



City of Gloucester

Five Year Tourism Marketing Plan

Part II: Marketing & Strategic Plan

Prepared by:
Open the Door, Inc.
374 Marlborough Street
Boston, MA 02115
cpappas@openthedoor.biz
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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Gloucester is in the process of creating a private/public destination marketing organization to promote the City to regional, national and international visitors. Once this organization is created, it will be the officially recognized tourism marketing organization by both the City of Gloucester, as well as the private sector.

The primary objective of this new marketing organization is to develop and implement effective strategies that will help increase the number of overnight visitors and day-trippers. Strategies will focus on those market segments that offer the greatest opportunities to leverage resources and return on investment through joint collaborations, in-kind programs, and the promotion of special events that have the ability to draw visitors to Gloucester, ultimately aiding in the increase of the economic vitality of the City.

In 2013, travelers to Massachusetts directly spent \$18.5 billion, which translated to \$1.2 billion in state and local taxes, 129,400 jobs supported and \$3.96 billion in wages paid. Of this, \$865 million was spent in Essex County, supporting 6,845 jobs and \$64 million in state and local taxes. It is projected that FY2014 revenues for the City of Gloucester derived from hotel and meals tax, as well as parking, will exceed \$3.3 million.

Phase I Recap:

In the Fall of 2014, Open the Door created Phase I of the Five Year Marketing Plan. Phase I includes the recommendation for the creation of an organizational structure under which Gloucester will be marketed as a premier visitors destination, creating a more robust year round industry that will yield more jobs and revenues throughout the different sectors of the local economy, which will in turn, strengthen the core community. Phase I was created by conducting one-on-one interviews with over 30 key stakeholders in order to identify ways to work better together and assist in developing key action steps; engaging key community groups; and analyzing and reviewing best practices and structural models from other communities.

As part of the key stakeholder interviews, several local marketing organizations were identified and their roles discussed. While detailed findings can be found starting on Page 14 in Phase I of the report, some of the key findings include:

- Interviewees expressed support for Discover Gloucester but feel strongly that in its current structure, it is not sustainable;
- There was a general consensus among key players that the public relations effort belongs within the new organization; and
- Stakeholders identified the new Tourism Commission as much stronger than in the past and taking a much more active role, however they seek more communication from them.

Based upon the research undertaken, there were three reasonable options for consideration:

1. Place the tourism marketing effort within the City of Gloucester;
2. Place the tourism marketing effort within the existing volunteer marketing organization; or
3. Create a new public/private visitor marketing organization.

There is a general consensus among those interviewed that the first two options would not be enough to catapult Gloucester to where everyone feels the city needs to go in order to generate increased tourism business during need periods.

As a result, the recommended structure is a new public/private visitor marketing organization that is an independent, non-profit organization. The City of Gloucester has previously contributed \$120,000 (staff, office space and cash) towards tourism and it is anticipated that this will continue moving forward. The city will take the lead in implementing the transition to this new organization and the new public/private organization will need to find new sources of revenue from the private and public sector to continue to make it sustainable.

Phase II Summary:

Phase II includes a detailed five year marketing plan for the new tourism organization. The marketing and promotional strategies outlined in this plan have been designed to

produce maximum impact. An integrated program has been recommended to reach to target market segments. Collaborating with the local tourism and cultural industry is a priority. These partnerships and others will help to leverage budgets and expand Gloucester's presence in order to grow market share.

Primary and secondary research indicates that travelers look for opportunities where they can partake in unique and varied activities. Research also indicate that satisfaction, value and price all continue to be important elements in the decision making process of a visitor. Results from research conducted also indicate that Gloucester should promote the wide variety of activities available in the city to both overnight visitors, as well as those within the local drive market.

Focus will be placed on increasing domestic overnight visitors from the Northeast (specifically New England and the New York/New Jersey/Pennsylvania markets), while efforts to target the international visitor will be introduced. Target market segments will include families and couples, as well as niche segments such as culinary, maritime, arts & culture, cruise and LGBT, among others.

Communications forms the foundation of this marketing program, through tactics such as media relations, e-newsletters, social media and advertising. Additional tactics include hosting familiarization trips and participating in tradeshow as well as other industry events. The website will continue to be improved and enhanced, making more information available on www.gloucesterma.com for viewing and downloading. This will help to give visitors timely access to information.

The overall marketing goals for Gloucester are as follows:

- Increase overnight mid-week and weekend business throughout the year by targeting group business and offering creative packaging, expanding cultural offerings, culinary packages and shopping experiences, among others;
- Increase visitors to the URL, www.GloucesterMA.com, but with a new, updated website design;
- Increase the combined telephone, mail and e-mail inquiries for visitor information coming to Gloucester;
- Increase leisure visitors to Gloucester, particularly from the Northeast;

- Increase international visitors to Gloucester, mirroring the target markets of the Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism and Discover New England; and
- Increase visitors length of stay, average spend and the City's occupancy rate.

This Five Year Marketing Plan will focus on the following priorities:

- Ensure a smooth transition in year one from multiple marketing entities to one public/private marketing organization;
- Develop and implement an educational and communication program for the local industry;
- Offer dedicated value added packages focusing on the City's cultural offerings and attractions, as well as culinary, maritime and shopping opportunities for overnight and leisure visitors;
- Increase website visibility and continue to push people to gloucesterma.com;
- Provide exceptional visitor services; and
- Increase partnership dollars to be able to expand marketing efforts.

II. MARKET ANALYSIS

The overall mission of the new private/public marketing organization is to develop and implement effective strategies and programs that enhance the economic vitality of the City of Gloucester. This strategy has been designed to position Gloucester as a year-round overnight destination, promoting the wide variety of available offerings to potential visitors. This assists to position Gloucester as one of New England's top destinations for all travelers, individuals, couples and families, who are seeking an experience rich in arts and culture, maritime history, soft adventure, fine dining, shopping, entertainment and more.

An essential element in the approach will be the regular assessment of external factors, as well as implementing and analyzing research and data in order to better understand Gloucester's visitors, to develop initiatives and programs to more effectively influence their travel decisions, evaluate the competitive position, and track results as well as performance.

a. United States Overview

Heading into 2015, the US market continues to show strong sign of recovery from the recession. Travel in nearly all sectors is up and travel spending is finally starting to surpass pre-recession levels. While memories of the recession remain, business, group, and individual travel have all grown significantly. When booking trips, customers still remain attuned to price and value, but they also focus on improving their travel through experiential, purpose-driven trips.

In 2013, according to the US Travel Association (USTA), in 2013 direct spending on leisure travel by domestic and international travelers totaled \$621.4 billion. US residents logged 1.6 billion person trips for leisure purposes and the top activities were (1) visiting relatives; (2) shopping; (3) visiting friends; (4) fine dining; and (5) beaches. With leisure travel bookings up, hotel bookings and occupancy rates have increased, as well. USTA has also reported that leisure travelers are older than business travelers with the average age of leisure travelers being 47.5 years old and business travelers 45.9 years old.

While leisure travel is increasing and the economy continues to improve, evidence suggests that the mindset of leisure travelers has not changed. While they continue to travel, they do so in a decidedly different, more cost-oriented manner. A recent survey by American Express Travel found that 20% of surveyed travel counselors indicated budget as their customers' top consideration given the rising fees associated with airlines, hotels, car rentals and other elements of the travel experience. Most travelers continue to comparison-shop websites as they seek to find rock-bottom prices to traditionally popular destinations. In addition, a study conducted by Unity Marketing on Affluent Consumer and Their Travel Plans found that they have become much more value driven and values oriented. They are still spending money on travel, and especially experiences, but don't want to be charged for small things like Wi-Fi.

With cutting costs in mind, many leisure travelers are opting to drive to their destination in response to rising flight costs. Currently, 47% of leisure travelers plan to drive to their destination, an increase from the 43% who planned to drive in 2013. Additionally, 60% of Canadians, America's largest international inbound travel partner, travel by car.

The online presence of travel companies, services and venues continues to increase in importance into 2015. USTA reported that trip-planning sources have shifted over the last several years, with social media and mobile devices being used more often. In 2012, nearly one-quarter (23%) of domestic leisure travelers relied on friends and relatives to plan their trips, while three in ten (31%) utilized their own past experiences. One in ten used destination websites, 9% used traveler provider websites (airline, hotel, rental car, cruise, tours, etc.), 5% used social networking and 4% used a mobile device to help plan their trip.

As of 2013, according to research provided by MMGY, 60% of American travelers use advice from TripAdvisor when choosing a hotel. YouTube is the second most popular choice. Skift reports that 84% of those between the ages 18 – 34 read and review content recommended by their peers, friends and social networks. This means that individuals, with the aid of technology, can have a much larger voice in the market, one that is not controlled by the industry themselves.

