

# Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board

Wednesday, March 20, 2019; 3:00pm – 5:00 pm

**Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce/CVB, 904 East Shore Drive, Ithaca, NY**

<b>AGENDA</b>	<b>Start</b>
1. STPB Meeting Minutes	3:00
• ACTION – Approve February Meeting Minutes	
2. Privilege of the Floor	
• Limit of 3 minutes per person for members of the public to address the board	
3. Chair’s Report – Kelli Cartmill	3:05
4. Staff Report – Nick Helmholtz	3:10
5. Community Celebrations Grant Panel Update – Carol Kammen	3:15
• ACTION – Approve 2019 Community Celebrations Grant Recommendations	
6. Combined Tourism Grant Panel Update – Michael Mellor	3:25
• ACTION – Approve 2019 Tourism Project and Tourism Marketing & Advertising Grant Awards	
7. CVB February and March Monthly Reports – Peggy Coleman	3:35
8. Presentation: 2018 Annual Search Report – Adworkshop	3:40
9. Downtown 2030 Strategic Plan Tourism Elements – Gary Ferguson	4:00
10. Member Announcements	4:45
11. Adjournment	5:00

## Agenda Packet

1. February 2019 Draft STPB Meeting Minutes
2. Community Celebrations Grant Award Recommendations – anticipated 3/19
3. Tourism Grant Award Recommendations – anticipated 3/19
4. CVB February and March Monthly Reports
5. Adworkshop Annual Search Engine Marketing Program 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 – February 20, 2019**

1 **Date:** Feb. 20, 2019  
 2 **Time:** 3:00-4:30pm  
 3 **Location:** Tompkins County CVB/Chamber of Commerce, 904 E. Shore Drive, Ithaca NY  
 4  
 5

**Attendees:**

Name	✓	Representation
Brett Bossard	P	Arts-Culture
Kelli Cartmill	P	Lodging
Laura Winter Falk	P	At-Large
Josh Friedman	P	Arts-Culture
Ken Jupiter	P	At-Large
Connie Kan	P	At-Large
Katie Kutz	E	At-Large
Doug Levine	P	Arts-Culture
Rick Manning	P	At-Large
Mike Mellor	P	At-Large
Cara Nichols	P	Ithaca College
Todd Parlato	P	At-Large
Barbara Romano	P	Cornell University
Monika Roth	P	Agriculture
Sue Stafford	P	TC3
Baruch Whitehead	E	Arts-Culture
Scott Wiggins	P	At-Large
Andy Zepp	E	Recreation
<i>Martha Armstrong</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>TCAD, Non-Voting</i>
<i>Peggy Coleman</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Chamber, Non-Voting</i>

Name	✓	Representation
<i>Gary Ferguson</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>DIA, Non-Voting</i>
	<i>P</i>	<i>TC Legislature, Non-Voting</i>
<i>Anna Kelles</i>		
<i>John Spence</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>CAP, Non-Voting</i>
<i>Jennifer Tavares</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>Chamber, Non-Voting</i>
	<i>E</i>	<i>Transportation, Non-Voting</i>
<i>Matthew Yarrow</i>		
<i>Ethan Ash</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
<i>Jim Brophy</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
<i>Erica Frenay</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
<i>Henry Granison</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
<i>Theresa Hollister-Ball</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
<i>Carol Kammen</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
<i>Michael Miller</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
<i>Jon Reis</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
<i>Wylie Schwartz</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Associate Member</i>
<i>Nick Helmholdt</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Staff</i>
<i>Kristin McCarthy</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Staff</i>

8  
 9 **Guests:** Heather Hughes, Erin Rafalowski, Jonathan Froehlich, Kendall Blizzard, Jodi LaPierre,  
 10 Sarah Imes

11  
 12 **Opening Remarks/Changes to the Agenda** – None

13  
 14 **Approval of the January 2019 STPB Meeting Minutes**

15 **Action:** Doug Levine moved approval of the December 2018 minutes. Motion carried.

16  
 17 **Privilege of the Floor** – None

18  
 19 **Swearing in Ceremony for New and Renewing STPB Voting Members**

20  
 21 County Clerk Maureen Reynolds gave the Oath of Office to new members Rick Manning, Todd  
 22 Parlato, and Laura Winter Falk, along with current members Doug Levine, Scott Wiggins, Cara  
 23 Nichols, and Sue Stafford, who were renewing their terms.

