

TOWN OF LEXINGTON
MASSACHUSETTS



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Tourism Marketing Plan

February 17, 2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
I. Executive Summary	3
II. Research & Market Analysis	
United States Overview	11
Regional Overview	12
Lexington Overview	17
Travel Trends	21
Comparable Analysis	26
Recommendations	37
III. Strategies & Tactics	40
Website	44
Communications	45
Social Media	49
Content Development	52
Collateral	54
Photography	55
Value Program	56
Partnerships	57
Events	59
Educational/Fam Trips	60
Memberships	61
Sales	62
Lead Generation & Fulfillment	63
Tradeshows	64
Advertising	65
Revenue Generating Ideas	67
Surveys	69
Measurement Tools	70
IV. Year I Priorities	71
Strategies & Tactics Timeline	74

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Lexington, MA is an historic town located just 11 miles from Boston. Its geographic location, within the Greater Boston Area and the Merrimack Valley region, offers convenient access to Boston's Logan International Airport. Home to approximately 33,400 residents, Lexington is known as the location of the first battle of the American Revolution. In addition to its connection to the American Revolution, Lexington is also rich in cultural sites, including Cary Memorial Building, with a performance hall which hosts a variety of programming year round and is home of the Lexington Symphony, Munroe Center for the Arts and the Lexington Arts & Crafts Society. With a surplus of conservation land throughout the Town, Lexington is known for its recreational sites, such as Minute Man National Historic Park and Minute Man Bikeway, which is in the National Rail-Trail Hall of Fame. Lexington also boasts exceptional architecture, as well as dining and shopping experiences that are also appealing to residents and visitors.

While Lexington has undertaken tourism marketing for 20 years, with the opening of the new Visitor Center in April, 2020, as well as the 250th anniversary of the Revolution which will take place in 2026, the Tourism Committee set a goal to increase business from both the visitors-based economy (overnight visitors as well as visitors located less than 50 miles from Lexington) as well as residents. Town secured consulting services from Open the Door to analyze and recommend target audiences, develop an integrated marketing and communications plan, and advise on potential revenue streams to help support the marketing efforts and maximize generating an increase in non-resident tax dollars.

The process to develop this plan included:

- Conducting primary research through key stakeholder interviews
- Obtaining and analyzing additional primary and secondary research
- Conducting analysis of tourism and brand positioning of comparable communities

This marketing and communications plan has been designed to produce maximum impact in a crowded field, as there are many destinations that are trying to attract the same visitor that Lexington is pursuing.

The Town of Lexington currently provides \$44,000 to fund tourism marketing efforts in addition to funding a position whose responsibilities including tourism, as well as economic development. In order to remain competitive, as well as to prepare for Rev250 in 2026, the Town of Lexington should look to increase the current tourism investment.

In comparison:

- Salem, MA receives 50% of the local options tax for tourism and then raises additional funds from the private sector through partnership programs. Destination Salem's budget is approximately \$600,000.
- Provincetown has a dedicated Tourism Manager within the Town and a Visitor Services Board that recommends programming and advocates for funding. The current tourism budget is \$750,000.
- Gloucester set up a tourism office in 2016, Discover Gloucester. They are a private, 501-C-6 that receives a grant from the Town through a portion of the local tax collections. This amount must be matched by the private sector. Their current budget is approximately \$250,000.
- Sturbridge operates their tourism efforts out of the Economic Development office. They are overseen by the Sturbridge Tourist Association, a town committee, that serves as the fiduciary for 16.5% of the Town's Hotel/Motel Tax Revenues. Their budget is approximately \$200,000.
- Concord has recently created a dedicated Tourism Manager position. This position and the efforts of this office, including the Visitor Center, are funded by both their General Fund and a revolving fund through the Recreation Department. In addition to salary and administration, it covers the approximately \$40,000 required to run the Visitor Center. While they currently do not have additional marketing funds allocated, they are investing in the tourism position, a new website and starting to promote the destination to visitors so that they can make the case for additional funding for tourism marketing efforts.

The challenge Lexington has is different than most communities. Because of the role the Town played in American history, and the tourism promotion that has been undertaken in the past 20 years, there is an awareness for Lexington. As a result,

visitors come to see the sites and experience the history. However, they are not as informed as they could be about the additional activities in town and in the region. As a result, this plan will focus on how to get existing visitors to extend their stay, as well as how to attract new visitors. Given limited budgets, it is important that campaigns are integrated, not only locally, but also by working in collaboration with other communities, regions, the state, national and international partners. In this way, Lexington will be able to leverage marketing dollars, expand programs to reach target market segments of domestic and international leisure visitors, as well as the group tour market, and ultimately grow market share. This plan will also help support the Battle Green Masterplan and the town center streetscape program, helping to revitalize Lexington for both visitors and residents.

According to the United States Travel Association (USTA), in calendar year 2018, domestic and international visitors to the Greater Merrimack Valley, the region of the state in which Lexington is located, spent over \$1.3 billion, resulting in \$73.9 million state taxes and \$35.5 million in local taxes. This is the third highest region in the state, behind Greater Boston and Barnstable County. Of this total amount, visitors to Lexington spent \$111.5 million on lodging, meals, entertainment, retail and transportation, resulting in \$6.3 million in state taxes and \$3.04 million in local taxes.

Lexington ranked 3rd in the list of top ten cities and towns in Merrimack Valley in terms of visitor expenditures in 2018. This helped to support 866 tourism related jobs in Lexington.

Top Ten Cities/Towns in Merrimack Valley - Economic Impact Data (USTA)					
	Expenditures	Payroll	Employment	State Taxes	Local Taxes
Merrimack Valley	\$1,314,017,493	\$362,812,244	10,120	\$73,878,764	\$35,503,831
Burlington	\$341,756,433.26	\$92,052,378.99	2,580	\$18,657,268.70	\$9,013,895.47
Woburn	\$290,962,869.35	\$80,979,728.02	2,255	\$16,512,940.57	\$7,922,405.49
Lexington	\$111,542,490.41	\$31,100,382.57	866	\$6,342,961.88	\$3,042,087.84
Billerica	\$100,653,707.43	\$28,059,861.38	781	\$5,723,470.52	\$2,745,004.44
Tewksbury	\$97,589,595.28	\$27,608,437.24	766	\$5,645,799.40	\$2,699,567.10
Bedford	\$83,106,613.91	\$22,907,066.04	639	\$4,663,098.10	\$2,241,749.99
Westford	\$77,829,851.19	\$21,767,600.50	606	\$4,442,537.08	\$2,129,229.81
Chelmsford	\$68,306,241.18	\$18,957,494.70	528	\$3,863,800.17	\$1,854,817.69
Concord	\$52,458,756.44	\$14,605,469.46	407	\$2,978,458.26	\$1,428,864.71
Lowell	\$40,855,865.61	\$11,174,166.85	312	\$2,267,815.12	\$1,092,349.35

In addition, expenditures in Minute Man National Historic Park supported a total of 790 jobs, \$33.2 million in labor income, \$54.5 million in value added, and \$85.8 million in economic output in local gateway economies surrounding the Park.

