

Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board

November 20, 2013
3:00 pm – 4:45 pm
Reception 4:45 – 5:15
CVB

Meeting Agenda	Minutes
1) October STPB Meeting Minutes	3 minutes
• ACTION – Approve Meeting Minutes	
2) Privilege of the Floor	3 minutes
3) Chair’s REPORT – Rick Adie	5 minutes
4) Nominating Committee REPORT – slate of 2014 officers	3 minutes
5) Online grant management system	10 minutes
• ACTION – Vote on recommendation of Grant Committee Chairs	
6) Ticket Center Ithaca Closure – responding to CAP’s request for support	10 minutes
• ACTION – Recommend budget reallocation	
7) Planning and Evaluation Committee	20 minutes
• REPORT – Ken Jupiter, Tom Knipe	
• ACTIONS – Vote to accept report. Vote to approve recommended actions.	
8) STPB process improvement – Ethan Ash	15 minutes
• Presentation and discussion	
9) AirBnB – Update about AirBnB and room tax	5 minutes
10) CVB Report – Bruce Stoff	15 minutes
• B.A.S.S. tournament report and discussion	
11) Tompkins County Wayfinding Strategy – Laurene Gilbert, Tom Knipe, Jean McPheeters	
• Presentation	15 minutes

Reception to follow – 4:45pm – 5:15pm - Thank you outgoing STPB members!

Agenda Packet

- Draft October Meeting Minutes
- Memo - Ticket Center Ithaca Closure Response
- Report – 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan Implementation Status

Next Meetings

January 15, 2014

STPB is not schedule to meet in December



MISSION:

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

**Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB)
DRAFT Meeting Minutes – October 2013**

1 **Date:** October 16, 2013
 2 **Time:** 3:00-5:00pm
 3 **Location:** Convention and Visitor's Bureau
 4
 5

Attendees:

Name	✓	Representation	Name	✓	Representation
Anne Kellerman	✓	At-Large	Mike Mellor	✓	At-Large
Anthony Hopson	✓	Ithaca College	Susie Monagan	E	Arts-Culture
Christy Agnese	✓	At-Large			
Ethan Ash	✓	Arts-Culture	<i>John Spence</i>	✓	<i>CAP, Non-Voting</i>
Gary Stewart		Cornell	<i>Bruce Stoff</i>	✓	<i>CVB, Non-Voting</i>
Jon Reis	✓	Arts-Culture	<i>Dwight Mengel</i>	✓	<i>Transportation, Non-Voting</i>
Miriam Musco	E	At-Large	<i>Gary Ferguson</i>	✓	<i>DIA, Non-Voting</i>
Paul Tatar	✓	Recreation	<i>Jean McPheeters</i>	✓	<i>Chamber, Non-Voting</i>
Rick Adie	✓	Lodging	<i>Martha Armstrong</i>	✓	<i>TCAD, Non-Voting</i>
Rita Rosenberg	E	Agriculture	<i>Will Burbank</i>	✓	<i>TC Legislature, Non-Voting</i>
Scott Wiggins		Lodging	<i>Anne Gossen</i>		<i>Associate Member</i>
Stephen Nunley	✓	At-Large	<i>Beverly Baker</i>		<i>Associate Member</i>
Steve Hugo	✓	At-Large	<i>Ken Jupiter</i>		<i>Associate Member</i>
Stuart Stein	✓	At-Large	<i>Tiffany Gallagher</i>	✓	<i>Associate Member</i>
Sue Perlgut	✓	Arts-Culture			
Sue Stafford	✓	TC3	Tom Knipe	✓	Staff

7

8 **Also in attendance:** Dan Klein, Ronda Roaring (ilovethefingerlakes.com), Brandon Seager, Instructor of
 9 Wine Marketing at TC3, and Mary Lou Szabol (Tompkins County Planning Dept.)

10
 11 **Agenda**

- 12 Approval of minutes for September, 2013 STPB meeting
- 13 Chair's Report
- 14 Privilege of the Floor
- 15 Fall 2013 Tourism Grants
- 16 Tourism Partner Award Recommendations
- 17 Membership & Bylaws Committee Report
- 18 Beautification Program Annual Report
- 19 Ticket Center Ithaca Report
- 20 TC3 Culinary Tourism Initiative Presentation
- 21 Room Tax Revenues Report
- 22 AirBnB Report
- 23 Member Items
- 24 Announcements

25
 26 **Discussion**

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

28
 29 **September 2013 minutes were approved** unanimously without change.

30
 31 **Chair's Report** – Rick turned the floor over to Jean McPheeters. Jean announced that Bruce Stoff has
 32 been appointed as the new CVB Director.

33
 34 **Fall 2013 Tourism Grants** – Jon Reis reported on the New Tourism Initiative Grants. Jon discussed the
 35 merits of each applicant, amounts requested, amounts received and the decision process. The impact of
 36 each event was discussed by reviewing different aspects including number of participants, disposable
 37 income, room nights, seasonal tie-ins, destination events, underdeveloped demographics, sports/
 38 adventure tourism, and local government support.

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39 Ethan Ash reported on the Tourism Marketing and Advertising Grants. Funding for The Cayuga Lake Wine
40 Trail Annual Wine and Herb Festival supports agritourism, but funding is contingent on demonstration of
41 formal partnership/ package with Tompkins County hotels. PRI/ Museum of the Earth's event, 2014 Family
42 Fun with Dr. Scott from PBS's Dinosaur Train, has the potential to draw daytrippers and supports the
43 merger of the Museum and Cayuga Nature Center. Package development with Tompkins County hotels for
44 overnights is encouraged. Funding is contingent on more detailed marketing budget information.
45 Motion to approve funding of \$10,040 for Fall 2013 NTI grants (individual amounts as recommended by the
46 committee in the agenda packet) by Steve Hugo, seconded by Paul, and approved unanimously. Motion to
47 approve funding of \$13,174 for TMA (individual amounts as recommended by the committee in the agenda
48 packet) by Christy, seconded by Sue Perlgut, and approved unanimously.
49

50 Sue Perlgut reported for Carol Kammen on the Community Celebrations Grants. Sue discussed different
51 reasons for granting funding such as a historical/ cultural aspect, event in Groton (outside of Ithaca).
52 Motion to approve funding of \$7,475 for Community Celebrations (individual amounts as recommended by
53 the committee in the agenda packet) by Anthony, seconded by Sue Stafford, and approved unanimously.
54

55 **2013 Tourism Partner Awards** – Rick Adie reported on the Tourism Partner Awards. Nominated are the
56 NYS Veterinary Conference and the HEDW Conference. Motion to approve by Paul Tatar, seconded by
57 Stu Stein, and approved unanimously.
58

59 **Membership Committee** – Sue Perlgut reported that 5 people applied for 4 available seats. Ken Jupiter is
60 recommended for an At-Large seat, Anne Gossen for an Arts/ Culture seat, Lynnette Scofield for a Lodging
61 seat, and Ian Golden for a Recreation seat. Andy Zepp will be asked to do something specific for the
62 board. Ethan Ash, Mike Mellor, and Christy Agnese are recommended to continue to serve in their
63 respective seats and John Gutenberger will fill the Cornell University seat. Jon Reis has been appointed by
64 the Chair, as an Associate Member. Recommendation to send the slate of new appointments to the EDC
65 motioned by Ethan Ash, seconded by Sue Stafford and approved unanimously. Recommendation to send
66 the slate of returning members motioned by Steve Nunley, seconded by Paul Tatar, and approved
67 unanimously.
68

69 **Beautification Program** – Jean McPheeters gave an update on the Beautification Program. Jean applied
70 and received a grant for Wayfinding. Lauren Gilbert, a retired Cornell employee who worked in planning
71 and also has a background in Landscape Architecture, was hired as the Wayfinding Coordinator and peter
72 j. smith & company, in Buffalo, has been hired as consultant. They will be facilitating an evening public
73 meeting on 11/7/13 at the Public Library, notices will be sent. A countywide plan will be created to
74 determine what types of signs should be placed in certain locations and a list of where signs are needed.
75

76 Dan Klein presented a slide show of plantings in various locations around the city. He spoke about the
77 progress of previous plantings and also new plantings. Moveable wooden planters were constructed with
78 the assistance of students from BOCES and are being used successfully on the Commons and can be
79 used in other locations as well.
80

81 Jean and Dan also mentioned rural grants to towns – towns appreciate the funds. Rick added that the
82 results are fantastic and noticed by the tourists as they travel around. The volunteers' efforts are great and
83 a story should go out.
84

85 **Ticket Center Ithaca** – John Spence reported that the Ticket Center was closed as of Saturday 10/14/13.
86 The final deal with Tickets.com got us out of the remaining 4 years at \$50,000/year, this went away entirely.
87 So, CAP owed \$37,500 for 2013, which was reduced to \$25,000 by deducting CAP's first quarter payment
88 and then (with the return of equipment - scanners and chargers) to \$18,500. The remaining \$18,500 was
89 paid by check last Friday, 10/11/13 from CAP reserves.
90

91 CAP Bookkeeper prepared a Profit/ Loss Statement that estimates a loss at year-end of \$16,800 for rent,
92 supplies, and staff plus the \$18,500 for a total loss of \$35,300. This is on top of the \$33,000 that CAP
93 spent on subsidizing the Ticket Center during the past 5 years. Reports are being produced for Ithaca
94 College on ticket sales as well as for Hangar Theatre. Cayuga Chamber Orchestra has moved over to
95 Brown Bag Ticketing. The message that the Ticket Center is closed has appeared in the Ithaca Journal.