24  
 25 **Chair's Report – Kelli Cartmill**

26  
 27 Kelli invited new associate members Wylie Schwartz, Henry Granison, Michael Miller, and  
 28 Theresa Hollister-Ball to introduce themselves to the group. She then circulated list of committee  
 29 assignments for members to review. Anyone with questions should feel free to contact her.  
 30

**Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB)**  
**Draft Meeting Minutes – February 20, 2019**

31 **Staff Report – Nick Helmholdt**

- 32
- 33 • Matt Yarrow from TCAT will be joining the STPB as the new Transportation representative.
  - 34 • The opening for the “Taughannock Giant” exhibit, which will be the first public event at the
  - 35 new Tompkins Center for History & Culture, has changed to March 29-30th.
  - 36 • Per a direct request from the City of Ithaca, the Tourism Program commented on its policy
  - 37 prohibiting dogs on the Commons.
- 38

39 **Presentation: CVB 2018 Annual Report & 2019 Work Program – Peggy Coleman**

40

41 Peggy and her staff from the CVB talked in detail about their work over the course of 2018 and

42 plans for expanding on it, as well as taking on new initiatives, in 2019. A copy of the annual report

43 and work program can be found in the February agenda packet and on the STPB webpage.

44

45 She also shared that Jonathan Froelich would be moving on to a position with Cornell Catering.

46

47 **2019 ACOD Grant Award Recommendations – John Spence**

48

49 John presented the Arts and Culture Organizational Development Grant (ACOD) recommendations

50 for 2019. In 2017, 10 organizations were approved for a two-year grant. At the end of 2018, the

51 recipients provided grant reports, which the ACOD panel reviewed and recommend for second-

52 year funding.

53

54 Action: Mike Mellor moved, and Scott Wiggins seconded, the 2019 ACOD Grant Award

55 Recommendations. Doug Levine and Brett Bossard abstained. Motion carried.

56

57 **Strategic Tourism Plan Activity – feedback on proposed Tourism Program Aims**

58 Members participated in an interactive group exercise designed to help with brainstorming and

59 elicit feedback on the Tourism Program Aims being considered for the next iteration of the County

60 Strategic Tourism Plan. Nick will gather and compile everyone’s feedback for inclusion in the

61 planning process.

62

63 **Member Announcements**

64

65 Members shared upcoming community events of possible interest to the group.

66

67 In closing, Kelli shared updated year-end room tax data that included figures for Maplewood.

68 Members can contact her for more details.

69

70 Chair Kelli Cartmill adjourned the meeting at 12:30 p.m.



## February 2019 - CVB Report to the Board

### **PR & Communications:**

We're thrilled to see the following articles published by Destination I Do, The Passport Chronicles, and Getaway Mavens after hosting Carolyn Steere, Tianna Gratta, and Malerie Yolen-Cohen on media tours this past summer:

- **Destination I Do (100k CIRC)** features a full article on weddings in the Finger Lakes in its Spring/Summer 2019 issue. The three-page piece refers to a wide range of properties that make the region an "up-and-coming destination wedding location," full of delightful surprises and having "value...without sacrificing quality."
- **The Passport Chronicles:** "What To Eat And Drink In The Finger Lakes" <http://thepassportchronicles.com/what-to-eat-and-drink-in-the-finger-lakes/?fbclid=IwAR2f4XPoZqcDjQ-8L6vFVhHUFFalfw7khn6xxW5RMAelwTaSZDu7pbD5ah4>
- **Getaway Mavens (19,127 UMV)** released an article on "35 Surprisingly Romantic Escapes in New York State," which lists Auburn, Ithaca, Rochester, Seneca Falls, Syracuse, and Keuka and Seneca Lakes.
- **Getaway Mavens** Best College Art and History Museums in the Northeast USA which lists the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of art.
- **Getaway Mavens** [35 Unsung But Oh So Worthy Museums, Attractions, and Tours in New England And New York 2019](#)
- **Getaway Mavens** [10 A Plus Lodgings on your East Coast College Tour](#)

### **Additional recent media coverage:**

- **Forbes (29.7 million UMV)** included the Finger Lakes in "[10 Inspiring Trips to Celebrate International Women's Day.](#)" The outlet mentions Sarah Barden from Ithaca is Foodies.
- **PennyGeeks** – [Ithaca ranked #1 on 2019 list of the Top Cities and Towns for Nature Lovers in the U.S.](#)
- **Unique Homes (31,751 UMV)** highlighted the Finger Lakes as a top nature-immersive getaway. The writer suggested visiting Letchworth State Park, booking wellness programs, going on the region's adventures and taking wilderness survival training. Unique Homes recommends staying at Seneca Sol, Firelight Camps or Mountain Horse Farm during the getaway.
- **Family Vacation Critic (477.4k unique monthly visitors)** named the Finger Lakes in a roundup of "family vacations that never get old." Listed among other renowned lake getaways in the US, the writer calls the region a "refreshing" option.