Primary and secondary research indicates that travelers look for opportunities where they can partake in unique and varied activities and experiences. Research also indicate that satisfaction, value and price all continue to be important elements in the decision making process of a visitor.

Focus will be placed on increasing domestic visitors from the Northeast (specifically Massachusetts and New England, New York/New Jersey/Pennsylvania markets) as well as Texas, Florida and California. Efforts to target the international visitor will continue to be made, with focus on Canada, the UK and China, among other markets. On average, overseas travelers spend \$4,200 and stay in the United States for eighteen nights. These markets will mirror those of the Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism, the Greater Merrimack Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau and Discover New England.

Target market segments will include families and couples, as well as segments such as heritage travel, arts & culture, recreation and military travel (given Lexington's close proximity to Hanscom) among others. Target audiences include those who are visiting friends and family; those seeking a quick getaway or nearby vacation; and/or those who wish to immerse themselves in American history, arts & culture or recreation. Activities such as Revolution 250 celebrating the 250th anniversary of the Revolutionary War in 2026 and Mass400, celebrating the 400th anniversary of a number of communities, including Plymouth, Quincy, Salem and Boston between 2020 and 2030, will provide opportunities to elevate the story of Lexington to national markets over the coming years. These rich assets will allow Lexington to promote the wide array of things to see in Lexington that visitors and residents can discover.

The principal mode of transportation for domestic visitors to Massachusetts is automobile, with 73.8% accessing the Commonwealth in their vehicles. Just fewer than 14% of visitors accessed Massachusetts by plane, with the remainder of visitors traveling by bus, train, boat, etc. Nearly 80% of all person trips to Massachusetts in FY2018 included an overnight stay, with the average overnight stay being 3.5 nights.

Visiting friends and relatives is the dominant reason for domestic trips, accounting for 46.3% of the trips. Lexington has a strong business Monday through Thursday, but there is potential for growth not only in weekday travel but weekends as well. Regional partnerships will be encouraged to make Lexington the base of a hub and spoke trip.

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

Research has shown that travelers determine the destination for their travel in a variety of ways. Therefore, existing and new communications efforts will form the foundation of this marketing program, through tactics such as media relations, e-newsletters, social media and advertising. Additional tactics include hosting educational trips and participating in tradeshow as well as other industry events. The visitor website should be enhanced to be more engaging, user friendly, providing information that is easy to view and download. This will help to give visitors timely access to information.

Recommendations:

Based upon research, including stakeholder interviews, the following strategies are recommended to be undertaken immediately:

- Dedicated tourism staff to implement strategies and tactics outlined in this plan, with the focus of increasing visitation to Lexington, the new Visitor Center, and growing overnight stays.
- Website enhancements to make the visitor website easy and engaging for visitors to use.
- Analyze current brand and graphic touchpoints. Modify and develop a brand that will carry Lexington into the 250th anniversary in 2026 and beyond.
- Creation and implementation of integrated social media campaign.
- Quarterly meetings with the private sector and other partners in order to develop campaigns to increase visits to Lexington. These meetings would be in addition to coordination/collaboration with the Center Streetscape and Battle Green Masterplan groups.

- Reintroduce service training initiative.
- Implement a community relations campaign to educate residents on the value of tourism to Lexington and introduce them to the new Visitor Center, showing them how it is for them, as well as visitors.
- Implement strategies in this plan that will ultimately help prepare Lexington for the Rev250 Celebrations in 2026.

Goals:

This marketing and communications plan is designed to increase local, regional, national and international awareness about visiting and discovering all of the things that Lexington has to offer, which will ultimately lead to increased visitation from domestic and international markets. This will be done by accomplishing the following goals:

- Increase visitors to the new Visitors Center
- Implement a social media strategy that builds and engages followers
- Enhance communications with Lexington residents about the tourism efforts of the town and benefits to them from these efforts, while remaining sensitive to their needs
- Build collaborations with regional tourism organizations (i.e. Concord, Salem, Plymouth)
- Increase the combined telephone, mail and e-mail inquiries for visitor information coming to Lexington
- Increase domestic & international visitors to Lexington mirroring the target markets of the Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism, the Greater Merrimack Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau, Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau and Discover New England
- Increase visitors length of stay and the Town's hotel occupancy rate
- Develop baseline numbers and tracking mechanisms to measure success of programs going forward. These include:
 - Direct access to Google Analytics to measure/analyze data on web traffic
 - Tracking the number of inquiries received through phone, mail and email
 - Tracking the number of partners participating in programs
 - Tracking the people counter at the Visitors Center
 - Track the growth in newsletter list
 - Tracking the amount of revenue generated through partnership programs

- Tracking amount of media coverage generated (# of articles/media value)
- Tracking the number of educational (familiarization) trips taking place in Lexington, including number of participants, number of partner businesses included, media coverage and/or business generated from hosted buyer/writer
- Tracking the number of charter bus tours in Lexington, including number of charters, number of participants, number of partner business included
- Including measurement tools in all promotional campaigns to be able to track and analyze statistics from the individual campaigns, as well as collectively
- Having the Tourism Committee work with Town Staff and Partners (hotels, attractions, etc.) to meet quarterly and develop cumulative baseline visitor numbers to be measured quarterly
- Tracking and analyzing social media analytics
- Implement Annual Consumer Survey:
 - Analyze Survey Data, modifying surveys and measuring results
 - Track the number of businesses who sent out the survey
 - Track the number of emails that the survey is sent to
 - Track the number of surveys that were sent out/completed

While meeting these goals is important to the success of the tourism efforts, we remain sensitive to the taxpayers/residents of Lexington, understanding, however, that the tax benefit is a way to help provide additional services for residents without assuming an additional tax burden.

Strategic Priorities:

In order to accomplish the goals outlined in this plan, the following strategic priorities have been identified as areas of focus:

- Provide exceptional visitor services
- Analyze current brand and graphic touchpoints. Modify and develop a brand that will carry Lexington into the 250th anniversary in 2026 and beyond
- Promote and market Lexington's assets, programs and services
- Expand community engagement and partnerships
- Increase media relations opportunities

- Develop story ideas/suggested itineraries that will attract diverse audiences
- Create consistent social media presence that supports tourism marketing efforts
- Enhance www.TourLexington.us
- Increase partnership dollars to be able to expand marketing effort – from both investment from the Town as well as the private sector and other communities
- Incorporate data results from marketing research into communications strategies
- Provide leadership and guidance for the development and implementation of marketing strategies

II. RESEARCH & MARKET ANALYSIS

The overall mission of the tourism effort in Lexington is to develop and implement effective strategies and programs that enhance the economic vitality of the Town of Lexington and grow non-resident taxes. This strategic plan has been designed to position Lexington as a year-round destination, promoting the wide variety of available offerings to potential visitors.

An essential element in the marketing approach will be the regular assessment of external factors, such as the economy and how it is affecting the travel and tourism industry for both domestic and international visitation; the price of gas as that affects drive markets; the growth of the sharing economy and how that affects the business to local hotels; and how Lexington's competition is marketing and promoting their destinations as that can have an effect on visitation.

