Strategic Tourism Plan
Strategic Tourism Planning Board
May, 2005

Tompkins County, N Y

2005 - 2010

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Tompkins County Legislature

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Retail
Recreation & Agriculture
Culture
Restaurants
Arts
At-Large
University/College – Ithaca College
Culture
Arts
Retail
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Ex-Officio Tompkins County Area Development
Ex-Officio Director of Convention & Visitors Bureau
Ex-Officio Director of Community Arts Partnership
Ex-Officio Ithaca Downtown Partnership
Ex-Officio Legislature
Ex-Officio Government Transportation
Dear Tourism Supporter:

In October 1989, Tompkins County created a new tourism program supported by a room occupancy tax. Since then, over $9.4 million has been invested in marketing and developing our tourist attractions. In 2004, $1.1 million was budgeted to promote Tompkins County and enhance the visitor experience. And, the industry is estimated to have generated over $100 million of sales from accommodations, dining, shopping, and entertainment.

The Strategic Tourism Planning Board is charged by the County Legislature with making recommendations for the County’s tourism investments to ensure continued success. The 2005-2010 Strategic Tourism Plan presents a vision for the future and a plan of action for the entire county. Tompkins County has much to offer visitors from the rest of New York State, around the nation, and indeed, from around the world. This plan provides guidance on stewarding our existing resources and developing our assets to ensure that what we have to offer will be available and pleasing to the visitors we host.

The 2005-2010 Strategic Tourism Plan is the result of the reflection and hard work of many dedicated members of County boards, committees, the Convention and Visitors Bureau, and tourism enterprises. They worked in concert to create the vision and plan to market and develop our very special mix of cultural, natural, recreational, and hospitality experiences. Those experiences present Tompkins County to the outside world of visitors—a world of visitors who, in turn, enhance our lives by their presence. It is with great pleasure that we present the 2005-2010 Strategic Tourism Plan to the community.

Sincerely,

Scott Wiggins, Chair
Strategic Tourism Planning Board

Tim Joseph, Chair
Tompkins County Legislature

OUR 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.
The Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB) extends thanks to all of the individuals who invested countless hours researching, compiling, writing, analyzing, and editing materials to make this plan possible.

Members of the Long-range Planning Committee:
Carol Chock, Chair
Stu Stein, Past Chair
Scott Wiggins
Charlie Trautmann
Richard Driscoll
Martha Armstrong
Dewi Evans
Renata Ballard
Jon Reis
Gary Ferguson
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Staff and consultants:
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County staff: Joan Jurkowich and Katie Borgella
President of PLACES, place-based tourism consultant: Gary Esolen
Former and current directors of the CVB: Bridgette Berry and Fred Bonn
Layout and editorial assistance: Wendy Skinner

Photo credits:
Our deep gratitude goes to these photographers who granted permission to use their photographs throughout the document.

Jon Reis, 607-272-1966, www.jonreis.com. Front cover (far left, far right); pages 3 (middle, far right), 5 (middle), 8 (upper right, lower right), 9 (far right); back cover.
David Reuther, 607-277-2451, d-reuther@hotmail.com. Front cover (middle); page 4 (lower middle).
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The Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB) set out to create a strategic plan that is both a product and a systematic process to achieve a set of goals and objectives for the future of tourism promotion and development in Tompkins County and to create the basis for future actions.

Major steps in the three-year process* included:

- A **Marketing Study**, conducted by Randall Travel Marketing in February 2002, to examine the effect and propose improvements to the ways we reach our potential tourism audience.

- An analysis of the **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats** existing at the start of the process. This SWOT Analysis was approved by the STPB in April 2002.

- A definition of the **Aims** that will best guide future decision-making, adopted by the STPB in May 2002. See page 6 of this Plan.

- An identification of a full range of possible **Action Steps**. This process began with a retreat of the full STPB in July of 2002 led by Joan Jurkowich, Deputy Commissioner of Tompkins County Planning.