### **Marketing:**

The marketing team has been populating a comprehensive content calendar to effectively plan consumer/partner communication, website content development and focuses for social and PR. Main aspects of the calendar will be shared with partners to encourage more engagement and social sharing, cooperative messaging and product development around key themes, events and dates.

Winter Recess is being promoted through a banner ad on the FLTA website throughout the month of January and will be included in a public newsletter sent by FLTA with a reach of 55,000. We are also

focused on social media posts, paid digital and a new ad buy for print with the New York Press Service featuring an ad in daily and community newspapers across Central and Western, NY.

**Digital –**

Winter Recess Teachers Festival landing page and event listing on VisitIthaca.com have seen over 700 unique pageviews.

Traffic from organic search is up 13%; overall traffic from PA is up over 13% and we also saw a significant increase from MA, FL, TX, OH, and IL.

**Jan 2019**

Website VisitIthaca.com	
Unique Users 2019	21,801
Unique Users 2018	19,604
Unique Users 2017	19,434
Sessions 2019	26,437
Sessions 2018	23,664
Sessions 2017	23,488
stories.visitithaca.com	
Unique Pageviews 2019	352
Unique Pageviews 2018	232
events.visitithaca.com	
Unique Pageviews 2019	15,188

**Agriculinary Tourism –**

Many hours were put into coordinating the demonstration that Sarah Barden with Ithaca is Foodies conducted at the New York Times Travel Show. The presentation was extremely well received. Some comments attendees shared with Kendall; “Best presentation of the day!”, “We do a lot of traveling and always try to eat local along the way. Ithaca is on our ‘must-go’ list now.”

The March 5th Agritourism Conference registration is live. The goal is for 100 attendees. Please spread the word. <https://business.tompkinschamber.org/events/details/agriculinary-tourism-conference-2019-189414>

Planning continues for a robust year of cider promotion due to the Market NY Cider Grant. We are confirming dates for a Visit Ithaca farmer event at Pier 17 in NYC, a Heritage Radio buy and involvement in the creation of a new Cider Show, and an annual marketing campaign with Escapemaker among many other initiatives.

## Sales:

Sarah just returned from her first tradeshow of the year, American Bus Association. She successfully organized the NYS Dine Around, a coveted invitation only dinner event for Tour Operators, pulled together the grand prize giveaway package at the NYS hosted breakfast for operators in which Peter Pantuso, President of American Bus Association, and Ross Levi, Director of ILNY Division of Tourism, both attended, and held numerous successful appointments to highlight group tour options to Ithaca and Tompkins County.



(Photos: NYS Breakfast/ Rose Levi with Sarah and Sarah)

17 leads were sent, with 8 booked for leisure group business in January resulting in a total estimated economic impact of \$195,562.



Three meeting/sport leads have become definite with an economic impact of \$115,600. Three additional leads were sent for 200+ room nights and a total estimated economic impact of over \$59,000.



## Visitor Experience

### **2019 Winter Recess Teacher Festival**

The Visitor Experience team has been working feverishly at securing deals, events and new programming to make the 2019 Winter Recess Teacher Festival one of the best yet. New deals and increased quality were a focus for the 2019 event taking place February 15th-24<sup>th</sup>.

### **A2D Tourism Training Program**

The second field test for the Arrival to Departure (A2D) Tourism Training Program was held in January where we trained an additional five champions. The program now has a web presence and live class dates scheduled through June. The next live class is scheduled for Monday, February 11<sup>th</sup>. Please go to [visitithaca.com/visitor-journey](http://visitithaca.com/visitor-journey) to learn more. Please share this with your team, boards, and organizations.

### **Ithaca is Foodies Tour**

The Visitor Experience Department expanded their knowledge of attractions in January by participating in an Ithaca is Foodies tour. Through this tour, team members visited and tried food at restaurants they had not yet visited and picked up some new historical nuggets about downtown Ithaca.

**By the Numbers – Thanks to reinforced training, the team has done a better job at tracking visitor engagements.**

	Jan 2019	Jan 2018	YOY % Change	YTD 2019	YTD 2018	YOY % Change
Phone	163	52	+213%	163	52	+213%
ESD Traffic	96	63	+52%	96	63	+52%
DVC Traffic	66	77	-14%	66	77	-14%
Taug. Traffic	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chats	201	164	+22%	201	164	+22%
TG Requests	254	186	+36%	254	186	+36%
Off-Site Events	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>780</b>	<b>542</b>	<b>+44%</b>	<b>780</b>	<b>542</b>	<b>+44%</b>



Ithaca/Tompkins County Convention & Visitors Bureau

### March 2019 - CVB Report to the Board

#### 2019 Winter Recess a resounding success!!

We are still compiling final numbers but have documented over 4000 attendees between school district employees and their family members. **The estimated economic impact of the receipt raffles is at least \$173k. Teachers visited from NC, ME, FL, OR, VA, MA, PA, CT and across NYS.**

Winter Recess messaging began in mid-November and carried through February. Social media reach was 60,000+ primarily directing to IthacaLovesTeachers.com. The Winter Recess landing page on VisitIthaca.com saw 776 unique pageviews up from 229 in 2018; pageviews for the event listing on events.visitithaca.com were on par with 2018.