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96 The Ticket Center's phone line is operative through November. Update on the space requested by Rick
97 Adie – ongoing conversation, CAP is broke, looking for help with rent for space shared with Visitors Center
98 and the Gallery. Spoke with Frost Travis, the landlord, who requested a proposal. People are interested in
99 seeing the Gallery continue. CAP may be able to generate funds to help pay the \$2100 monthly rent by
100 charging artists fees, group shows, and a variety of photography/ landscapes to sell. Conversation is
101 ongoing and proposal will be sent to the landlord. CAP should not invest a lot of money in the space and
102 discuss a month by month basis with landlord. Rick commended John for a masterful job of taking a
103 \$250,000 liability and bringing it down to \$35,300. Tom Knipe agreed with Rick on John's accomplishment.
104 We don't have the perfect solution yet on the remaining CAP debt. Small brainstorming last week with
105 county personnel. The County will work with STPB to evaluate options for helping ease the financial blow to
106 CAP. Any budget reallocation would come back to the STPB.
107

108 **TC3 Culinary Tourism Initiative** – Sue Stafford introduced Brandon Seager, Instructor of Wine Marketing.
109 TC3 did an enrollment market analysis which showed that there's a great need and interest in Hospitality
110 Management. There are about 100 students in the program and TC3 has an International Hospitality
111 Certificate in the Study Abroad program and a Wine Marketing Certificate. TC3 is adding 2 new programs:
112 Sustainable Farming & Food Systems A.A.S. and Culinary Arts A.A.S. and will begin in the Fall of 2014. Sue
113 discussed 3 required courses that speak to the strategic plans of STPB. These courses will talk about food
114 distribution, food sovereignty, farmer's markets, local and global distribution; all of which are very important
115 in Tompkins County.
116

117 New initiative is called "Farm to Bistro". TC3 has purchased 43 acres next door to the main campus, will
118 hire a farm manager, and grow vegetables, fruit, and herbs for the students' dining facility. The organic farm
119 will be off the grid and funded by a NYSEDA grant. It will involve the college's entrepreneurship program,
120 as well as business, biology and environmental science students. All participants will learn in this "Living
121 Lab".
122

123 COLTIVARE – Italian word for cultivate - global as the world, local as our food; the Culinary Center will
124 include the following: an 1800 sq. ft. kitchen teaching lab, production kitchen, wine tasting room, meeting
125 space to accommodate 120-200 people. The space will be a showstopper on the corner of Cayuga Street;
126 construction will begin in the first quarter of 2014. Sue thanked the board for their letters of support.
127

128 **Room Tax Revenues Report** – Tom Knipe reported that revenues were good for 3rd Quarter 2013, up
129 4.2% over 3rd Quarter 2012, YTD is up 2.9% over last year at this time. Goal for the year was set at 3%
130 and will be exceeded (3.25%) if we have the same results in 4th Quarter as in 3rd Quarter. Rick added that
131 October is usually one of the best months for hospitality. There were no rooms available within 30 miles of
132 Ithaca this past weekend, Oct. 11-13, Ithaca College Homecoming/ Alumni Weekend.
133

134 **AirBnB** – Tom Knipe reported on the website AirBnB and the concerns that some of the owners of the
135 listed rentals are not registered and paying the Hotel Room Occupancy Tax. County Finance received a
136 letter last month from the President of the local BnB Association; they were paying but protesting the
137 negative impact of the rapid growth of AirBnB on their business; members of the Association are registering
138 and following the local laws. The County's response has been to clearly articulate which types of properties
139 and stays are subject to the room tax law, and this has to do with the definition of a "hotel" in the room tax
140 law. The County is working to reach out to the community at large about the room tax law as well as to
141 AirBnB hosts who may not be registered (with CVB assistance), and to make it easier to register.
142

143 With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:03 PM.
144

145 Respectfully Submitted,
146 Mary Lou Szabol, Administrative Assistant
147 Tompkins County Planning Department
148

149 Approved by STPB on _____, 2013
150

151 **Next Meeting Scheduled**
152 Wednesday, November 20 – 3pm



Tompkins County
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

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

121 East Court Street
Ithaca, New York 14850

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

TO: Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB)
FROM: Tom Knipe, Senior Planner / Tourism Coordinator
CC: John Spence, Joe Mareane, Will Burbank, Doug Levine, Rachel Lampert
DATE: November 19, 2013
RE: **Proposed 2013 Room Tax Budget Reallocation of \$24,324 from the Arts & Culture Organizational Development (ACOD) Program to Ticket Center Ithaca**

Action Requested

STPB is asked to recommend a 2013 budget reallocation of \$24,324 from the ACOD Program to CAP/Ticket Center. This recommendation has been reviewed and approved by the STPB Budget Committee and is now forwarded for consideration by the full STPB.

Background

Ticket Center Closure: Due to changes in the cost and functionality of ticketing software and a financial shortfall precipitated by the departure of two Tier I clients, the Community Arts Partnership (CAP) closed Ticket Center Ithaca on October 12th, 2013. CAP's Director John Spence has shared the final financial impact of the closure of the Ticket Center on CAP (\$36,379 estimated 2013 loss) and made a specific request for additional County support (\$30,000 - see attached letter). This estimate includes a successfully negotiated final payment to Tickets.com of \$18,500 which is more than \$100,000 less than CAP's contracted liability to Tickets.com.

Despite difficult circumstances, the discussion amongst users of the Ticket Center and other partners around the closure of the Ticket Center has been characterized by a collaborative spirit in which all parties recognize that the impact of the closure of the Ticket Center should be shared to minimize damage to any one organization. The three parties whose actions have most directly led to the closure of the Ticket Center (notwithstanding external factors such as technological changes and possible shortcomings of the software vendor) are CAP, the State Theatre and the Kitchen Theatre. It is appropriate that each of the three organizations share a role in covering Ticket Center losses.

ACOD Eligibility: The Arts and Culture Organizational Development grant program has consistently maintained a requirement for all performing arts organizations receiving ACOD funds to use Ticket Center Ithaca. It has been determined that The State Theatre ceased its use of the Ticket Center by July 1, 2013 and therefore is ineligible to receive ACOD funding for 1/2 of 2013 (\$11,887 of a \$23,774 award). The Kitchen Theatre ceased using the Ticket Center on September 1, 2013 and therefore is ineligible to receive ACOD funding for 1/3 of 2013 funding (\$9,000 of a \$27,000 award).

In order to minimize damage to the Kitchen Theatre – with whom the County has a three year award agreement for 2013-2015 – the Kitchen Theatre will be allowed to space its \$9,000 payment reduction over several payments. Specifically, their 2013 award will be reduced by \$5,000 and their 2014 award will be reduced by \$4,000. As the State Theatre is at the end of its three-year award agreement at the end of 2013, a similar flexible arrangement is not possible for the State Theatre. However, beginning January 1, 2014 the eligibility requirement for performing arts organizations who receive ACOD funds to use the Ticket Center will be removed, as the Ticket Center will no longer exist and major Ticket Center financial liabilities will have been addressed. Thus, the State Theatre will be eligible to apply for a new ACOD grant in 2014.

Tourism Program Role and Financial Solution: As a key funder of tourism-related activities and investor in the Ticket Center, the County can play a role in allowing a smooth transition to occur. The County's financial support for the Ticket Center (\$460,820 in room tax funds between 1997 and 2013, or \$27,000 per year on average over 17 years) was predicated on increasing visitor access to performance art experiences and enhancing our ability to collectively market our community as a performing arts destination. Access to ticketing in one location also benefited local residents.

The County's support for the Ticket Center was also a means of supporting the overall development and financial health of local performing arts organizations by reducing the cost to any one organization of purchasing and servicing a ticketing system. By strengthening our arts organizations overall, we further strengthened our performing arts tourism product. The Ticket Center served these interests for a period of time, but it was never self-funded as was hoped, and the primary clients raised ongoing concerns about the quality and cost of the service. And the business of ticketing has changed so that ticketing venues can now successfully provide independently for their ticketing needs.

The recommended financial solution consists of a reallocation of available 2013 ACOD funds to the Ticket Center, which include:

- \$5,000 - Kitchen Theatre 2013 ACOD grant payment reduction
- \$11,887 - State Theatre 2013 ACOD grant payment reduction
- \$7,437 - Allocated, unspent ACOD amount from 2012 reallocated to 2013 ACOD budget but for which there is no current planned use.
- **TOTAL: \$24,324** - proposed 2013 reallocation from ACOD to CAP-Ticket Center

This would bring CAP's loss down from \$36,379 to \$12,055 for 2013. This is slightly more than the State and Kitchen are each being asked to contribute, but a sum that CAP can most likely absorb without damaging core programming. This is also a solution that the Tourism Program can support without drawing funds from limited reserves or other programs. The \$4,000 by which the Kitchen Theatre will have their payments reduced in 2014 will become available for other purposes within the ACOD program in 2014.

Downtown Visitors Center Impact: The CVB has stepped up to provide limited financial support to CAP in 2013 for CAP to maintain its lease on the shared Ticket Center/Downtown Visitors Center space. At this time, it is not expected that the CVB will require additional financial support in 2013 or 2014 from the Tompkins County Tourism Program to maintain a presence, in the short term, in the Downtown Visitors Center space. This is something that the CVB and its partners will be working on

and reporting on in 2014, as CAP intends to relinquish the space in 2014 and it is clear that the CVB does not require the full square footage to maintain an effective downtown visitors center presence.

2014 Budget Considerations: This approach will free up the 2014 CAP-Ticket Center room tax allocation of \$21,755 for other tourism investments. Choices which were articulated as possible priorities by the STPB during the 2014 budget process this past summer are strategic tourism implementation, more money into the competitive grants, or room tax reserve replenishment. The STPB budget committee will need to take this up in early 2014.

In addition, in 2014 CAP will deconstruct the closure of the Ticket Center for lessons learned for the STPB and staff, and report to the STPB.

Finally, with Ticket Center challenges behind us, the performing arts community and tourism partners can consider new collaborative and individual efforts to promote and strengthen the performing arts in Tompkins County.

Budget Implications

The recommended budget reallocation is contained entirely within the 2013 Tompkins County Tourism Program budget and is a straight reallocation from one program to another within the Tourism Program budget, which is funded by Tompkins County hotel room occupancy tax. The proposed reallocation will increase the total 2013 Tourism Program/room tax contribution to Ticket Center Ithaca from \$21,755 to \$46,079 and decrease the Tourism Program/room tax contribution to the ACOD program from the modified 2013 budget amount of \$208,210 to \$183,886.

Contact Information

Tom Knipe, Tompkins County Planning Department, 607-274-5560
John Spence, Community Arts Partnership, 607-273-5072

Attachment:

- CAP Request – 11/4 Letter from John Spence to Tom Knipe



11.4.13

Tom Knipe
Senior Planner /Tourism Coordinator
T.C. Planning Department
121 E. Court St.
Ithaca, NY 14850

Tom,

As requested, I am documenting the financial impact of the Ticket Center (TC) on the Community Arts Partnership (CAP) with a request for assistance in mitigating our losses. While CAP's role and responsibility in the Ticket Center's difficulties should not be minimized, I would hope that all would agree that other organizations played a part in the collapse of the TC's business model as well. Your stated principle, that "no one organization should be harmed as we try to untangle ourselves collectively from Tickets.com" was motivating, and greatly appreciated, as I sought a final solution.

I am providing the following documentation:

- Evidence of CAP's subsidizing the Ticket Center over the last five years. -\$33,113
- A profit and loss statement detailing the losses specific to 2013 -\$42,679.41
- A copy of the termination agreement between CAP and Tickets.com -\$18,500

While the losses over the last five years and the termination agreement are straight forward, the P&L statement requires some explanation.

- We closed the Ticket Center on October 12th but there were costs that extended beyond that date such as retaining one staff to finalize reports for the theaters. Those cost are presented in the column "est".
- The final number of -\$42,679.41 includes the one-time payment of \$18,500 to Tickets.com. It also includes \$6,300 in rent and utilities for October, November and December. CAP has not, and will not be in a position to pay rent and utilities for the last quarter of 2013. We are working with the Convention & Visitor's Bureau & the landlord to reach an agreeable solution to the rent for the end of this year.

Disregarding the combined subsidies from the last five years and this quarter's rent and utilities, the loss to CAP's operating budget for 2013 is -\$36,379.41 I am requesting \$30,000 from the ACOD program, or other appropriate sources, rebuild CAP's diminished reserves.

Thank you Tom for your thoughtful assistance through this difficult transition.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'John Spence', with a long, sweeping underline.