- A process guided by Gary Esolen, Director of PLACES, a regional place-based tourism consultant, in September 2002, to create a collective **Future Vision** of what Tompkins County could look like to

* Background materials and grant applications are available at Tompkins County Administration, 125 East Court Street, Ithaca, NY.
a visitor a decade from now. The Vision, presented on the following pages, highlights some of the possibilities we saw.

- An examination of prior tourism-related plans to place the current effort in Historical Perspective.

- Creation of a Plan of Action. Identification of the action steps that could realistically be implemented or encouraged. The STPB examined whether these actions were appropriate for room tax expenditures or if other funding would be necessary and most appropriate for implementation of each action.

- Ultimately, the STPB ranked and identified the highest priority items to recommend for most immediate attention. These Strategic Actions, presented on pages 12 – 18, are the heart of this Strategic Plan.

- Simultaneously, the STPB created programs to implement the steps, primarily through new grants. Grants programs are listed on page 8.
A FutureVision of Ithaca & Tompkins County

In the year 2010 Ithaca/Tompkins County is a year-round, place-based tourism destination with a million visitors a year.

The area offers excellent lodging, a range of winter activities, a unique edu-tourism program that builds on its world-class educational institutions, rich history, and its many well developed cultural trails, museums, and excellent restaurants with distinctive local cuisine. There is also great scenic beauty, excellent access to and interpretation of the Finger Lakes wine region, readily available experience and interpretation of the local geology and of the bio-environment, great cultural diversity, a lively performing and visual arts community, clear signage, and a model tourism marketing program.

Located at the southern tip of Cayuga Lake and at the Southeastern edge of the Finger Lakes wine region, Ithaca/ Tompkins County is known to visitors as the best place to stay while exploring the region, with a successful pedestrian mall and a thriving downtown area full of boutique shops, galleries, and restaurants offering a variety of cuisines. Its many lodging options include a wide range of hotels from roadside limited service to luxury properties, an unusually well promoted bed and breakfast program and, more recently, several upscale spa properties.

Ithaca/ Tompkins County is remarkable for its majestic waterfalls and extraordinary scenic beauty, made readily accessible by trails in four state parks and other locations and by a walking trail along the edge of Cayuga Lake. Outdoor activities draw a range of sports enthusiasts, including bicyclists, runners, and anglers from Britain as well as the US, to the region throughout the year. Cayuga Lake is connected to the Erie Canal and other canal systems which allow boaters to travel to Ithaca from Canada, the upper Midwest, and the entire East Coast.

The winter season offers a combination of ice-covered waterfalls, wine tastings where visitors can come face to face with winery owners and vintners, cross country skiing, and winter hiking in the area parks and meadows. Downtown offers events and a winter festival celebrating the fusion of music, art, and science, which draws tourists from a wide radius.

Ithaca and Tompkins County are home to Cornell University, Ithaca College, and Tompkins Cortland Community College. Ithaca enjoys both a sophisticated college town and a small city environment. The county is known for its
unique “edu-tourism” offerings. For example, the Museum of the Earth interprets the remarkable regional geology, seen in the deep gorges cut by runoff flowing over high waterfalls into Cayuga Lake from the adjacent hills. Ithaca’s Sciencenter is a nationally recognized hands-on discovery museum. At Cornell University, the world-famous Lab of Ornithology at Sapsucker Woods serves as an ultimate destination for birders and other visitors, while the Cornell Plantations provides extensive and colorful collections of flowers and herbs, as well as tropical plants from around the world in its new conservatory. The History Center presents the county’s heritage to visitors who can also experience the distinctive architecture in several historic districts.

A series of well developed, engaging cultural trails link wineries, museums, art galleries, antique shops, educational institutions, and historical sites. Local shopkeepers and hotel staff are knowledgeable about the trails and can direct visitors to virtually any destination. At the Center for the Finger Lakes Experience, visitors can get oriented to the region, learn about vini-culture and winemaking and buy local wines. The community has a spirited personality, with cultural diversity and appreciation of alternative lifestyles, and extends a warm, welcoming attitude toward visitors. There is a vigorous local music scene that sustains an entertaining nightlife.