Mobile applications are now a critical pillar of the industry and it's imperative that the way online information is offered is adapted. Statista has revealed that mobile devices account for 17.4% of web traffic, a 57% jump over the previous year. In fact, Skift reports show that in the United States, for the first time ever, desktop online bookings will decline in 2014 while mobile bookings will grow over the next five years. TravelClick reports that in 2015, mobile is expected to generate an average of 22% of on line bookings, up from 11% in 2013. While these new bookings are increasing they illustrate unique characteristics and behaviors that differ from traditional web booking. Same day reservations are growing from 9% to 23% as users are becoming more comfortable with their mobile devices and they are waiting until the last minute to book. Travel companies must remain on the cutting edge of technology to stay successful in the current state of the industry.

The MMGY survey also shows that millennials represent the new up-and-coming niche market. The industry must also adapt to accommodate the challenge of this younger population of travelers. This generation tends to favor traveling for new experiences and often avoids doing the same thing twice. Instead of targeting hotels toward the aging baby boomer age group, it's necessary to make the shift towards marketing to the millennials. This age group is extremely tech-savvy and employs a higher degree of entrepreneurial skills than the older generation. Only 47% of millennial travelers, as opposed to 59% of the baby boomer age group, plan their trips more than 6 months in advance. Additionally, only 2 in 5 travelers are expressing loyalty to any one hotel brand. Instead, travelers are looking for the best possible deals rather than staying loyal to their preferred hotel brand. millennials want to learn something new and have enriching life experiences. Many are looking to embed themselves in the local culture or learn new skills. By 2020, millennials will account for nearly half of the US workforce.

National research also suggests that marketing to the niche LGBT market (Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender) continues offer a tremendous opportunity. OutNow Consulting has reported that the LGBT market represents \$181 billion in leisure travel spending. The US LGBT market spends \$52.3 billion per year, with per capita spending at \$3,472, the second highest in the world. The World Travel and Business Council reported that the LGBT market grew year over year by almost 10% in 2013, despite the only 3% growth in the general travel and tourism industry. The LGBT market segment

seeks safe destinations with exceptional dining and cultural experiences. Additionally, according to Experian, the LGBT market is more likely to be technology “wizards”, making it more likely they will book their trips online.

b. Regional Overview

In 2013, total domestic and international travelers directly spent \$18.5 billion in Massachusetts, up 4.2% over 2012. Domestic traveler spending increased 4% while international traveler spending increased 5.3%. During the same time, domestic and international travelers also spent \$5.6 billion on public transportation, up 5.1% from 2012.

Domestic and international travelers spent \$4.2 billion on lodging during 2013, an increase of 5.4% from 2012. According to Smith Travel Research, hotel room demand increased by 2.2% in 2013 while the average daily room rate increased by 3.6%. And spending on food service by domestic and international travelers totaled nearly \$3.6 billion, up 3.6% from 2012. Domestic and international travel spending on auto transportation increased by 1.5% in 2013 to \$2.4 billion.

Essex County saw \$816.3 million in domestic travel spending in 2013, a 4.6% increase from 2012. Domestic traveler spending in Essex County generated \$180.6 million payroll income and 6,400 jobs during 2013.

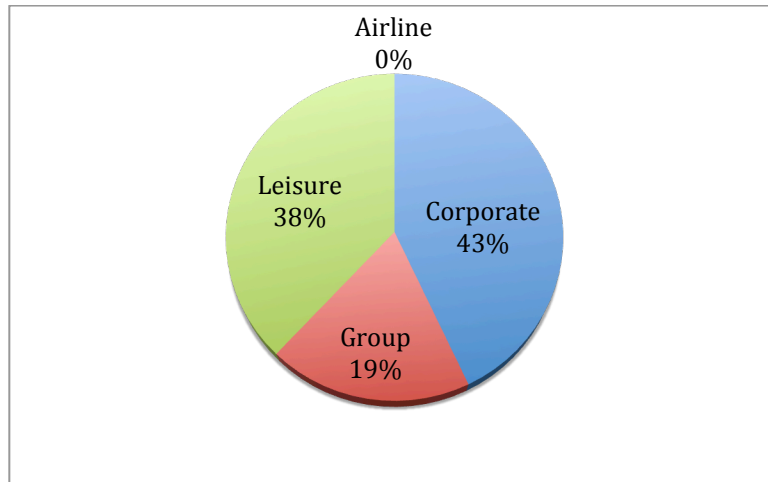
Domestically, Massachusetts’ drive market is very strong with interest from New York and around New England. Research indicates that these markets are less concerned with “deals” and are more focused on the overall experience of a destination. One of the most cost effective ways to communicate to the New York and New England markets is through social media channels. Other strong efforts include public relations, blogs and e-newsletters to promote offerings these markets are seeking, i.e., culture/history, dining, shopping, events, recreational, maritime and experiential/learning activities. This helps to reinforce the value of Gloucester to target markets.

The majority of Massachusetts’ international visitors come from the United Kingdom, China, Germany and Canada. City-break travel remains strong, particularly from the United Kingdom where consumers can choose during the peak summer season from

five non-stop flights daily from London. Family travel also remains strong, as does shopping-break travel.

Based on Pinnacle Advisory Group’s historical data, seasonally the strongest months of lodging demand in Massachusetts are June, July, September and October. The area’s shoulders months, or months of mid-level demand, are April, May and November. The weakest months for lodging demand are December, January, February, March and August. In 2013, demand was relatively evenly distributed between corporate transient, leisure transient and group demand.

Massachusetts Hotels Market Mix 2013



The average length of stay in Massachusetts has remained the same in the past eight years at 2.2 nights.

| MASSACHUSETTS HOTELS ¹ | MARKET MIX | | AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY | |
|-----------------------------------|------------|------|------------------------|------|
| | 2013 | 2012 | 2013 | 2012 |
| Market Segment | | | | |
| Corporate | 43% | 42% | 2.1 | 2.1 |
| Group | 19% | 19% | 2.1 | 2.0 |
| Leisure | 38% | 38% | 2.1 | 2.1 |
| Airline | 0% | 1% | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 2.1 | 2.1 |

Pinnacle Advisory Group provides this Market Mix and Average Length of Stay. This information is based on data for 31 hotels throughout Massachusetts. These statistics are based on 2012 and 2013 year-end data.

c. Gloucester Market:

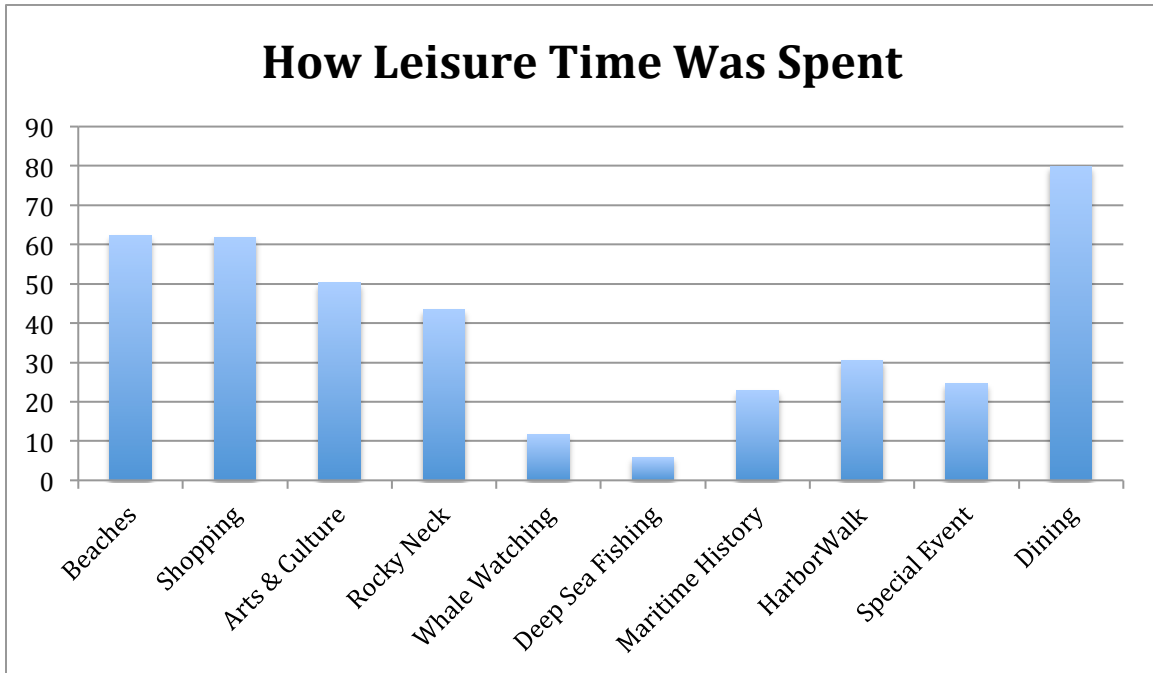
The City of Gloucester offers a large number of sustainable competitive advantages because of its rich history, well-known maritime past, seaside location, as well as its art and cultural offerings. As a result, the City features a variety of offerings for travelers who are visiting friends and family to seeking quick getaways or even lengthy vacations. This positioning allows for the promotion of a variety of things to see and do in Gloucester and plays to families and short stay visitors as well. This diversity of the City's product also allows targeting of the individual niche traveler, including those from the following segments: culinary, maritime, LGBT, cruise and arts & culture. Marketing efforts will focus on creating products that appeal to niche markets in order to help differentiate Gloucester from competing destinations.

