

AGENDA – September 19, 2012
3:00 pm – 5:00 pm, CVB

Strategic Tourism Planning Board
Tompkins County

Agenda

- 1) Meeting Minutes - 3 minutes
 - **ACTION** – Adopt August minutes
- 2) Chair's REPORT – David Sparrow - 3 min
- 3) Festivals Program REPORT Vicki Taylor-Brous – 20 min
- 4) Nominating Committee – 5 minutes – David Sparrow
 - **ACTION** – Form Nominating Committee to prep officer slate for 2013.
- 5) Membership & Bylaws Committee REPORT – 10 minutes
 - **ACTION** – Recommend Christy Agrese (Voytko) to fill vacant At-Large Seat.
- 6) Strategic Tourism Implementation Funding Opportunity – Tom Knipe - 20 minutes
 - **ACTION** – Approve Guidelines
- 7) Finger Lakes Wine Center REPORT – Fred Bonn - 10 minutes
- 8) CVB REPORT – Fred Bonn - 10 minutes
- 9) Community Celebrations Grants – Beverly Baker – 15 minutes
 - **ACTION** – Approve Fall 2012 Grant Recommendations
- 10) Proposed Administrative Changes to the ACOD Program – Tom Knipe and Brett Bossard – 15 minutes
 - **ACTION** – Accept administrative changes.
- 11) Room Tax Revenue REPORT – Tom Knipe – 5 minutes
- 12) Announcements (time-permitting)

Attached (agenda packet):

1. August draft STPB meeting minutes
2. Tourism Program administration – one year update from Joe Mareane
3. Tompkins Festivals Program Materials
 - a. Summary of Activities
 - b. Workshop Series
 - c. 2012 Scope of Services
4. Strategic Tourism Implementation Funding Opportunity GUIDELINES
5. Fall 2012 Community Celebrations Grant Recommendations
6. MEMO – Proposed Administrative Changes to the ACOD Program for 2013
7. CVB report



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 – August 2012**

Date: August 15, 2012
Time: 3:00-4:30pm
Location: Convention and Visitor's Bureau

Attendees:

Name	✓	Representation	Name	✓	Representation
Anne Kellerman	✓	At-Large	Sue Perlgut	exc	Arts-Culture
Anthony Hopson	exc	Ithaca College, Vice-Chair	Sue Stafford	✓	TC3
Beverly Baker	✓	At-Large	Susie Monagan	✓	Arts-Culture
David Sparrow	✓	At-Large, Chair	Tim Joseph	✓	At-Large
Ethan Ash	✓	Arts-Culture	VACANT		At-Large
Gary Stewart		Cornell	Brett Bossard	✓	CAP, Non-Voting
Jon Reis	exc	Arts-Culture	Fred Bonn	exc	CVB, Non-Voting
Ken Jupiter	✓	At-Large	Gary Ferguson	✓	DIA, Non-Voting
Paul Tatar	✓	Recreation	Jean McPheeters	exc	Chamber, Non-Voting
Rick Adie	✓	Lodging	Martha Armstrong	exc	TCAD, Non-Voting
Rita Rosenberg	✓	Agriculture	Will Burbank		TC Legislature, Non-Voting
Scott Wiggins	✓	Lodging	VACANT		Transportation, Non-Voting
Stuart Stein	✓	At-Large	Tom Knipe	✓	Staff

Also in attendance: Kathy Wilsea (Tompkins County Planning Dept.)

Agenda

- Finger Lakes Museum Presentation
- Approval of minutes for June and July, 2012 STPB meetings
- Chair's report
- Recommend Adoption of 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan
- CVB Report for June & July
- Membership and Bylaws Announcement
- Community Celebrations Program Update
- Announcements

Discussion

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 PM by the Chair, David Sparrow. Visitors were introduced: Rhonda Roaring of ilovethefingerlakes.com, Andrew Defran recently employed by Merrill Lynch in Ithaca and looking for a volunteer opportunity in public sector economic development, and John Adamski from the Finger Lakes Museum.

Finger Lakes Museum Presentation – John Adamski, President of the Board of Trustees and Executive Director of the Museum, described the origins of the Museum project and the plan for its creation. He wrote an article four years ago for Finger Lakes magazine about having a museum in the Finger Lakes. A poll was conducted on the magazine's website and response was very positive. This museum would showcase Finger Lakes culture and natural history. Their *Imagine A Place* video was shown (available on their website: www.FingerLakesMuseum.org). In the discussion period, John said they will probably open in 2015. They have purchased the former Branchport Elementary School, which will be an education center and collaborative space. They received some funds from New York State, and have been invited to apply again. Startup is expected to tally over \$30 million. They are currently working with over 90 volunteers. Sustainable funding is not all in place yet. This project is intended to be regional, not for Keuka Lake or Yates County, to impact all 14 counties in the Finger Lakes Region. This museum is expected to serve as a hub to send visitors to other sites, too, as well as draw visitors from the entire region. They have established a partnership with the Rochester Museum & Science Center and expect other

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partnerships. The anticipated annual operating budget is \$2.5 million. John will be contacting other regional tourism projects and also interacting with Native American groups. In the first phase, the aquarium will be the main feature, and the 19th century winery, wildlife exhibits, interactive displays and Gallery of Lakes are also planned to be completed early. There will also be rotating exhibits. John welcomes ideas for interacting with other groups in the region.

June and July (special budget meeting) minutes were approved unanimously. In the first sentence of the July draft minutes, “agenda” was changed to “budget”.

Chair’s Report – David Sparrow reported that the 2013 budget was approved by the Legislature’s PDEQ Committee.

Strategic Tourism Plan – Tom Knipe discussed the changes that led to the revised draft document, and the next steps for adopting it. STPB’s Planning & Evaluation Committee met to review public comments and address other final changes. Next steps: STPB recommends to PDEQ, which recommends to the County Legislature. Overall goals were incorporated and photos changed to include more winter shots and shots showing our diversity. An Executive Summary will be crafted, and that would become a hand-out brochure that would include a web address. Tom has been meeting with lead agencies for the Critical Actions. Thanks were extended to Brett Bossard for design work. Brett said Anthony Hopson has indicated Ithaca College is willing to print copies of the document. Fred Bonn has volunteered CVB resources to create an online flip-book version of the Plan. The Committee’s presentation of the Plan constituting a motion, it was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Convention & Visitors Bureau Report – Fred Bonn was absent from today’s meeting, but his report was included with the agenda. David reported Fred will introduce the CVB’s new Integrated Marketing Manager next month. CVB staff member Bruce Stoff is leaving, and Paul Tatar suggested extending our thanks to him, as he was instrumental in the success of Teachers Week and other initiatives. A letter of appreciation will be sent.

Tourism Partner Awards – Rick Adie reported for the committee. Three awards have gone through the Legislature, and two more have been recommended but not finalized by the Legislature (Highway Superintendents and Dragonboat Festival). The committee recommends an award for Jane Miller and the Cayuga Lake Triathlon, which passed by unanimous voice vote. Engraved paving stones will be prepared for the trailhead of the Cayuga Lake Waterfront Trail at the CVB. Mary Rachun (CVB) has expressed interest in planning a reception/media event when the stones are unveiled.

Community Celebrations Grants – updated guidelines – Tom Knipe reported the fall round has been announced through a press release and distribution of information to tourism partners. The committee met to review guidelines and create a scoring scheme so the guidelines can be easily implemented. New guidelines regarding diversity and sustainability have been added. The fall round will cover events in January – April 2013. This is the only grant program that retained funding to use in a fall round, and Tom expects 6 to 8 applications. David expressed thanks to the committee for its work. Gary Ferguson said the guidelines are now very clear for all applicants.

Announcements –

- Paul Tatar announced a canal conference will be held in Oswego, and registration is online. Stu Stein said this is a group of non-profit organizations that operate along the Erie Canal National Heritage Corridor.

