017	NYS, TPG, TMA
9	Capacity	Launch an ongoing Tompkins County Heritage Tourism Group (HTG).	The History Center will lead an ongoing Heritage Tourism Group, grown out of the development of this Heritage Tourism Implementation Plan, to encourage cooperation among heritage organizations, pursue emerging opportunities and support existing efforts. The group will also revisit this plan after two years for possible updates.	THC, HI, Historian, CU and IC faculty, CAP, CVB, TCPD, FLTT	2015	n/a
10	Capacity	Develop Heritage Tourism Public Programs and Outreach Coordinator position(s) at THC and HI.	The History Center and Historic Ithaca have each applied for support from New York State through the 2015 CFA to establish new outreach positions. These new staff positions would grow our community's capacity to advance a number of actions in this plan and develop new marketing and public outreach platforms for heritage tourism.	THC, HI	2015	NYS
11	Capacity	Provide tourism training and technical assistance for heritage professionals and heritage training for tourism professionals.	The CVB will offer guidance to heritage professionals on best practices and tools for tourism marketing and, as part of the Hospitality Star program or workshops, offer training on how to be a tourism ambassador. The History Center will explore the establishment of a training resource on local heritage for professionals who engage with visitors.	CVB, THC, HI, WIB	2017	Existing Programs?
12	Capacity	Organize a heritage tourism exchange.	Organize a heritage tourism exchange between Ithaca/Tompkins County and one or more communities from whom we can learn, and vice-versa. The idea is that a team from here would visit Saratoga Springs or other community with heritage tourism lens and provide feedback to that community and vice versa.	THC, HTG	2017	
13	Capacity	Assist in integrating heritage themes and activities into events and tourism projects.	Using tourism grant programs as leverage and technical assistance resources, encourage integration of heritage themes and activities into existing and new events and tourism projects.	TCPD, HTG	2016	n/a
14	Marketing	Develop a framework and preliminary content for a website to promote heritage tourism attractions and experiences.	With guidance from the CVB, develop a website or unique content for visitithaca.com to promote the community's heritage tourism offerings; incorporate Uniquely NY videos and digital map-based tours to be developed as an earlier action in this plan; and submit a CFA application to Market NY when the other goals are further along.	THC	2017	NYS, NTI, TMA

15	Marketing	Explore the creation of a 'Heritage Ambassadors' program.	A training and volunteer program could be established by The History Center to train local individuals such as retirees and students with an interest in local history to become Heritage Ambassadors. Heritage Ambassadors could greet visitors at the new Heritage Center and other heritage sites, lead walking tours, and promote local history in a variety of other formats.	THC, HI	2017	THC, HI
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*Organization and Funding Key

CAP	Community Arts Partnership
CCETC	Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County
Chamber	Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce
CVB	Ithaca Tompkins County Convention and Visitors Bureau
GIAC	Greater Ithaca Activities Center
HI	Historic Ithaca
Historian	Tompkins County Historian
HTG	Tompkins County Heritage Tourism Group
NEH	National Endowment for the Humanities
NTI	New Tourism Initiative Grant
NYS	New York State
PAC	City of Ithaca Public Art Commission
SSCC	Southside Community Center
STI	Strategic Tourism Implementation Grant
STPB	Strategic Tourism Planning Board
TCG	Tourism Capital Grant
TCPD	Tompkins County Planning Department
TCTP	Tompkins County Tourism Program
THC	The History Center
TMA	Tourism Marketing and Advertising Grant
TPG	Tourism Project Grant

End Notes

ⁱⁱ National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2008; <http://culturalheritagetourism.org/howToGetStarted.htm>

ⁱⁱⁱ 2013 Cultural and Heritage Traveler Report

^{iv} Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor ECONOMIC IMPACT REPORT– EAST REGION CASE STUDY
http://www.eriecanalway.org/documents/EconomicImpactReport_final_ECNHC_072610.pdf