Gloucester offers international visitors uniquely American activities in an area that is easily accessible from Boston. While this segment accounts for a small percentage of visitors, it can not be overlooked, as international visitors tend to stay longer and spend more money. Capitalizing on Gloucester's rich arts, culture and maritime history will continue to be a main focal point moving forward. The new marketing organization will work to grow market share from this very important visitor segment by collaborating with organizations already working the international market, including the Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism, Discover New England, and the North of Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau, among others.

Primary research provided by the Stage Fort Park Welcome Center, as well as through an online survey to past visitors indicates that one-third of visitors to Gloucester are from Massachusetts with an additional 12% from the rest of New England and the mid-Atlantic represents 23% of business. 42% of international visitors are from Canada, with another 44% from Europe, although Great Britain and Germany alone make up over 50% of this group.

The majority of visitors (80%) came for leisure purposes and when asked how they spent their time in Gloucester, the five top activities were restaurants/dining (79%), beaches (62%), shopping (61%), arts & cultural events (50%) and Art Colony/Rocky Neck (43%). Maritime history, whale watching, deep sea fishing, boating and cruising were much lower on the list. This is not to say that these are not important activities, it's

just that the current visitor is not partaking in these activities to as great an extent as they are other activities. This marketing plan will address ways to increase awareness for, and participating in, many of the water activities that are important to Gloucester's economy.



59% of visitors surveyed heard about Gloucester from friends or family, 55% got their information from them as well, 19% got their information from social media, 20% from the GloucesterMA.com and 18% from the Discover Gloucester Website. Interestingly, 16% of visitors got their information from TripAdvisor indicating that this is as important a source to visitors as the destinations website.

50% of visitors said they stayed in Gloucester for 1 – 3 nights, with an additional 21% indicating that they stayed 3 – 5 nights. 7% came for the day only. 45% traveled as a couple, 14% traveled alone and 18% traveled as a family. 47% of visitors traveled to another destination in the region before or after their trip to Gloucester, indicating that partnering with other destinations in the region has potential to help to drive additional visitors in the future. 85% of visitors who completed the survey were over 45 years of age and 60% were over 55. 45% of the visitors had an average household income over \$75,000.

d. Competitive Analysis

Located just 35 miles north of Boston, the City of Gloucester is easily accessible from major highways throughout New England. Its geographic location also offers access for air travel through Logan International Airport. Gloucester has been a popular seasonal tourism destination, as America's Oldest Seaport, it is most known for its coast line and its maritime history. The city offers a wide variety of attractions and was the setting for the box office hit *The Perfect Storm*, and is now home to the show, *Wicked Tuna*. Gloucester is a dynamic destination with diverse offerings that appeal to multiple demographics.

The competitive set within the leisure market includes destinations that are similar to our key tourism locations within the region as well as other locations of the United States. It is acknowledged that any region could effectively act as competition. The main competition has been limited to the destinations listed below that have been identified by stakeholders and through research. While all of the destinations listed serve as overall competition, some places are perceived as more desirable than others by different segments, i.e. New England tourists, those seeking Gloucester specifics and day trippers. Understanding these segments is very important.

New England tourists, mostly empty nesters who are taking some time to soak in an area of the country they probably have never visited before are seeking *living history*. They are looking for scenery and atmosphere, rather than facts and hard history. Destinations are the starting and ending point of the day, but the real adventure is the journey in between. They want to experience "old New England" and take in the coastal scenery. They would be as likely to visit Portland, ME; Newport, RI; Portsmouth, NH; Salem, MA; New Bedford, MA; as well as Gloucester.

Those seeking Gloucester specifics are looking to gain an understanding deeper than they can learn from books. These visitors are a mix of empty nesters and family vacationers who are interested in learning more about a specific event or want to take in the cultural and maritime history of Gloucester. Family vacationers want to educate their kids in a fun way, and empty nesters are self described history buffs who want

authenticity and to *feel* the place they've read about. They'd be likely to visit New Orleans, LA; St. Augustine, FL; Seattle, WA; or Annapolis, MD.

Day trippers are visitors who live within an hour drive (50 miles) from Gloucester. They want a day away from the ordinary, but not a huge investment in time or cost. The key to their trip is that the destination has multiple points of interest for all parties. Other destinations that would appeal would be Rockport, Newburyport, Marblehead or Salem.

- *Portland, ME:* Portland offers visitors the history and culture of the region, including the maritime history. Portland's Old Port is one of the most successful revitalized warehouse districts in the country. Seamlessly connected to the waterfront, the Old Port is both a working waterfront and a chic shopping and entertainment district, increasingly known for its fine dining. Portland is easily accessible for visitors from I-95, train, bus or air.

The Greater Portland Convention & Visitors Bureau website is easy to navigate and presents information about the region, visitors, meetings, weddings, travel trade, relocating, media, members, and more. The Tourist Information Centers are easily accessible, either by phone during business hours, or the 24-hours service with the website. Three of their main tabs in the visitor section are Visiting Maine, Visitor Resources, and Savings.

Visiting Maine provides where to stay, eat, shop, what to do, getting around, and visitor services.

Visitor Resources has a calendar of events, which can be very helpful when booking trips.

Savings offers an interactive map & trip planner, making it easy to look through vacation packages, coupons and deals.

On their website, there are several different options to attract every type of potential visitor, offering information about travel to Maine, lodging, entertainment, dining and shopping, and can be easily navigated. They also offer a free visitors guide, available online or hard copy. The Visitors Guide is a 92-page magazine format with all members of the convention bureau listed, maps, ads and articles on things to do.

They also include brochures from various attractions in their mailing, as these brochures help to pay for postage and fulfillment.

- *Newport, RI:* Known as a New England summer resort and for the famous Newport Mansions, Newport has one of the highest concentrations of colonial homes in the nation. Another National Historic Landmark District, Bellevue Avenue, is the home of the International Tennis Hall of Fame. Newport has coastlines on the West, South and East and is a maritime city, known as the sailing capitol of the United States. It offers a large variety of dining and lodging options.

The Newport Convention & Visitors Bureau website is innovative and user-friendly. The home page provides where to stay, what to eat, where to shop, things to do, and visitor resources. These all have drop down tabs that have different concentrations, making it easy to find the information you want and need quickly. On the homepage they also offer last minute deals, upcoming events, an insider's blog, and a travel guide. The overall design of the website is clean yet creative, and provides an abundance of travel information for everyone in-between the solo traveler, and the wedding planner.

Visitors can request a brochure which is a small, 8.5" x 5.5" branding piece with beautiful images that drives people back to the website for more information. They also send a postcard that has listed the Visitor Center information on one side and a list of upcoming events on the other side.

- *Portsmouth, NH:* Located on the New Hampshire Seacoast, Portsmouth is an historic seaport and popular summer tourist destination. It has been named by the National Trust for Historic Preservation as one of America's Dozen Distinctive Destinations. With a stimulating mix of historic buildings, sidewalk cafes, great restaurants, art galleries, jazz clubs and distinctive artisans' boutiques, the city has been called "one of the most culturally rich destinations in the country". Portsmouth is easily accessible, roughly an hour north of Boston, an hour east of Manchester, NH and an hour south of Portland, ME.

The Greater Portsmouth Chamber of Commerce website is easy to navigate. The homepage has a running slideshow of visitors, concerts, local cuisine, gardens, the harbor, etc. providing an immediate visual of what they have to offer visitors. On the sidebar of the homepage they have a list of events, visitor guides, and seasonal videos. The website isn't fancy but it provides easy access to information that would be helpful in planning a trip.