In addition, research will be implemented and data will be analyzed in order to better understand the visitor to Lexington, to develop initiatives and programs that more effectively influence their travel decisions, as well as evaluate competitive positioning and track results & performance. This data and research will take the shape of tracking numbers, statistics and documented trends, as well as stepping on trolleys or tour buses in Lexington and asking the passengers where they are from, what brought them to Lexington, etc. This informal tracking has taken place in the past and will be documented going forward.

Market Analysis: US Overview

According to the United States Travel Association (USTA), direct spending on leisure travel by domestic and international visitors totaled nearly \$762 billion in 2018. The top leisure activities for travelers are:

- *Domestic Travelers:*
Visiting Relatives, Shopping, Visiting Friends, Fine Dining, Rural Sightseeing

- *International Travelers:*
Shopping, Sightseeing, Fine Dining, National Parks/Monuments,
Amusement/Theme Parks

Four out of five domestic trips that Americans take are for leisure purposes and an Expedia survey found that a long weekend is the ideal trip length for Americans. Domestic travelers completed 1.8 billion person leisure trips in 2018, with an average of about four leisure trips per person.

Approximately 80 million international travelers visited the United States in 2018, with half of those visitors coming from overseas. According to the Department of Commerce, international visitor arrivals have increased 3.5% in comparison to 2017, and spending by those same visitors increased 1.7% over the same time period. On average, overseas travelers spend \$4,200 and stay in the United States for eighteen nights.

Market Analysis: Regional Overview

According to the Massachusetts Office of Tourism and Travel (MOTT), the state of Massachusetts saw nearly 27.6 million domestic visitors in 2018, up 2% over 2017; and 1.826 million international visitors, up 5.5% over 2017.

The majority of visitors to Massachusetts come from the New England region as well as the Mid-Atlantic states of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. These visitors account for 76.3% of all domestic travelers. 30% of visitors to Massachusetts came from Massachusetts, followed by New York with 13% of visitors.

The principal mode of transportation for domestic visitors to Massachusetts is automobile, with 73.8% accessing the Commonwealth in their vehicles. Just fewer than 14% of visitors accessed Massachusetts by plane, with the remainder of visitors traveling by bus, train, boat, etc. Nearly 80% of all person trips to Massachusetts in FY2018 included an overnight stay, with the average overnight stay being 3.5 nights. Visiting friends and relatives is the dominant reason for domestic trips, accounting for 46.3% of the trips.

Domestic Visitor Origin: Top 10 States, FY 2018		
State	Person Trips to Massachusetts	Share of all Person Trips
Massachusetts	7,877,500	30.6%
New York	3,432,000	13.4%
Connecticut	2,358,500	9.2%
New Hampshire	1,505,000	5.9%
Rhode Island	1,095,500	4.3%
California	561,000	2.2%
Florida	678,000	2.6%
New Jersey	1,130,500	4.4%
Maine	855,000	3.3%
Vermont	634,000	2.5%
Pennsylvania	740,000	2.9%
All Other States	4,854,625	18.9%
All New England States	14,325,500	55.7%
All Mid Atlantic States	5,302,500	20.6%

Source: TNS, Travels America, FY2018

The majority of international travelers to Massachusetts come from Canada, the United Kingdom, and China. Visitors from these three countries make up 49% of all international visitors to Massachusetts. These markets provide opportunities for Lexington to be promoted year round, as one of China's biggest travel periods is right before Chinese New Year (January/February) and with so much non-stop air service from the UK, these travelers think nothing of visiting for three days for shopping. Logan International Airport (BOS) is also undergoing renovations to expand its international terminal, which will allow for more foreign arrivals and departures every day.

Direct expenditures from domestic and international visitors to the state totaled \$24.2 billion in calendar year 2018, up 5.6%. Domestic visitors contributed \$19.86 billion of that spending, while international visitors made up the remaining \$4.29 billion. Domestic and international visitors tend to spend their money in different areas, with domestic visitors spending more on transportation and international visitors spending more on lodging and retail. Lodging represents a significant percentage of spending for both groups, but international visitors tend to stay for longer durations, which leads to higher spending in that category.

It's important to remember that while direct expenditures are important, there is a multiplier effect through indirect and induced spending. Direct expenditures are those that are spent directly on goods and services by the traveler. Indirect spending occurs when the travel industry business operator (hotel, restaurant, etc.) purchases goods (food & linens) and services (electricity) from local suppliers. Induced spending is spending by employees of travel related businesses. In 2017, the total impact of all travel spending in Massachusetts was \$35.9 billion (\$22,289.9 billion direct/\$12,996.3 billion indirect). This was a 4.2% increase over 2016. Indirect and induced spending have an important impact on the economy, multiplying the direct spending effect by over 50%.

In calendar year 2018, visitors to Lexington spent \$111.5 million, resulting in \$6.3 million in state taxes and \$3.04 million in local taxes which is comprised of lodging, dining, shopping, transportation, entertainment and recreation. The hotel and meals tax in FY2018 for Lexington accounted for \$1.36 million of this amount. Following is a breakdown of these figures provided by US Travel Association showing breakdown by domestic and international visitors.

Lexington		Expenditures	Payroll	Employment	State Taxes	Local Taxes
	Domestic	\$100,905,529.18	\$28,728,739.56	796	\$5,881,318.34	\$2,808,542.60
	International	\$10,636,961.23	\$2,371,643.01	69	\$461,643.54	\$233,545.24
	Total	\$111,542,490.41	\$31,100,382.57	866	\$6,342,961.88	\$3,042,087.84

Lexington ranked 3rd in the list of top ten cities and towns in Merrimack Valley in terms of visitor expenditures in 2018.

Top Ten Cities/Towns in Merrimack Valley - Economic Impact Data (USTA)						
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	Woburn	\$290,962,869.35	\$80,979,728.02	2,255	\$16,512,940.57	\$7,922,405.49
	Lexington	\$111,542,490.41	\$31,100,382.57	866	\$6,342,961.88	\$3,042,087.84
	Billerica	\$100,653,707.43	\$28,059,861.38	781	\$5,723,470.52	\$2,745,004.44
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	Westford	\$77,829,851.19	\$21,767,600.50	606	\$4,442,537.08	\$2,129,229.81
	Chelmsford	\$68,306,241.18	\$18,957,494.70	528	\$3,863,800.17	\$1,854,817.69
	Concord	\$52,458,756.44	\$14,605,469.46	407	\$2,978,458.26	\$1,428,864.71
	Lowell	\$40,855,865.61	\$11,174,166.85	312	\$2,267,815.12	\$1,092,349.35

In the same year, domestic and international visitors to the Greater Merrimack Valley, of which Lexington is a part of, spent over \$1.3 billion. \$1.13 billion was spent by domestic visitors and \$182 million was spent by international visitors. This spending resulted in \$73.9 million state taxes and \$35.5 million in local taxes. The Merrimack Valley region has the third highest domestic and international spending in the Commonwealth. The Greater Boston region has the highest spending, followed by Barnstable County.