John Spence
Executive Director
Community Arts Partnership

John H. Dietershagen, C.P.A.
 Jerry E. Mickelson, C.P.A.
 Thomas K. Van Derzee, C.P.A.
 Debbie Conley Jordan, C.P.A.
 Patrick S. Jordan, C.P.A.
 Duane R. Shoen, C.P.A.
 Lesley L. Horner, C.P.A.
 D. Leslie Spurgin, C.P.A.



**Ciaschi • Dietershagen • Little • Mickelson
 & Company, LLP**

Certified Public Accountants and Consultants

Frederick J. Ciaschi, C.P.A.

MANAGEMENT COMMENT LETTER

Mr. Brett Bossard, Executive Director
 Community Arts Partnership
 of Tompkins County, Inc.
 Ithaca, New York

In planning and performing our audit of the financial statements of Community Arts Partnership of Tompkins County, Inc. (CAP) as of and for the year ended December 31, 2012, in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, we considered CAP's internal control over financial reporting (internal control) as a basis for designing our auditing procedures for the purpose of expressing our opinion on the financial statements, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of CAP's internal control. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on the effectiveness of CAP's internal control.

A deficiency in internal control exists when the design or operation of a control does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent, or detect and correct misstatements on a timely basis. A material weakness is a deficiency, or combination of deficiencies, in internal control, such that there is a reasonable possibility that a material misstatement of CAP's financial statements will not be prevented, or detected and corrected on a timely basis.

Our consideration of internal control was for the limited purpose described in the first paragraph and was not designed to identify all deficiencies in internal control that might be significant deficiencies or material weaknesses and, therefore, there can be no assurance that all such deficiencies have been identified. We did not identify any deficiencies in internal control that we consider to be material weaknesses.

This letter summarizes our recurring comment. This letter does not affect our report dated July 1, 2013, on the financial statements of CAP.

OTHER MATTER

Ticket Center

Finding:

During our current and prior year audits, we noted in many of the past several years the Ticket Center has ended the year with a net loss, steadily increasing the net deficit of this operation. Below is a summary of net budget to net activity and ending net deficit for the past five years:

	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
Net Budgeted Income (Loss)	\$ 6,284	\$ 4,581	\$ 1,311	\$ 5,474	\$ 1,679
Net Operating Income (Loss)	\$ 2,569	\$ (13,136)	\$ 10,088	\$ (18,078)	\$ (14,539)
Net (Deficit)	\$ (33,113)	\$ (35,682)	\$ (22,546)	\$ (32,634)	\$ (14,556)

CORTLAND

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 Cortland, New York 13045
 607-753-7439
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ITHACA

401 East State Street ~ Suite 500
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WATKINS GLEN

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 607-535-4443
 fax 607-535-6220

The Ticket Center did show operating income in 2012 and 2010. In 2010, a special allotment from the County Tourism program was included in ticket center operations. In addition, during 2012 and 2010, CAP changed the way ticket fees were charged to the various users. Finally, the addition of the State Theater in 2012 resulted in significant increases in ticket volume and fees.

Recommendation:

We recommend CAP continue to monitor Ticket Center expenses and revenues in order to eliminate the current net deficit and bring the Ticket Center into the black. While there was net operating income in 2012, the overall net deficit is still significant.

We will review the status of this comment during our next audit engagement. Our comment and recommendation is intended to improve the internal control structure or result in other operating efficiencies. We would be pleased to discuss this comment in further detail at your convenience, to perform additional study of this matter, or to assist you in implementing the recommendation.

We would like to thank you for the cooperation and support given to us during the course of the audit. We appreciate the opportunity to be of service to you and look forward to our continued involvement.

This communication is intended solely for the information and use of the Board of Directors and management of Community Arts Partnership of Tompkins County, Inc. and is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than these specified parties.

Cianchi, Nutcracker, Little Mermaid, & Company, LLP

July 1, 2013
Ithaca, New York

Accrual Basis	thru mid-Oct	est	total		
		thru 2013			
7076 · Ticket Center Income					
6025tc · TomCnty Inc- Tick Cent	21,755.00				
7010tc · Convention Vis Bureau Rent	11,670.00				
7021tc · Registration Income	380.00				
7022tc · CreditCard Trans Fees	21,164.96				
7023tc · Cash Over/Short	15.59				
7026tc · Ticket Fee (customer)					
7026x · Tic Fee/CC charge 2.8%	81.78				
Total 7026tc · Ticket Fee (customer)	60,194.03				
7027a · Late fees on Tier 1 payments	33.33				
7027b · BO staffing fee	125.00				
7040 · Phone Service Charge					
Total 7040 · Phone Svc Charge(per or	17,153.55				
7050tc · Misc Income TC	0.49				
Total 7076 · Ticket Center Income	132,573.73	0.00			
8376 · Ticket Center Expense					
8020tc · audittc	1,500.00				
8030 · Credit Card Trans Fee Expense	23,806.57				
8040tc · Bank Charges-TC	69.88				
8090tc · Equipment-TC	1,704.00				
8100tc · Health Ins/Fringe ben.TC	8,098.97	1,400.00			
8160tc · Office Exp TC	274.32				
8175 · Tickets.com Support	31,000.00			<<included 18500 T.com	
8176 · Ticket Stock	2,090.21				
8180tc · Postage Exp tc	274.00				
8190tc · Print/Copy TC	1,638.83	200.00			
8210tc · Rent-TC	18,055.00	5,490.00			
8220tc · salary TC	59,567.18	2,500.00			
8221tc · P/R taxes-Fica employer TC	5,457.55	5,000.00			
8225-tc · Professional Development	1,000.00				
8240tc · Telephone-TC	2,030.03	200.00			
8260tc · utilities	2,716.01	810.00			
8350tc · Misc Ticket Center	370.59				
Total 8376 · Ticket Center Expense	159,653.14	15,600.00			
Net Income	-27,079.41	-15,600.00	-42,679.41		
			18,500.00	<<tic.com	
			6,300.00	<<rent/util	
			-17,879.41		

Tompkins County

2020 Strategic Tourism Plan

Implementation Status Report

To: Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB)

Author: Tom Knipe, Senior Planner / Tourism Coordinator

Date: 11/6/2013

Reporting Period:

From: 9/18/2012

To: 9/18/2013

Version: 3

Status of this Report: Under Review

The Planning and Evaluation (P&E) Committee of the STPB has approved this report. It is slated for discussion and action at the 11/20/13 STPB meeting.

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to update the Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB) on the status of implementation of The Tompkins County 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan, and to support the STPB in identifying areas which may benefit from special board action in 2014. The Plan offers a shared vision for our community-based model of tourism development in Tompkins County and articulates policies, goals and critical actions to help us achieve that shared vision. This report is organized by the fifteen focus areas identified in the Plan and covers each of the 37 critical actions. A five page executive summary precedes the longer main report.

A link to the Tompkins County 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan may be found at:
www.tompkinscountyny.gov/tourism

Executive Summary

The Tompkins County 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan was completed in September 2012. One year later, of the 37 critical actions identified in the Plan, 27 are *On Plan*, meaning we are on track so far to complete the actions within the designated timeframe, and 10 are *Off Plan*. Most of those which are *Off Plan* are *Off Plan with Minor Impact*. Two are *Off Plan with Moderate Impact*, and one – the Critical Action to support the Finger Lakes Wine Center – is *Off Plan with Serious Impact*. A table following this executive summary gives a snapshot of the status of Critical Actions.

12-month implementation highlights

The Tompkins County Tourism Program has funded three new significant projects to directly implement critical actions in the Plan through one-time Strategic Tourism Implementation grant funding: 1) visitor amenities on the Ithaca Commons, 2) a wayfinding system plan, and 3) a new Farm to Table Culinary Tourism Initiative. The Planning Department with its partners will complete work this fall on the Cayuga Lake Blueway Trail Plan and County Priority Trails Strategy. Several new tourism initiatives have been funded through tourism grants, and the Tourism Program has applied for and helped acquire state and federal grant funding for a number of tourism-related projects in the community.

Much has been accomplished, and yet we can catalyze STPB support to go faster, further.

Focus areas that would benefit from special STPB action in 2014

Strategic thinking and planning are at the core of an effective board. Thus an effective role for STPB is to focus energy on areas of *Opportunity* or *Setback*; whereas areas that are humming along with the efforts of existing programs require less board focus. Four special STPB actions are recommended for 2014.

Agriculture and Culinary Tourism - *Setback* and *Opportunity*. The closure of the Finger Lakes Wine Center represents a major setback to the Plan. The new TC3 Culinary Center and the general growth in farm to table experiences and initiatives represent a major opportunity.

STPB Action #1 - Deconstruct the failure of the Finger Lakes Wine Center for lessons learned for the STPB and staff. An initial investigation will be conducted by County staff, to be followed by STPB review.

STPB Action #2 – Convene Ag & Culinary Tourism Working Group beginning in mid-2014 to develop a five-year culinary tourism strategy and implementation plan.

Arts, Culture and Heritage Tourism - *Opportunity*. Major community arts and culture organizations continue to develop themselves into tourism attractions, but there are under-tapped opportunities to develop and promote heritage tourism.

STPB Action #3: Convene Heritage Tourism Working Group to encourage implementation of heritage tourism related actions articulated in the Plan.

Town Gown – *Opportunity*. The rescue of the Highway School is a recent success made possible by strong town-gown cooperation, but no specific progress has been made to date on the critical actions in this focus area of the Plan. Given the importance of higher-education related trips and need for a champion, this will be a key area for STPB focus.

STPB Action #4: Convene a Higher Ed Tourism Working Group with a proposed specific focus/charge in 2014 of increasing the presence of visitor information about the community to campus visitors and increasing the presence of campus information to general community visitors. Once underway, working group members will primarily consist of boots-on-the-ground staff people, with engagement and support from STPB higher-education representatives and other STPB members. A first meeting will be held by early 2014 and focus on Ideation - clearly articulating desired outcomes, participants and process for the new working group to ensure success.

Focus areas for special staff action and reporting to the STPB in 2014

Two focus areas which would benefit from special staff action in 2014 have been identified. They are distinct from those identified above for special STPB action in that program staff will take the primary role and report to STPB.

Arts, Culture and Heritage Tourism – *Setback and Opportunity*. The closing of Ticket Center Ithaca in October, 2013 may represent both a setback and opportunity surrounding visitor access to local performing arts experiences. Also, IthacaEvents.com could be a major tool to advance tourism.

- CAP will deconstruct the closure of the Ticket Center for lessons learned for the STPB and staff, and report to the STPB.
- CAP and IthacaEvents.com stakeholders will work to optimize our community's online event calendar to drive tourism, and report to the STPB.

Festivals – *Opportunity*. The STPB Festivals Committee is currently exploring possible programmatic enhancements for STPB review.

- The DIA and Tourism Program staff will bring forward detailed recommendations for enhancements to the Tompkins Festivals Program to help achieve critical actions articulated in the Plan. The STPB Festivals Committee will help guide this work.