- *Rockport, MA:* Rockport's historic attractions bring seacoast history alive with many over 250 years old for example, *Motif No 1, built in the 1840s* is the "most-often painted building in America". Generations of artists have been drawn to Rockport, in particular, for its uncommonly magical light that has inspired artists since Winslow Homer. Visitors can enjoy dozens of art galleries. Rockport is also a popular destination for outdoor activities, including sailing, kayaking, bird watching, and is home to beautiful beaches and lighthouses. Rockport is known for fresh, delicious seafood and restaurants with waterfront views. Rockport has an abundance of historic inns and hotels, charming B&B's, motels and cottages. Less than an hour from Boston, Rockport is easily accessible by train and boat.
- *Newburyport, MA:* Located on the south bank of the Merrimack River at the mouth of the Atlantic Ocean, Newburyport is filled with churches and cemeteries that evoke remembrances of local personalities. The Tannery District, close to downtown, is an extension of old steam mills and tanneries of the past. All over town visitors can imagine the locations of former ropewalks and clammers' shacks, while viewing shipyards, as well as the saltbox and Victorian houses, Federal mansions and Colonial houses that are today's cherished homes. Newburyport also has a lengthy maritime history. Lowell's Boat Shop is the country's oldest continuous boat building business in operation still producing dories. The downtown area offers a variety of boutiques, banks, bookstores, import shops, salons, cafes and food shops. Newburyport offers a variety of historic inns, B&Bs, hotels and motels. In terms of dining, Newburyport offers varied menus from Yankee New England fare, to American and European cuisine to ethnic enticements.
- *New Bedford, MA:* Located in the Bristol County of Massachusetts New Bedford is the sixth-largest city in Massachusetts. New Bedford is nicknamed "The Whaling

City” because during the 19th century this city was home to one of the most important whaling ports in the world. This city is accessible from water, air, car and rail via the MBTA. Downtown is considered the heart New Bedford and offers a mix of museums, art galleries, history, restaurants and shops. It is home to the New Bedford Whaling National Historic Park and the working waterfront.

The Destination New Bedford website is very user friendly and appealing to the eye. Visitors to the site experience a homepage with scrolling images highlighting different attractions and activities. The destination website also connects various departments, including the City of New Bedford, Economic Development Council and Port of New Bedford. All of their websites are connected showing community between all organizations.

A request for visitor information results in Destination New Bedford sending a personalized letter as well as maps, art guides and other materials to visitors for assistance in planning their trip.

- *Salem, MA*: Located just 17 miles north of Boston’s Logan International Airport, Salem is well known maritime past, seaside location, art, culture and the Witch Trails of 1692. As a result, the city features a variety of offerings for leisure travelers who are visiting friends and family, seeking quick getaways or vacations closer to home. Salem is easily accessible by major highways, commuter rail and in the summer, the Salem Ferry. The Salem website showcases blogs, weddings, *Haunted Happenings*, historic information and LGBT support right from their homepage. The website is also directly linked to the City of Salem, Chamber of Commerce and Salem Main Streets sites showing community between all of Salem’s organizations. Other highlights offered to visitors are a Free Guide available in print or online and the Salem Passport. The Salem Passport includes admissions to different attractions, museums and trolleys in the area; it also offers some discounts on food and beverage and is available for purchase. Salem sends a 5.5” x 8.5” magazine that includes story ideas for visitors, maps, a calendar of events by season and articles that might be of interest to visitors.

- *Providence, RI:* The capitol of Rhode Island, Providence is situated at the mouth of the Providence River at the head of Narragansett Bay. In 2009, Providence began rebranding themselves to emphasize its educational resources and arts community. Providence is marketed to showcase the best of both worlds. They combine the friendliness of a small town with the culture and sophistication of a big city. Providence has diverse communities, a thriving arts community, a variety of lodging options and great restaurant and shopping scene.

The Providence Warwick Convention & Visitors Bureau has a great website showcasing Providence and all it has to offer. The homepage has scrolling images and a welcoming message. Directly from the homepage visitors have the availability to book a hotel room in the area, view current offers, watch videos, read blogs and connect to social media. The site also has planning tool tabs for easy assistance to visitors planning their trip to the area.

- *Annapolis, MD:* Annapolis is the State Capitol of Maryland and is world-renowned as America's Sailing Capital. Located on the Severn River in Anne Arundel County, Annapolis is not only the center of Maryland government but is also home to the U.S. Naval Academy. The Annapolis Countryside offers hundreds of miles of the Chesapeake Bay shoreline and a wide array of American history. Annapolis's downtown area is also home to Arundel Mills-Mall, Maryland Live! Casino and BWI Thurgood Marshall Airport.

The Annapolis & Anne Arundel County Conference & Visitors Bureau website shares a lot of information with easy navigating right from the homepage. The homepage images change as they highlight the different featured items (the tabs on the left) of Annapolis. Other highlights incorporate that are great for visitors are:

- *Stay Informed:* Visitors can sign up to receive announcements, information on upcoming events and exclusive offers from the AAAC for the Annapolis area.
- TripAdvisor link directing visitors directly to TripAdvisor
- *Good Translate:* Visitors are able to chose from different languages to view the site in.

- *Sample Itineraries* and *Build Your Own Itinerary*: Visitors can view sample itinerary of what travelers have done in the past and then have the ability to take their trip a step further and build their own itinerary.
- *Walking Tour*: Right from the homepage they market their downloadable walking application.

Their printed materials for visitors include a magazine style visitor guide and a map.

- *New Orleans, LA*: New Orleans is most known for its celebrations and festivals; mainly Mardi Gras. The city is also famous for its cuisine, music, distinct French and Spanish Creole architecture, as well as its cross-cultural and multilingual heritage. New Orleans is located in the southeastern part of Louisiana and straddles the Mississippi River. The New Orleans visitor website is interactive and user friendly. As New Orleans is a huge tourist destination the website offers merchandise for sale and opportunities to win trips to festivals and events. Visitors are able to book a hotel room right from the homepage, request a travel guide and sign up for E-News.
- *St. Augustine, FL*: Known as the *Ancient City*, St. Augustine is located between North East and Central East Florida and is convenient to Jacksonville, Orlando and Daytona airports. This city is full of history as it is referred to as the first city in America. It is full of cobblestone streets, quaint cafes, bars, unique shops and bed-and-breakfast inns. Significant landmarks in this destination are Castillo de San Marcos, Lightner Museum, Flagler College and Fort Matanzas. St. Augustine's website showcases all of the standard visitor information with tabs connecting them to *what to do*, *places to stay*, *places to eat*, *deals* and *events*. Videos and articles are showcased as well as links to airports and beaches. Visitors are able to upload their own photos.
- *Seattle, WA*: Seattle is a coastal seaport city and is known as one of the world's greenest cities. It is home to a unique blend of art, culture and nature. When visiting Seattle visitors have access to the water, mountains, wineries and different eclectic neighborhoods. The popularity of Seattle increased in the 1990's with the movie

Sleepless in Seattle and is also known for its popular coffee chains. Starbucks originated in Seattle and the city is also home to the Seattle's Best brand.

The Visit Seattle website shares a lot standard visitor website information but it highlights their *Seattle Localist* program. Upon entering the site, visitors receive a pop up which allows them to subscribe to the *Seattle Localist* which gives them Seattle *insider* information on what is happening. The site is also big on social media and offers a downloadable travel guide.

It is clear that visitor information (both print and digital) needs to be user friendly and engage the potential visitors. By offering useful information, suggested itineraries, maps, and trip planning tools, it makes it easier for a potential visitor to plan their trip and increases the chances of them actually visiting. In an effort to grow market share, competitive destinations will continue to be monitored and their marketing and promotional programs targeting visitors will be analyzed. This is a constantly changing scene and in order to remain competitive Gloucester must continue to seek out new ways to differentiate the destination from competition and showcase positive attributes as well as value.

Gloucester will be positioned as an authentic, affordable, and year-round destination, giving those that desire it an opportunity to experience all that the City has to offer. Those looking for a quick escape will be given the opportunity to Discover Gloucester as an easily accessible destination that offers something for everyone.

III. MARKETING INITIATIVES

In order to develop the Five Year Tourism and Marketing Plan, past programs have been evaluated, research has been implemented and results have been analyzed. Focus has also been placed on understanding trends in the industry that may have an effect on Gloucester. The marketing recommendations emphasize the city's arts & culture, soft adventure, maritime history, various attractions, dining and shopping opportunities, among other attributes attractive to visitors.

Gloucester will continue to be positioned as an ideal place to visit for domestic and international families and couples for both overnight and day visits. Niche marketing effort will be developed to drive incremental business, particularly during need periods. The marketing strategies will continue to create awareness that Gloucester is a vibrant destination offering a variety of opportunities for all types of visitors. The destination will be positioned as one to *discover* for all target audiences.

The primary goal of this marketing program is to increase overnight visitation to Gloucester. While day-trippers are important, in order to increase hotel tax revenue, the initial focus has been placed on driving overnight business. This will help to increase economic impact and the health of the visitor industry. Overnight visitors will be targeted throughout the year by the following strategies:

- Engaging the tourism and cultural industries in a unified marketing and communications effort;
- Incorporating data results from marketing research into communications strategies;
- Generating leads and providing information to prospective visitors in all target market segments;
- Actively pursuing media coverage through an integrated media relations campaign, including regularly scheduled e-blasts, pursuing placement of stories and continuing to target a list of on-line publications for events and activities;
- Developing and promoting themed months that are tied into the festivals and other activities in Gloucester. These themed months will be supported by media

relations efforts, as well as by developing suggested itineraries and packaging by partners;

- Increasing the number of marketing & promotional partners working with Gloucester;
- Integrating and enhancing the web-site;
- Developing international marketing programs; and
- Providing leadership and guidance for the development and implementation of marketing strategies.