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- Rita Rosenberg thanked members who shared information on the Gad!Zukes event last month. Cooperative Extension also helped with organization and publicity. The event was successful, with about 50 to 75 total visitors who selected sites to visit, so different sites had different attendance numbers. Next year they will make sure they have more things for kids to do.
- Brett Bossard extended thanks to all who helped with the Ithaca Artists Market. 68 artists and approximately 16 organizations participated.
- Tim Joseph said he attended a meeting of the Hydrilla Task Force this morning. The big concern is the possible invasion the south end of Cayuga Lake by Hydrilla. The Task Force is monitoring the Inlet and has selected 1600 sites for sampling. So far, 1200 have been checked and all have no growth.
- Stu Stein asked if we had a report on the Dragon Boat Festival. Tim said they expected lower attendance this year, as the dates were near the dates of the world championships. They are part of a circuit, so the date is assigned and can't be changed locally. Tom Knipe will be meeting with a festival staff person tomorrow, and will suggest more sponsorships.
- Tom reported that the NYS Secretary of State attended a ribbon cutting ceremony in Ithaca for Phase 3 of the Waterfront Trail two weeks ago.
- The Cayuga Lake Blueway Trail plan is being implemented with the award of the consultant contract to Alta Planning and Rick Manning Landscape Architects.
- The Museum of the Earth has received a \$145,000 federal grant for its glacier exhibit.
- Sue Stafford expressed thanks to STPB for making the TC3 Hospitality Program work. The fall semester at TC3 starts 8/23, and on-campus housing is full (capacity 800). This fall the program is hosting international business students from France, who will be touring the area to learn about our wine production. She also thanked STPB for support of the Hospitality Star program, the most successful to date.
- Beverly Baker announced she became an honorary grandmother on 7/31.
- David Sparrow announced the next STPB meeting will be held on 9/19 in the Borg Warner Room of the Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce Building.

With no further business, the meeting David declared the meeting adjourned at 4:40pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathy Wilsea, Secretary
Tompkins County Planning Department

Approved by STPB on _____, 2012

Next Meetings Scheduled

Wednesday, September 19 – 3pm

Wednesday, October 17 – 3pm



Tompkins County Department of Administration

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COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
Joe Mareane
DEPUTY COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
Paula E. F. Younger

"Promoting excellence in County operations while respecting the needs of the people we serve."

TO: Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB)
FROM: Joe Mareane, County Administrator
DATE: July 11, 2012
RE: Tompkins County Tourism Program administration – one year update

It has been a year since we expanded and centralized the County's administrative support for tourism programs funded by the room tax. As promised at the outset, we have undertaken an internal assessment of how the change has worked. With this memo, I am sharing that assessment with you for your review and feedback. It includes a summary of the major accomplishments of the first year of the Senior Planner/Tourism Coordinator position, how the role of the Planning Department in providing support to the Tourism Program is meeting the original objectives for this support, and goals for the coming year.

Tom Knipe, Ed Marx, and I welcome your feedback, including areas where improvement may be needed. To begin that process, we would be happy to present this report to the Executive Committee at a time convenient to its members.

Background: Since June 2011, the Tompkins County Planning Department has provided staff support, strategic planning, grant management and overall program development and coordination for the Tompkins County Tourism Program. This work is performed in direct support of the Strategic Tourism Planning Board's mission to provide oversight and strategic direction for tourism initiatives that promote economic development and enhance the quality of life in Tompkins County. The major portion of this support consists of 35 hours a week of staff support by the Senior Planner/Tourism Coordinator.

Year One Accomplishments: In the first year, the Planning Department has focused on the goals established by the STPB and the Tompkins County Legislature for this position, and has accomplished the following:

1. Strategic plan – clarified structure, defined new elements, proposed and delivered a community workshop and new outreach methods, developed baseline data for industry performance indicators, facilitated STPB work, and wrote a draft for public comment. The plan is on track to be adopted this summer and will set the stage for future work on implementation.
2. Assumed administrative responsibility for the tourism program, quickly embracing its complexity. Developed positive working relationships with tourism program administrators, County staff, and dozens of partners. Improved administrative processes: file management protocols, document templates, process timelines, writing and editing informational documents, etc.

3. Administered grants and improved grant processes:
 - a. Created grant/contract database to reduce staff time spent on clerical functions and increase the availability of information to support analysis of investments;
 - b. Modified applications to enhance clarity around eligibility;
 - c. Streamlined application process including by moving to electronic submission;
 - d. Grant workshops – marketed, coordinated, facilitated, enlivened;
 - e. Provided technical assistance, encouragement and advice to dozens of grant seekers and tourism partners, leading to a 55% increase in grant applications in spring 2012;
 - f. Established scoring rubrics on all grant committees;
 - g. Closely tracked reports.
4. Provided staff support to the STPB:
 - a. Timely agendas, agenda packets and minutes in support of the STPB Chair;
 - b. Policy support – Conflict of interest, rollover, etc.;
 - c. Supported officer position descriptions, new board member training and intake process, committee definitions, recruitment and placement of new members;
 - d. Supported STPB bylaws revision;
 - e. Moved resolutions through the legislative process in a timely fashion;
 - f. Proposed STPB comments to the DEC’s draft S-GEIS on natural gas drilling;
 - g. Basic communications improvements such as minutes, agendas and program documents on the tourism program website, and regular press releases;
5. Provided budget and accounting oversight, leading to accuracy and transparency in accounting procedures:
 - a. Reserve calculations;
 - b. Year-end account reconciliation;
 - c. Grant payment tracking;
 - d. 2013 budget process.
6. Negotiated contracts and coordinated services with Tourism Program administrators.
7. Tax policy support.
 - a. Legal issue surrounding non-payment by a lodger;
 - b. Permanent residency exemption research/analysis.
8. Planning and strategic plan implementation
 - a. Supported development of the RFP for Cayuga Lake Blueway Trail Plan and provided mapping/ data support;
9. Started work on a County Priority Trails Strategy in partnership with the County ad-hoc trails advisory group.

10. Revitalized the Tourism Partner Award Program.

Year Two Major Goals: Ed and Tom have indicated that the overarching goals for the position for the next year include supporting strategic tourism plan implementation, implementing an overhaul of tourism grant programs, and developing and implementing a refined system of program evaluations across all tourism programs. These are listed again below with corresponding measures of success. Within these overarching goals, the Senior Planner/Tourism Coordinator will work to help achieve a number of more detailed programmatic goals. Finally, everything that the Tourism Program does is done in partnership with others in the community. The Senior Planner/Tourism Coordinator will continue to work to engage diverse stakeholders to support tourism development in our County and to promote collaboration amongst tourism partners.

Goal 1: Support strategic tourism plan implementation.

Measures of Success: Direct staff support is provided to advance “critical actions” identified by the Strategic Tourism Plan. The Tourism Program’s decision-making processes reflect the policies that are established by the new plan. Measurable objectives are validated and data sources and baseline figures are established.

Goal 2: Implement an overhaul of tourism grant programs.

Measure of Success: A report is issued to the STPB, specific changes and measures are agreed upon and the new structure is in place in time for the next major grant round (spring 2013).

Goal 3. Develop and implement a refined system of program evaluation across all tourism programs.

Measure of Success: Clear measurables, reporting schemes and timelines, and tools are identified for all programs and their use is adopted by the end of 2013.

Goal 4. Support the STPB and the Legislature in providing effective oversight and strategic direction for the Tompkins County Tourism Program.

Measure of Success: STPB and the Legislature are satisfied with staff support.

In my judgment, the professionalism and quality of the staff support, strategic planning guidance, grant management and overall program development and coordination that the Planning Department has provided to the Tourism program has met or exceeded expectations, and has produced value that justifies the investment of resources.

I look forward to the opportunity to meet with you to hear directly any feedback you may have.

Cc: Will Burbank, Chair, PDEQ Committee & STPB Liaison
Martha Robertson, Chair, Tompkins County Legislature



Tompkins County Festival Program Summary of Activities

Update to the Festivals Committee of the Strategic Tourism Planning Board

Grant Program

There are four components to the Festivals Program grant to the Downtown Ithaca Alliance:

1. Technical Assistance
2. Website Development
3. Equipment Purchasing
4. Production of a Strategic Plan

Technical Assistance

Technical assistance was provided by the festivals program throughout 2011 and into 2012. Assistance included helping to stabilize events and organizations, as well as assisting with long term vision, event design, education (from understanding the responsibilities of boards to how to use software), marketing, budgeting, grants writing, volunteer recruitment, coordination, restructuring components of events for efficiency, working to improve the tourism draw of events, safety and accessibility planning, troubleshooting, fundraising, site use and access, parking plans, co-promotion, packaging and permitting.

Events and organizations that were assisted include Ithaca Festival, Grassroots Festival of Music & Dance, Dragon Boat Festival, Ithaca Scottish Games, Cornell University, Ithaca College, Puerto Rico Festival, First People's Festival, Community Arts Partnership, Cancer Resource Center, Light in Winter Festival, Rhiner Festival, Finger Lakes Environmental Film Festival, Finger Lakes Wine Center, AIDS Ride for Life, Franziska Racker Center, West End Waterfront, Ithaca Asian American Association, Sabado Gigante, Ithaca Fire Department, Latino Civic Association, Greater Ithaca Activities Center, State Theatre of Ithaca, Community School of Music & Arts, Cinemapolis, Ithaca Children's Garden, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Ithaca Youth Bureau, Friends of Stewart Park, Family & Childrens Service, St. Catherine's International Festival, Greenstar Oasis, Tompkins Trust Company, the History Center, restaurants and wineries, plus events in the planning stages including a new Fringe Festival and Fantastic Film Festival. In addition we worked with the City of Ithaca during the year to develop new special events policies and structure, as well as assisting most events that obtain permits within City limits. This also required advocacy on behalf of events due to the proposed fee structure and reduction in services.