Focus areas not requiring special action by the STPB in 2014

Work is underway in these areas, action plans have been clearly articulated by lead organizations, or they are more medium or long-term actions. Specific projects within these focus areas may still very well be priorities for Tourism Program funding or staff work in 2014, and reports, funding requests and opportunities may be brought forward by staff and community partners in these areas. The distinction is that these focus areas can advance without special board action in 2014.

- **Downtown Ithaca.** The Ithaca Commons project is moving ahead smoothly; visitor kiosks have been funded in part by a Strategic Tourism Implementation Grant.
- **Edutourism.** No clear action has been taken for this medium-term focus area, but CVB and Town-Gown group to provide focus beginning in 2015.
- **Lakes, Trails, Parks and Gorges.** Lots of ongoing Tourism Program activity related to trails, Stewart Park and water trail planning. STPB can help champion.
- **Sustainability Tourism.** *On Plan* as these are medium-term areas and activity is being encouraged. Special focus may be required beyond 12 months if no suitable projects come forward. Conferences and workshops on this subject may offer the biggest bang for buck.
- **Niche Tourism.** Many niche market initiatives have been supported through grants and the CVB is actively promoting themed group tours to niche audiences.

- **Sports Tourism.** TCPD and CVB are working on a partnership with Cortland County, and a handful of new sports tourism initiatives have been launched with grant support.
- **Beautification.** Wayfinding system plan is underway with Strategic Tourism Implementation Grant. Beautification plan is next in late 2014. Public art grant ideas are a possible focus for 2015.
- **Groups.** CVB has launched a new conference sales group to coordinate efforts with Directors of Sales of key conference hotels.
- **Marketing and Advertising.** CVB to provide renewed focus on implanting related critical actions.
- **Transportation.** Active TCPD and CVB conversation and partnership with TCAT.
- **Visitor Services.** A conversation has recently opened up with Cornell Visitor Services about stronger coordination. Hospitality training is ongoing.

Other means of implementing the plan

The four special STPB actions highlighted on the preceding page are not the Tourism Program’s exclusive means of implementing the Strategic Tourism Plan. The Plan is also being implemented through existing programs, and steps are being taken to best align these resources with the Plan. Examples include:

Existing grant programs – Capital, ACOD, TMA, TPG, NTI, Celebrations.

Steps: “Implementation of Strategic Tourism Plan” is now core to grant review process and grant evaluation. The ACOD grant program is being examined by CAP for possible expansion to other tourism-driving entities in the community.

Strategic Tourism Implementation Grant program - Funded at \$147,000 in 2013; no budget in 2014.
Step: STPB should consider restoring 2014 funding if reserves grow below floor.

Alignment of line-item budget resources - CVB, Beautification, CAP, Festivals, Discovery Trail, WIB, Market the Arts

Steps: Annual budget and contract administration processes have incorporated implementation of Strategic Tourism Plan as key consideration. Bruce Stoff, recently hired as CVB Director, and John Spence, recently hired as CAP Director, will be closely examining opportunities to implement the Plan.

Tourism Program staff – Tompkins County Planning Department Senior Planner / Tourism Coordinator

Step: A variety of types of support will continue to be provided - convening and facilitation, grant-making, planning, evaluation, technical assistance, pursuit of outside funding, and research.

Off Plan Status

Action Number	Description	Time Frame	Lead	Assessment
6	Inventory established but underutilized cultural assets	Short	CAP, CVB, DIA, TCPD	Off Plan - Minor Impact
18	Promote and develop Tompkins County as a destination for LGBT weddings	Short	CVB	Off Plan - Minor Impact
21	Formalize a public art grant program	Short	Chamber, TCPD	Off Plan - Minor Impact
25	Develop a new project to recruit higher ed meetings & conferences.	Short	CVB, Cornell, IC, TC3	Off Plan - Minor Impact
29	Target alumni media for editorial content.	Short	CVB	Off Plan - Minor Impact
31	Develop a tourism-higher ed working group	Short	CVB, TCPD, Cornell, IC, TC3	Off Plan - Minor Impact
35	Develop a strategy for providing more visitor information to campus visitors	Short	CVB, Cornell, IC, TC3	Off Plan - Minor Impact
23	Enhance visitor-oriented capabilities of IthacaEvents.com	Short	CAP, CVB	Off Plan - Moderate Impact
30	Enhance cross-promotion of Cornell, IC and TC3 based events	Short	CVB, Cornell, IC, TC3	Off Plan - Moderate Impact
3	Support the Finger Lakes Wine Center	Short	FLWC	Off Plan - Serious Impact

Ahead of Plan or On Plan Status

Action Number	Description	Time Frame	Lead	Assessment
7	Support the rebuilding of The Ithaca Commons with elements serving visitors	Medium	City of Ithaca, DIA	Ahead of Plan
1	Inventory local culinary tourism assets, assess best practices, and develop a five-year culinary tourism strategy and implementation plan	Short	CVB, CCETC, FLCB, TCPD	On Plan
2	Support existing collaborative agri- and culinary tourism marketing vehicles	Medium	CVB, TCPD	On Plan
4	Develop tours across multiple media of historic sites and themes	Medium	History Center, HI, CVB, City, DIA	On Plan
5	Support existing collaborative arts marketing vehicles, and develop new collaborative marketing platforms and programs for arts & cultural institutions.	Long	CAP, CVB	On Plan
8	Coordinate edutourism offerings with IC's and Cornell's large conferences	Medium	CVB, IC, Cornell, TC3	On Plan
9	Support the completion of priority multi-use trails and connections	Long	TCPD	On Plan
10	Complete and support implementation of the Cayuga Lake Blueway Trail Plan	Medium	TCPD	On Plan
11	Support the Stewart Park Rehabilitation Action Plan	Long	City of Ithaca, FOSP	On Plan
12	Create a comprehensive feasibility study and implementation strategy for attracting new sporting events and tournaments	Short	CVB	On Plan
13	Create a Sports Council	Medium	CVB	On Plan
14	Inventory Sustainability Tourism attractors and attractions and develop platforms to connect visitors to those entities	Medium	TCPD	On Plan
15	Develop a tourist oriented green business map	Medium	TCPD, CVB	On Plan
16	Provide education, coordination and marketing assistance to hotels and other tourism businesses to embrace green business practices	Medium	CVB, WIB	On Plan
17	Support the development of specialty festivals in the indoors in the winter.	Short	DIA, TCPD	On Plan
19	Write and implement a Tompkins County Beautification Plan	Short	Chamber, CCETC	On Plan
20	Create a wayfinding signage plan/system	Short	Chamber, TCPD	On Plan
22	Assist existing large festivals and events	Short	DIA, TCPD	On Plan
24	Conduct bi-annual "FAM" tour for Albany, NYC and targeted markets	Short	CVB	On Plan
26	Market themed international group travel.	Short	CVB	On Plan
27	Promote marketing coordination to facilitate innovative marketing partnerships.	Short	CVB	On Plan
28	Develop integrated geo-targeted niche campaigns	Medium	CVB	On Plan
32	Articulate and develop a system of tourist-oriented shuttles	Medium	CVB, TCPD, TCAT, Cornell, IC, TC3, DIA	On Plan
33	Plan and implement a visitor communications strategy for local transportation options to encourage parking and then using the bus, cycling and walking	Medium	CVB, TCPD, ITCTC	On Plan
34	Bundle TCAT bus access with hotels and offer tourist oriented bus passes.	Short	CVB, TCAT, TCPD	On Plan
36	Expand the presence of visitor information at key locations	Medium	CVB, CAP	On Plan
37	Develop our hospitality workforce	Short	WIB	On Plan

Detailed Critical Action Report

Established Focus Area: Agricultural and Culinary Tourism

Goal: *Develop Ithaca and Tompkins County as a regional hub of culinary and agritourism.*

Critical Actions:

	Description	Time Frame	Lead	Assessment
1	In cooperation with Finger Lakes Culinary Bounty, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and the Tompkins County Restaurant Association, inventory local culinary tourism assets, assess best practices for encouraging and marketing culinary tourism, and develop a five-year culinary tourism strategy and implementation plan.	Short	CCETC, Restaurant Association, Finger Lakes Culinary Bounty, TCPD	On Plan
2	Support existing collaborative agri- and culinary tourism marketing vehicles, such as the wine trails and the Finger Lakes Cheese Trail and develop new collaborative marketing platforms and programs for agricultural and culinary tourism (beer, CSAs, foodie tours, you-pick/farm experience, Farmers Markets).	Medium	CVB, TCPD	On Plan
3	Support the Finger Lakes Wine Center as a gateway to the Finger Lakes Wine Country.	Short	FLWC	Off Plan - Serious Impact

Critical Action #1

Progress to Date

The CVB received a \$54,000 Strategic Tourism Implementation Grant in early 2013 from the Tompkins County Tourism Program for the [Ithaca Farm to Table Culinary Tourism Initiative](#). The statement of work calls for this project to roll out in fall 2013 and spring 2014. The CVB is working this summer on brand identification, development of the marketing platforms, and identifying criteria for inclusion of restaurants and farms (with CCETC).

Roles in Supporting Implementation

- CVB is lead on the Culinary Tourism Initiative grant.
- TCPD Role: Grant administration; possibly research, facilitation, and writing of five-year implementation plan; possibly procure additional expert support on behalf of Tourism Program.
- STPB Role: Convene Ag & Culinary Tourism Working Group with STPB members and reps from lead organizations.
- Lead Organization(s) Role(s): Ad-hoc advisory group could author implementation plan.

Proposed Immediate Next Steps

The timeframe for implementation of this critical action should be modified to Medium. Our collective focus in 2013 and early 2014 should be on implementation of the Farm to Table Culinary Tourism Initiative, with CVB and CCETC as leads. Following launch of this Initiative, the STPB should consider convening an ad-hoc Ag and Culinary Tourism Working Group in mid-2014 to facilitate inventory, research, and implementation planning work.

Critical Action #2

Progress to Date

See above under #1. In addition, a Spring 2013 NTI Grant supported creation of a [Gardener's Trail](#) by CCETC to promote local nurseries, and TMA Grants to support Cayuga Lake Wine Trail and Restaurant Week. The CVB also received a state grant through the Fall 2012 CFA round for enhanced marketing, including an event, for the [Finger Lakes Beer Trail](#). Wine, Dine Stay and Play, a New Tourism Initiative project that was part of [Harvest Dinners](#) was supported in the past, but did not apply in the Spring 2013 round. Several culinary and agritourism related events have also applied for support through Community Celebrations grants, including the Food Justice Summit (supported), GadZukes! Zucchini Festival (supported), Enfield Harvest Festival (supported), Apples, Arts and Antiques (supported), Finger Lakes Wine & Tapas Showcase (no grant awarded), and Groundswell's Local Food and Farming Festival (no grant awarded).

Roles in Supporting Implementation

- TCPD Role: Grant administration. Enhanced marketing of existing trails and ag and culinary tourism products could be supported by Tourism Marketing and Advising Grant. Will require recruitment and encouragement of potential applicants.
- STPB Role: Working Group could play a role in identifying and encouraging undertapped opportunities.
- CVB role: support targeted marketing through coordination, appropriate investment of CVB marketing funds and technical assistance to partner organizations.
- Lead Organization(s) Role(s): Apply for tourism grants to implement projects.