These strategies will continue to be developed and implemented through 2019, with the results from the previous years programs being evaluated on an annual basis to ensure that they are still the most effective strategies to generate the greatest return on investment.

The plan will build on existing efforts, and for each of the outlined initiatives, partnerships will continue to be developed and promotional opportunities will be sought out wherever possible. Primary focus will be placed upon increasing overnight visitation to Gloucester by targeting a variety of market segments through integrated initiatives, which will ultimately lead to generating increased visitors to the City of Gloucester and industry partners. Programs will be developed that help to cross promote at the point of sale. For example, someone buying a ticket to park at the beach might be encouraged to dine or shop downtown with a value add coupon on the back of the parking ticket.

In addition, the new marketing organization will work with local industry partners to share research. The organization will also undertake independent research on a regular basis in an effort to measure the success of individual programs, not only from the perspective of the visitor, but also from the perspective of the private sector. In this way, programs can continue to be modified on a regular basis and tailored to meet the immediate, as well as long term needs of the destination. Measurement tools will not only include an annual review of the number of visitors to Gloucester as well as the hotel tax revenue generated as reported by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, but web-hits will be measured on a monthly basis, the value of media generated will be reviewed regularly, as will the number of brochures distributed, the number of partners working with Gloucester, response to online visitor survey and more.

a. Initiatives

The primary objective of this plan to develop and implement effective marketing strategies that help to increase the number of overnight visitors to Gloucester that will ultimately result in enhancing the economic vitality of the city through increased tax revenue. Strategies will continue to focus on those that offer the greatest opportunity to leverage resources and return on investment through joint collaborations, in-kind programs, and promotions of special events that draw visitors to Gloucester. Programs have been recommended that require an investment in staff time, rather than a significant amount of cash (i.e. advertising). While advertising is important, with a start-up, limited budget, the focus needs to be on spreading the word via media, social media, online and through other inexpensive communications sources.

The goals of the overall marketing program are as follows:

- Ensure a smooth transition in year one from multiple marketing entities to one public/private marketing organization;
- Increase number of visitors to the City, especially during low-demand periods;
- Increase the number of visitors staying in hotel rooms;
- Increase the length of stay;
- Increase overall visitor spending in Gloucester;
- Develop and implement an educational and communication program for the local industry;
- Provide exceptional visitor services; and
- Increase partnership dollars to be able to expand marketing efforts.

Key stakeholder interviews, as well as analysis of research, indicates that there needs to be a push to attract both overnight visitors and day-trippers, understanding that while overnight visitors will help drive room tax revenue, day-trippers will help drive business during the slower visitor months.

The strategies and tactics outlined below are general initiatives that will be implemented through 2019. More detail can be found in Section IV - Implementation, page 36.

Communications:

There are two communications programs that need to be developed and implemented. The first is an internal communications program, which is designed to engage businesses and community leaders in Gloucester. The second is the external communications program designed to educate visitors on all the city has to offer as a visitor destination.

Internal Communications Program:

Regular communications among stakeholders and community leaders is imperative in order to keep and make the tourism marketing efforts sustainable.

- Database: A database will be created that includes the various segments of the industry (lodging, dining, retail, attractions, artists, etc), as well as elected officials, community leaders and others affected by and/or interested in seeing tourism succeed in Gloucester.
- Quarterly Meetings: In an effort to generate programs through partnership, quarterly meetings will be held inviting partners to come together to network, exchange business ideas and discuss opportunities for cooperative marketing programs. These meetings will also provide the opportunity to discuss the coordination of events as well as plan programming for existing and new community events.
- Bi-Monthly E-Newsletter: As part of the internal communications program, a quarterly e-newsletter will be created and distributed to partners to keep them informed about the programs and opportunities available to them. Content will include upcoming events, educational and networking opportunities, marketing opportunities, programs, themes, as well as any news that may affect tourism efforts in Gloucester. This E-Newsletter will also provide a way to keep partners and legislative leaders informed of industry trends and the importance of tourism, as well as to provide updates on the economic impact generated. This information will also be disseminated to Good Morning Gloucester.

- Service Training Initiative: A service training initiative should be developed. This initiative will help increase the quality of service to visitors and make the visitor experience more positive. Hotel desk clerks, wait staff, bartenders, hosts and hostesses, restaurant staff, cab drivers, shop keepers, police officers, retail clerks, receptionists and tour guides, among others, will be incited to a one day training session that will focus on customer service and what's new in Gloucester. The long term goal will be to offer training semi-annually and assist service people in developing superior service skills, knowledge of what there is to see and do in the area and encourage them to take pride in their performance with visitors.

External Communications Program:

The external communications program has been designed to educate potential visitors in target markets on all of the things to see and do in Gloucester year-round.

- Media Relations: One of the most cost effective ways to market a destination is through an integrated media relations strategy. PR for Gloucester enjoyed great success working with directly with travel writers that will continue with the new entity. In addition, working closely with the North of Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau, Discover New England and the Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism will help Gloucester to aggressively pursue travel editors to secure print, online and broadcast coverage for our city. Story ideas and suggested itineraries will be developed and pitched to media.

Educational trips for travel writers and interviews with key partners will take place, an online media library and a calendar of pitch ideas/press releases will be developed to generate exposure for Gloucester among target media. Regular updates will be sent out to media on a targeted list of print, online, radio and television news sources that talk about what's new and upcoming in the area with a 6 to 18 month lead time.

Media relations is critical in expanding Gloucester's reach to target the northeast market. There aren't enough advertising dollars available to have a consistent and comprehensive presence in the New York/New Jersey/Pennsylvania,

Connecticut and New England through advertising, but awareness can be built through stories.

- Social Media:

Social Media is an important, if not the most important, way for existing and potential customers to receive news and information on what's happening in Gloucester. Social Media is influential and is the quickest way to reach target markets. A program to introduce regular posts on Facebook and Twitter will be implemented for those audiences interested in obtaining their information that way. YouTube and Flickr will be utilized as well. A monthly calendar of posts will be created to highlight news we want to tell about Gloucester. When there is breaking news, planned posts will be swapped out, but in this way, there will be a consistent strategy and communications platform for daily posts and distribution of news.

- E-Newsletters:

Similar to the community E-newsletter, a bi-monthly consumer E-newsletter will be produced and distributed to those who sign up for it on the website, as well as to the media database. The newsletter will promote events and specials with a shorter lead-time, helping to address short-term business needs.

Content Development:

One of the most cost effective ways to promote Gloucester is through developing comprehensive content that is of interest to the various target market segments. In order to have programs and content to promote to visitors and residents, a series of itineraries and themed months will be developed in cooperation with businesses in Gloucester. This will help to expand awareness to target market segments. Topics for itineraries will be listed on the website and promoted to the media. The itineraries could be one big overall itinerary or individual itineraries that could be combined with others depending up on the trip people want to experience.

- They could be 1, 3 or 5 day itineraries, as well as half days
- The itineraries could be seasonal, weekend or weekday specific, helping to drive business to need periods

Topics could include:

- Buy Local – art, food, services
- Soft Adventure Activities - hiking, biking, boating (kayaking, sailing, etc)
- LGBT
- Arts & Culture
- Culinary
- Seafood/Lobstering
- Schooners
- Experiential – arts, food, music
- Music & Entertainment
- Fairs & Festivals
- Maritime
- Special Events
- TV & Movies
- Waterfront
- Family Friendly

Itineraries can be leveraged with the other areas to create longer stays in the region, or act as stand alone options for visitors. They will be developed with need periods in mind. For example, to promote off season family travel, an April School Vacation Week itinerary could be created in an effort to attract families to visit Gloucester and partake in activities when it's not as crowded as it is in the summer. To promote the wide variety of activities that Gloucester has to offer, a Fairs & Festivals itinerary could be promoted to not only attract overnight visitors but also to encourage more locals and day trippers to participate in events. Each one of the themes, outlined above, could be developed for various times of year and promoted through an online events calendar, media releases, newsletters, the website and other communications sources.

In addition, Gloucester will develop and promote product, packages and themed months. Packages allow the opportunity to control, to a degree, how the city is promoted. It is also a great way to get multiple partners to work together to help drive revenue in a traceable way.

Topics for product/packages/themed months might include:

- Itineraries outlined above
- Off Season
- Nature Hiking & Biking Trails
- Water activities – sailing, kayaking, whale watching and more!
- Seafood/Lobster
- Locally made and produced items (art and food)
- Value Promotions
 - 40 ideas for under \$40
- Women as Leaders in the Arts
- Music & More
- Meet the Living Artists
- 50 Ideas for Those Over 50 (or 50 Ideas for Those Under 50!)