Our team also managed our DIA events including Chili Cook-off, Apple Harvest Festival, First Friday Gallery Nights, Summer Concerts, Winter Festival including Ice Wars and Chowder Festival, Halloween, Downtown Living Tours, Restaurant Week, and Downtown Employee Appreciation Week.

Website

A website resource was created with the new domain www.tompkinsfestivals.com. The password protected site (login: tcfestivals pwd: festivals) is now available for use by local event planners. Features on the site include the online version of the events manual, positions available, Information/Data request form, a planning calendar, and oth-

er resource links for equipment and workshops. The site is designed to be interactive.

Equipment Purchasing

The Downtown Ithaca Alliance was able to procure equipment in 2011 for the Festivals program. Purchases included 20 tables, 40 chairs, a bounce house, and pop up tents. In addition, DIA and staff equipment was made available to events including sound systems, staging, generators, as well as other electrical and safety equipment.

Strategic Plan

The Downtown Ithaca Alliance has been working on the Strategic Plan for Festivals. This plan outlines the steps that should be taken by the Strategic Tourism Planning Board, as well as events planners, to make events more successful for tourism and for the community.

Youth Program

Working with the Ithaca Youth Bureau Youth Employment Service, led by Mike Smith, the festival program has introduced youth to festival planning and micro-business. This entrepreneurial program has been going on for two years with youth working on various festivals operating stands, including marketing, advertising, finances, signage, menu design etc. In 2011, the YES program produced the first annual Banana Festival. The event was designed and implemented 100% by students in the program.

Festival Program Interns

The Downtown Ithaca Alliance has hired work study and other interns to assist with the festivals program since the summer of 2010. Each semester and during the summer, interns are assigned to festivals gaining valuable events knowledge and also providing important assistance to the events. Interns have participated from Cornell, Ithaca College, and TC3.

Challenges

The program has not been without challenges. Some of the larger concerns include:

- New event planners requiring significant education before being able to effectively and responsibly manage their events. Workshops for new event planners will be put together in 2012 that include event basics. It is important though to cultivate new planners to increase the diversity in events being offered in the area.
- Equipment breakages. Contracts are being developed to manage the risk associated with the loan program. Deposits will be required so that loss can be minimized.
- Succession and expansion planning: Some events are not developing new leadership, and other events that are relying on all volunteer assistance are getting large and requiring more effective planning that comes from having a dedicated coordinator.
- We continue to see few referrals and inquiries from outlying areas. This is going to require active solicitation. This likely can be accomplished by working closely with the Tourism Coordinator, Tom Knipe.
- The financial crises faced by municipalities are having a great impact on events. We've now seen Ithaca Festival reduce its footprint due to proposed fee increases in the City of Ithaca. The impact will be greater on new, less sophisticated events, and events undertaken by diverse groups.
- The Festivals program needs can sometimes exceed the available resources. The Downtown Ithaca Alliance has now hired a new Events Manager who is able to implement the DIA's main events, thus allowing additional time to focus on this program. The DIA has been working with the Finger Lakes Wine Center to restructure, which delayed the deliverables for this project.

TOMPKINS FESTIVALS

*A Resource for
Tompkins County
Event Planners*



Workshop Series

First Tuesday of the Month – 1pm – 2pm

The Tompkins County Festivals Program will be hosting a series of workshops designed to help event planners in the area focus on important topics related to special events. The workshops are free and open to all event planners in the County.

Tuesday, October 2: Budgeting and Fundraising for Your Special Event

How do you pay for your special event? This workshop will feature a discussion of event budgeting and fundraising including tracking, raising revenues from sponsorship, vendors, merchandise, tickets, concessions, grants, and other donations.

Tuesday, November 6: Marketing and Advertising Your Special Event

What is the best way to get the word out about your special event? This workshop will discuss print, radio, and online advertising, press releases, working with the media, as well as inexpensive ways to market your event including social media, materials development and distribution.

Tuesday, December 4: Enhancing and Measuring the Tourism Impact of Your Event

The Tompkins County Tourism Program supports many events in this area with its primary goal to draw more visitors to the area. How can you enhance your event to increase the likelihood of overnight stays and secondary spending in this community? This workshop will discuss packaging, event design, and ways to measure your success.

Tuesday, February 5: Good Grant writing

What makes a good grant? How do you find out about available grant monies? This workshop will focus on and provide examples of well written grants, as well as local and regional sources of funding.

Tuesday, March 5: Volunteer Recruitment and Management

A well run event attracts volunteers year after year. This workshop will discuss ways to recruit volunteers in this community as well as best practices for volunteer management.

Tuesday, April 2: Greening Your Event

Are you tired of seeing the giant pile of trash left over at the end of your event? This workshop will focus on resources for greening your event including waste reduction, plus trash, recycling and composting plans.

*An additional workshop will be held when decisions have been made about the 2013 City of Ithaca Special event regulations to discuss their impact on local events in the municipality.

TOMPKINS COUNTY FESTIVAL TECHNICAL SUPPORT CONTRACT 2012 SCOPE OF WORK

Project Dates: January to December 2012

Total Contract: \$25,000

Major Project Components

1. Hands-on Technical Assistance – January to December 2012
 - To provide direct telephone and/or in-person technical assistance to at least 20 different entities during calendar year 2012.
 - The duration of this technical assistance will vary according to each entity, ranging from telephone consults to in-person day of event assistance.
 - Contacts will be obtained from the Tompkins County STPB program grant intake process as well as from the City of Ithaca Office of the Clerk.
 - The scope of this assistance will include event planning, budget planning, logistics planning, and assistance with disaster/emergency planning.
2. Applicant Workshops (minimum of 5) – August – December 2012
 - For each funding round, DIA staff will participate in the official applicant information workshops offered by the STPB.
 - For each funding round, the DIA will also provide a separate workshop for event planners interested in submitting for grants that will discuss strategies, grant preparation, meeting expectations and how to propose a viable special event project.
 - Throughout the year, the DIA will host (3) additional workshops on specific topics pertaining to special events and festival planning. Topics may include, but not be limited to, working with vendors, fundraising, budgeting, volunteer management, and safety planning.
3. Ongoing Information/Planning/Education – January-December 2012
 - Maintain the tompkinsfestivals.com website.
 - Integrate festivals program into regional marketing including working with the CVB, ithacaevents.com, visitithaca.com, and explore cooperative marketing.
 - Maintain databases of vendors, volunteers etc. and make available to event planners
 - Ongoing Strategic Plan review and implementation.
 - Work with STPB staff to update applications, festivals program process, and conduct program evaluation.

(Items #1-3: \$20,000)

4. Shared Equipment Program – January – December 2012
 - DIA will survey event managers to assess current equipment needs (e.g. safety equipment)
 - The DIA will make equipment purchases and set up a policy for equipment sharing. Utilization will be tracked.

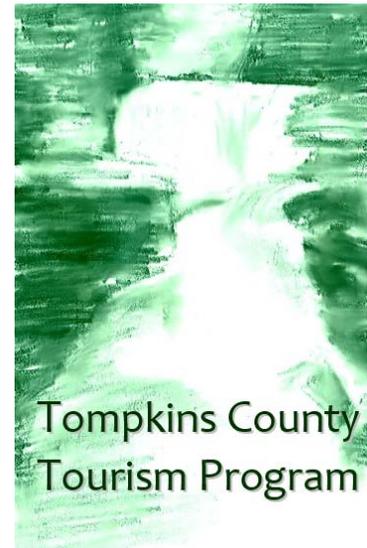
(Item #4: \$5,000)

Other possible components

5. A Formal Youth Mentoring Program – Summer/Fall 2012
 - The DIA will work with youth organizations such as GIAC and the Youth Employment Service of the Ithaca Youth Bureau to mentor youth in community event planning
6. Municipality (City of Ithaca and other towns) policy negotiation/assistance – Jan-Dec 2012
7. Explore shared event center concept and investigate incremental steps (see below) .i.e. shared printing/copier

APPLICATION GUIDELINES (DRAFT 9/7/12)

2013 Strategic Tourism Implementation Grant Funding Opportunity



Deadline

Grant applications/proposals must be emailed by 11am, Tuesday January 8th, 2013.