Ithaca’s success as a tourism destination is no accident. Area innkeepers work harmoniously with the Convention & Visitors Bureau and local government on issues of tourism development and marketing. Ready access to Cayuga Lake and excellent signage to shops, parking, restaurants, and galleries provide visitors with seamless transitions to all locations in the county.

The area has a model tourism marketing program which uses the Internet and a variety of other media to tell a simple, strong story of a physically beautiful and culturally rich place that embraces visitors with warm hospitality. This is backed up by a commitment to developing those assets and keeping them attractive. The marketing messages and quality of product are consistent, and the results have been on a rising curve for several years.
These are the aims that the STPB identified in order to set directions and strategies for further developing tourism in Tompkins County. They are shown in a circle because we believe none has priority over any others.

- **Provide memorable experiences and legendary service**
  that will educate, delight and relax visitors, compel them to tell others, and motivate repeat visits.

- **Create demand**
  through excellent marketing of appropriate tourism sites and services, and cultural and recreational assets in Tompkins County.

- **Present this unique place**
  by building on the special characteristics of its people, culture, history, geography, environment, economic activity, and institutions.

- **Improve economic climate**
  through a vibrant tourism program that builds jobs, raises tax revenues, and helps make our county a great place to live, work, and invest.

- **Encourage development of strong programs**
  and facilities to serve as the tourism “infrastructure” upon which future projects can be developed.

- **Improve and never harm**
  the quality of life for local residents, businesses, and institutions. Tourism programs should enrich the lives of all who live here.
The Tompkins County Legislature first implemented a room occupancy tax in 1986, and since 1989 has created a series of boards to provide advice on issues related to tourism development and to guide the allocation of proceeds from the Tompkins County Room Occupancy Tax.

Between 1989 and 2002, funds from a room tax of 3 percent were allocated thus: 76.5 percent to the Convention and Visitors Bureau, 8.5 percent to the Finger Lakes Association, 15 percent to a competitive Development Grants Program, and a maximum of 10 percent for administration.

In 2002, the County Legislature passed an increase in the room tax, which was phased in until it reached the current rate of 5 percent in June of 2003. The income from this tax is divided into two parts: a) the 3 percent tax, which is used primarily for marketing, although some of these monies are used for small grants to assist new programs and events to get started; and b) the 2 percent tax, which is used for product development and tourism capital purposes, especially the development and stabilization of the county’s cultural and arts resources and facilities, and for beautification of the county. Additional background and history are available on request.

Annual Room Tax Collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Room Tax Collection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>400,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>400,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>400,000</td>
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<td>1996</td>
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<td>2002</td>
<td>700,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>700,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>800,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CURRENT GRANTS PROGRAMS
The Room Tax Fund currently funds the following grant programs:

- **Ithaca/Tompkins County Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB)**
  Enhances the community’s economic development by promoting this area as a vibrant and diverse vacation and meeting destination. Working closely with its tourism partners, the CVB’s marketing, promotion, and public relations efforts help to enhance the experience of visitors to our area.

- **Signage, Beautification, and Public Art**
  Improves wayfinding signage to direct travelers to key destinations, and beautify communities to welcome visitors – especially at gateways.

- **Tourism Capital Grants**
  Focuses on expanding major visitor-generating projects and funds feasibility studies for potential projects.

- **Arts and Cultural Organizations Stabilization**
  Strengthens large existing arts and cultural organizations with long-term financial planning tools.

- **Community Celebrations**
  Awards grants for an observance, commemoration, jubilation, inauguration, or any other “red letter day” or salute that has meaning for the community.