#### Winter Recess Media Coverage:

- [Tompkins Weekly](#) - Winter Recess article and interview with Jodi LaPierre 2/7/19
- [Educators to be celebrated with 'Winter Recess Teacher's Festival'](#) – Ithaca Voice 2/6/19
- WHCU News Radio (Cayuga Radio Group Network) – event promotion
- [Ithaca Loves Teachers Winter Recess](#) February 15-24, 2019 Throughout Tompkins County – Life in the Finger Lakes Magazine, February 2019
- [Spectrum News](#) – Interview of Jodi La Pierre and visitors at registration at East Shore Drive Visitor Center. 2/15/19
- [WENY](#) -Interview of Jodi La Pierre at Winter Recess opening reception at Hotel Ithaca 2/16/19

“Dear Organizers & Sponsors of the Ithaca Loves Teachers Winter Recess:

Thank you so much for all the work and generosity that went into this Winter Recess 2019! For the last couple of years, we have been traveling during the winter break, but this year (for a number of reasons) we stayed in Ithaca. And we had a blast...thanks to you! As someone who loves to win raffles/games/etc. (who doesn't?!), I was determined to be one of the winners of the raffle, so my daughter, spouse, and I took on the challenge to visit as many places and buy things (that were in reason) from the listed restaurants and retailers in the booklet so we could proudly enter another ticket in the drawing. In all, we enjoyed so many of the places - I can't even count them up (seriously!) - and

we even explored places that were listed in the booklet that we couldn't get to by just checking out their websites. Who knew about that gem of a place at Apple Station Winery? Or that my mother's neighbor has a delicious hard cider business? Or that the library has a new maker space? And that I could buy a real-life silk cocoon to show my students who have been studying how silk was made in Ancient China! It was an expansive vacation - even though we had a "staycation"! We made new connections with area businesses and added to our list of things we wish to visit beyond the week. Our experiences on the Commons were especially wonderful and all the merchants voiced their appreciation for teachers. What a treat! And, last but not least, it was fun to pop in to the Downtown Visitor Center and update them on our fun experiences. Although we didn't win in the drawing/raffle, we had a "winning" vacation here in Ithaca! Thank you again for organizing such a wonderful event!"

Carol H.

ENL Teacher at DeWitt Middle School

### **Tompkins County Tourism Grant Support:**

The Tompkins County Tourism Program Spring grant applications were due to the county by February 28<sup>th</sup>. We met with four applicants submitting Tourism Capital grant projects to discuss alignment with the county marketing strategy and how best to track visitors to the projects, should they be funded. In addition, we supported four applicants submitting Tourism Project grant projects and Marketing grant projects. These projects show great promise for driving incremental visitation to the county.

### **Marketing:**

#### **Digital –**

At the end of February, we launched a digital campaign with Atlas Obscura – a guide to curious and wondrous travel destinations. The campaign will run through mid-May and includes the addition of two new attractions added to the Atlas Obscura website, display media, and promoted social media.

#### **Agriculinary Tourism –**

To engage more partners and prepare them to be involved throughout the year for cider promotion Kendall has joined the New York State Cider Association as an associate member and attended their annual meeting. Our team has also met with their Executive Director, Jennifer Smith, to talk about ways that we can collaborate throughout the year.

The Facebook boosted post about the "Seed to Table" panel discussion at the Agriculinary Tourism Conference scheduled for March 5<sup>th</sup> at The Hotel Ithaca had a reach of over 6000 people, 126 reactions, and 435 post clicks. The Conference had more than 130 people attend, including students from TC3.