Email to: tknipe@tompkins-co.org

Description of Funding Opportunity

\$147,000 is available in the 2013 budget of the Tompkins County Tourism Program for Strategic Tourism Plan Implementation. The Tourism Program is funded by the County's hotel room occupancy tax. The overarching purpose of these one-time funds is to support a significant, early drive towards implementing the Tompkins County 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan, which was adopted in Fall 2012 by the Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB) and the Tompkins County Legislature as the County's guiding document for tourism development. The County seeks proposals that will implement *critical actions* identified in the 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan.

The minimum amount that may be requested is \$25,000; the maximum amount is \$75,000. There is no match requirement, but proposals demonstrating community support by way of matching financial and in-kind support may be rated more highly. The total number of individual awards made through this funding opportunity will be between two and five. Grant awards will be made through a competitive process. Both existing programs/projects and new programs/projects are eligible to submit proposals. This funding opportunity is not subject to the 60/40 split for tourism marketing/product development that is currently used as an annual budgeting guideline by the Tompkins County Tourism Program. This funding opportunity is designed to be flexible in terms of the types of proposals that will be considered and at the same time focused on direct implementation of *critical actions* identified by the Strategic Tourism Plan. It does not replace any existing grant programs of the Tompkins County Tourism Program.

Critical Actions

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

Eligibility

Not all entities are eligible to receive funding from County government. In general, a County government may award a grant to another municipality or certain not-for-profit agencies. Organizations currently funded through ongoing room tax budget allocations are eligible, and entities proposing new projects that are not currently funded through ongoing tourism budget

allocations are also potentially eligible. Proposals for capital projects are eligible. If you are unsure about your eligibility, please consult with the grant administrator.

Limitations

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

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

- New Tourism Initiatives whose total one time request is less than \$25,000.
- An ongoing event or project that has been funded in the past through a Tourism Project Grant, New Tourism Initiative Grant, and/or Tourism Marketing and Advertising Grant and is not proposing a significant new offering.
- Projects that are part of the current work plan of an existing program that is funded by the Tompkins County Tourism Program, where a critical action will be best implemented through an alignment of existing resources.

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

Please refer to the Tompkins County Tourism Program's website for information about other grant programs of the Tompkins County Tourism Program: <http://www.tompkins-co.org/tourism/>. Other grants may be available in these program categories:

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

Application Timing

A funding opportunity announcement will be made after November 20th, 2012. Applications will be due by January 8th, 2012. Potential applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the grant administrator early in the process to review the proposal concept and/or review drafts. The STPB and legislative review process and decisions will take place by March 1, 2013. Adhering to this schedule will allow successful applicants to begin putting these funds to use in the first half of 2013. It will also allow applicants to know the award decisions **before** applications for the Tourism Capital Grant program are due in the spring 2013 grant round.

Review Committee and Award Process

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

- At least two members of the Planning & Evaluation Committee of the STPB,
- At least one member of the Tourism Capital Grant review committee,
- At least one member of the New Tourism Initiative/Tourism Project Grant review committee, and
- At least one member of the Marketing and Advertising Grant review committee.
- In any case, a majority of review committee members shall consist of voting STPB members, but not all IRC members need be STPB members.
- Potential review committee members will be asked to disclose their organizational ties in order to limit conflicts of interest.

All grant applications/proposals will be evaluated together as a pool. After the applications are reviewed, the IRC will issue a letter to each applicant indicating the proposal evaluation results. After awards are approved by the Tompkins County Legislature, funds will be disbursed pursuant to a contract with the County. Awards are not intended to be on a reimbursement basis; award payments will be made up-front. Contracts with awardees will be written for a period not to exceed twelve months; the funds must be used within a year of the start date of the contract.

Evaluation Criteria

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

Project Readiness. Does the proposal demonstrate readiness to use the grant funds and implement the proposed project in 2013?

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

Project Benefits. How significant is the potential for direct, measurable tourism impact in Tompkins County? If developed, will there be economic benefits in Tompkins County in the form of additional hotel/B&B room nights and visitor spending? Are the expected economic benefits likely to be realized, given other constraints or barriers? Are there additional significant quality of life benefits? Measurable benefits may occur in years subsequent to 2013.

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

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

Demonstration of Community Support. Are matching cash and in-kind contributions secured or likely? Is evidence of partnerships provided? Although no match is required, applications demonstrating community support by way of matching financial and in-kind support will be rated more highly on this criterion. Does the proposal contain Letters of Commitment from participants, co-funders, and related businesses and other organizations?

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

Requirements. Proposals must meet the following requirements:

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

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

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

include letters of interest or commitment from team members, businesses or other organizations critical to the success of the project.

Application Directions

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

Program Budget Worksheet – Required Attachment

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

Statement of Work – Required Attachment

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

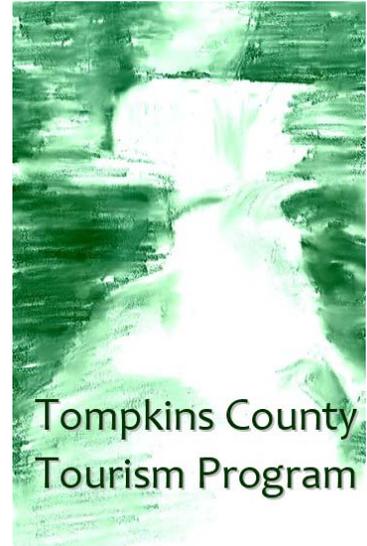
Assistance

Please call or email if you have any questions or need help putting together your application.

Tom Knipe
Senior Planner/Tourism Coordinator
Tompkins County Planning Department
121 E. Court St.
Ithaca, NY 14850
tknipe@tompkins-co.org
607-274-5575 (direct)

APPLICATION (DRAFT 9/7/12)

2013 Strategic Tourism Implementation Grant Funding Opportunity



I. BASIC INFORMATION

Project/Proposal Name: _____

Applicant Organization: _____

Contact Person: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Request: \$ _____

II. PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION

Describe your proposed project.

III. STRATEGIC TOURISM IMPLEMENTATION

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

IV. EXPECTED BENEFITS

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

V. ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION

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

VI. BUDGET NARRATIVE

Describe how you propose to use the requested funds.

VII. IMPACT OF FUNDING

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

ATTACHMENTS

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

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

____ Other Attachments - OPTIONAL

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

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

PROPOSAL CHECKLIST

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

- ____ Questions I through VII are answered completely and concisely, in no more than ten pages (proposal narrative)
- ____ The budget worksheet is completed using the template (required attachment)
- ____ The Statement of Work is complete and accurate (required attachment)
- ____ Optional attachments are provided as needed
- ____ The proposal narrative, required attachments, and any optional attachments are compiled into **a single .pdf file.**
- ____ **Email this proposal file electronically** to tknipe@tompkins-co.org no later than 11am, Tuesday, January 8th. Mailed, faxed or hand-delivered proposals will not be accepted. Upon receipt of your complete proposal, you will receive an email confirmation of receipt.

If you do not receive a confirmation via email by the end of business on 1/8/13, please follow up to ensure that your proposal was received!



Ithaca/Tompkins County Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB)

Report to:

Strategic Tourism Planning Board

September 19, 2012

Submitted by: Fred Bonn, Director

MARKET UPDATE:

STR Report 2012 YTD – Occupancy for the last 12 months is up 2.8% with Average Daily Rate up 4.9%. 2012 Year to date shows a 5% increase in Revenue and a 7.9% increase over the last 12 months. The month of July took a big dip however with Occupancy down 5.8% and Revenue down 2.8%. We believe this to be due to two factors. 1. The 4th of July holiday fell on a Wednesday and reports are that business was off as a result. 2. Last July, Watkins Glen International hosted the series of Phish concerts. We know that several Ithaca hotels were host sites for the concert promoters as well as several group tours that were packaged around the concerts.

Fairfield Inn – The 106 room Fairfield Inn continues to move along. The management team, Keystone Hotel Management, says they remain on schedule with a target opening at the end of March / beginning of April 2013.

Holiday Inn – For several months I have been reporting that the Holiday Inn Conference Center project was scheduled to commence this November. In the last month the ownership group, Hart Hotels, has decided to delay the project by one year. The project has received all of the necessary approvals from the City of Ithaca and the new timeline will have renovations of the 80 rooms in the tower beginning in Nov. 2013. These rooms will re-open in April of 2014 with the entire project scheduled for completion March/April of 2015.

Ithaca Marriott – A month ago it was announced that The Hotel Ithaca, originally started by Jeff Rimland, will now be a full service Marriott. Jeff has assembled his financing and brought on additional partners for this project. They are working with the City of Ithaca to obtain approvals to their revisions. It was reported that they were hoping to have a ground breaking this fall.