Proposed Immediate Next Steps

Work with local organizations to encourage targeted, timely investments through grants as well as marketing collaboration with the CVB.

Critical Action #3

Progress to Date

The Finger Lakes Wine Center closed in late 2012 due to insufficient revenues to support operating costs and outstanding obligations, including, but not limited to a \$24,000 New Tourism Initiative Grant from Tompkins County that was used by the Wine Center for general operating support instead of the contracted project. The farm-winery license has been relinquished, and the landlord has possession of the space and is seeking new tenants. Between 2004 and 2011, the Tompkins County Tourism Program invested \$260,000 in the Wine Center.

A chance for the community to realize some of the value of this investment is to see TC3's proposed Farm to Bistro program be developed in the former Wine Center space and in the vacant space next to it on Cayuga St. This project is being spearheaded by the President of TC3 and by Sue Stafford, Chair of the Hospitality and Wine Marketing Program at TC3 and STPB Member. Tom Knipe, Vicki Taylor-Brous, and Rick Adie have served on TC3's community advisory committee for the project. I have also assisted TC3 in developing their sponsorship sales approach, and STPB supported TC3's application for a state grant through the 2013 New York State CFA grant round.

Proposed Immediate Next Steps

Analyze the failure of the Wine Center to extract possible lessons for the STPB and the Tourism Program. Remove Critical Action #3 from the plan. Use the activities under Critical Action #1 to consider means

other than the Finger Lakes Wine Center to promote Ithaca and Tompkins County as the southeastern gateway to Finger Lakes wine country.

Established Focus Area: Arts, Culture and Heritage Tourism

Goal: *Develop Ithaca and Tompkins County as a central arts, cultural and heritage tourism destination in the Finger Lakes.*

	Description	Time Frame	Lead	Assessment
4	Develop walking, cycling and driving tours across multiple media (brochures, online maps, apps, audio tours, etc) of historic sites; historic architecture; local and academic black history sites (including the Underground Railroad/Freedom Trail in Ithaca); Native American archaeological sites; local industrial history sites (airplanes, guns, typewriters, etc.); homes of local authors (e.g. Nabokov), artists, playwrights; etc.	Medium	History Center, Historic Ithaca, CVB, City of Ithaca, DIA	On Plan
5	Support existing collaborative arts marketing vehicles, and develop new collaborative marketing platforms and programs for arts & cultural institutions.	Long	CAP, CVB	On Plan
6	Inventory established but underutilized cultural assets such as the region’s cinema (historical and contemporary), specialty festivals, and music and develop targeted programs to expand and promote these.	Short	CAP, CVB, DIA, TCPD	Off Plan - Minor Impact

Critical Action #4

Progress to Date

The MLK Freedom Trail applied for, but did not receive, a Strategic Tourism Implementation Grant to develop an anchor sculpture, interpretive display, and collateral materials. Governor Cuomo’s Path Through History Project has rolled out since the adoption of the Plan. Tom Knipe, Fred Bonn, Scott Callan and Alphonse Pieper have served on the project working group for the Southern Tier, and several Tompkins County sites are listed on the Path Through History website - <http://paththroughhistory.ny.gov/> - which includes an itinerary feature and sorting sites and heritage tourism experiences by historical themes. However, the Path Through History Project alone falls short of the full vision for interpreting our heritage tourism assets.

Roles in Supporting Implementation

- TCPD Role: Grant Administration, encourage projects to come forward for support.
- STPB Role: Convene Heritage Tourism Working Group. Periodic review of more detailed “Heritage Tourism strategy” paper developed by Stu Stein in support of the larger Strategic Tourism Plan. Paper available upon request.
- Lead Organization(s) Role(s): CAP could take up the mantle for a joint project.

Proposed Immediate Next Steps

The History Center or another entity could take the lead in developing a cohesive, branded marketing platform under which a number of local Heritage Tourism topics and experiences could be folded, and engage stakeholders to provide content. The next step might be to convene a visioning meeting with CAP, CVB, Tourism Coordinator and key stakeholders to discuss the feasibility of developing such a platform, and if there is enough agreement about the value of this, to begin to sketch out the framework for its development. We have the potential heritage tourism stories and experiences; what’s lacking is an

overarching marketing effort to provide ready access to visitors. Requires initiative by a lead organization. May not be a short-term priority unless a partner decides to take this up in the short term.

In addition, The City of Ithaca and its partners could be encouraged to apply for a Tourism Capital Grant to develop this visitor-oriented amenities associated with the future MLK Freedom Walkway.

Critical Action #5

Progress to Date

Ongoing. Examples include financial support for the Discovery Trail, the Ticket Center Ithaca, and CAP events and programming. The CVB has also worked to build arts information into visitithaca.com, such as by developing a new page under Attractions titled “Local Art in Ithaca” and integrating ticket purchase button directly into performing arts listings. At a spring 2013 visioning session, Ticket Center stakeholders expressed interest in more collaboration on arts marketing. The Ticket Center is now closed and enhanced collective marketing of the performing arts is one important goal that is inherent in past investments in the Ticket Center. In addition, several theatres jointly applied - but were not awarded - a Strategic Tourism Implementation grant for self-service ticketing kiosks. The Discovery Trail has created a new focus in their marketing to push attention to current activities, such as through the new “what’s hot” button on their website.

Roles in Supporting Implementation

- TCPD: Funding administration, program evaluation, encourage proposals.
- Lead Organization(s) Role(s): Put forth innovative marketing plans and develop proposals.

Proposed Immediate Next Steps

A short term focus is on untangling emergent issues with the Ticket Center in a manner that minimizes damage to any of the partner organizations, maintains access to ticketing for smaller organizations in our community, and allows visitors and residents to continue to buy tickets easily as coming to a close. The aspirational vision for a new Ticket Center model (Ticket Center 2.0?) should provide strong collective marketing of the arts to visitors, and a stronger role for the CVB in this effort would support the enhanced marketing goals.

Two grant applications – one proposing to promote Ithaca as a destination for the purchase of fine art, and another proposing to promote Ithaca as a destination for fabric arts shopping and education - were not funded in the Spring 2013 round because they were too focused on a particular business as opposed to a broader community effort. They and others will be encouraged to broaden their efforts and reapply.

Bruce Stoff and I have begun work with the Discovery Trail to help them reimagine their collective marketing investments; there is a valuable technical assistance role for the CVB to play here.

Critical Action #6

Progress to Date

A formal inventory has not yet been developed, but the development of several underutilized cultural assets has been supported through grant investments, including IMPP, theatre arts (Fringe Festival), Shakespeare, music education (Winter Village Bluegrass), literary arts (Spring Writes), industrial history (MOOG exhibit), and hip-hop culture and history (TCPL Foundation). This Critical Action has some overlap with Critical Action #17, to “support the expansion and development of specialty festivals in the indoors in the winter.”

Roles in Supporting Implementation

- STPB Role: P&E could work to finalize an inventory. Alternatively, TCPD, the CVB and DIA (Festivals Program) could work jointly to develop this inventory.
- TCPD Role: Grant administration; coach applicants to come forward with project ideas.
- Lead Organization(s) Role(s): CAP being polled to confirm lead organization status.

Proposed Immediate Next Steps

Continue to encourage grant applications to come forward that fit with this critical action. The P&E Committee should consider what role to take in doing a formal inventory.

Established Focus Area: Downtown Ithaca

Goal: *Enhance downtown Ithaca as a hub of visitor activity.*

	Description	Time Frame	Lead	Assessment
7	Support the rebuilding of The Ithaca Commons with feature elements serving visitors.	Medium	City of Ithaca, DIA	Ahead of Plan

Critical Action #7

Progress to Date

The DIA applied for a 2013 Strategic Tourism Implementation grant from the Tompkins County Tourism Program and received partial funding to support an interactive visitor kiosk on the Commons. The Commons project is underway and on schedule to be completed in summer 2014.

Roles in Supporting Implementation

- TCPD Role: Grant administration.
- STPB Role: Advocacy as needed for tourism-enhancing amenities.
- Lead Organization(s) Role(s): DIA and the City of Ithaca are leads.

Proposed Immediate Next Steps

Review final kiosk design proposals to ensure alignment with the funded grant proposal. CVB and DIA will work together to promote “it’s a new downtown” message to group market.

Established Focus Area: Educational Tourism

Goal: *Increase educational tourism.*

	Description	Time Frame	Lead	Assessment
8	Coordinate edutourism offerings with IC's and Cornell's large conferences featuring stay-the-weekend opportunities.	Medium	CVB, IC, Cornell, TC3	On Plan

Critical Action #8

Progress to Date

The CVB anticipates that work on this critical action will start in 2015. Attraction of more Road Scholar (formerly Elder Hostel) groups is another possible action related to edutourism.

Roles in Supporting Implementation

Lead Organization(s) Role(s): Requires CVB leadership.

STPB Role: This might be a topic for a Tourism-Higher Ed Working Group to consider how to advance in more detail.

Proposed Immediate Next Steps

Clarify timeline expectations.

Established Focus Area: Lakes, Trails, Parks and Gorges

Goal: Expand outdoor recreation and other tourism related to our outstanding natural amenities: Cayuga Lake, gorges and waterfalls, trails, parks, and natural areas.

	Description	Time Frame	Lead	Assessment
9	Support the completion of priority multi-use trails and connections between these and existing foot path systems, and support tourism-enhancing features for priority trails (BDT, CWT/Urban Connections, S. Hill Rec Way, Finger Lakes Trail, Ithaca-Dryden Rail Trail).	Long	TCPD	On Plan
10	Complete and support implementation of the Cayuga Lake Blueway Trail Plan, to include enhanced maps and signage to waterfront access points, and targeted site development for enhanced waterfront access.	Medium	TCPD	On Plan
11	Support the Stewart Park Rehabilitation Action Plan.	Long	City of Ithaca, FOSP	On Plan

Critical Action #9

Progress to Date

The Chamber and the City of Ithaca expect the final phase of the Cayuga Waterfront Trail to be built in 2014. In addition, after decades of advocacy and work, the Black Diamond Trail between Cass Park and Taughannock Falls State Park is nearly complete (two major bridges are in, and funds for final surfacing and drainage improvements were recently allocated by NY State Parks). TCPD assisted the City of Ithaca in writing an application to NYSDOT for Black Diamond Trail Phase Two (Cass Park to Buttermilk Falls State Park) which was not funded but the project is well-articulated for future state or federal funding applications. A number of other efforts related the development of a connected network of multi-use trails in Tompkins County are being undertaken by the City of Ithaca, Town of Ithaca, Town of Caroline, Town of Dryden, and Cornell University. I am the co-author with Jeanne Leccese of the Creating Healthy Places Project of a report titled, "Tompkins Priority Trails Strategy – A Vision for Five Networked Trails in Tompkins County." The report will be released to the community in November 2013 and will describe a vision for developing Tompkins County as a destination for world-class trail-based recreation and articulate clear action steps that can be taken in the next five years to help our community achieve this vision.