Merrimack Valley		Expenditures	Payroll	Employment	State Taxes	Local Taxes
	Domestic	\$1,132,010,118	\$322,293,774	8,935	\$65,979,654	\$31,507,675
	International	\$182,007,375	\$40,518,470	1,185	\$7,899,110	\$3,996,156
	Total	\$1,314,017,493	\$362,812,244	10,120	\$73,878,764	\$35,503,831

A review of hotel occupancy, average rate and hotel RevPAR (revenue per available room – the difference between the price of the room and the amount it costs to maintain it) - shows that in 2019, the Merrimack Valley region had an occupancy of 69%, average daily rate (ADR) of \$133.23 and revenue per available room (RevPAR) of \$91.90. The same time period in Lexington/Concord showed an occupancy of 67.2%, ADR of \$136.65 and RevPAR of \$91.80.

In FY2019 (July 2018 – June 2019) hotel room occupancy tax collections totaled \$283 million and local option room occupancy tax collections was an additional \$228.9 million. \$10 million of the state hotel room occupancy tax money goes back into tourism - \$4 million to the Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism and \$6 million divided by the 16 Regional Tourist Councils (RTCs). The Greater Merrimack Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau (GMVCVB), the local RTC that supports Lexington, receives approximately \$300,000 from this tourism fund. The rest of the collections go into the Commonwealth's general fund. In essence, the state invests approximately 3.5% back into tourism, which is quite low compared to tourism funding in other states. While the tax collections continue to increase, Massachusetts funding ranks as one of the lowest funded states in the country. California leads with a budget of \$120 million. Oregon is in the middle with \$33 million and even Maine receives \$15 million.

The Town of Lexington provides \$44,000 to fund tourism marketing efforts in addition to funding a position whose responsibilities including tourism, as well as economic development.

In comparison, Salem receives 50% of the local options tax for tourism and then raises additional funds from the private sector through partnership programs. In 2009, local options room tax collections were \$324,622. By implementing a dedicated tourism marketing program, in 2016 collections were \$560,960. With the funds from both the private sector and the town, Destination Salem's budget is approximately \$600,000. Destination Salem is a non-profit public private partnership.

Provincetown has a dedicated Tourism Manager within the Town and a Visitor Services Board that recommends programming and advocates for funding. The Select Board recently approved a five-year financial forecast as recommended by the Visitor Services Board and voted to refer an article to the April annual town meeting to fund a \$840,000 tourism budget for FY21. The current tourism budget is \$750,000. Provincetown has noted that although city service expenses increased with the rise in the number of visitors, over time, they found that the revenue generated from increased tourism far exceeded the expenses.

Gloucester set up a tourism office in 2016, Discover Gloucester. They are a private, 501-C-6 that receives a grant from the Town through a portion of the local tax collections. Gloucester has historically funded tourism with at least \$120,000 to cover salary and administrative expenses. Discover Gloucester is required to match those funds from the private sector. By implementing a dedicated tourism marketing program, travel expenditures by domestic visitors to Gloucester have increased from \$98.2 million in 2014 to \$111.76 million in 2017 (the most recent figures available). The local tax collections from domestic visitors have increased from \$2.496 million in 2014 to \$2.925 million in 2017 and these numbers continue to increase.

Sturbridge operates their tourism efforts out of the Economic Development office. They are overseen by the Sturbridge Tourist Association, a town committee comprised of local residents and business- owners, responsible for expanding and facilitating tourism in the town. They serve as the fiduciary for 16.5% of the Town's Hotel/Motel Tax Revenues and with this funding source, awards grants to support community projects, marketing projects and the economic development/tourism position.

Concord has recently created a dedicated Tourism Manager position. This position and the efforts of this office, including the Visitor Center, are funded by both their General Fund and a revolving fund through the Recreation Department. In addition to salary and administration, it covers the approximately \$40,000 required to run the Visitor Center. While they currently do not have additional marketing funds allocated, they are investing in the tourism position, a new website and starting to promote the destination to visitors so that they can make the case for additional funding for tourism marketing efforts.

In order to remain competitive and grow market share, as well as to prepare for Rev250 in 2026, the Town of Lexington should look to increase their tourism investment beyond the \$44,000 currently allocated for marketing programs. In addition, partnership dollars can be leveraged from the private sector, as well as through programs with other communities.

Market Analysis: Lexington Overview

The Town of Lexington is well positioned to attract domestic and international visitors, due primarily to its well-known role in the American Revolution, but also due to its proximity to Boston, its accessibility from major highways throughout New England, as well as its lesser known assets of recreation, arts and culture. As a result, the Town features a variety of offerings for travelers seeking quick getaways or even longer trips. This positioning allows for the promotion of a variety of things to see and do in Lexington and plays to families and short stay visitors.

Primary research has been conducted through key stakeholder interviews, and additional primary and secondary research has been analyzed in order to better understand the visitor to Lexington, as well as to develop initiatives and programs that will more effectively influence their travel decisions, evaluate competitive positioning and track results and performance.

Lexington features a variety of offerings for all leisure travelers, from American history to architecture, arts & culture to dining, outdoor recreation to shopping. Target audiences include those who are visiting friends and family; those seeking a quick getaway or nearby vacation; and/or those who wish to immerse themselves in American history, arts & culture or recreation. Activities such as Revolution 250 celebrating the 250th anniversary of the Revolutionary War in 2026 and Mass400, celebrating the 400th anniversary of a number of communities, including Plymouth, Quincy, Salem and Boston between 2020 and 2030, will provide opportunities to elevate the story of Lexington to national markets over the coming years. These rich assets will allow Lexington to promote the wide array of things to see in Lexington that visitors and residents can discover. Lexington has already established a commission that will be charged with working on programming for Rev250.

The Lexington Visitor Center experienced 120,000 visits in 2018. In addition, there are an average 8,000 tickets sold to the Liberty Ride annually, with over 130 charter tours each year.

In 2018, 9.6 million visitors spent an estimated \$832 million while visiting National Park Service lands in Massachusetts, with over one million of those park visitors spending an

estimated \$59.9 million while visiting Minute Man National Historical Park. These expenditures at the Park supported a total of 790 jobs, \$33.2 million in labor income, \$54.5 million in value added, and \$85.8 million in economic output in local gateway economies surrounding Minute Man National Historical Park. The following chart shows the breakdown of visitation by month, with the greatest activity being between the months of April and October.