For example, Women’s History Month is March. Gloucester could theme the month of March *All Things Women* and restaurants could offer special themed dinners for groups of women, hotels could offer “girls getaway” packages and the attractions could offer programs themed around *Women in the Arts* (i.e. classes, exhibits, lectures, etc). In this way, all of the businesses catering to visitors can be involved in a campaign that drives visitors during need periods and helps create a hook to attract media attention for the City.

Another example might be seafood/lobstering where a visitor can purchase a package to go lobstering and then go back to a restaurant or their hotel and learn to cook the meal.

Value Program:

Content that promotes value will be developed, including creating packages and/or special offers that can be promoted collectively in an effort to generate increased awareness for the region as a destination that offers good value for visitors. It could also be shared with residents, particularly during the off-season.

In addition, cross marketing will be encouraged at point of sale in an effort to drive business. For example, when visitors park at the beaches, they will be encouraged to

visit the shops and restaurants of downtown Gloucester. The back of their parking ticket could offer a discount or value add if they bring it into a downtown business.

Niche Markets:

As competition increases, the objective will be to focus on increasing room nights within niche markets. Gloucester will be established as a welcoming destination for all segments by:

- Developing individual suggested itineraries and/or packages for targeted markets;
- Identifying and growing partners we can work with to leverage programs;
- Focusing on campaigns that will attract the overnight visitor to Gloucester; and
- Developing campaigns that will attract the local visitor to Gloucester.

Arts & culture, as well as LGBT and culinary will be promoted and the marketing effort will include working with partners to promote special events and other themed months that will help to position the variety of things to see and do in Gloucester throughout the year.

Opportunities for partnerships will be explored between retail, restaurants, hotels and attractions as visitors continue to seek value and packaging. Working with partners, suggested itineraries and packages will be created that will help promote the City's offerings to the niche markets, as well as develop packages that will promote *Off Season Gloucester*.

In order to build awareness for the variety of restaurants that are in Gloucester, promotions will continue to help the existing Restaurant Weeks that are organized by the Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce. Specific strategies will include the promotion of restaurant/chef special offers occurring outside of Restaurant Week on the website and through e-blasts, as well as the development of Restaurant Week hotel packages that offer the diner additional incentives to spend the night and see what else Gloucester has to offer.

Using the Restaurant Week model, the new marketing organization will work with the Chamber to potentially develop and implement a specialized “off price” shopping program during need periods for retail sales. Shops will be encouraged to work with hotels to create packages to complement the shopping experience as well as explore implementation options (such as first weekend of the month, frequent buyer card, etc.). All of these activities will be promoted by the new marketing organization.

With the increasing trend towards family travel, Gloucester will work to increase the number of family visitors to the City. The marketing organization will work with partners to create a targeted promotion of three family friendly school vacation weeks annually: Holiday Week, February School Vacation Week and April School Vacation Week, ensuring that Massachusetts, New Hampshire and private school vacation weeks are taken into consideration as they all differ.

Another important niche market segment for Gloucester is the Cruise Ship industry. Programs will be designed specifically for the cruise passenger. The promotion of offerings for the cruise ship industry will be expanded by developing suggested itineraries and actively compiling and promoting a calendar of cultural events and activities in Gloucester. This information will be made available to the North of Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau, Massport and others who are actively soliciting the cruise market in the region. Gloucester will be promoted as a cruise destination on the website, during fam trips, and at all tradeshow and events in an effort to drive more cruise business to the region.

Advertising:

The advertising strategy incorporates understanding the travel trends and research that are outlined earlier in this document; highlighting the creation of packages and incentives that will lengthen visitor stays; developing messaging of interest for regional travel; and offering a message that highlights both the known and the unknown offerings of Gloucester.

Advertising will focus on promoting Gloucester as a destination of unique experiences, a perfect blend of the historical and the contemporary, underscored with value added offers. Gloucester will be positioned as a place where visitors can understand the

making of history and make history themselves. Affluent consumers in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Connecticut, as well as Massachusetts and New England households will be targeted, as research indicates that affluent travelers are still looking for a deal.

Trends show it is typically the woman in the family/couple who make the travel decision. Advertising and promotions will be tailored to appeal to the women decision maker, with emphasis on continuing to incorporate social media strategies into our activities. The ads and promotional campaigns will stress the mix of activities and special events available, as well as the *value* of the Gloucester experience.

Co-operative ads will continue to be offered to the local industry to help sell the destination. The focus will be on the experience of the destination, not just the individual advertisers. The co-op ad will promote a link to the website where only those who financially support the placement will be listed, so that they can track a return on investment. Consistent messaging should be integrated throughout all mediums used and it should be distributed for use by as many partner organizations as possible.

Advertising will target both the local and overnight visitor and will take the form of both brand and co-operative advertising campaigns. It is imperative that the advertising program be leveraged with partners in order to reach the various audiences that Gloucester and the businesses in the City are interested in. Potential media might include:

- Boston Magazine
- TripAdvisor
- New England Travel
- Boston.com
- Yankee Magazine Travel New England
- Improper Bostonian
- AAA Mid-Atlantic
- AAA New England
- North of Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau Visitors Guide
- WBZ Traffic Reports
- CT1/Hartford Courant

- Comcast/Time Warner

Ad space can also be traded with other organizations to leverage reach, wherever possible, and we will work with media reps to purchase remnant space in travel and lifestyle publications wherever possible. Advertising in these vehicles is highly recommended if funds are available.

Website:

Currently there are two websites promoting Gloucester. DiscoverGloucester.com and GloucesterMA.com. Although only a small portion of visitors to Gloucester currently get their information from either website, this can be viewed as an opportunity and goal for the future. GloucesterMA.com has captured 322,844 visitors who have viewed 878,312 pages since it launched in March 2011. 78% are new visitors. A focus moving forward will be to integrate the sites and work towards driving traffic to one site. GloucesterMA.com is a well-known URL, however with the re-launch recently of www.discovergloucester.com, the site is much more user friendly and has much of the outline of the content needed moving forward. It is recommended that the design of the Discover Gloucester site be combined with the GloucesterMA.com URL into one site that everyone is directed to for information on visiting Gloucester.

The flexibility of the website makes it an ideal outlet for communicating the message of a year round destination. The site should be updated to include seasonal promotions and special opportunities. Key target market sections should be enhanced, as well as offer new promotional opportunities. Niche market segments should be included and new web outlets will be added for promotion, including blogs and social networking sites, ultimately driving more business to the website.

The objective for the website is to make it easier for the visitor to find what they are looking for, and to make it easier for them to find something new that will entice them to the area. As a result, new areas will be added, including sections offering:

- Value Specials & Packages
- Suggested Itineraries
- Themes & Events
- Media Only Section

- Press releases
- Images
- Story ideas

In addition, an industry page should be created where partners can go for updated program information, and a section will be added where consumers can sign up for the e-newsletter.

Educational Trips:

Educational (Fam) trips will continue to be implemented and enhanced, targeting media as well as tour operators from the US, Canada and from key overseas markets. In addition, the Greater Boston Concierge Association will continue to be hosted, and will be expanded to include all of those who help to sell Gloucester (hotel sales & marketing staff in surrounding towns, Visitor Center staff, staff at the Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism, North of Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau, local receptive operators and destination management companies and other organizations that help to sell Gloucester.

Memberships:

The new marketing organization will join appropriate tourism organizations and become actively involved in programs offered by:

- Cape Ann Chamber
- North of Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism
- Greater Boston Concierge Association

Tradeshows:

Eventually, Gloucester will have a presence at the following shows, among others, in an effort to expand our network of potential clients and drive business:

- Discover New England Summit
- IPW (International Pow Wow)
- NTA (National Tour Association)
- ABA (American Bus Association)

- AAA Roadshow
- Boston Globe Travel Show
- North of Boston CVB Events
- CT1/Hartford Courant Show

Working with both with the private sector, a comprehensive tradeshow and marketplace list will be developed that identifies tradeshows that partners are attending. These will include shows that drive visitors to the region. This list will provide an opportunity for Gloucester to leverage resources and expand exposure for the region among target audiences, while allowing for partnering between the private and public sector.

Production & Distribution of Visitor Guide:

While many people turn to the internet for information on a destination, there are those who still seek printed materials for both when they are researching a destination as well as when they're actually visiting. The key collateral piece for Gloucester is the Visitor Guide. This is the premier destination marketing piece and is considered a valuable resource by visitors, potential visitors, as well as media, tour operators and travel professionals.

The Visitor Guide provides an opportunity for businesses to promote themselves to consumers interested in or already visiting Gloucester. While it is expensive to distribute, it is still an important sales tool to provide the consumer. Recommendations for covering distribution costs include finding a sponsor (such as a business like a local bank or other vendor such as those who provide paper products, cleaning services, linen services or others, who would lose revenue if the businesses of Gloucester lost business) or creating a "tag-a-long" program that would allow businesses to include their brochures for a small fee with the mailing.