- **Tourism Development Grants**
  Awards grants to organizations for the initiation, development, expansion, and enhancement of Tompkins County tourism attractions and events with broad appeal such as natural attractions, the arts, and cultural, historical, or educational activities.
THIS PLACE WE LOVE
Tompkins County encompasses 465 square miles of territory and had a population just under 100,000 in 2000. An urbanized core surrounds the historic City of Ithaca, which sits at the southern end of Cayuga Lake. The city and environs include Cornell University and Ithaca College, retail and commercial centers, as well as about half the households in the county. The remainder of the county is largely rural rather than suburban, with a mix of woodlands, farms, and villages. The natural geology has created a number of gorge waterfalls surrounding the lake, three of which are features of state parks. Higher education dominates the local economy, each year bringing about 25,000 college students, top faculty, and researchers to the area. Diverse manufacturing, commercial, and retail businesses are also economically significant. In addition, excellent health and social services contribute to the overall vibrancy of the economy.

THE VALUE OF THE TOURISM SECTOR
Taxable room sales in Tompkins County for 2003 were about $24.5 million. Extrapolating from this figure, Tompkins County Area Development has estimated total tourist expenditures to be about $100 to $110 million in 2003.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estimated Tourist Expenditures in Our County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lodging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food and Beverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amusement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation (local)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenditures</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The tourism sector also creates about 2,000 jobs. Total wages attributable to tourism in 2003 were estimated to be between $30 and $45 million. The tourism sector generates $1.1 million in room tax and approximately $4 million in retail sales tax for the county.
To maintain the high level of excellence in tourism promotion and to guide expenditures of Tompkins County tourism resources for the next five years, the following overarching strategies are established:

**TOURISM MARKETING**
- Increase market share through better targeted and expanded marketing. From 2005 to 2010, the goal is to double the number of inquiries for visitor information.
- Increase visitors and inquiries from prospective visitors.
- Develop an ongoing market analysis program to refine understanding of the current and potential tourist markets.
- Focus on expanding weekday, shoulder season, and winter tourism.

**TOURISM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT**
- Maintain and fully implement product development including: stabilization and capital investment in major attractions, signage, and beautification. Evaluate and refine these programs in 2006.
- Continue to support grants for special projects that increase weekday, shoulder season, or winter tourism, and highlight the unique qualities of life in Tompkins County.

**TOURISM INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS**
- Strengthen cooperation among Tompkins County tourism partners to coalesce the county's tourism industry. Adopt a set of common marketing tools to be used by major partners.

**USE OF RESOURCES**

The STPB feels that the County’s limited tourism resources should be focused on programs that now exist, rather than investing in new programs during the next five years. Our priority is to stabilize recently developed programs and help them grow, while continuing to support existing, mature programs such as CVB marketing. This strategy emphasizes the need to support the promising programs that were initiated in the past few years, and to concentrate tourism resources effectively. The STPB remains open to considering unique and timely opportunities; however, new projects may need to be primarily funded by independent sources.

Tourism resources include:
1.) Funds earmarked for tourism marketing and development.
2.) Personnel, that is, people's time to put into tourism marketing and development.
3.) Private and non-profit investors who may independently, or in partnership with local government, decide to market or develop a tourism attraction or program that will bring tourists to the community.
The STPB engaged in a series of extensive discussions in which we identified strategic action items, classified them into four categories, ranked, suggested appropriate lead players and then prioritized them. Many of the steps are already under way, some have even been completed, and many will also need to become ongoing activities. While some are items that can be easily assigned to specific lead agencies that already take responsibility, we recognize that some will only be dreams unless future partners – public, non-profit, and/or private – take lead roles. The list of actions is categorized as follows:

**Provide Gateway**  **Infrastructure**  
**Offer Experience**  **Product Development**  
**Create Demand**  **Marketing**  
**Enable Action**  **Government Initiatives**

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**ACTION STEPS KEY**

for the following pages:

In each of the sections, the listing is in *order of priority* as recommended by the STPB. Within each category, certain strategic actions have been prioritized and are indicated with an asterisk ( * ).