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
2018	37,794	26,962	44,396	111,836	131,786	120,228	119,375	102,563	102,682	99,906	63,568	53,707
2017	38,154	27,798	55,602	115,676	115,750	105,565	115,421	109,433	110,322	111,346	64,126	54,728
2016	32,131	25,936	52,962	117,218	119,345	111,312	117,687	104,008	121,273	120,040	66,140	61,362
2015	26,071	12,826	35,230	119,078	99,873	103,075	117,712	119,052	94,710	112,950	63,310	60,443
2014	44,869	24,849	48,324	115,009	120,625	109,810	130,329	126,175	111,862	106,814	65,108	52,775
2013	44,871	22,123	43,760	112,456	116,922	121,330	104,270	110,331	90,244	62,653	65,674	53,260

Stakeholder Interviews:

As part of the process to develop this plan, a list of key stakeholders was created that included business leaders, attractions, community advocates, and public sector officials. Over 40 stakeholders were contacted and the following were people were interviewed (in alphabetical order):

- Christina Burwell – Munroe Center for the Arts
- Larry Conley – Lexington Minuteman
- Pat Costello – Liberty Ride Guide, Town Meeting Member
- Kathy Fields – Crafty Yankee
- Tom Fitzmaurice – Greater Merrimack Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Jill Hai – Selectboard Member, Tourism and Center Committee Liaison
- Laurie Hobbs – Inn at Hastings Park
- Donna Hooper – Historical Society President, Former Town Clerk
- Terumi Irizawa – Lexington Arts & Crafts Society
- Fred Johnson – Center Committee, Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Committee liaison
- Ryan Kane – Town of Concord Recreation Director
- Trisha Kennealy – Tourism Committee and Inn at Hastings Park
- Peter Lally – Spectacle Management
- Doug Lucente – Chair of BOS and Lion’s Club Member
- Phil Lupsiewicz – Minuteman National Park
- Jim Malloy – Town Manager
- Gerry Marrocco, Liberty Ride Coordinator & Guide
- Erica McAvoy – Historical Society Director and Tourism Committee
- Dawn McKenna – Tourism Committee chair and Town Meeting Member
- Jerry Michelson – Center committee Chair, Michelson’s Shoes, Lexington Retailer’s Association, Town Meeting Member
- Glenn Parker – Appropriations Committee
- Stacy Thornton – Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau

- Patrice Todisco – Freedom’s Way
- Masha Traber – Former Liberty Ride Coordinator, Liberty Ride Guide
- Ashley Wagner – Farmer’s Market

In these confidential interviews, respondents were asked to discuss what is working, not working, what needs to be done to attract visitors to Lexington and what obstacles stand in the way.

Throughout the interviews, many of the responses were consistent. In general, it was felt that Lexington has excellent assets, they are just not being communicated and promoted as well as they could be. It was felt that the promotional focus has been primarily on Lexington’s role in the American Revolution, but that not enough promotion has been made about all of the other assets available in the town. Stakeholders would like a focus to be made not only on promoting Lexington for its American History, but also for its recreation, arts, culture and other activities. The town needs to find unique ways to package and promote its assets, using story-telling to get the message across.

In addition, it was felt that there is a need for more collaboration among the Town and businesses, and there was a general feeling that there needs to be a dedicated tourism staff person to focus on pulling together all of the various entities and efforts and foster collaboration throughout the community, as well as market and promote to target audiences. This position would supervise the tourism operations, including the Liberty Ride and Battle Green Guides and events, as well as the Visitor Center. In addition, they would be responsible for implementing all of the marketing activities outlined in the Strategies & Tactics section of this plan.

While everyone felt that there was a lot going on in town, they also felt that the communication of all of the activities was missing, and that the communication not only needed to be targeted to Lexington residents but sent to surrounding communities, as well as national and international media and contacts where appropriate. They felt that this dedicated position would be the disseminator of the information as it pertains to the promotion of tourism activities and driving visitors to discover the full depth and breadth of all that there is to experience in Lexington.

Many stakeholders commented on the need for not only more shops and restaurants, but also consistent and later hours, to support the needs of the visitor market, as well as locals. This is imperative because if the Town is being promoted as visitor friendly, those visitors have a certain level of expectations, that shops and restaurants will be open and that they can count on when they're going to be open. If the hours are constantly changing, visitors will not choose to go where their expectations can be met. In addition, it was recommended by several people that there needs to be a central/social gathering place downtown to help drive business, and also there needs to be a beautification program downtown for empty storefronts, such as vacant space pop-ups or window displays.

The majority of interviewees encouraged a greater collaboration between Lexington and Concord since both towns are telling the same story. They also recommended collaborations with other communities, such as Salem, Plymouth and Sturbridge, as they felt that these destinations are getting like-minded visitors. They felt that Lexington should work with them to promote the region as a full visitor experience, targeting not only consumers, but tour operators and bus companies as well in order to grow this market segment. In addition, collaborative efforts within the Town of Lexington were encouraged as well, having them take the lead on creating more events & activities that the tourism department can help promote.

Parking for tour buses was identified as an issues, as well as general traffic and parking issues. Interviewees felt that having better way finding might help to alleviate some of these problems. The Battle Green Masterplan will help address this issue as well as the importance of tour buses to the economic vitality of the community.

Although it is not the position of the Tourism Committee, there were a small number of stakeholders who recommended moving Patriots Day Monday activities to Sunday, in order to alleviate congestion and try to capture Boston visitors during the weekend before they partake in Marathon Monday activities.

Stakeholders were excited by the new Visitor Center that will open in April, 2020. While it will be a venue for visitors to get information on happenings in Lexington, it will also be

a resource for residents. Calling the center an *Information Center*, rather than a Visitor Center, may help to continue to define its role in the community.

Travel Trends:

Generational Trends: Travel and saving money for travelling is something that is important to all generations, but there are differences across these generations when it comes to their traveling tendencies. A recent Expedia study found that 57% of Americans are currently saving money for travel, and that this percentage is even higher among *Millennials* (ages 25 – 39) coming in at 65%.

In addition, it is important to remember that travelers determine the destinations for their travel in a variety of ways, largely depending on the age of the traveler. For example, when choosing their next destination, individuals in *Generation Z* (age 24 and under) are over three times more likely to consider the opinions of their friends and relatives via social media than *Baby Boomers* (ages 55 – 75). At the same time, *Baby Boomers* are much more likely to use offline media sources (such as TV or printed newspapers) than those in *Generation Z* to determine their next journey. Because of these differences in generations and the way they book their travel, there needs to be a number of strategies and tactics to promote Lexington to target audiences.

While there are differences in generational specific trends, there are some trends that are relatively consistent across generations. One is that all generations of Americans are placing more value on experiences as opposed to specific products or things, with 74% of Americans feeling this way.

Experiential Travel: An added emphasis on experiences over products is increasingly important to all generations of travelers, but is especially important to Millennials and Generation Z. According to Medium, 67% of travelers would rather spend more money on activities or a unique travel experience than on nicer lodging accommodations. According to Smarter Travel, an additional 70% think that trips involving new experiences are more important than simply seeing all of the sights. For some, this involves getting off the beaten path and trying to connect with local populations, but for others it means taking part in more activities while at their destination.

Social Media & Technology: According to the World Economic Forum, in 2018 Baby Boomers spent a little over an hour every day on various social media accounts. In comparison, Gen X used social media for almost 2 hours daily, Millennials averaged two and a half hours, and Gen Z browsed social media for nearly 3 hours. On average, across all consumer demographics, there is a two-hour block of time spent on social media, during which users can be exposed to content that promotes Lexington tourism. This exposure can be highly influential, with Expedia reporting that in 2017, 30% of Americans were *influenced or inspired* by social media when making travel decisions.