Lead Generation & Fulfillment:

For many of the programs, leads will be generated and require fulfillment. Where appropriate, the Visitor Guide will be sent for fulfillment. At other times, leads will be passed onto businesses in Gloucester for direct response to the client. But in all cases, leads generated from advertising, tradeshows, promotions and other sources will be tracked for return on investment.

Research and Measurement:

In order to gather research information, consumers will continue to be surveyed annually in order to get their opinions on Gloucester as a visitor destination, and to assist with generating additional statistics on the type of visitor Gloucester attracts, how they get their information, how they purchase their trip and what they do while they are visiting. The results from this research will be used to draft future marketing strategies.

Measurement tools will be attached to activities where possible, and new ways to measure success will be sought out in order to ensure that generation of the greatest return on investment possible from programs is implemented.

The success of these programs will be measured by:

- Tracking industry trends;
- Tracking the number of inquiries received;
- Measuring museum, attraction and visitation statistics;
- Measuring hotel occupancy, ADR and RevPAR statistics;
- Following-up with key target markets to gauge level of success in campaigns;
- Collecting, maintaining and analyzing our statistical data on our web visitors;
- Analyzing fulfillment statistics based around promotional campaigns; and
- Tracking the amount of media coverage we receive.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION

Through research, interviews and evaluation of existing organizations and best practices of other organizations, it has been determined that a new private/public marketing organization will be created to focus on generating tourism business year round. The organization will be open and inclusive and be representative of the entire visitor industry in Gloucester.

It will offer a sustainable promotional effort to attract outside, overnight visitors to Gloucester. The responsibilities will include overseeing all marketing and public relations for Gloucester tourism, driving overnight visitors to the City by marketing the destination outside of Gloucester to regional, national and international visitors. In addition, the marketing organization will be responsible for creating a central forum for all communication among the industry in Gloucester, coordinate a communications program to inform businesses and residents in Gloucester about the economic impact of tourism efforts, and develop a program to encourage businesses and residents to take pride in the community and welcome visitors.

The implementation of this plan has been broken down into two phases.

- Phase I: January 1 – December 31, 2015 – Transition
- Phase II: January 1, 2016 – December 31, 2016
- Phase II: January 1, 2017 – December 31, 2019

All programs have been designed to attract overnight visitors to the City, year round. Day trippers are a secondary market and will be targeted by promoting existing events and communicating through the website, e-newsletters and the media, all that the area has to offer.

Phase I has been designed to focus on setting up the new structure, particularly all of communications channels, content development and funding mechanisms. This will take place while working with Discover Gloucester as they continue to host educational trips, participate in tradeshow and produce the visitor guide. Starting in 2016 (Phase II and III), the new marketing organization will assume all responsibilities for destination marketing, as outlined below.

Phase I: January 1 – December 31, 2015:

In the first year of the marketing plan, several items need to be implemented to transition to a new private/public entity. Due to the fact that the city has previously contributed \$120,000 (staff, office space and cash), and it is anticipated that this will continue in FY16, it makes sense that they take the lead in implementing the transition. If someone needed to be hired to implement the transition, the marketing money currently available from the City (\$50,000) would have to be put towards salaries and the program would not be as effective as it could be.

Goal: Ensure smooth transition to new organization

Strategies & Tactics:

The following strategies and tactics will be implemented in order to reach the goal outlined above:

Organizational Structure

- Creation of a legal public/private entity
- Finalize bylaws and board make-up
- Hire Executive Director
- Finalize budget for 2016

Transition Efforts

- Work with Discover Gloucester to ensure existing marketing efforts continue
- Monthly Meetings - review activities and ensure that there is no overlap
- Assist with hosting educational trips and other programming as needed
- Participate jointly in membership
- Ensure Discover Gloucester has appropriate content to take to tradeshow
- New organization to take the lead on 2016 tradeshow registration/payment
- Work with Discover Gloucester during production of
 - Seafood Trail brochure
 - 2015 Visitor GuideNew Organization to take lead on sales for 2016 guide

Goal: Create local communications program to engage industry and key stakeholders

Strategies & Tactics:

The following strategies and tactics will be implemented in order to reach the goal outlined above:

Communication Infrastructure

Develop and implement internal communications program that includes:

- Create internal database
- Create internal E-Newsletter template
- Bi-Monthly E-Newsletters
- Hold quarterly meetings

Send leads generated from programs to local businesses for follow-up

Goal: Create exceptional visitor experience

Strategies & Tactics:

As part of the local communications program, a service training initiative will be introduced. One event will be held towards the end of 2015 and will include:

- Educating the industry on key selling points for the off-season
- Customer service training

Follow up on leads generated and information requests from potential visitors in a timely manner

Goal: Increase partnership dollars

Strategies & Tactics:

Corporate Business Partnership Program

Develop program for business partnership program for 2016.

- Develop database of potential businesses who benefit from increased tourism in Gloucester (i.e. vendors that the hotels, restaurants, attractions, do business with)
- Develop benefits for business
- Create benefit partnership document
- Sell partnerships

Industry Business Partnership Program

Develop tiered program for industry businesses for 2015/2016 in order to have a set budget to work with, rather than relying on individual pay-to-play programs for the first year.

- Create benefit list for industry partners
- Develop industry partner benefit document
- Develop financial tiers
- Sell partnerships

Funding

- Research potential funding sources
- Apply for grants as appropriate

- Goals:**
- Increase number of visitors to Gloucester**
 - Increase stays in hotels**
 - Increase length of stay**
 - Increase visitor spending**

Strategies & Tactics:

The following strategies and tactics will be implemented in order to reach the goals outlined above. Focus will be placed on driving overnight visitation to Gloucester, particularly during need periods.

Develop and implement external communications program

- Create consumer database
- Create external E-Newsletter Template
- Create and distribute bimonthly E-Newsletters

Media Relations

- Create media database
- Create 18-month calendar of story and pitch ideas
- Develop strategy for response to media inquiries and hosting educational trips
- Write & distribute press releases
- Follow-up with media on a regular basis

Social Media

- Create Facebook and Twitter Pages
- Develop a calendar of posts that tie into content offerings, below
- Post daily

Content Development

Itineraries: Develop five suggested itineraries. Could be 1 – 3 – 5 or 7 day.
Include in e-news and media outreach.

Topics might include:

- Culinary
- Seafood/Lobster
- Arts & Culture

- Experiential – art, food
- Maritime – sailing, kayaking, whale watching, HarborWalk, Maritime history, etc.

Themed Months or product: Designate four themed months for product and package development.

Include in e-news and media outreach

- Soft Adventure - Hiking & Biking Trails, water sports
- City of Schooners – festival, activities, history, exhibits, etc.
- Meet the Living Artist
- Wicked Tuna Promotion – play off the television show by offering overnight stays that include going out on the boat.

Create calendar of events and activities in Gloucester to be promoted to visitors and partners who help sell the region. Post on website, include in e-newsletters.

Support Schoonerfest financially and through promotion

Advertising

Due to budget limitations, in 2015, advertising will be limited to television advertising in the early summer in the NY/NJ/PA market. In the fall, efforts will be focused on setting up a TripAdvisor destination page, as many existing visitors get their information from Trip Advisor.

Website Enhancements

- Enhance Website
- Develop Search Engine Optimization
- Develop content and continually update content
- Post content on website
 - Suggested itineraries
 - Product, packages & theme months
 - Promotions
 - Media and industry sections
 - Consumers e- newsletter sign up
- Continually update content

Research & Measurement

- Annual visitor survey
- Annual business survey
- Develop program to implement tools to measure success (2014/2015 will form the baseline)
- Produce report that outlines results on an annual basis, including leads generated and results from annual programs, individual programs, ongoing events & activities and the annual visitor survey and annual business survey.

Phase II: January 1, 2016 – December 31, 2016

In 2016, many of the programs that were implemented in 2015 will be continued and expanded upon. However, based upon results from previous efforts, programs may be modified if necessary to become more effective.

Goal: **Continue to engage local industry and key stakeholders**

Strategies & Tactics:

The following strategies and tactics will be implemented in order to reach the goal outlined above:

Organization Infrastructure

- Implement new structure
- Develop brand and logo
- Create annual budget and goals

Continue implementation of internal communications program

- Continually update and add to database
- Bi-Monthly E-Newsletters
- Quarterly meetings

Send leads generated from programs to local businesses for follow-up

Goal: Continue to offer exceptional visitor experience

Strategies & Tactics:

As part of the local communications program, the service training initiative will be expanded. Two events will be held in 2016 and will include:

- Educating the industry on key selling points for the off-season
- Customer service training

Follow-up on leads generated and information requests from potential visitors in a timely manner.