Roles in Supporting Implementation

- TCPD Role: Champion Priority Trails Strategy, support state and federal funding applications, encourage tourism grant applications to come forward for limited tourism enhancing amenities such as interpretive and wayfinding signage and trailhead improvements.
- STPB Role: Champion Priority Trails Strategy
- Lead Organization(s) Role(s): Implementing municipalities and organizations – fund and build the priority segments identified in the strategy. Chamber and its partners – celebrate the completion of the Cayuga Waterfront Trail in 2014.

Proposed Immediate Next Steps

Endorse and promote Tompkins Priority Trails Strategy report.

Critical Action #10

Progress to Date

The TCPD has been working for the past eight months with Seneca and Cayuga Counties, the NYS Department of State, TPAs in the three counties, State Parks, the Finger Lakes Land Trust and a planning consultant to develop the Cayuga Lake Blueway Trail Plan. The Plan will be complete in fall 2013.

Roles in Supporting Implementation

- TCPD Role: Planning core committee, CFA grant-writing, possibly coordinate implementation.
- STPB Role: Champion the Blueway Trail Plan.
- Lead Organization(s) Role(s): The City of Ithaca, State Parks, CVB, and Town of Lansing and others in Tompkins County will be key partners in implementation.

Proposed Immediate Next Steps

Apply through the state CFA process in 2014 for Phase I implementation of the Cayuga Lake Blueway Trail Plan.

Critical Action #11

Progress to Date

The Friends of Stewart Park (FOSP) and the City of Ithaca have actively advanced implementation of the Stewart Park Rehabilitation Action Plan (SPRAP). Rick Manning was hired as a part-time director of FOSP in 2013, thanks to a grant from a local foundation, which is already having the effect of leveraging capital support from a variety of sources, including the City, the State of NY, and the Tourism Program. Specifically, they received a grant in 2012 from New York State for physical improvements to address health and safety requirements at the Cascadilla Boat House. The City has finished rebuilding the Small Pavilion. The Tourism Program awarded a \$70,000 Tourism Capital Grant for physical improvements to the Large Pavilion and they are seeking state funds in the 2013 CFA round to match this support. A playground design has been completed. Efforts are underway in partnership with the Cayuga Bird Club to provide birding interpretation at the Cayuga Lake shoreline. The Ithaca Motion Picture Project (IMPP) has secured formal approval from the City to develop the former Wharton Studios building into a silent film history museum, and the Tourism Program recently awarded partial funding to the History Center to explore the feasibility of partnership with IMPP and the Ithaca Aviation History Foundation on that site. In addition, IMPP has applied for formal museum designation from the State of New York; upon receipt of this designation, the project will become eligible for a variety of state and federal museum grants. Some landscape improvements such as plantings at the mayor's flag pole have also been completed.

Roles in Supporting Implementation

- TCPD Role: Grant administration.
- STPB Role:
- Lead Organization(s) Role(s): FOSP to continue incremental improvements through funding applications, volunteer coordination, leadership and advocacy.

Proposed Immediate Next Steps

Full implementation of the SPRAP can be achieved over time through continuous incremental enhancements. However to advance implementation more quickly, it may be valuable for the implementing agencies to consider creative funding mechanisms. One such mechanism may be to lease land or buildings in the park to private concessions to provide visitor experiences in the park (e.g. food & beverage, boat and bike rentals). This could serve to both enhance tourism by providing more of a critical mass of activity, and to help fund the needed improvements. Advocacy and technical support from the Tourism Program for pursuing this approach may be helpful. Stewart Park is also identified in the draft Blueway Trail Plan as a site for Phase I improvements, and the TCPD intends to work with the City and FOSP to apply for financial support from NYS for those improvements in 2014.

Stabilization of the Friends of Stewart Park organization, which has applied for but not yet received their 501c3 non-profit tax status, may be another important avenue to speed implementation of this critical action. The Tourism Program may wish to examine the Arts and Culture Organizational Development (ACOD) grant program’s eligibility requirements to explore a possible fit in the future for stabilization funds to be made available for this and other similar tourism-related organizations that may benefit from stabilization funding.

Emerging Focus Area: Sports Tourism

Goal: Increase sports tourism.

	Description	Time Frame	Lead	Assessment
12	Create a comprehensive feasibility study and implementation strategy for attracting new sporting events and tournaments, including recruitment best practices, cost/benefit of different types of tournaments, financial requirements, inventory of sites, inventory of ideal weekends, and possibility of partnership with Cortland County.	Short	CVB	On Plan
13	Create a Sports Council comprised of reps from Athletic Departments at Cornell, Ithaca College, TC3, The RINK, the YMCA, local school districts, City of Ithaca Parks Department and other local facilities and Ithaca amateur athletic leagues and associations (ie. soccer, swimming, lacrosse, hockey, wrestling, cycling, indoor track, basketball, volleyball, figure skating, roller skating, golf, tennis).	Medium	CVB	On Plan

Critical Action #12 and Critical Action #13

Progress to Date

The CVB and TCPD have reached out to the Cortland Regional Sports Council to begin forming a partnership to advance this Critical Action. The partnership would entail formally linking up with the Cortland group – which has full time staff and industry-specific experience and contacts, to inventory and

promote Tompkins County venues for new sporting events and tournaments. The work to be undertaking through this partnership encompasses both Critical Action #12 and #13.

Roles in Supporting Implementation

- TCPD Role: Support grant application through CFA.
- STPB Role:
- Lead Organization(s) Role(s): CVB and Cortland Regional Sports Council are the key implementers.

Proposed Immediate Next Steps

A grant application has been submitted for 2013 Market New York grant through the CFA to provide state funding for enhanced joint marketing of Cortland and Tompkins Counties for sporting events. If successful, the CVB has identified \$8,000 in their 2014 budget as a local match for this initiative, with Cortland County putting in as much through in-kind staffing support.

Emerging Focus Area: Sustainability Tourism

Goal: *Develop Ithaca and Tompkins County as the preeminent Sustainability Tourism destination in New York State.*

	Description	Time Frame	Lead	Assessment
14	Inventory Sustainability Tourism attractors and attractions and develop platforms to connect visitors to those entities potentially including a tourist-oriented sustainability trail.	Medium	TCPD	On Plan
15	Develop a tourist oriented green business map	Medium	TCPD, CVB	On Plan
16	Provide education, coordination and marketing assistance to hotels and other tourism businesses to embrace green business practices and promote themselves as green businesses, such as through the New York State green hotels program.	Medium	CVB, WIB	On Plan

Critical Action #14, #15 and #16

Progress to Date

A consortium of three sustainability-related organizations in Tompkins County (The Sustainability Center, Green Resource Hub and Sustainable Tompkins) jointly submitted a 2013 Strategic Tourism Implementation Grant application to advance all three of these initiatives. While not funded, the application articulates means of advancing each of the critical actions in this arena and can serve as a useful guide for future grant applications.

One of the challenges in advancing implementation in this area is identifying the right organizational and funding fit to advance these actions. No single, clear implementing agency has emerged, and the requirements of the existing grant programs of the Tompkins County Tourism Program around demonstrating immediate, directly attributable additional room nights and spending may put future applications to implement these Critical Actions at consistent disadvantage because by nature the economic benefits will accrue over time and more diffusely. Thus, it may be appropriate for the Tourism Program to more clearly articulate the value of Sustainability Tourism as an effort which, while holding some potential to draw additional visitors to take part in certain experiences grounded in sustainability, is

also primarily about enhancing the overall visitor experience of Tompkins County as a green destination. In this sense, Sustainability Tourism can be seen in a similar light as community beautification or public art.

The NYS Green Hotels Program is not a viable option for 3rd party green lodging certification as this program has been abandoned by the State; other local solutions for green certification for hospitality businesses should be explored.

Roles in Supporting Implementation

- TCPD Role: Grant administration and encouragement, possibly take a lead role in developing and championing if needed to implement.
- STPB Role: Grant review, possibly establish an ad-hoc Sustainability Tourism Committee in 2015 to consider specific means of advancing these initiatives.
- Lead Organization(s) Role(s): Apply for grants.

Proposed Immediate Next Steps

Short-term, work with applicants to incrementally advance each of these Critical Actions through the New Tourism Initiative or Tourism Marketing and Advertising Grant Programs. Consider changes to grant review scoring and guidelines to target implementation of critical actions that are identified in the Strategic Tourism Plan to remove possible disadvantage for tourism infrastructure-related investments.

Emerging Focus Area: Undertapped Niche Markets

Goal: *Grow under-tapped niche visitor markets and experiences.*

	Description	Time Frame	Lead	Assessment
17	Support the expansion and development of specialty festivals in the indoors in the winter.	Short	DIA, TCPD	On Plan
18	Promote and develop Tompkins County as a destination for LGBT weddings.	Short	CVB	Off Plan - Minor Impact

Critical Action #17

Progress to Date

Ongoing. Tourism grant guidelines and evaluation criteria have been modified to favor off-season niche market activities, and several new initiatives have been funded that support implementation of this Critical Action, including an expansion of Winter Village Bluegrass Festival to include instrumental music camps (also in the winter), the Ithaca International Fantastic Film Festival, the Ithaca Fringe Festival. Off-season festivals that have maintained Tourism Program support include Restaurant Week, Downtown Ithaca Winter Festival, Maple Festival, Finger Lakes Literary Festival and certain museum exhibits and festivals.

Roles in Supporting Implementation

- TCPD Role: Grant administration
- STPB Role: Grant review
- Lead Organization(s) Role(s): DIA focused on technical assistance aspects.

Proposed Immediate Next Steps

Post an “opportunities and blackouts calendar” annually as an addendum to the grant guidelines. As part of grant applicant recruitment, identify non-existing or underdeveloped indoor, winter events and perform targeted outreach to those to encourage expansion and enhanced out-of-County marketing. Examples might include fabric arts, black gospel, insects, birding events, hip-hop, children’s book events, storytelling, FLEFF, specialty music, rock skipping, specialty sports, etc.

Critical Action #18

Progress to Date

In 2013, I Love NY began making a big push statewide to market to the LGBT travel market. Locally, PRI and the Cayuga Nature Center put forth a Strategic Tourism Implementation grant application to promote their venues for weddings. It was not successful because it was too narrowly focused on specific venues as opposed to a broader destination marketing effort. The CVB has been opportunistic about latching on to specific PR opportunities such as a recent Ford Focus promotional tour.

Roles in Supporting Implementation

- Lead Organization(s) Role(s): CVB is lead.

Proposed Immediate Next Steps

Short-term, the CVB will continue to be opportunistic in its ongoing marketing and PR efforts to promote Ithaca as an LGBTQ-friendly destination. This may be an important market for which to develop a more proactive targeted strategy, for weddings, but also more generally.

A consensus amongst members of the P & E committee has emerged that the idea of promoting our community as a destinations for same-sex weddings is too narrow and that the heart of this critical action is about developing and promoting ourselves an LGBT friendly destination more generally.