MARKETING AND PROMOTION:

Underwriting Campaign on WBFO in Buffalo – We will be launching a Public Radio underwriting campaign in Buffalo this Fall as part of our efforts to increase our brand awareness in this market. Highlighting key events and activities including concerts, theater performances and festivals will be central to these spots.

ESTO – Kristy Mitchell and I attended this two+ day conference last month that was focused on destination marketing. Much of the content featured how to link social media with traditional media campaigns and how to position a destination using social and emerging media. Biggest take aways were; 1. Activation of mobile devices is 3x's the national birthrate. 2. Short burst video is becoming more common platform for viral marketing. 3. Continuous Partial Attention Disorder is real and our next generation of customer is suffering from it.

Booking Engine on VisitIthaca.com – I have reached an agreement with Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance to embed a booking engine on VisitIthaca.com. We will be making this enhancement available to accommodations in November. The system's backbone is BookDirect which is currently being used successfully by FLTA, Corning and Cooperstown.

Accommodations Search and Corresponding Calendar of Events – We have gone live with a new feature on VisitIthaca.com that's pretty exciting. Based on a suggestion we received from Leslie Greene at the Kitchen Theatre, customers who enter their dates of travel on our website are now not only shown where hotel and B&B rooms are available, but there is also a rotating gallery and links to events taking place before, during and shortly after their stay.

2013 Travel Guide – Work on our 2013 guide has begun. We are contracting with former Marketing and Communications Manager, Bruce Stoff, to assist in this year's production.

2013 Cooperative Marketing and Advertising Opportunities – Kristy Mitchell is in the final stages of developing a comprehensive coop. marketing and advertising piece for our partners. This will include opportunities like we have had in the past as well as some new opportunities that Kristy's developed to feature partners on Facebook and YouTube.

Meetings / Conferences, Tour Groups and Athletic Events:

September Familiarization Tour for Group Tour Companies – SOLD OUT! - Mary and Louise in our office and several Directors of Sales at local hotels have received commitments from 12 owners of motor coach companies that they will be attending our Familiarization Tour on September 24th and 25th. This two day event will be attended by bus tour companies from Ontario, New York City, PA, NJ, MD and OH.

EARNED MEDIA AND PUBLIC RELATIONS – Attached to my report are clippings from recent media stories that our office has had a hand in, as well as a few stories that feature Ithaca that were not influenced by our office.

World Café in Ithaca – Based on a very successful event in November 2009, we have negotiated to partner with WXPB and David Dye's World Café to sponsor another get-away contest this past weekend. The event was built around a performance at the State Theatre by Josh Ritter and it included an interview by David Dye that will be recorded for national broadcast.

The Today Show – I Love NY asked cities across New York to submit a get-away contest package for The Today Show. We worked with LaTourelle and Experience The Finger Lakes to put together a fantastic entry and we were selected to be one of two contests that will receive national exposure during their "Fan of the Week" segment that aired on September 3rd.

Smith Travel Report for Tompkins County – July, 2012

Occupancy (%)	2012	Year To Date	
	Jul	2011	2012
This Year	75.1	60.0	60.6
Last Year	79.7	60.3	60.0
Percent Change	-5.8	-0.6	1.1

Demand	2012	Year To Date	
	Jul	2011	2012
This Year	36,031	196,241	198,686
Last Year	38,146	197,332	196,241
Percent Change	-5.5	-0.6	1.2

ADR	2012	Year To Date	
	Jul	2011	2012
This Year	136.71	130.60	135.45
Last Year	132.89	121.06	130.60
Percent Change	2.9	7.9	3.7

Revenue	2012	Year To Date	
	Jul	2011	2012
This Year	4,925,888	25,629,747	26,911,859
Last Year	5,069,289	23,889,621	25,629,747
Percent Change	-2.8	7.3	5.0

Ithaca / Tompkins County CVB Dashboard – Aug. 2012

Visitor Information Services – Aug. 2012

Requests for info. Aug: 3452, up 32% over 2011
 YTD Requests for info. Aug: 25522, up 42% over 2011

Visitor Center Traffic - Aug. 2011:
 East Shore Drive: 1813 (-13% over 2011)
 Downtown Visitor Center: 997 (-12% over 2011)
 DT Kiosk: 938

VisitIthaca.com Stats - Aug. 2012 & YTD Aug. 2012

August 2012	Desktop	Mobile	Total	2011	Change
Visits	45,014	4,543	49,557	42,661	16%
Pageviews	152,461	29,732	182,193	166,389	9%
Pages/Visit	3.39	6.54		3.9	
Avg. time on Site	4:07	3:06		3:48	
YTD Aug. 2012					
Visits	260,191	21,576	281,767	259,258	9%
Pageviews	918,465	131,281	1,049,746	997,514	5%
Pages/Visit	3.53	6.08		3.85	
Avg. time on Site	4:00	2:45		3:47	

Facebook – as of 9/12/12

- Lifetime “Likes” – 10,330

Group Sales Activity – August, 2012

Leads Distributed	2
Prospects Generated	74
Sales Kits Distributed	3
Prospects converted to Leads	1
Groups Assisted/Serviced	8
Site Visits Conducted	3

Lead sent date	Event account	Event status	Event start date	Event end date	Total Requested Room Nights	Multiplier	Economic Impact	Source
8/3/2012	Collegiate State Track Meet	Lead	2/21/2012	2/22/2013	800	260	\$208,000.00	IC Referral
8/30/2011	Medical Retreat	Cancelled	9/27/2012	9/28/2012	120	260	\$31,200.00	Email Request
12/1/2011	Carefree Capers	Cancelled	10/2/2012	10/5/2012	26	353	\$9,178.00	ABA
2/2/2012	Mary Kay Sales Leaders 32nd Fall Retreat	Booked	10/5/2012	10/6/2012	80	260	\$20,800.00	Call-in
11/21/2011	Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Training	Booked	10/8/2012	10/11/2012	40	260	\$10,400.00	Email Request
4/11/2012	NYS Collegiate Tennis Tournament	Booked	10/12/2012	10/14/2012	192	260	\$49,920.00	IC Referral
4/16/2012	IC October Volleyball Tournament	Booked	10/12/2012	10/13/2012	53	260	\$13,780.00	IC Referral
7/6/2012	Land Grant Conference	Definite	10/16/2012	10/19/2012	600	260	\$156,000.00	CU Referral
4/27/2012	High Peaks Audubon Society	Cancelled	10/19/2012	10/21/2012	81	353	\$28,593.00	CVB Generated
6/11/2012	ADG Leadership Forum	Awaiting Client Response	10/24/2012	10/25/2012	130	260	\$33,800.00	ESSAE
3/26/2012	Princeton Soccer	Booked	10/26/2012	10/27/2012	28	260	\$7,280.00	Accommodation Referral
3/26/2012	Princeton Field Hockey	Booked	10/27/2012	10/28/2012	20	260	\$5,200.00	Accommodation Referral
5/3/2012	IC Wrestling Tournament	Definite	11/1/2012	11/2/2012	200	260	\$67,600.00	IC Referral
1/26/2012	Turkey Shoot- Varsity Tournament	Booked	11/2/2012	11/4/2012	200	250	\$50,000.00	Repeat Business
1/26/2012	Turkey Shoot- JV Tournament	Booked	11/9/2012	11/11/2012	200	250	\$50,000.00	Repeat Business
9/7/2012	Alpha Delta Phi	Lead	11/9/2012	11/10/2012	24	260	\$6,240.00	Call-in
1/27/2012	NYSPPHSSA Girls Swimming/Diving Championships	Booked	11/15/2012	11/16/2012	300	250	\$75,000.00	Ithaca College
6/11/2012	NACUFS Fall Meeting	Awaiting Client Response	11/19/2012	11/20/2012	100	260	\$26,000.00	ESSAE
6/28/2012	NCAA Wrestling Regional Meet	Lost	2/28/2013	3/2/2013	600	260	\$156,000.00	IC Referral
3/20/2012	2013 YMCA Swimming Championships	Definite	3/15/2013	3/17/2013	500	260	\$130,000.00	IC Referral
3/21/2012	Fulton County YMCA Flying Fish	Booked	3/15/2013	3/17/2013	65	260	\$16,900.00	IC Referral
3/23/2012	Saratoga Springs YMCA	Booked	3/15/2013	3/17/2013	120	260	\$31,200.00	IC Referral
8/3/2012	Fry Wedding	Lead	5/9/2013	5/11/2013	60	353	\$21,180.00	Call-in
6/6/2012	Liu/Jacob Wedding	Booked	5/17/2013	5/18/2013	20	353	\$7,060.00	Call-in
7/23/2012	D'Amato Wedding	Definite	5/17/2013	5/18/2013	80	353	\$28,240.00	Call-in
4/17/2012	Butterbaugh Wedding	Booked	6/15/2013	6/15/2013	40	353	\$14,120.00	Call-in
	Ohio Motor Coach Mystery Tour	Awaiting Client Response	6/17/2013	6/20/2013	200	353	\$70,600.00	CVB Generated
9/4/2012	Masterson-Robinson IC Reunion	Lead	8/23/2013	8/24/2013	50	353	\$17,650.00	Call-in
2/6/2012	NYSPPHSSA Girls Swimming/Diving Championships	Booked	11/21/2013	11/22/2013	300	250	\$75,000.00	Ithaca College
7/26/2012	NYS Snowmobile Assoc.	Lead	4/24/2014	4/26/2014	1400	260	\$364,000.00	NewYorkMeetings.com
4/20/2012	Engineering Dept. Forum	Booked	6/15/2014	6/18/2014	67	260	\$17,420.00	CU Referral