“A” indicates projects or programs in which the STPB can either play a role through its own direct efforts or through recommendations to the County Legislature for use of the County room tax. These are the most significant items and provide guidance for use of the room tax, according to state legislation.

“O” indicates projects that others will have a responsibility to fund and carry out. The room tax would not be an appropriate funding source for these programs. In many cases, the state legislation allowing for the establishment of the room tax would not legally permit its usage for these projects.

✓ indicates the activity is currently funded with room tax.

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**ABBREVIATIONS**

- **CAP** Community Arts Partnership
- **CCE** Cornell Cooperative Extension
- **CLSB** Cayuga Lake Scenic Byway
- **CVB** Convention & Visitors Bureau
- **IDP** Ithaca Downtown Partnership
- **ITCTC** Ithaca-Tompkins County Transportation Council
- **STPB** Strategic Tourism Planning Board
- **TCAD** Tompkins County Area Development
- **NYSDOT** New York State Department of Transportation
- **VIC** Visitors Industry Council
**Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Plan, 2005 – 2010**

### Objective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Lead Organizations</th>
<th>Funding Source</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* A ✓ Improve signage countywide, including downtown, the Ticket Center, Discovery Trail, kiosks, CAP, electronic maps, etc.</td>
<td>CVB, IDP, CAP Signage Comm.</td>
<td>room tax</td>
<td>Currently in process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* A ✓ Beautify Tompkins County, especially our gateways, downtown, and village centers.</td>
<td>Beaut. Comm., CVB, IDP</td>
<td>room tax, in-kind, municipalities</td>
<td>Under way. County Beautification Coordinator is located at CCE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* A ✓ Support growth of existing attractions and feasibility studies for future attractions.</td>
<td>STPB, TCAD, CAP</td>
<td>room tax, private</td>
<td>Currently in process, primarily through Capital Grants Program under direction of TCAD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* A ✓ Improve image, awareness, and operation of downtown Visitor/Ticketing Center in the Clinton House and the lakeside Visitors Center.</td>
<td>CAP, CVB</td>
<td>room tax</td>
<td>Currently in process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* O Encourage increased lake, inlet, and gorge access for visitors.</td>
<td>private, municipalities, not-for-profit</td>
<td>private, municipalities, not-for-profit</td>
<td>STPB can encourage, but government must enable land use controls for both public and private access. Entry points could include lakeside lodging, restaurants, retail, docks, boat launches, swimming areas, fishing stations, parking, interpretative or other exhibits, etc. Locations include Inlet Island.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O Improve availability of outdoor equipment for visitor use.</td>
<td>private</td>
<td>private</td>
<td>Driven by private sector, likely to increase as waterfront develops and to include boat rental, equipment sales and outfitters, tent and bicycle rental.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O Remain informed about transportation issues affecting access by tourists to the county directly or indirectly.</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>Other than the STPB remaining aware, transportation is not fundable by or appropriate for room tax spending.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Plan, 2005 – 2010

A = Appropriate for room tax expenditure  
* = High priority  
O = Other funding  
 ✔ = Currently funded by room tax

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Lead Organizations</th>
<th>Funding Source</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>Actively coordinate with Ithaca Downtown Partnership (IDP) and village “main street” development efforts.</td>
<td>IDP, Villages</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>Support safe hike trails, bike trails and routes around the county.</td>
<td>IDP, County Planning Dept.</td>
<td>unknown, small, participation by Development Grants, Celebrations, TCAD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>Remain supportive of the Cayuga Lake Scenic ByWay, Inc. (CLSB).</td>
<td>CLSB, County Planning Dept.</td>
<td>federal, other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>Examine costs and benefits of development of facilities for bus tours and coordination with attractions and lodging.</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>Encourage improvement of access to Farmers’ Market (vehicular, pedestrian, and water).</td>
<td>not-for-profit, private, NYSDOT, ITCTC</td>
<td>multiple sources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Support place-based seasonal events and activities, especially in off-peak/winter months. Support and develop visual and performance arts, museums, stabilization activities, heritage programs, and other cultural activities.**