In addition, the new marketing organization will convene a meeting of key decision makers to discuss infrastructure developments needed to continue to enhance the visitors experience in Gloucester. Items could including signage, upkeep of public facilities, appropriate parking facilities for buses to attract more group tour business, etc. This meeting will take place in early 2016 as at that point there will be 18 months worth of data that can be used to show results.

Goal: Increase partnership dollars

Strategies & Tactics:

Corporate Business Partnership Program

- Expand target list of business and industry partners
- Expand tiered industry partnership program
- Expand benefits list and financial tiers for industry partners
- Update benefit documents
- Sell partnerships to potential business partners

Funding

- Research potential funding sources
- Apply for grants as appropriate

Expand co-op opportunities for industry

- Develop website advertising opportunities
- Co-op Advertising
- Participate in tradeshow and have private sector partner to attend

- Goals:**
- Increase number of visitors to Gloucester**
 - Increase stays in hotels**
 - Increase length of stay**
 - Increase visitor spending**

Strategies & Tactics:

The following strategies and tactics will be implemented in order to reach the goals outlined above. Focus will be placed on driving overnight visitation to Gloucester, particularly during need periods.

Continue implementation of external communications program

- Update and grow consumer database
- Bi-Monthly E-Newsletters

Media Relations

- Continually update and add to media database
- Respond to media inquiries
- Host educational (fam) trips
- Proactively seek out media to host on trips
- Continually update 18-month calendar of story and pitch ideas
- Produce & distribute press releases regularly
- Expand Social Media efforts. Continue to post daily.
 - Instagram
 - Pinterest
 - Flickr
 - YouTube

Website Enhancements

- Continually update and expand new content website
- Create banner advertising opportunities for partners on site
- Continue with SEO

Content Development

Develop and promote programs and promotions to engage more of the industry in destination marketing efforts:

- Continue to create and promote hotel packages
- Work with Chamber to create and promote Restaurant Week Overnight Packages
- Work with Chamber to create and promote “Off season” shopping program
- Develop school vacation weeks packages for promotion
- Create dedicated shopping/dining packages for Cruise passengers
- Value program – cross promote businesses at point of sale (i.e. people parking at the beach get discounts to go downtown after day at the beach; people going on whale watch or visiting the Cape Ann Museum or other attractions get a discount to shop/dine on Rocky Neck, etc).

Develop and promote itineraries and themed months:

Itineraries: Continue to develop & expand suggested itineraries.

Include in e-news and media outreach

- Buy Local – food, art and services
- Soft Adventure Activities – hiking, biking, water activities
- Music & Entertainment
- Family Friendly

Themed Months: Continue to develop & expand themed months, products and packages

Include in e-news and media outreach

- Women as Leaders in the Arts
- Locally made (art & food)
- Value Month - 40 ideas under \$40
- Seafood & Lobster

Create calendar of events and activities in Gloucester to be promoted to visitors and partners who help sell the region. Post on website, include in e-newsletters.

Membership & Partnership programs with Organizations outside of Gloucester

- Partner with MOTT, Discover New England and other organizations
- Partner with other destinations and organizations
- Join:
 - Cape Ann Chamber
 - North of Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau
 - Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau
 - Greater Boston Concierge Association

Tradeshows

Participate in tradeshows based upon budget. Work with industry partners to see what shows they're already attending and where Gloucester can be cross promoted.

Tradeshows in 2016 may include:

- Discover New England Summit
- NTA (National Tour Association)
- AAA Roadshow
- Boston Globe Travel Show
- North of Boston CVB Events
- CT1/Hartford Courant Show

Advertising:

If budget allows, advertise in the following media to drive awareness for Gloucester.

- TripAdvisor
- Boston.com
- AAA Mid-Atlantic
- North of Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau Visitors Guide
- Comcast/Time Warner

Development of Promotional Materials

- Produce and distribute Visitors Guide
- Produce and distribute Seafood Trail brochure and/or other materials requested by the private sector that they would be willing to financially support

Research & Measurement

- Annual visitor survey
- Annual business survey
- Produce report that outlines results on an annual basis, including leads generated and results from annual programs, individual programs, ongoing events & activities and the annual visitor survey and annual business survey.

Phase III: January 1, 2017 – December 31, 2019

From 2017 – 2019, many of the programs that were implemented in 2015 and 2016 will be continued and expanded upon. However, based upon results from previous efforts, programs may be modified if necessary to become more effective.

Goal: **Continue to engage local industry and key stakeholders**

Strategies & Tactics:

The following strategies and tactics will be implemented in order to reach the goal outlined above:

Organization Infrastructure

- Implement new structure
- Develop brand and logo
- Create budget and goals for upcoming years

Continue implementation of internal communications program

- Continually update and add to database
- Bi-Monthly E-Newsletters
- Quarterly meetings

Send leads generated from programs to local businesses for follow-up.

Goal: **Continue to offer exceptional visitor experience**

Strategies & Tactics:

As part of the local communications program, the service training initiative will continue.

Two events will be held annually and will include:

- Educating the industry on key selling points for the off-season
- Customer service training

Follow up on leads generated and information requests from potential visitors in a timely manner.

In addition, the new marketing organization will continue to convene a meeting of key decision makers to discuss infrastructure developments needed to continue to enhance the visitors experience in Gloucester. Items could including signage, upkeep of public facilities, appropriate parking facilities for buses to attract more group tour business, etc.

Goal: **Increase partnership dollars**

Strategies & Tactics:

Corporate Business Partnership Program

- Expand target list of business and industry partners
- Expand tiered industry partnership program
- Expand benefits list and financial tiers for industry partners
- Update benefit documents
- Sell partnerships to potential business partners

Funding

- Research potential funding sources
- Apply for grants as appropriate

Continue to offer co-op opportunities for industry

- Advertising – print, online
- Tradeshows
- Postage/mailing program for businesses (they can pay to have their brochure inserted into consumer fulfillment pieces at a nominal cost)

- Goals:**
- Increase number of visitors to Gloucester**
 - Increase stays in hotels**
 - Increase length of stay**
 - Increase visitor spending**

Strategies & Tactics:

The following strategies and tactics will be implemented in order to reach the goals outlined above. Focus will be placed on driving overnight visitation to Gloucester, particularly during need periods. However, at this point, years 3, 4 & 5, some of these programs will be ready to be customized in more detail. For example, research may show that there are increases in business in the shoulder season but the industry wants to extend it further. Specific programs may be developed for targeted weeks, weekends, and other time periods – but this can only be done once there is more data available.

Continue implementation of external communications program

- Update and grow consumer database
- Bi-Monthly E-Newsletters

Media Relations

- Continually update and add to media database
- Respond to media inquiries and
- Host educational (fam) trips
- Seek media to host on trips
- Continually update calendar or story and pitch ideas
- Produce press releases regularly
- Distribute press releases regularly
- Expand Social Media

Website Enhancements

- Continually update and expand new content on website
- Continue with SEO

Content Development

Develop and promote itineraries and themed months:

Itineraries: Continue to develop & expand products and package
Include in e-news and media outreach

- LGBT
- Arts & Culture
- Schooners
- Fairs & Festivals
- Special Events
- Waterfront

Themed Months: Continue to develop & expand themed months products
and packages

Include in e-news and media outreach

- Music & More
- 50 Ideas for those over 50 (or 50 ideas for those under 50)

Continue to create calendar of events and activities in Gloucester to be promoted to visitors and partners who help sell the region. Post on website and include in e-newsletters.

Membership & Partnership programs with Organizations outside of Gloucester

- Continue to partner with MOTT, Discover New England and other organizations
- Continue to partner with other destinations and organizations
- Continue to develop calendar of cultural events and activities in Gloucester to be promoted to visitors and partners who help sell the region
- Continue membership in:
 - Cape Ann Chamber
 - North of Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau
 - Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau
 - Greater Boston Concierge Association

Tradeshows

Participate in tradeshows based upon budget. Work with industry partners to see what shows they're already attending and where Gloucester can be cross promoted. Based upon results from previous years efforts, tradeshows may include:

- Discover New England Summit
- IPW (International Pow Wow)
- ABA (American Bus Association)
- NTA (National Tour Association)
- AAA Roadshow
- Boston Globe Travel Show
- North of Boston CVB Events
- CT1/Hartford Courant Show

Advertising:

If budget allows, advertise in the following media to drive awareness for Gloucester.

- TripAdvisor
- Boston.com
- AAA Mid-Atlantic
- North of Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau Visitors Guide
- Comcast/Time Warner
- Boston Magazine
- New England Travel
- Improper Bostonian
- AAA New England
- WBZ Traffic Reports
- CT1/Hartford Courant

Development of Promotional Materials

- Produce and distribute Visitors Guide
- Produce and distribute Seafood Trail brochure

Research & Measurement

- Annual visitor survey
- Annual business survey
- Produce report that outlines results on an annual basis, including leads generated and results from annual programs, individual programs, ongoing events & activities and the annual visitor survey and annual business survey.