7 Semi-Secret North American Swimming Holes

Nothing says summer like the swimming hole, a hidden oasis that's usually reached by a short walk along an overgrown path and often sporting a rope swing and pure aquatic refreshment. Whether tucked away in the Ozarks or just off the road in the New Mexico desert, a swimming hole engenders your inner child like few other experiences. Here are 7 that will help you beat the heat this summer. *Text by Crai S. Bower | Photo editing by Mike Hipple*

< > 5 of 7



Robert H. Treman State Park, Ithaca, N.Y.

The bumper stickers read “Ithaca is Gorges” for good reason, as shale channels provide the Northeast’s best assortment of natural swimming pools. Buttermilk Falls State Park also provides a wide cascading swath of freshwater, and is just a skipping stone’s distance from city center. Visitors to [Treman State Park](#) encounter a dozen falls en route to the deep pools beneath the lower falls of Enfield Creek. The 115-foot-tall Lucifer Falls is up the path away from the swimming area, where the adventurous slide beneath the falling water and the thrill seekers jump from the shale plateau six feet above the deepest pool.

Bing: [View more photos of Treman State Park](#)

Of Gorges, Grapes, and Grains

Discovering Ithaca, New York

July 16, 2012 [New York, Northeast](#)



Story by Jeff and Stephanie Sylva

As we descended the narrow trail into Fall Creek Gorge we came upon a doe grazing on the steep hillside. After stopping a moment so as not to startle the deer, we continued our walk passing within less than ten feet of her. The doe, obviously aware of our presence, continued to graze unfazed by our interruption. After reaching the bottom of the trail, we spent about 20 minutes just enjoying the view of the cascades in the gorge and reflecting on the beauty of the scene and the experience of encountering the deer.

A scene such this is something that many people experience quite often when venturing into natural settings. The reason this experience was somewhat unique is that it occurred on the campus of Cornell University in Ithaca, NY. Although we have seen many beautiful college campuses, we were very impressed that two beautiful gorges, the aforementioned Fall Creek Gorge and Cascadilla Gorge, are located on the Cornell campus. These are just two of the many gorges to be found in Ithaca.



Taughannock Falls

“Ithaca is Gorges”

The clearly-intended pun in the tourism tagline for the City of Ithaca clearly highlights some of the city and surrounding area’s main attractions – the many ice-age gorges and their numerous waterfalls and cascades. In the three days we spent in Ithaca, we tried to experience them all; but there are just too many, so we did our best to see as many as we could. We started with Buttermilk Falls State Park, hiking the 1.5-mile round-trip Gorge Trail. The ascent is somewhat strenuous, but the views of the waterfalls and cascades within the gorge make the trip well worth the effort. The park has a life-guarded swimming area in the natural pool below the falls. It looked very enticing, but we were there before the swimming season opened.

Two other state parks where we hiked the gorges were Taughannock Falls State Park– its 215-foot falls is higher than Niagara Falls- and Robert H.Treman State Park– impressive stonework on the trails built by workers in the Depression-era Civilian Conservation Corps is a highlight here.



The Upper Gorge Trail at Treman State Park

Both of these parks also have outstanding views of waterfalls and breath-taking scenes in the gorges. All three state parks have an excellent variety of trails of varying difficulty enabling hikers of all abilities the opportunity to enjoy the wonderful natural beauty of the area. Swimming and camping is also available at each of these parks. Visit the [New York State Parks](http://www.nysparks.com) website at www.nysparks.com for more information.

If you should want even more waterfalls, there are plenty more in and around Ithaca. A favorite for locals seeking a momentary respite from a hectic schedule or a quiet spot for a bagged lunch is Ithaca Falls, an idyllic setting just minutes from downtown. Contact the [Ithaca-Tompkins County Convention & Visitors Bureau](http://www.VisitIthaca.com) at 800/28-Ithaca (284-8422) or www.VisitIthaca.com for its Official Travel Guide and the “Waterfalls In & Around Ithaca” booklet.



Lucifer Falls in Robert F. Treman State Park

Outdoor adventure in Ithaca is certainly not limited to viewing gorges and waterfalls, not with 40-mile long Cayuga Lake around. Boating, sailing, kayaking, lake cruises, and fishing are great ways to get out on this member of NY's famed Finger Lakes. Hiking, biking, golfing, horseback riding, horseback riding, hot-air balloon rides, and even skydiving are other ways to experience Ithaca's outdoors.

Grapes Galore!

The Finger Lakes region of NY is well-known for its many wineries, and a visit to Ithaca puts one in close proximity to more than 25 wineries. You might begin your wine region tour with a stop at the [Finger Lakes Wine Center](#) in downtown Ithaca for some information and even a tasting. Be sure to pick up the [Cayuga Lake Wine Trail](#) Map & Guide. The Wine Trail is the first organized and longest running wine trail in America. With 15 wineries, 1 cidery, and 4 distilleries you're sure to find something to your liking. Many of the wineries offer dining options in wonderful settings both indoors and al fresco. Also check out the Vino Visa Coupon Book for discounts and free tastings. The coupon book can be purchased for \$15 at any of the wineries or online.



A Finger Lakes vineyard in the fall

Two interesting and enjoyable stops we recommend are [Ports of New York](#) on Taber St. in Ithaca and [Corks & More Wine Bar](#) on W. Buffalo St. in Ithaca. At Ports of New York you will meet Frederic Bouche, who will share with you the fascinating history of his family's winery in France beginning in the early 1900's, as well as show you his equipment and process for producing his Meleau Specialty Wines.

Corks & More is a great place to experience, not the art of making wine, but rather a unique way of serving it. This wine bar/lounge features the new technology of the WineStation, a self-serve dispensing system that allows customers to use a pre-paid tasting card to dispense a 1 oz., a 2.5 oz., or a full 5 oz. serving of a wide variety of wines. If you like wine, you may feel like a kid in a candy store. A fully-stocked bar, including over 40 craft beers and a great list of scotches is also available, along with a tasting menu of small plate cuisine.

And, of course, the Grains

After hiking the gorges and enjoying the grapes of this Finger Lakes region, it's time now to enjoy the grains – at least the ones that the local breweries and brew pubs use in their craft beers. [Ithaca Beer Company](#) is open

every day for tastings and conducts tours on Saturdays. Naturally, its fine selection of craft brews is available for retail sale.

Local brewpubs featuring their own craft brews include [Bandwagon Brewpub](#) on Cayuga St. and the [Scalehouse Brewpub](#) on Cinema Dr., both in Ithaca. [Rogues' Harbor Brewing Company](#) is located at the Rogues' Harbor Inn on East Shore Drive in Lansing, just five miles north of Ithaca. We can't account for the brewpubs brews, but we can say that Ithaca Beer makes some very fine beers, especially the Cascazilla Red Ale and Flower Power IPA.

Ithaca is about discovery.

When you are done hiking the gorges, and sipping the wine, and enjoying the beer, what else will you discover in Ithaca? Plenty. What would you expect from a city where there are 758 graduate-degree-holders per square mile?

Take for instance Ithaca's [Discovery Trail](#), a group of eight educational organizations whose goal is to promote awareness and understanding of the connections among art, history, literature, science, and the natural world. Trail sites include the [Cayuga Nature Center](#), [Cornell Lab of Ornithology](#), [Cornell Plantations](#), [The History Center](#), [Johnson Museum of Art](#), [Museum of the Earth](#), [Sciencenter](#), and the [Tompkins County Public Library](#). With a wide arrange of activities, exhibits and hands-on fun, The Discovery Trail has something for everyone. We only had time to explore the Botanical Gardens and Arboretum of [Cornell Plantations](#) located on the university's campus.