### **PR & Communications:**

Beyond publicity for Winter Recess, Heather's efforts have garnered additional media coverage for Tompkins County to include:

- [Visiting Ithaca, New York](#) on LoveToKnow.com by Laurie Jo Miller Farr
- Under the Radar USA: Why Ithaca is More than Gorges – <https://www.lonelyplanet.com/usa/new-york/ithaca/travel-tips-and-articles/under-the-radar-usa-why-ithaca-is-more-than-gorges/40625c8c-8a11-5710-a052-1479d2756cbe>
- Forbes, "[10 Inspiring Trips to Celebrate International Women's Day](#)" – features Finger Lakes foodies: Susie Atvell of Kinfred Fare, Sarah Barden of Ithaca is Foodies, Autumn Stoscheck of Eve's Cidery, Melissa Madden of Finger Lakes Cider House, and Jennifer Newman of Young Lion Brewing Company.
- I Love NY features the FL Thaw Festival in their 2/28/19 e-blast and [website](#).
- TripAdvisor features a list of "[North America's 18 Best Lake Towns](#)" in which Ithaca is featured.

Finger Lakes Regional Tourism Council Blog postings:

- [11 Must have Photos for your FLX Vacation](#) -Featuring Taughannock Falls & Firelight Camps

### **Sales:**

Sarah continues to work the motor coach tradeshow season with attendance at Heartland Travel, where

she completed 23 pre-scheduled appointments at the show. Our presence at American Bus Association last month is producing interest, with New England Coach planning a Fam Tour possibly in March. Five of the ten group tour leads have booked, with a potential economic impact of \$63,500.

Jonathan's focus has been on laying the groundwork for a meeting planner client event to be held in Albany later this year. In the month of February, he distributed five meeting leads for a potential economic impact of \$47,500.

**Visitor Experience:**

The Ithaca Tompkins County Arrival to Departure (A2D) Tourism Training program has now trained 33 individuals since its launch in December 2018. Live classes are on the calendar at [visitithaca.com/visitor-journey](http://visitithaca.com/visitor-journey) through June 2019. The next one takes place at Ithaca College on March 14<sup>th</sup>.

Members of the Visitor Experience Department are focusing on completing several product knowledge tours before the summer season kicks off, including a visit to the NY Welcome Center in Kirkwood. Two team members attended the NY Wow Marketplace in NYC early February.

**By the Numbers – without the one off-site event in 2018, February traffic is flat, not including Winter Recess traffic.**

	<b>Feb 2019</b>	<b>Feb 2018</b>	<b>YOY % Change</b>	<b>YTD 2019</b>	<b>YTD 2018</b>	<b>YOY % Change</b>
Phone	140	78	+79%	303	130	+133%
ESD Traffic*	64	41	+56%	160	104	+54%
DVC Traffic*	47	101	-53%	113	178	-36%
Taug. Traffic	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chats	174	192	-9%	375	356	+5%
TG Requests	338	233	+45%	592	419	+42%
Off-Site Events**	0	600	-600%	0	600	-600%
<b>Total</b>	<b>652</b>	<b>1245</b>	<b>-48%</b>	<b>1543</b>	<b>1787</b>	<b>-14%</b>