Foundation Focus Area: Beautification, Signage and Public Art

Goal: *Increase the perception of Ithaca and Tompkins County as an outstandingly beautiful community that is simple for visitors to navigate and as a place to visit for the overall beauty of the area.*

	Description	Time Frame	Lead	Assessment
19	Write and implement a Tompkins County Beautification Plan for 2012-2020, to include the square footage, location and type of gardens maintained by the program, maintenance and infrastructure requirements, design standards, and prioritized actions.	Short	Chamber, CCETC	On Plan
20	Create a wayfinding signage plan/system that includes physical signage as well as new technological wayfinding platforms and that points to major destinations including Discovery Trail venues, downtown Ithaca and the Commons, trailheads, parks, theatres, waterfront access sites, arts and heritage destinations and natural areas.	Short	Chamber, TCPD	On Plan
21	Formalize a public art grant component of the Beautification Program to encourage public art installations throughout Tompkins County.	Short	Chamber, TCPD	Off Plan - Minor Impact

Critical Action #19

Progress to Date

The Chamber and the Beautification Committee have decided to focus on the wayfinding strategy, and will turn its attention to the beautification plan in late 2014 and early 2015 once the wayfinding strategy is complete.

Roles in Supporting Implementation

- TCPD Role: Support beautification planning efforts through research and planning assistance.
- STPB Role: Review/approve beautification plan once complete.
- Lead Organization(s) Role(s): The Chamber will lead this effort.

Critical Action #20

Progress to Date

The Chamber of Commerce secured a \$63,000 Strategic Tourism Implementation grant from the Tompkins County Tourism Program in early 2013 to complete a county Wayfinding and Interpretive Signage Plan. The original grant application called for the Chamber to hire a project manager to oversee development of the project, secure a planning consultant to develop the plan, and assign \$9,750 for pilot installation of signs. The Chamber has hired a project manager, assembled an experienced and committed client committee, and conducted interviews with the two consultants who responded to the Chamber's RFP. Based on the proposals that were submitted, the Chamber recently requested to increase the portion of the grant that that will go to the development of a comprehensive wayfinding system plan, and to decrease the amount of funding that will go to installation of pilot signage. This change will allow the Chamber to hire Peter J. Smith & Company, Inc – a design and planning firm – to develop a robust wayfinding and interpretive signage plan. The amount available through this grant for purchase of signs would decrease from \$9,750 to just over \$1,000, but the consultant would produce bid documents and secure approvals for installation so that when additional funding is secured (likely from a variety of sources) Phase I installation of signs can occur in a timely and seamless fashion.

Roles in Supporting Implementation

- TCPD Role: Grant administration, core committee service.
- STPB Role: Review and recommend adoption of wayfinding signage plan
- Lead Organization(s) Role(s): Chamber is lead.

Proposed Immediate Next Steps

The wayfinding system plan is scheduled for completion in mid-2014. Implementation will require additional funding from a variety of sources (municipalities, state, county), and securing these funds is likely to be the most important immediate next step in implementing the plan.

Critical Action #21

Progress to Date

The Chamber anticipates that work on this critical action will start once the Ithaca Commons project and the wayfinding strategy are complete.

Roles in Supporting Implementation

- TCPD Role: Funding administration. Convening support if needed.
- Lead Organization(s) Role(s): Chamber and CAP.

Proposed Immediate Next Steps

The Chamber may wish to engage CAP in considering opportunities to advance this Critical Action. The funding requirements to launch such a program may be small (several thousand dollars) and could be assigned through the Chamber contract for beautification or directly through TCPD. Appropriate timing may be after completion of the Wayfinding Strategy.

Foundation Focus Area: Festivals

Goal: *Grow the visitor attraction and positive impacts of vibrant festivals and events.*

	Description	Time Frame	Lead	Assessment
22	Assist existing large festivals and events on succession planning, financial sustainability, and enhancing their tourism impact.	Short	DIA, TCPD	On Plan
23	Enhance visitor-oriented capabilities of IthacaEvents.com.	Short	CAP, CVB	Off Plan - Moderate Impact

Critical Action #22

Progress to Date

This work is ongoing through the Tompkins Festivals Program which is administered by Vicki Taylor-Brous of the DIA. The program continues to mature and the Festivals Committee has met recently to explore future opportunities to make this work more proactive and sustainable. In addition, tourism grant guidelines have been modified and two addenda to the guidelines are now under development which will highlight best practices for marketing to visitors and for participant data collection and reporting.

Roles in Supporting Implementation

- TCPD Role: Contract management. Planning and report writing support.
- STPB Role: Festivals Committee commission recommendations/report
- Lead Organization(s) Role(s): DIA is lead on implementation.

Proposed Immediate Next Steps

TCPD and DIA will produce an updated Strategic Plan for Festivals in the latter part of 2013/early 2014 highlighting accomplishments to date and recommendations for the evolution of the program. Workshops will continue this fall. In addition, the grant coaching and application process for events and festivals who have received tourism grants consistently for a number of years will place new emphasis on formally articulating plans for financial sustainability.

Critical Action #23

Progress to Date

None of the imagined improvements have yet been made directly to IthacaEvents.com. The CVB has made several changes in how it is using the data from IthacaEvents.com to highlight specific events through special features on VisitIthaca.com and through its Facebook efforts and weekly e-newsletters. CAP owns the site, and the DIA (through the Tompkins Festivals Program) and the CVB are major stakeholders, along with major venues and events. Two of the challenges with the current site that are commonly mentioned are that it is set up to have event organizers self-populate the site, which can lead to inconsistencies in what and how information is displayed, and second, that there is no filter which can bring larger events – those more likely to drive tourism/appeal to visitors - to the top in the way

information is displayed. Perceived opportunities to improve the destination marketing capabilities of IthacaEvents.com have also been a perennial topic of discussion at meetings related to Ticket Center Ithaca. Since the site was not built with a CMS backbone, major improvements to IthacaEvents.com website will require a new website to be built or contract with a web developer to modify the site.

Roles in Supporting Implementation

- TCPD Role: Research, convening.
- STPB Role:
- Lead Organization(s) Role(s): CAP owns the site. DIA and CVB are major stakeholders in envisioning improvements.

Proposed Immediate Next Steps

The best way forward may be for CAP in partnership with the CVB to take the lead in researching the limitations and specific opportunities for an improved method of marketing Ithaca and Tompkins County online as a destination for vibrant events and festivals. The lead organization would then produce a report outlining specific recommendations for changes/improvements to IthacaEvents.com.

Foundation Focus Area: Groups

Goal: *Expand meetings, conferences and group tours.*

	Description	Time Frame	Lead	Assessment
24	Conduct bi-annual "FAM" tour for Albany, NYC and targeted markets.	Short	CVB	On Plan
25	Develop a new project to recruit higher ed meetings & conferences with campus assistance.	Short	CVB, Cornell, IC, TC3	Off Plan - Minor Impact
26	Market themed international group travel.	Short	CVB	On Plan

Critical Action #24

Progress to Date

Ongoing. Successful FAM tours conducted by CVB in 2013.

Roles in Supporting Implementation

- Lead Organization(s) Role(s): CVB is lead.

Proposed Immediate Next Steps

Ongoing.

Critical Action #25

Progress to Date

No action to date.

Roles in Supporting Implementation

- Lead Organization(s) Role(s): CVB is lead.

Proposed Immediate Next Steps

One possible area of opportunity for the new CVB Director.

Critical Action #26

Progress to Date

CVB attended the Active Travel China show in 2013 and is working to link tours that that visit CMOG up through Ithaca. Cornell may be the biggest draw for the Asian group travel market. I Love NY announced a major initiative to get international travelers to Upstate NY from NYC, and the CVB has an opportunity to work with I Love NY to ensure that Ithaca and the Finger Lakes are featured.

Roles in Supporting Implementation

- TCPD Role: Marketing Advisory Committee
- STPB Role: Marketing Advisory Committee
- Lead Organization(s) Role(s): CVB is lead.

Proposed Immediate Next Steps

One possible area of opportunity for the new CVB Director.

Foundation Focus Area: Marketing & Advertising

Goal: *Maximize the effectiveness of destination marketing, advertising, and public relations.*

	Description	Time Frame	Lead	Assessment
27	Promote marketing coordination to facilitate innovative marketing partnerships between tourism attractions and venues.	Short	CVB	On Plan
28	Develop integrated (digital, social media, cable) geo-targeted niche campaigns (wine, waterfalls, locavore, music, green/sustainability, family, Double Income No Kids ", recent empty nest, low-cost, etc).	Medium	CVB	On Plan
29	Target alumni media for editorial content.	Short	CVB	Off Plan - Minor Impact

Critical Action #27

Progress to Date

Ongoing. See CVB Marketing Plan.

Roles in Supporting Implementation

- TCPD Role: Marketing Advisory Committee
- STPB Role: Marketing Advisory Committee
- Lead Organization(s) Role(s): CVB is lead.

Proposed Immediate Next Steps

Critical Action #28

Progress to Date

Ongoing. See CVB Marketing Plan.

Roles in Supporting Implementation

- TCPD Role: Marketing Advisory Committee
- STPB Role: Marketing Advisory Committee
- Lead Organization(s) Role(s): CVB is lead.

Proposed Immediate Next Steps

Critical Action #29

Progress to Date

No progress to date.

Roles in Supporting Implementation

- Lead Organization(s) Role(s): CVB is lead.

Proposed Immediate Next Steps

One possible area of opportunity for the new CVB Director.

Foundation Focus Area: Town Gown

Goal: *Enhance collaboration and partnership on tourism related initiatives between tourism partners and our institutions of higher education.*

	Description	Time Frame	Lead	Assessment
30	Enhance cross-promotion of Cornell, IC and TC3 based events that would be of interest to general visitors and community-based events that would be of interest to college and university visitors.	Short	CVB , Cornell, IC, TC3	Off Plan - Moderate Impact
31	Develop a tourism-higher ed working group to meet periodically to share information and explore ideas for enhanced collaboration.	Short	CVB , TCPD, Cornell, IC, TC3	Off Plan - Minor Impact

Critical Action #30

Progress to Date

No progress to date.

Roles in Supporting Implementation

- Lead Organization(s) Role(s): CVB is lead.
- STPB Role: Convene Tourism Higher-Ed Working Group to work on this Critical Action.

Proposed Immediate Next Steps

This may benefit from specific attention by the working group described in Critical Action #31. This could also be an area that the new CVB Director may wish to focus on.

Critical Action #31

Progress to Date

No progress to date.

Roles in Supporting Implementation

- TCPD Role: Convene and facilitate as needed.
- STPB Role: Champion/convene Tourism Higher-Ed Working Group.
- Lead Organization(s) Role(s): CVB and campus participation are key.

Proposed Immediate Next Steps

This group would likely best function as a small group of boots-on-the-ground folks tightly focused on one or two joint win-win projects that would benefit from regular communication to get launched, as opposed to a group having a policy/PR focus. Because the way forward is less clear than with other actions identified in the plan, this action has not risen to the top in the 11 months since the plan was adopted, but that does not mean that is less important, or that the impacts of enhanced collaboration that could be generated are not as great as for other Critical Actions. The next step would be for someone to champion the formation of this group and propose the specific projects or issues that it would work on first. This is another area where the new CVB Director may have an interest in focusing.