Culture and the arts do not take a back seat to nature in Ithaca. The many theaters, music venues, galleries, and artist studios are thriving with creative expression. From downtown galleries and sculpture exhibits, to the museums and galleries of Cornell and Ithaca College, art enthusiasts will find a wealth of creative exhibits. Music and performing arts are also thriving in the community, with a wide variety of concert venues, nightclubs, and theaters offering a wide choice of local and internationally acclaimed artists, including a number of free concert series.



Ithaca Commons on a summer day

We took in a wonderful production of a new musical, "Waiting for Spring," at the [Kitchen Theatre Company's](#) intimate 99-seat, 3/4-round theater. If this production is typical of the Kitchen's goal of presenting "bold, intimate, engaging" theater, then this nationally-recognized, year-round professional theater company will continue the success it has experienced for the last 21 years.

Dining can be a great experience in Ithaca— especially when you consider the fact that Ithaca has more restaurants per capita than New York City. (In 2008 *The New York Times* called Ithaca a “gastronomic oasis.”) Downtown has a wealth of choices, from upscale bistros to casual cafes and taverns. A dining experience you don’t want to miss is Moosewood Restaurant, which is well-known for its 11 internationally acclaimed cookbooks. It features vegetarian cooking, with a daily fish entrée on the menu as well. *Bon Appetit* named this restaurant “one of the 13 most influential restaurants of the 20th century.” We never knew that vegetarian cuisine could be so creative and inspired.

Another recommendation we have is for a treat – ice cream from Purity Ice Cream, which has been a popular spot for ice cream and other treats in Ithaca since 1936. (Did you know that Ithaca is the birthplace of the ice cream sundae?)



Sunset on Cayuga Lake

Lodging in Ithaca is also eclectic. There are plenty of chain hotels if that’s your preference. But Ithaca has a wealth of wonderful inns and B&B’s. We stayed at [MacIntire’s Cottage B&B](#), and we felt like we were at a home away from home. The Cottage is located in a residential, walking neighborhood and is a mere 3 miles from the town of Ithaca and 2 miles from Cornell (the closest B&B to the college). Judith MacIntire has been welcoming visitors to her B&B since 1989 with her warm hospitality. For a complete list of B&B’s visit the websites of [Bed & Breakfast of Greater Ithaca](#) and [Association of Historic Bed & Breakfast Inns of the Ithaca Area](#).

We enjoyed our experience in Ithaca, discovering for ourselves some of the many things available in the eclectic college town. Discover for yourself the vibe that is intimated in its slogan – “Ithaca is Gorges.”

2 million monthly page views, 49,000 subscribers to e-newsletter

10 Natural Swimming Holes for Cooling Off

By **Laura Kiniry**

Aug 6, 2012

With record temps blanketing the U.S. this summer, finding a place to cool off is more important than ever. From Arizona to Puerto Rico, these natural swimming holes are scenic, refreshing -- and just what you need on a hot summer day.



Enfield Falls, New York

Where: Ithaca, the [Finger Lakes](#), New York

Robert H. Treman State Park's beloved swimming hole sits at the bottom of 70-foot-tall Enfield Falls (also known as Lower Fall). With its deep and shallow pools, diving board, and superb spots for sunning, the place is a magnet for families, couples, and college students looking to chill. If the crowds get too much, take in one of the park's gorge hikes or visit one of its 11 additional waterfalls.

How to Get There: There's plenty of parking (\$7 per vehicle) on either side of the park, and a short, wheelchair-accessible trail to the swimming hole. A lifeguard is on duty during designated summer hours.

More Info: www.nyfalls.com/treman.html

Photo Caption: Enfield Falls at Robert H. Treman State Park, Ithaca

Photo by [Carl M/Flickr.com](#)

Read more: <http://www.frommers.com/slideshow/index.cfm?group=1195&p=4#ixzz22y1LFOc7>

Fodor's (2.4 Million online monthly visitors)

Best NY Restaurants (Beyond the Boroughs)

Travel Blog 

Best NY Restaurants (Beyond the Boroughs)

Posted by [Jimmy Im](#) on August 28, 2012 at 2:54:52 PM EDT

Posted in [Restaurants](#) Tagged: [New York](#), [Restaurants](#)

By [Jimmy Im](#)

Fodor's Contributor

New York City is often called the dining capital of the world. But if visitors were to step outside the Big Apple (and its boroughs), they'd find culinary treasures just a train- or bus-ride away. From the Adirondacks to the Hudson Valley, chefs are serving up unforgettable gastronomic experiences in otherwise rustic and elegant establishments. We rounded-up the best restaurants in the state of New York that are worth the commute.



Moosewood Restaurant

Five hours from Manhattan

Foodies who also like to cook turn to executive chef David Hirsch for inspiration. The man behind the popular [Moosewood Restaurant](#) (which was named by *Bon Appetit* as one of the 13 most influential restaurants of the 20th century) is also a gardener who offers classes, lectures, and workshops on cooking and gardening. His book, *Moosewood Restaurant Kitchen Garden*, offers insight and instructions on growing, harvesting, and cooking home-grown produce as well as designing gardens. The [Finger Lakes](#)-based restaurant, opened in 1973, specializes in multi-ethnic cuisine with a vegetarian emphasis. The menu changes every day according to what's fresh, local, and in season.

Don't Miss: Vegetable tofu burger, when they have it. (Trust us.)

September issue of AAA Horizons (circulation of 1,660,000) and on AAA.com (4,338,759 unique monthly visitors) in the 10TripTiks feature on scenic bike paths.

The Cayuga Waterfront Trail is highlighted as one of the most scenic bike paths in the Finger Lakes region along the shores of Cayuga Lake.

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2. Cayuga Waterfront Trail, Ithaca, N.Y. One of the most scenic bike paths in the Finger Lakes region, this paved waterfront trail cuts through the lovely Cass Park and continues along the shores of Cayuga Lake. Two-thirds complete, construction on the final 2-mile stretch – connecting Cass Park and Ithaca's Farmers Market at DeWitt Park – will begin next year to complete the 6-mile trail.

Photo by Kristian Reynolds, courtesy of Ithaca Convention and Visitors Bureau

The Best River Towns in America: Ithaca, New York

This isn't your classic river town; it's situated on the shores of the Cayuga Lake

By: Ali Carr Troxell



Cayuga Lake, New York. *Photographer:* Stephen Simpson/Corbis

Ithaca isn't your classic river town. It's on the shores of 40-mile-long, 400-foot-deep Cayuga Lake, after all. But all that water is replenished by nine creeks, which create hundreds of waterfalls and geologically stunning gorges along the city's front stoop—something readers consistently pointed out. “I can carry my kayak half a block from my house, put it into Cascadilla Creek, and head out to Cayuga Lake,” says resident Cat Holmes. There's also readily accessible kiteboarding, fishing, cliff jumping, road cycling, backpacking, and cross-country skiing. “Shindagin Hollow State Forest is the reason Ithaca is one of the top-five mountain-biking towns in the country,” notes attorney Dick Ruswick. Vineyards and orchards abut organic farms. One hundred and fifty of the vendors at the farmers' market, on the shores of Cayuga Lake, are from within 30 miles of town. Breweries like the new [Bandwagon Brewpub](#) and the [Ithaca Beer Company](#) pump out local favorites like High Step Weizenbock, which “won the New York State gold medal this year,” points out Jenny Emerson, a fourth-grade teacher in the Ithaca City School District. While the vibe can be crunchy (“Mate herbal tea is the dominant religious group,” says local Dan Hersky), the place is full of arts, theater, and highly educated individuals, thanks to the two universities that face off above town: Ithaca College and Cornell University, which locals claim is the most beautiful Ivy League campus. Winters can be tough, and so can the job prospects, unless you work in academia. But the appeal of living in the city can be life changing, as longtime resident Nancy Lazarus can attest: “I came to visit friends in Ithaca in 1974. I've lived here since.”

BEST NEW TRAILS: “The community is working to establish an Emerald Necklace that would encircle Ithaca with preserved land,” says Ruswick. “For bikers, the Black Diamond trail is scheduled to open this year between Ithaca and Taughannock Falls park, 10 miles away, and more extensions are planned.” Also, the last section of the multiuse Waterfront Trail, connecting Cass Park to Stewart Park via the farmers' market, should be open soon.

ON THE TOWN: “If music is your thing, bring your lawn chairs and blankets to the outdoor summer concerts at Taughannock Falls State Park,” says Christine Peterson, a veterinary technician at Cornell.