\*does not include Winter Recess traffic

\*\* No off-site event in Feb 2019

# Search Engine Marketing Program



*Michael Martineau*

*Kelly Sutliff*

*Adam LaFountain*

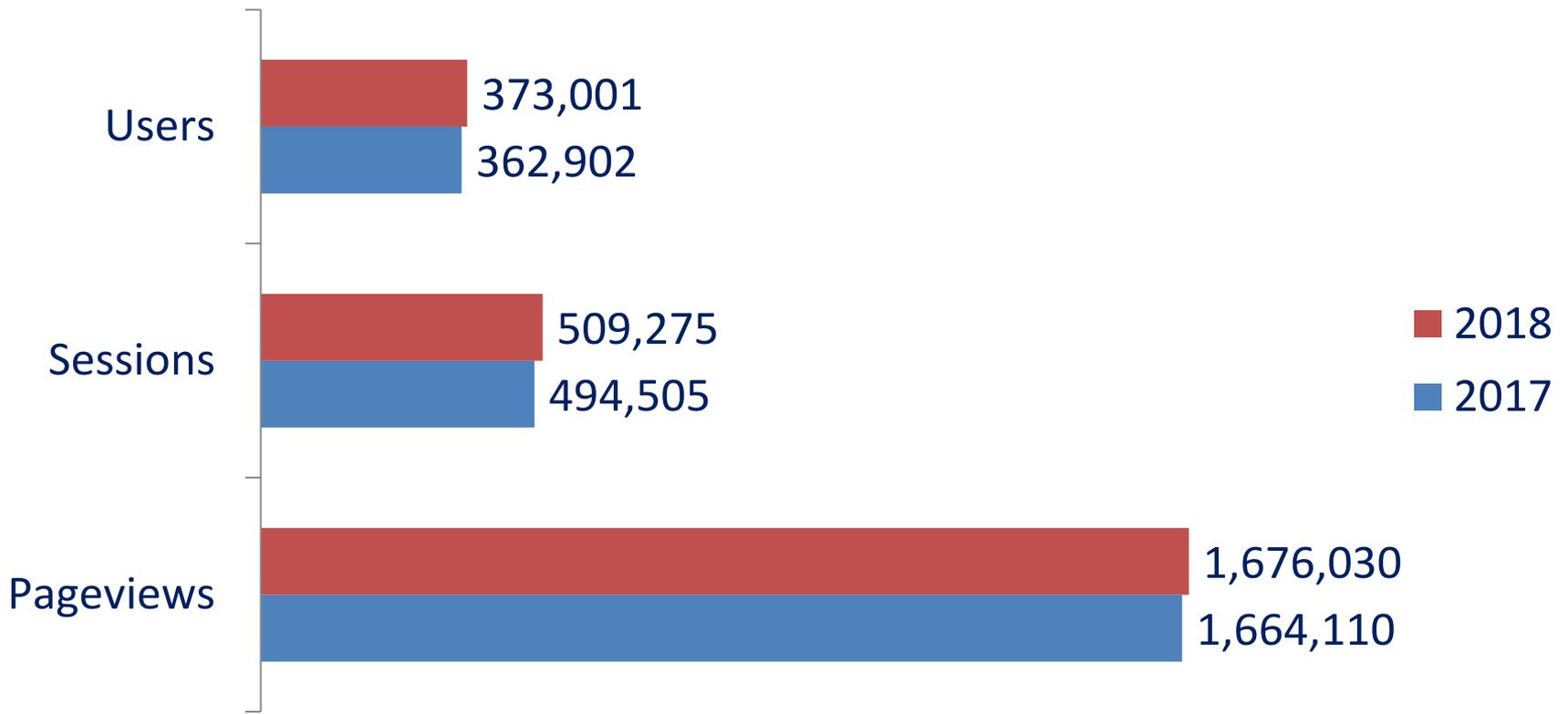
*Wednesday March 20, 2019*

**adworkshop.**

# Overall Usage

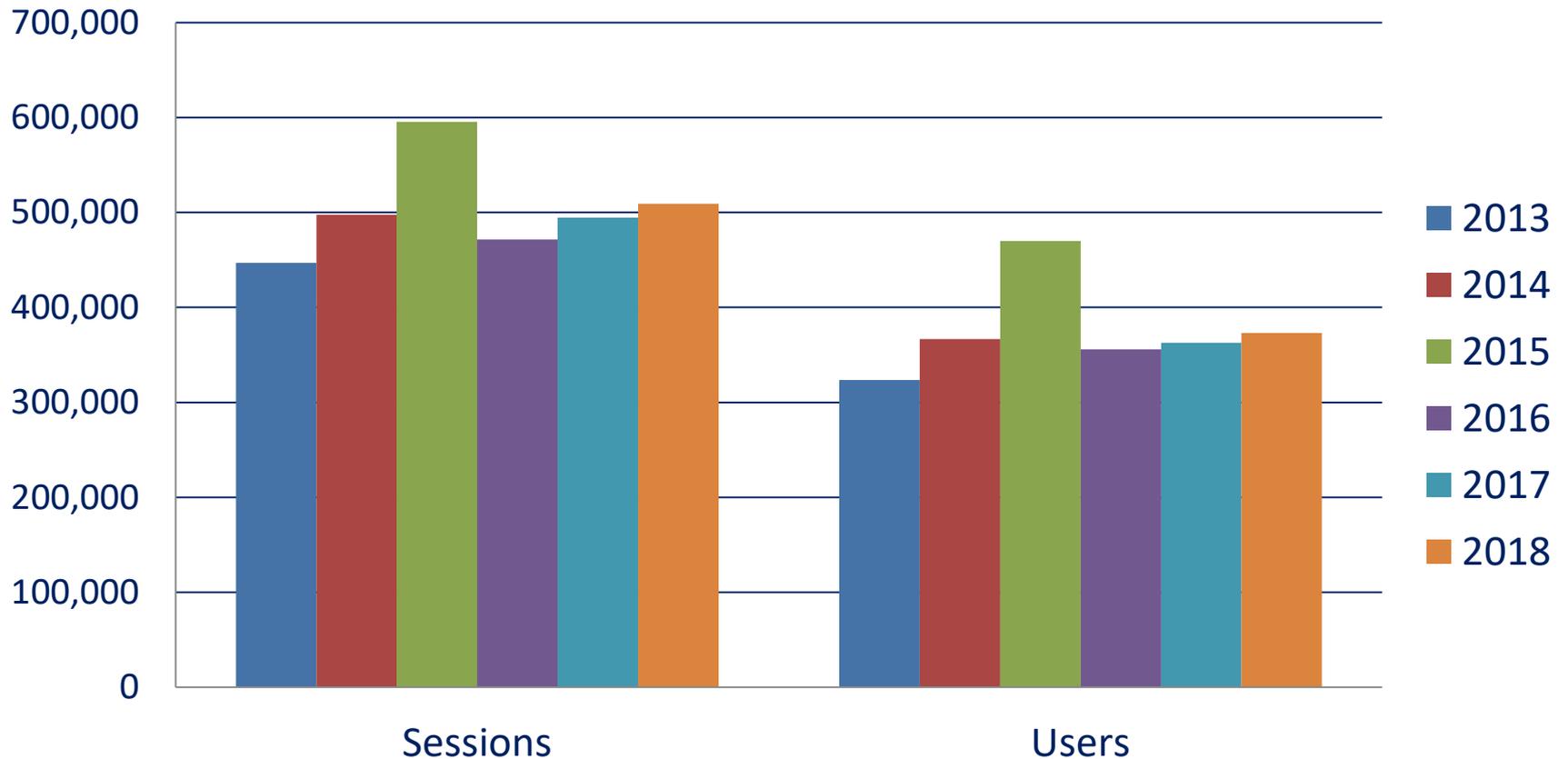
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2018 vs. 2017 (Jan - Dec)