**Develop and encourage packaging of tourism activities that combine events, accommodations, dining, and other activities in new and creative ways.**

**Explore feasibility and development of “edu-tourism” activities.**

**Improve customer service at point of contact with visitors to Tompkins County.**

**Support place-based festivals.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Lead Organizations</th>
<th>Funding Source</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* A ✓</td>
<td>CAP, TCAD, STPB, Development Grants, individual groups</td>
<td>multiple sources</td>
<td>Currently in process, primarily through Stabilization program administered by CAP and the STPB Development Grants program. Examples: February is Hot, Light in Winter, Holidays Around the World.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* A ✓</td>
<td>CVB, STPB</td>
<td>STPB, not-for-profit, private</td>
<td>Currently in process, initially encouraged through Development Grant Program and CVB.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* A</td>
<td>STPB, CVB, others</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>STPB vision process, Randall report, and SWOT analysis all pointed to educational strength of area and its potential to attract additional visitors. Concept of “edu-tourism” needs better definition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* O/A</td>
<td>CVB, Marketing Committee, Workforce Development, Innkeepers, IDP</td>
<td>room tax, private</td>
<td>Methods might include hospitality training at management and front-line staff levels in hotel, inn, taxi and other businesses; examination of “best practices” in the fields, creation of Local Ambassador’s program or other seminars for business and resident audiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A ✓</td>
<td>CVB, IDP, STPB, County Historian, others</td>
<td>room tax, other</td>
<td>In process through Celebrations Grants Program.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Objective**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Lead Organizations</th>
<th>Funding Source</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O Explore ways to coordinate with Cornell, IC, and TC3 to attract and retain visitors to the area.</td>
<td>STPB, CVB</td>
<td>room tax, colleges</td>
<td>Build upon and coordinate with the wealth of interest these world-class institutions have to offer and the visitors, alumni, and parents they already attract.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O Encourage organized-group, narrated lake excursions.</td>
<td>CVB</td>
<td>private</td>
<td>CVB has worked with private operators since 2003.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O Consider tourist-oriented bus routes during tourism seasons for family weekends at area colleges.</td>
<td>TCAT, CVB</td>
<td>TCAT, CVB</td>
<td>For example, bus route to Cornell, Discovery Trail, parks, Farmers Market, downtown.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A = Appropriate for room tax expenditure  
* = High priority  
O = Other funding  
✓ = Currently funded by room tax
**Objective**

* A ✓ Support the CVB as Tompkins County’s lead marketing agency.

* A ✓ Enhance and support the development of collaborative marketing efforts that include not-for-profits and private tourism activities.

* A ✓ Continue to market to our current customer base.

* A ✓ Perform market analysis with special attention to tourist demographics, including current and future marketing goals.

* A ✓ Continue efforts to reach niche markets.