WHAT YOU GET FOR \$10: [One Ithaca Hour](#), a local currency developed in 1991 by residents to help keep money in the local economy. Today there are an estimated \$150,000 worth of Hours in circulation, redeemable for goods and services at dozens of local businesses.

<http://www.outsideonline.com/adventure-travel/best-towns/Best-Towns-Ithaca-New-York.html>



TODAY | Aired on September 03, 2012

Historian fan says KLG, Hoda best hosts in history

Fan of the week Joseph Crisalli from McKinney, Texas, proclaims his love for Kathie Lee and Hoda through poetry. For his loyalty, he gets a three-night stay at La Tourelle Resort and Spa in Ithaca, New York.

<http://video.today.msnbc.msn.com/today/48842933#48842933>

Fall 2012 Community Celebrations Grant Applications

SUMMARY and RECOMMENDATIONS

Celebration	Date(s)	Expected Attendance	Description	Committee Comments	Request	Recommend
Tompkins County Veteran's Parade	11/4/2012	500-1000	93rd Annual Veteran's Day Parade celebrating United States veterans of all wars.	<i>Narrow audience for parade as proposed. Want to support veteran's, but encourage different format for Veteran's Day celebration. Application does not respond to sustainability. Could do more to encourage diversity. No connection to Civil War Susquecentennial efforts.</i>	\$2,000	\$0
Kwanzaa 2012	12/28/2012	400	Celebration of African-American heritage and the seven principles of Kwanzaa at the Southside Community Center featuring music, performances, lectures, food demonstrations, storytelling and art.	<i>Strong cultural and historic value. Lifts up SSSC. Committee wishes SSSC to encourage broad participation in Kwanzaa.</i>	\$1,350	\$880
MLK Jr. Community Breakfast	1/19/2013	500	Annual Saturday celebration of the life and legacy of Dr. King. Brings together diverse community members for fellowship, guest speaker, breakfast and awards to students and community members to celebrate efforts towards peace-making and unity.	<i>Important annual event in the community. Reasonable request; strong application.</i>	\$735	\$735
Fire & Ice Festival	2/2/2013	150-200	First annual celebration of winter outdoor fun, art and creativity at Ithaca Children's Garden featuring igloo-building, snowfort-making, kid ice sculpture and environmental snow/ice art combined with with bonfires, fire-juggling and fire sculpture.	<i>Innovative winter celebration building on success of mud day. Incorporates elements of historical winter-time activities. Reaches diverse audience.</i>	\$2,000	\$1,000
Groton Winterfest	2/2/2013	400-500	10th annual Village celebration of winter with sledding, games (including a recycled Toboggan contest), demonstrations, booths, dog-sledding and a school poster-making contest.	<i>Important event in one of our rural communities. Annual event.</i>	\$910	\$910
Light in Winter	2/23-2/24/2013	1600	Celebration of our community's artistic, scientific and intellectual elements. Light In The Streets is an addition to the free public event for kids - the Hall of Wonders - and will feature glass-blowing, live music, a fire walker, and possibly a temporary ice rink.	<i>Bringing events downtown and into the community. Important transition year. Clear financial need and strong community value.</i>	\$2,000	\$1,500
High School Gospel Music Invitational	4/13/2013	500-600	Gospel music festival at Ithaca College celebrating African-American sacred music, with presentations and workshops about the history of the underground railroad and the AME church.	<i>Wonderful cultural and historic significance. Strong ability to deliver and strong on diversity. But more appropriate for another grant category. Very large budget; other resources are available.</i>	\$2,000	not eligible
International Youth Arts & Culture Festival	4/20/2013	150-200	Inaugural student-organized celebration of international music and dance with performances, art displays, cultural cuisine, arts and crafts, a children's activity zone, booths and a talent show contest featuring students at local schools.	<i>Want to encourage organic growth. Think big, but start smaller. Concerns about capacity to deliver on large project as conceived.</i>	\$2,000	\$500

TOTAL REQUEST / AWARD \$12,995 \$5,525

FALL 2012 AVAILABLE \$5,525 \$5,525

DIFFERENCE (\$7,470) \$0



Tompkins County
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
121 East Court Street
Ithaca, New York 14850

Edward C. Marx, AICP
Commissioner of Planning
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Telephone (607) 274-5560
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TO: Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB)
FROM: Tom Knipe, Senior Planner / Tourism Coordinator, and
Brett Bossard, Executive Director, Community Arts Partnership (CAP)
DATE: September 13, 2012
RE: **Proposed Administrative Changes to the Arts and Culture
Organizational Development (ACOD) Program for 2013**

The purpose of this joint memo is to describe proposed administrative updates and changes to the ACOD program, to be implemented in 2013. The goals of these proposed changes are to increase administrative efficiency, reduce administrative cost, and maintain general operating/organizational development support for flagship and emerging arts/culture, tourism-enhancing organizations in Tompkins County.

The Arts and Culture Organizational Development (ACOD) Grant Program, under the leadership of the Community Arts Partnership, has provided much needed support to secure the financial and operational stability of the county's major arts and cultural organizations and helped ensure the vitality and viability of our arts and cultural assets as important players in the county's successful tourism industry. This program has been a critical component of tourism product development funding since the institution of the additional 2% county room tax in the early 2000s. As the STPB launches an effort to implement the recently adopted 2020 strategic tourism plan, the need to continue to strengthen cultural and visitor-oriented organizations is not anticipated to diminish.

At the inception of the program, 10% of the total program budget was made available for general program administration. As the overall budget of the program has grown, the combined amount made available for general program administration and conducting third party organizational health reviews has approached \$24,000. As the ACOD program has matured, and as County staffing capabilities have expanded recently, there is now an opportunity to streamline the administrative function provided to the program. Outcomes of this streamlining in 2013 are anticipated to be a reduction in direct top-end cost to administer the program from \$24,000 to \$12,000, annually, and a corresponding increase in the overall amount of funds available to make as grants of \$12,000. This will be accomplished by reducing duplicative oversight and administrative handling, while maintaining top-level organizational development assistance, including periodic organizational health assessments.

The grants would continue to be managed and promoted as a joint effort of the Tompkins County Tourism Program and the Community Arts Partnership.

The specific changes proposed are as follows:

- 1) Overall reduction in oversight/monitoring:
 - a) Maintenance of once every three years comprehensive review through Organizational Health Assessments. These could continue to be conducted by a third party professional reviewer (e.g. Jack Little) or CAP could propose to assume this function.
 - b) Simplified annual reporting to include providing a copy of the organization's annual financial audit and integration of funder reports generated by the New York Cultural Data Project web tool (www.nysculturaldata.org). Seven of eight current grantees are already using this tool for other grant reporting.
 - c) Elimination of twice annual site visits.
- 2) Planning to accommodate new ACOD recipients into the grant pool.
 - a) Annual set-asides for new applications. New applicants will apply for smaller, single-year grants, with multi-year support after successful first year.
 - b) 3-5 year budget planning for the ACOD program.
- 3) Reduced administrative burden on CAP, and corresponding reduction in direct administrative cost.
 - a) Under \$12,000 total for administration (including fees for professional reviewer) is a target for 2013.
 - b) Repurpose remaining funds budgeted for administration directly into ACOD grants.
- 4) Switch administrative burden for contracting and vouchers solely to Tompkins County Planning Department (there is currently some duplication of effort on these).
- 5) Streamlining of program guidelines.
 - a) Maintain \$25,000 annual grant limit, with annual and multi-year support recommendations subject to panel review. Recommendations based on combination of application and results of organizational health review.
 - b) Create two application categories: 1st time applicant (one year funding request) and on-going support applicant (3 year funding request). All of the grants will continue to be called Arts and Culture Organizational Development grants.
 - c) 1st time applicant grants will support consultant fees for strategic/long term planning or implementation of existing plan.
 - d) On-going support grants will fund general operational infrastructure that aligns with health assessment recommendations (e.g. staffing, program support, artist fees), but not media buys, marketing collateral, or capital expenses.

Timing of changes

The target for the timing of these changes is for the 2013 grant cycle. 7 of 8 partners are on the 3rd year of three-year contracts. This is good timing to reformat reporting requirements and install administrative efficiencies. Also, the Tompkins County Planning Department has administered the Tourism Program for 15 months and has developed efficiencies in processing contracts and vouchers that will allow for this function to be fully assumed by the County without adding significant workload to the Senior Planner/Tourism Coordinator.

Multi-year budgeting scenarios

Projecting a 3% annual growth in room tax allocations for the program and maintenance of the \$25,000 maximum annual grant, the program should be able to accommodate up to three new grantees by 2016. This scenario assumes that approximately \$21,000 of previous years' budgeted but unspent funds be allocated from reserves.