# Usage Over Time

2013 - 2018 (Jan - Dec)



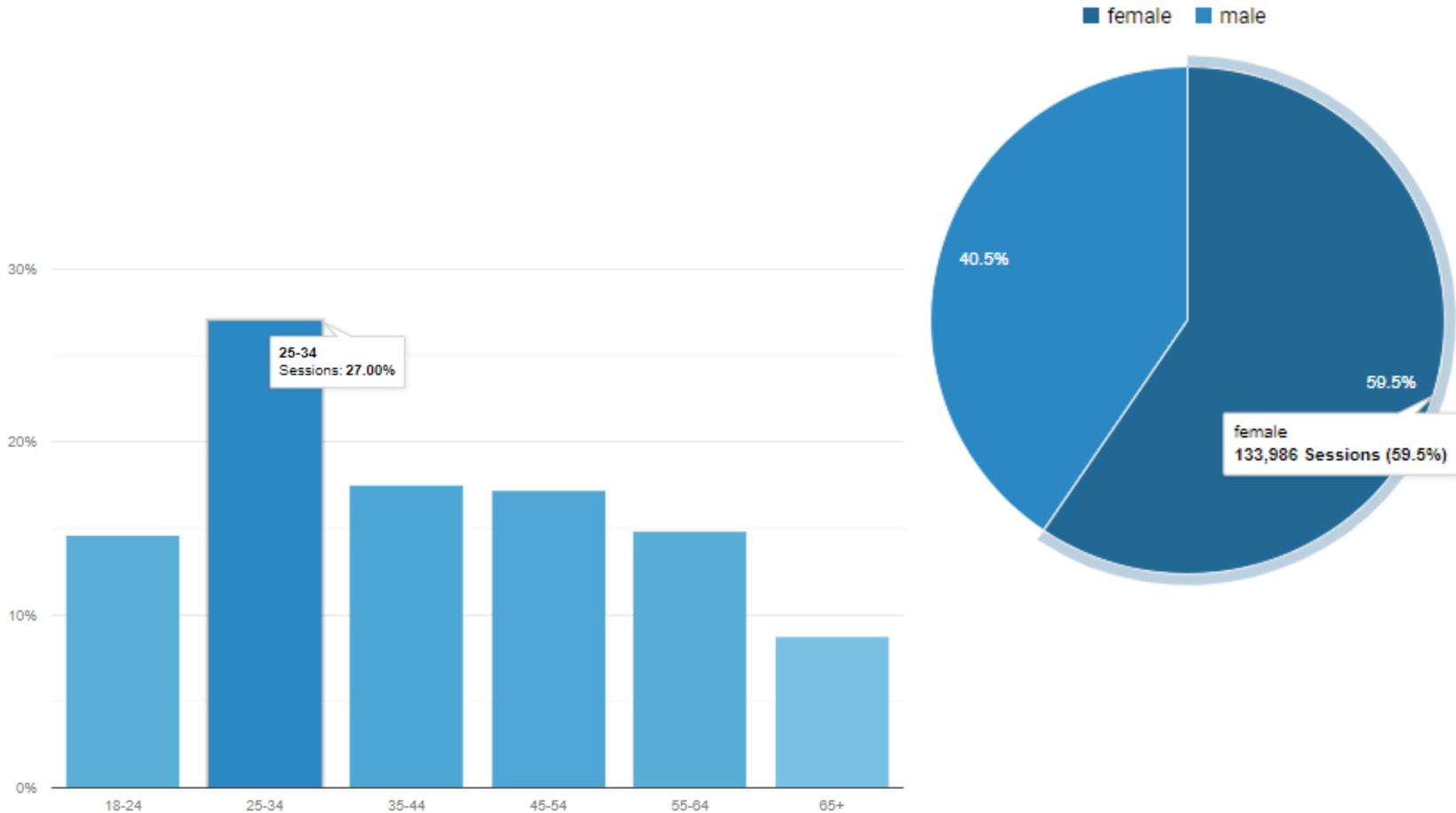
adworkshop.