Adobe's *2019 State of Travel* report found that more than one-third of travelers age 18-24 use social media to find their hotel accommodations. Pinterest, as well, claims that 76% of users who viewed travel-related content made a purchase shortly after. Other crowd-sourced review sites, such as Yelp or TripAdvisor, have an immense impact on tourism. In 2017, the reviews and recommendations posted on TripAdvisor influenced over 433 million trips worldwide, resulting in a \$546 billion global impact. This use of TripAdvisor and other social media sites for planning trips is consistent with Lexington's experience, as well.

Videos are also an important tool. According to Hyperfine, video in an email leads to a 200% increase in click through rates, and including a video on a landing page increases conversion by 80%. Invisia states that 90% of users say that watching a video is a helpful step in their decision process. These statistics refer to the more traditional forms of video, but several social media sites now offer live streaming video features to reach viewers in the moment. These include Facebook Live, Periscope, YouTube Connect, and Instagram Live stories.

Given that many travel decisions are made by recommendations and suggestions on social media platforms, it is imperative that Lexington start their social media efforts by having Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts that are active, engaging and encourage people to visit Lexington. Once there is a level of comfort with the use of these basic channels for marketing. Pinterest could eventually be added to the marketing channels as this is an effective place to post suggested itineraries, themed travel ideas and other content that appeals to different groups of travelers. With the creation of a video library, YouTube can also be introduced into the mix. Events in

Lexington should also have SnapChat filters. SnapChat filters are an overlay to an image that appears when you take a Snap and swipe left or right. They highlight neighborhoods, events, shops, restaurants and more and allow the user to share where they are with their friends and followers.

In addition to the strong influence of social media, Booking.com predicts that more travelers in 2020 will allow technology to make travel decisions for them. Such tech will include smartphone applications that enable users to book, arrange, and plan activities for their trip in one consolidated interface, all while on the go. For even more convenience, the artificially intelligent programs will recommend specific destinations and sights curated to the individual user. While an impressive 53% of business travelers have used their smartphone to book travel arrangements, only 31% of leisure travelers have done the same. According to a Google study, 94% of travelers alternate between their mobile and desktop devices when researching or booking a trip, with 46% explicitly stating that they come to a decision on their mobile device, but make the actual transaction on a secondary device.

Augmented Reality: The future success of mobile booking will likely depend on the use of Augmented Reality in marketing. In Augmented Reality (AR), digital content is overlaid on top of the view seen through one's smartphone camera lens. The result is an entirely new "reality" that enhances the viewers experience and knowledge. One common form of AR technology that smartphone users are already familiar with include Snapchat filters, the popular mobile game Pokémon Go, and Amazon's *View in Your Room* feature, which allows buyers to preview how a product will look in their home. While AR has only recently been introduced into the digital landscape, the market is forecasted to expand from \$6 billion to \$198 billion over the next half decade.

As AR becomes more prominent, smartphone owners will look to use this convenient technology to make and execute their travel plans. A survey of 1,000 Americans by Opera Mediaworks found that 66% of tourists use their smartphones to research their travel itinerary. Augmented reality can become a key step in that information-gathering and decision-making process. For instance, travel planning apps such as ARvis give users an AR view inside any airline flight, allowing them to see and try out the size of their prospective seats and overhead luggage space.

AR also helps travelers as they embark on their unique journeys. With apps like Google Translate, travelers can scan a foreign phrase with their phone's camera to automatically translate it. Traditional guidebooks are also being outpaced by digital AR travel guides. With these applications, users can simply point their camera at a city street, and digital markers will pop up onscreen to highlight points of interest, such as restaurants, boutiques, or a perfect photo opportunity. This allows visitors to not only curate an itinerary on the go, but to venture off the beaten path with confidence. In museums, AR apps serve as tour guides, offering visitors information about exhibits, or using visuals to bring dioramas to life. At heritage sites, AR technology can show users what their current environment looked like in ancient times, or after a historic battle. AR is unique in that its goal is not to replace or mask a traveler's surroundings, but to instead build upon them to enhance the user's adventure.

Cultural & Heritage Travel: Similar to the millennial mentality of valuing experiences over products, visitors are looking to experience more cultural and heritage aspects of their destinations. According to the Huffington Post, 78% of millennials said that they wanted to learn something new while they are on the road, and just under half said that they would select a certain destination in order to experience cultural/heritage aspects. The same survey found that millennials are twice as likely to seek out an experience where they can explore a new culture to find an experience centered on partying or shopping.

Ancestry Travel: With the rising popularity of affordable DNA tests like 23andMe and Ancestry.com, more people are engaging in ancestry travel. Ancestry travel is when a person visits the locations that their ancestors hail from. A person with ancestral roots in colonial America, for example, might find it enriching to visit Lexington, the birthplace of the Revolutionary War, and witness a battle reenactment, as part of their vacation.

According to a 2019 Airbnb study, more than half of Americans surveyed have visited an ancestral country. Airbnb has also reported a 500% increase since 2014 in the number of travelers who used their service for ancestry travel. For a vast majority of adults, one's roots are a major component of their identity, and the desire to reconnect with the faded traditions and culture of their ancestors is vastly compelling. So much so, in fact, that the genealogy industry has nearly doubled since 2012, from \$1.6 billion to \$3 billion,

and travel companies are capitalizing on its popularity. Airbnb, for instance, has partnered with 23andMe to give each customer a personalized itinerary of Airbnb lodgings and cultural experiences for their own heritage travel adventure.

Between the museum, Cary Library and the Historical Society, Lexington has tremendous archives that will help visitors trace their history so promoting Ancestry Travel should be one of the strategies that the Town uses to attract new visitors.

Soft Adventure/Outdoor Recreation: Recent years have also seen an increase in soft adventure tourism, or low-risk outdoor recreation that requires minimal prior experience. In addition to being highly cost-effective, this area of tourism is suitable for nearly all ages and skill sets, which makes it perfect for traveling families or multi-generational groups. Soft adventure activities can include nature walks, hiking, wildlife watching, and kayaking, all of which are available on the 900 acres of Minute Man National Historic Park. Lexington also offers ice skating in the winter for free, and can be used as a draw for those visitors interested in outdoor recreation during the off-season. The accessibility of soft adventure tourism also complements the rise in micro adventures, brief weekend, overnight, or day trips into nature to momentarily escape the rigors of city life. These micro and soft adventures do not strive to be like traditional large-scale, rugged camping trips, but rather like casual, brief tours of nature. This desire to engage in soft outdoor adventures also coincides with the popularity of rural sightseeing among American domestic travelers, a factor that was noted earlier in this report.

Group Tour Market: Group travel has been and continues to be an important part of the travel sector. Group tour coordinators have increased their catering towards individual travelers, creating groups specifically for solo travelers, as well as getting rid of fees that had been applied to these travelers in the past. Experiential tours remain popular, as travelers, particularly millennials, look to engage more deeply with the cultures of the countries that they are visiting. The family traveler is a growing segment of the group tour sector. A recent AAA Travel survey found that nearly one third of all Americans are planning on taking a family vacation in 2019, a slightly higher number than last year. Two thirds of these travelers will take a vacation during the summer months, and just under half made plans to travel this past spring.