Top-level objectives of this group would possibly be to:

1. Increase length of stay and associated local spending of college and university prospective student and family visitors, alumni, conference attendees, parents, athletics.
2. Increase awareness and appreciation of the full richness of experiences available in the community to university-based visitors.
3. Increase awareness and appreciation of the full richness of experiences available at Cornell University to community-based visitors.

A proposed specific focus in 2014 is to increase the presence of community visitor information to campus visitors and campus information to community visitors.

Another area which could be examined by this group or through a series of targeted conversations with a different group would be to examine opportunities for IC and Cornell to coordinate the dates of certain large events to minimize potential overlap - move-in, homecoming, trustees council and parents weekends.

Foundation Focus Area: Transportation

Goal: *Develop Ithaca as a model of sustainable transportation for tourists*

	Description	Time Frame	Lead	Assessment
32	Articulate and develop a system of tourist-oriented shuttles, with possibilities for linking event participants to attractions, Cornell and IC parents to community shopping, winter sports enthusiasts to venues, hotel guests to theatres and other venues, etc.	Medium	CVB , TCPD, TCAT, Cornell, IC, TC3, DIA	On Plan
33	Plan and implement a visitor communications strategy - to include use of digital technology such as “apps” - for local transportation options to encourage parking and then using the bus, cycling and walking.	Medium	CVB , TCPD, ITCTC	On Plan
34	Bundle TCAT bus access for tourists with hotels and offer tourist oriented bus passes.	Short	CVB , TCAT, TCPD	On Plan

Critical Action #32

Progress to Date

Doug Swarts and Tom Knipe met to discuss implementation of this Critical Action. TCAT is open to considering a visitor-oriented route, although there are many challenging questions that would need to be addressed. There are examples in larger cities, such as Bus 100 in Berlin, where it is clear “this is the tourist line”. Doug believes that there is some latent ridership demand to Cass Park, Hangar Theatre. TCAT is looking at increasing frequency from once every 15 minutes to once every 12 minutes along the enhanced transit spine that is underdevelopment between d/t, Cornell, IC and the West End. Still, while we don’t serve our parks very well, everything else is already served by existing routes and a new tourist-oriented route may be duplicative and very costly.

An analysis of visitor transit needs would need to be performed. This could be difficult. What do people really want? Questions we would want to try to answer with any analysis might include:

- What frequency is needed to function as a tourist route?
- What is the maximum amount of time you would want to wait for a bus?
- What are the ideal tourist itineraries?
- How much transferring would people tolerate and still use the service?
- Legibility and information: How would this service be visibly distinct?

There’s also a question of how this expanded service would be paid for. If it were not covered in the right proportion by the fare box, TCAT would likely ask for a “revenue guarantee model”, in which the tourism program would somehow agree to pick up the incremental cost of any shortfall at the fare box.

Roles in Supporting Implementation

- TCPD Role: Planning, convening
- STPB Role:
- Lead Organization(s) Role(s): TCAT and TCPD would work in tandem.

Proposed Immediate Next Steps

Devise a market survey of visitor transit needs. Might center around a focus group with folks with local tourism market expertise. An outcome of this survey/focus group would be to figure out what the groups/types of visitors are, what must be connected, and what a tourist bus/shuttle might look like (center out to destinations, loop between destinations, etc). The Tourism Program would bring those findings to Doug, and they would be matched up against the existing routes to understand where the needs are. One potential outcome to have in mind might be that it could end up being about increasing frequency of existing routes on certain days and times of existing routes.

If the Tourism Program would like to do more work on this, we can come up conceptually with what we want to explore, and then TCAT could help work on this.

Critical Action #33

Progress to Date

TCPD has met with TCAT to discuss how this might be implemented from the perspective of transit. There is an existing app for transit in Ithaca - Ride 14850 - developed by a private individual. TCAT is upgrading its data format right now with a 5-10 year roadmap for implementation. In the future, all data will conform to the GTFS (google/general transit feed specification) data format. GTFS data will allow for easy integration with smart phone apps, google maps and other digital mapping uses. TCAT will most

likely make the data available to market solutions through good licensing agreements, once the data upgrade project is complete.

This summer, the ITCTC upgraded and reprinted its popular bike map of Tompkins County. TCPD coordinated with ITCTC, the CVB and I Love NY to add a wide variety of visitor information. The new map includes visitithaca.com links, information about bike-friendly events and destinations, local biking resources, mountain biking locations and links for more information about how to access mountain biking in Tompkins County, a new suggested ride for families and beginning cyclists on the Cayuga Waterfront Trail, and the locations of Visitors Centers, farmers markets and public swimming. \$1,500 of I Love NY Matching Regional Marketing Funds were used by the CVB to support this initiative.

The wayfinding project described under Critical Action #20 will also be supportive of this Critical Action.

Roles in Supporting Implementation

- TCPD Role: Convene. Possibly grant administration for a communications platform later.
- STPB Role:
- Lead Organization(s) Role(s):

Proposed Immediate Next Steps

Taxi regulation and enhancing access to Ithaca CarShare for visitors are related issues around which there are currently active conversations. TCPD will stay attuned and keep the STPB informed.

Critical Action #34

Progress to Date

TCPD convened a series of meetings in late 2012 and 2013 with CVB and TCAT on developing a visitor-oriented guide to transit for Tompkins County, along with an Ithaca is Gorges branded bus pass. TCAT and the CVB have both expressed enthusiasm, the CVB has conducted research on models from other communities, and these projects are currently under development with completion likely by the end of 2013. TCAT will also be able to produce the piece and print a limited number of copies within their existing marketing budget, although matching support from the CVB or Tourism Program may be desirable for broad distribution. An additional outcome of these conversations was that TCAT provided transit training to Visitor Center staff for the first time earlier this year, and we learned that the Visitors Centers can become a point of sale for bus passes which will happen once the branded cards are launched.

The other half of this critical action – to link bus passes directly with room keys – has been researched in detail and we will be ready to approach one or more hotels directly upon completion of the visitor oriented guide and branded visitor pass to pilot the room key integration. TCAT's fare box system will allow for this to happen fairly seamlessly; what's needed is agreement with the hotels on how it would be paid for on the backend. The hotels have also previously expressed concerns about sharing the MagStripe numbers with TCAT due to privacy concerns, but since the fare box readers would not be able to read the user information, only the number of the card, these concerns are addressable with education. The downtown Hilton, Holiday Inn and Statler, along with the new hotel downtown might be the first to approach for a pilot given their proximity to transit.

Roles in Supporting Implementation

- TCPD Role: Convene, facilitate.
- STPB Role:

- Lead Organization(s) Role(s): TCAT designing and printing. CVB consultation, convening support and design support as needed.

Proposed Immediate Next Steps

Finish the guide and branded bus pass, then promote it. Reach out to pilot hotels to explore room key integration once we have the collateral materials in place.

Foundation Focus Area: Visitor Services

Goal: *Provide effective visitor services and customer service at points of visitor contact.*

	Description	Time Frame	Lead	Assessment
35	Develop a comprehensive, coordinated strategy for providing more visitor information to campus visitors, including parents, alumni, prospective students and their families and conference attendees.	Short	CVB , Cornell, IC, TC3	Off Plan - Minor Impact
36	Expand the presence of visitor information at key IC and CU locations, the airport and high-traffic retail locations, to possibly include rich media kiosks.	Medium	CVB , CAP	On Plan
37	Develop our hospitality workforce through trainings for front-line staff and tourism business operators.	Short	WIB	On Plan

Critical Action #35

Progress to Date

The Visitors Center has a number of ongoing activities to provide visitor information to campus visitors; however no comprehensive, coordinated strategy has been articulated to date.

Possible Roles in Supporting Implementation

- STPB Role: Tourism/Higher-Ed working group?
- Lead Organization(s) Role(s): CVB is lead.

Proposed Immediate Next Steps

This may be an area for a higher ed/tourism working group to focus (see Action #31). This could also be an area where the new CVB Director may wish to focus.

Critical Action #36

Progress to Date

Visitor Services continues to be challenged by new travel trends that enable individuals to carry a great deal of information with them on mobile devices. In 2014, and in support of the 2020 Strategic Plan, the CVB proposed that we create a mobile, Segway based, information service center that takes the information to where the people are. In addition to providing essential travel information during large campus and community events, this mobile center was conceived to be equipped to capture email addresses, demographic information and key market data pertaining to why the individual/party is staying in our community. This initiative is no longer being pursued by the CVB.

In addition, as part of the Commons Upgrade project, the DIA and the City of Ithaca will install four interactive media-rich visitor-information kiosks at entrances to the Commons. The Tourism Program has funded two of these.

The Ithaca Theatre Collective's request for a Strategic Tourism Implementation Grant to fund seven electronic ticketing kiosks to be placed in high-traffic retail locations throughout the community was not funded, but provides evidence of the interest in including access to ticket information/ticketing in any mobile visitor-information kiosks.

Possible Roles in Supporting Implementation

- Lead Organization(s) Role(s): CVB is the lead.

Proposed Immediate Next Steps

CVB should articulate where repurposed Visitors Services funds will be assigned (instead of the Segway). There may also be an opportunity to consider opportunities to reprogram Downtown Visitors Center space in light of the recent closure of the co-located Ticket Center.

Critical Action #37

Progress to Date

Ongoing through services provided by the Workforce Investment Board. Recent achievements include:

- Increased enrollment in Hospitality STAR and customer service training workshops. In 2011, provided training for 62 individuals and in 2012 provided training for 131 individuals. As the program grows, further develops a presence/brand and is more recognizable, WIB hopes to provide and expand training options based on industry standards and needs, defined competencies and customizable materials.
- Created an organized approach, "branding of stars" (well established key contacts, mailings, list serves, social media, personal visits, etc) for marketing of training sessions to businesses through partnering with the Convention and Visitors Bureau, Downtown Ithaca Alliance, Society of Human Resource Management of Tompkins County and Tompkins Cortland Community College.
- Awarded Hospitality STAR attendees with Hospitality STAR pin and logo in 2011-12 sessions.
- Conducted ServSafe Food Safety and ServSafe Alcohol Certification Training. This enabled 39 individuals to receive an industry recognized credential.

Roles in Supporting Implementation

- TCPD Role: Contract administration.
- STPB Role:
- Lead Organization(s) Role(s): WIB is lead.

Proposed Immediate Next Steps

WIB will: 1). Provide greater exposure to tourism assets and resources in Tompkins County and align training with the goals and strategies of the Strategic Tourism Plan. 2). Continue the development of employee skills, knowledge and competencies to improve Tompkins County customer/visitor experiences and lessen negative experiences. 3). Increase number of employee industry recognized certifications. 4). Enable individuals to move and advance through career pathways. 5). Further develop training resources and opportunities. The workshops and training sessions are geared for entry-level employees, frontline supervisors and managers.