* A ✓ Develop and expand use of packages as a marketing tool.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Action</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Lead Organizations</th>
<th>Funding Source</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CREATE DEMAND</td>
<td>Support the CVB as Tompkins County’s lead marketing agency.</td>
<td>CVB</td>
<td>room tax, NYS, private</td>
<td>Marketing Committee to review, as well as ongoing input on possible marketing tools such as Travel Guide, website, and other special efforts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enhance and support the development of collaborative marketing efforts that include not-for-profits and private tourism activities.</td>
<td>CVB, Discovery Trail, CAP</td>
<td>CVB, room tax, NYS, private</td>
<td>Provide special emphasis on efforts that promote overnight stays; support Discovery Trail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continue to market to our current customer base.</td>
<td>CVB, Innkeepers, CAP</td>
<td>room tax, private, CVB</td>
<td>Existing base has already participated, is easier and less expensive to reach. Methods include in-room marketing of events, sharing of visitor lists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perform market analysis with special attention to tourist demographics, including current and future marketing goals.</td>
<td>CVB, STPB, Marketing Committee</td>
<td>room tax, CVB</td>
<td>Imperative to continually update knowledge of the best tourist market for Tompkins County, and to target and prioritize marketing efforts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continue efforts to reach niche markets.</td>
<td>CVB</td>
<td>room tax, private, not-for-profit</td>
<td>Niche marketing continues to expand as a tourism trend. Include exploration of ways to reach foreign visitors, using university-related capacity to provide multi-lingual translation in tourism promotion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop and expand use of packages as a marketing tool.</td>
<td>CVB, CAP, IDP, Marketing Committee</td>
<td>room tax, private, other</td>
<td>Will require increased cooperation among hospitality industry partners.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Plan, 2005 – 2010**

A = Appropriate for room tax expenditure   * = High priority  
O = Other funding  ✓ = Currently funded by room tax

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Lead Organizations</th>
<th>Funding Source</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* A  Market to educational institutions and major businesses.</td>
<td>CVB, Marketing Committee</td>
<td>room tax, other</td>
<td>Benchmark practices successful in other communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* ✓ Provide tourism information and directions at locations where tourists are likely to seek such information.</td>
<td>CVB, VIC, Marketing Committee</td>
<td>room tax</td>
<td>Strengthen existing efforts, expand number of locations, and explore new methods of providing public information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* A ✓ Confirm and adopt a marketing-trade “position statement” to guide presentation of Tompkins County image in future marketing efforts.</td>
<td>CVB, STPB Marketing Committee</td>
<td>CVB</td>
<td>In process. CVB responsibility with STPB Marketing Committee input.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective</td>
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<td>Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Increase alternate funding streams for tourism.</td>
<td>STPB, CVB</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Encourage local municipalities to develop land use controls (e.g. zoning) that will encourage the development of tourism facilities and lake access.</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Pursue application of the room tax to Cornell and IC dormitories when they are used for purposes not directly related to an educational mission.</td>
<td>STPB, County</td>
<td>no funding required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>Improve regulation of taxi service.</td>
<td>City, County</td>
<td>no funding required</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Including but not limited to:

Association of New York State CVBs
Bed and Breakfast Association of Greater Ithaca
Cayuga Lake Scenic Byway
Cayuga Waterfront Trail
Cayuga Wine Trail
Central Fingerlakes
City of Ithaca
Community Arts Partnership (CAP)
Convention and Visitors Bureau
Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County
Cornell University
Culinary Bounty
Destination USA
Discovery Trail
Empire State Society of Association Executives
Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance
Finger Lakes Trail Conference
Finger Lakes Wine Center
Greater Ithaca Art Trail
Greater Ithaca Innkeepers Association
Hangar Theatre
Heritage/social/cultural tourism groups
Historic Ithaca/State Theatre
International Association of CVBs
Ithaca-Tompkins Regional Airport
Ithaca College
Ithaca Downtown Partnership
Ithaca Farmers’ Market
Kitchen Theatre
Light in Winter
Local/ regional media
New York State I Love NY Program
New York State Canal Corporation
New York State Travel and Vacation Association
New York State Parks and Recreation
New York State Tourism and Hospitality Association
Outdoor recreation partners and athletic groups
Restaurants and retailers
Strategic Tourism Planning Board
Tompkins Cortland Community College
Tompkins County
Tompkins County Antique Dealers Association
Tompkins County Area Development
Tompkins County Area Transit
Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce
Tompkins County Historian
Tompkins County Restaurant Association
Tour operators, water and land
Tourism Promotion Agencies of New York State
Towns, Villages, and Hamlets of Tompkins County
Tompkins County, N Y

2005 - 2010
Strategic Tourism Plan
Strategic Tourism Planning Board
May, 2005

www.tompkins-co.org