Business Leisure (Bleisure) Travel: Business leisure travel (or *Bleisure*), is a rising trend in the travel industry. According to Avis Car Rental, 87% of business travelers are likely to mix business and leisure on the same trip. This can consist of adding on a few days to a business trip or bringing the family along on a business trip and spending time with them in between meetings. The distinction between business and leisure is blurry, as individuals continue to mix the two. This type of travel is not as popular among those in the older generations, who tend to disconnect from work while they are on vacation. This concept is more popular among Millennials, with 53% reporting that they have mixed business with pleasure in the past and that 46% plan to do it again in the future.

Market Analysis: Comparable Analysis

There are a number of destinations in Massachusetts that are similar to Lexington within the region. While destinations in the greater Northeast area and beyond present legitimate competition for Lexington, this review has been limited to four Massachusetts destinations listed below that have been identified through research as being comparable and having a similar visitor base.

In an effort to constantly grow market share, these destinations will continue to be monitored and their messaging and digital presence will be analyzed. In response to new social media platforms and ever-changing technology, new ways to differentiate Lexington and effectively communicate strengths and assets must continue to happen. To this end, Lexington will also collaborate with the cities and towns listed below to leverage resources, expand reach and provide the visitor with a full and vibrant experience.

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 Lexington 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 destinations such as Salem, Plymouth, Concord or Sturbridge, Massachusetts.

Those seeking Lexington 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 history of Lexington. 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 Boston, Concord, MA or Williamsburg, VA.

Day trippers are visitors who live within an hour drive (50 miles) from Lexington. 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 Concord, Salem or Cambridge, Massachusetts.

- Salem, Massachusetts: <https://www.salem.org>; <https://www.salem.com>
For most cities, visitor and tourism information is typically found on a webpage within the main city website. However, Destination Salem, the official tourism organization of Salem, Massachusetts, uses an entirely separate and independent web domain. Salem.com is the website for The City of Salem, while Destination Salem uses Salem.org. The City site does have an *Experience Salem* page that links to Destination Salem, HauntedHappenings.org, and various other nearby visitor attractions. Though Destination Salem’s site is more aesthetically pleasing, the two websites share similar blue-toned color schemes, and both use the same logo and slogan created by Destination Salem (*Salem: still making history*).

Destination Salem’s website is visually compelling, with lots of pictures, unique fonts, fun animated icons, and a teal and white color scheme. The minimal text on the homepage makes it incredibly easy to navigate its four sections: *Make Your Own Magic*, *Find What Fits Your Stay*, *What’s going on this month*, and *Find out what’s happening*.

At the top of Destination Salem's website is a navigation menu with six tabs: *Free Guide*, *Do*, *Eat*, *Stay*, *Learn* and *Plan*. The *Free Guide* page requires patrons to submit their email, name, and zip-code in exchange for a free download of the Salem Visitor's Guide and Downtown Walking Map. The 63-page guide contains local business ads and information regarding Visitor & Travel Information, Calendar of Events, Accommodations, Activities, Shopping, Wedding & Special Events, and Directions and Parking. The walking map notates points of interest such as accommodations, museums & attractions, trolley & walking tours, harbor tours, psychics, cinema & theatre, restaurants & bars, delis, pizza & sandwiches, brewery, sweets & treats, gifts & souvenirs, clothing, witch & occult shops, wedding & special events, transportation, and education/spiritual growth.

The *Eat* and *Stay* tabs both lead to pages containing directories of local restaurants or lodgings, respectively. Users can sort the *Eat* directory by breakfast, lunch, dinner, drinks, or dessert, and the *Stay* directory by hotels, motels, inns, camping, or regional. The *Do* tab is a drop-down menu with the following sub-categories: events calendar, museum and attractions, tours, psychics, entertainment, shop, outdoors, education and spiritual growth, festivals, 10 free things. Under the *Learn* tab is a submenu reading: Salem's History, Salem Witch Trials, Notable Locals, Tours, Blog, FAQs. The *Plan* tab also has a drop-down menu with categories for: Itinerary, Map of Salem, Free Guide, Parking Map and Directions, Public Transportation, Seasonal Hours, Group Tour, LGBTQ, Weddings and Special Events, and Marijuana Guidelines.

The *Make Your Own Magic* section is a collection of icons that represent a specific type of traveler, such as "history buff" or "foodie." Web users can click on whichever icon they feel most applies to them to get tailored recommendations based on their interests. They also have the option to save specific activities to an itinerary. The full range of categories represented in this section are: foodie, engaged, modern witch, literature nut, shopper, maritime fan, history buff, family, art appreciator, LGBTQ+, student/teacher, beer/wine lover, group leader, and Halloween enthusiast. The *Find What Fits Your Stay* section is more straightforward, with links for: history, shops, tours, dining, weddings, modern witch, art and outdoors. Upcoming events are listed

under *What's going on this month*, and *Find out what's happening* links to Salem's Instagram, blog, and an article on 10 Free Things to Do in Salem.

Salem also has a website dedicated entirely to visitor information on the city's Halloween and autumnal festivities (hauntedhappenings.org). This website's homepage offers information on accommodations, dining, events, family fun, transportation, and a link to Haunted Happening's official Instagram page. The navigation menu at the top has tabs for *Free Guide*, *Blog*, *Contact*, and *Event Calendar*. The menu on the right side of the homepage contains links to *Things to Do*, *Places to Eat*, *Places to Shop*, *Places to Stay*, *Facts & Fun*, *Free Guide*, *Maps & Info*, and *Plan & Share*.

Similar to the Destination Salem guide, visitors can give their email, name, and address to receive a free download of the Haunted Happenings guidebook. This guidebook is 80 pages and its contents include: Welcome to Salem, Calendar, Do, Eat, Shop, Stay, Getting Here, Visitor Information, and Acknowledgements.

The Haunted Happenings Magazine offers additional information on Halloween-specific excursions in Salem. The menu at the top of the homepage contains the sections: Home, What to do?, Directions, Advertise, Other, and Calendar. Quick links to Sites & Attractions, Walking Tours, Psychic Fairs, and Trolley & Boat Tours can be found on the homepage as well. Site visitors can also click on links to join the magazine's mailing list, visit their Instagram profile, and plan their visit and travel arrangements.

- Sturbridge, Massachusetts: <https://www.sturbridge.gov/for-visitors>

The tourism webpage for Sturbridge, Massachusetts operates under the town's main website. Its branding is well-defined: with a horse-drawn carriage as the background image, tasteful use of colonial-inspired font, and a color palette of forest green and yellow, the website emphasizes the qualities Sturbridge is most known for: historical and rural America. In keeping with tradition, the town seal is used as the logo, situated at the top left of the webpage. The town's slogan is also clearly displayed: *New England's Crossroads*.