# Top Referrals

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Referral	Sessions
Cornell	8,763
Facebook	6,031
Pinterest	1,441
I Love NY	459
Ithaca Farmers Market	453
NewYorkUpstate.com	384
Downtown Ithaca	377
TompkinsCountyNY.gov	336
Ithaca.edu	304

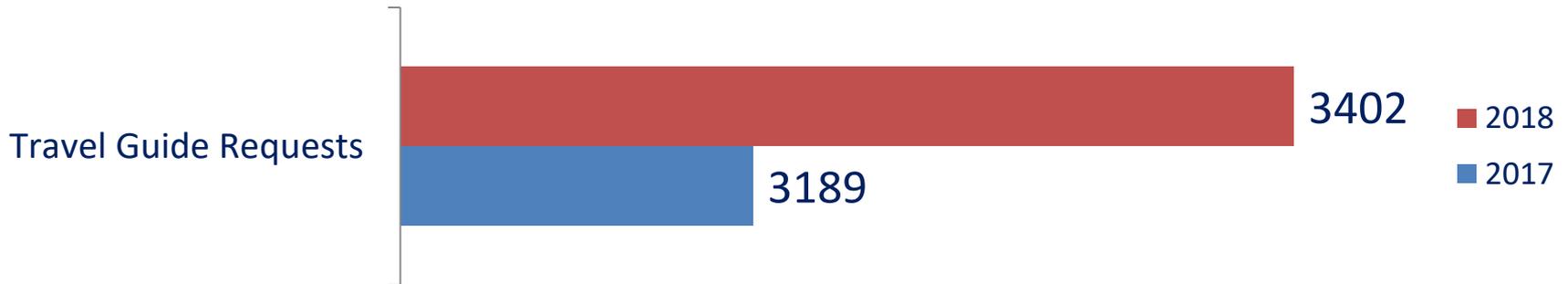
# Demographics



# Goals & Conversions

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2018 vs. 2017 (Jan - Dec)



## Lodging Interactions

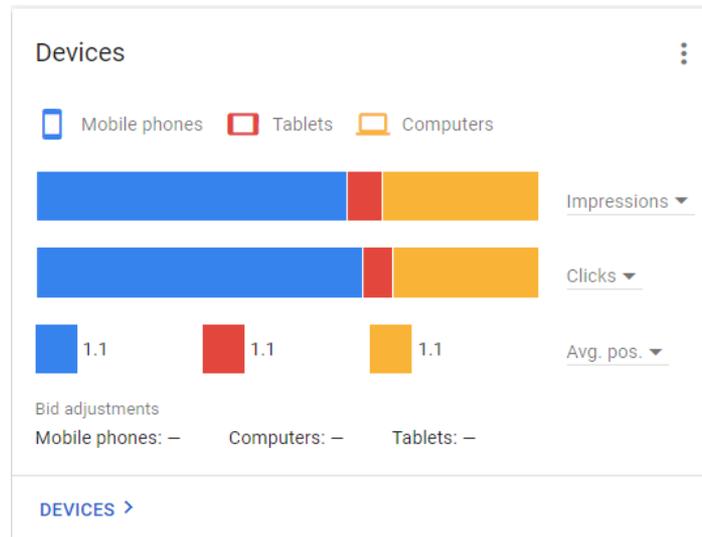


## Attractions Interactions



# Google Ads

- Events dominated the 2018 year for PPC. The events campaign saw a click-through rate of almost 20%, which is significantly higher than the benchmark average of 4.68%.
- Moving forward, it will be crucial to keep capturing and expanding upon all the events Ithaca has to offer to further maximize engagement.
- Most searches were conducted on mobile devices which indicates users are looking for quick, digestible information.



# 2019 Tactics

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- Enhanced content promotion feature
- Blog posts
- Content updates
- Backlinks outreach
- Align PPC tactics and website optimizations with overall goals of Ithaca CVB

# Any Questions?

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thank  
you

adworkshop.