Most of the information on the Sturbridge website is easy to find and readily available; so much so, in fact, that the aforementioned background horse carriage photo is frequently obscured by text boxes of information. The information, however, is well organized, with navigation bars located at the top, left and right sides of the screen. The tabs on the top navigation menu read: *Home, About, Government, For Business, For Visitors, and Town Meeting*. The left navigation menu lists: *Board & Committee Vacancies, Charter & Bylaws, FAQs, Forms & Documents, GIS/Maps, Job Opportunities, Minutes & Agendas, Pag Bills, RFP's & RFQ's, and Town Meeting*. The tabs on the right pertain to: *Administrator's Blog, Public Library, Sturbridge Schools, Directions, Subscribe to News, and Contact Us*. Located in the middle of the homepage are also quick links to local news, Sturbridge's Twitter feed, weather, meeting calendar, and public access station.

Web users have two ways to access visitor information: either through *links for visitors*, located under the top menu's *About* tab, or simply through the *For Visitors* tab in that same menu. Both choices link to an in-depth page that gives shopping, restaurant, lodging, and recreational recommendations. The links on this detailed webpage read: *@VisitSturbridge (Twitter page), A list of hotels, restaurants shops and more!, Discover Central Massachusetts, Mass Office of Travel and Tourism, Monthly Event Newsletters, Sturbridge Farmers Market, Trail Guide, and Visitor Guide 2019*. In addition, there is a section for *Frequently Asked Questions, News & Announcements, an Interactive Map of Local Businesses, a For Visitors Calendar, and an embedded live view of the Sturbridge Twitter feed*. There is also a link to Old Sturbridge Village.

The monthly events newsletter is a streamlined list of links to upcoming local events. Under the main Sturbridge website, there is a page for the Sturbridge Tourist Association (STA), a board of five members selected by the Town Administrator. The STA is the fiduciary for a percentage of the town's hotel and motel tax revenue. To increase lodging, restaurant, and business revenue, the STA funds and oversees several events and marketing projects; though the actual execution of these initiatives is carried out by the Discover Central Massachusetts Convention & Visitors Bureau.

The STA also publishes an official 36-page Sturbridge Visitor Guide that contains, in addition to local business ads, information on: Breweries & Wineries, The Great Outdoors, Orchards & More, Historical Attractions, Shops & Services, Accommodations, Weddings & Events, Good Eats, Trail Maps & Information, Arts & Entertainment, and Calendar of Events. Visitors can also contact the Economic Development and Tourism Coordinator for more information and brochures from regional partners.

On the Economic Development and Tourism Coordinator's page (found under the *Government* tab), you can find economic and businesses information. The tabs listed on this page include: *Business Breakfasts, Business Classes, Business Directory, Business Newsletters, Event Newsletters, Guides and Resources, Permitting Guidebook – 2018, Reports, Site Finder, Sturbridge Business Programs, Sturbridge Tourist Association, Tax Incentives, and Why Sturbridge?* There are also staff contacts available, the department's address, phone number, and hours of operation, as well as links to enroll in the Sturbridge Business Listserve, and access the Business Agenda, Newsletter, or Calendar.

Sturbridge is in the process of developing a three year marketing plan and a new brand. This work will be completed by June 2020.

- Concord, Massachusetts: <https://www.ConcordMA.gov>
Concord has not invested in tourism until recently. However, the town has made it a focus of their economic development efforts and hired a dedicated Tourism Manager in August of 2019 and are working on a new website and other sales and marketing efforts to drive more visitors to Concord.

The website for the Town of Concord, Massachusetts has a structured layout and contains a significant amount of visitor friendly information. It uses a color palette of dark red, off-white, and blue, and like many of its peers, its logo is the town seal situated in the top left corner of the website.

On the homepage, a navigation menu across the top of the screen contains five tabs: *Government, Services, Resident, Businesses, and How Do I...* There is also a

navigation bar on the left side of the screen with icons that read: *Home, Contact Us, Notify Me, Minutes & Agendas, Report an Issue, and Bids & Proposals*. More icons are used in the center of the page, which link to *Online Payments, Job Opportunities, GIS & Maps, Volunteer, and Important Documents*. Beneath these are three text boxes containing news bulletins, upcoming calendar events, and Concord's live Twitter feed. *Important contact information*, as well as links to *FAQs, the Emergency Alert sign up, and Board/Committee Volunteer information* are all located in the bottom banner of the page.

Visitor information is located under the Visitor Center link found under the *Services* tab at the top of the homepage. The Visitor Center page is decorated with a scrolling photo gallery, a video from Patriots' Day 2019, and a brief history of Concord. The five navigation tabs on the left side of the page are: *Tours, Visitor Guides & Maps, 2019 Visitor Center Sponsors, Directions and Transportation, and House of Operation & Contact Information*.

The Visitor Guides page is divided into three subsections: *Free Visitor Guides and Documents, Free Trail Maps, and Visitor Guides and Documents for Sale*. However, the links under the last two categories are broken and simply lead to an error page. But under *Free Visitor Guides* users can find trail maps for Walden Pond State Reservation and the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, as well as maps for Sleep Hollow Cemetery and Concord Center Historic Sites.

In addition, the left hand side of the Visitors page contains two navigation tabs: *Visitor Center Town Map* and *Historical Points of Interest*. The two-page Visitor Center Town Map focuses on areas of interest in Concord Center, Downtown Concord Center, Thoreau Depot, Walden Pond, West Concord Center and Nine Acre Corner. The specific listed sections on the map are: Concord Center – Food and Beverage, Concord Center – Retail, Concord Center – Entertainment, Concord Center – Lodging, Historical Points of Interest, Thoreau Depot – Retail, Thoreau Depot – Food and Beverage, Walden Pond Area – Historic and Points of Interest, West Concord – Food and Beverage, West Concord – Retail, West Concord – Lodging, and West Concord – Schools.

Concord has just completed a Tourism Benchmark Plan. As part of the plan, it was recommended that they create a new visitor website. They are in the process of working on that and will have it completed in Q1 2020.

- Plymouth, Massachusetts: <https://www.plymouth-ma/gov>;
<https://www.seeplymouth.com>

Like Salem, Plymouth, Massachusetts has separate websites for the Town and for its tourism organization, Destination Plymouth. The website for the Town of Plymouth is very utilitarian and straight forward. Its color scheme is light blue, dark blue and white, and the town seal logo is displayed in the top left corner, with the words “Town of Plymouth, Massachusetts” imposed over it.

The three main tabs in the navigation menu are: *Discover Plymouth*, *Departments*, and *Boards & Committees*. On the left side of the homepage is a square box with quick links to *Beach Info*, *Employment Opportunities*, *FAQs*, *Online Payments*, *Property Value Search*, *Services A-Z*, *Contact Us*, *E-Subscribe*, *Forms & Documents*, *Open Checkbook*, and *Public Records Requests*. Next to this menu is another text box with easy access to town news, meetings, social media, and quick links.

The Town website does contain some information for visitors, which can be found on the *Discover Plymouth* page. That page contains links to the *Chamber of Commerce*, *Destination Plymouth*, *E-Subscribe*, *Events Calendar*, *Live Government Access TV*, *Memorial Hall*, *PACTV*, and *The Plymouth Bay Cultural District*.

The majority of Plymouth’s tourism information, however, can be found on the website for Destination Plymouth (SeePlymouth.com). This website is more visual than the Town website, though it adheres to a similar color scheme of blue and white. The homepage is full of content, from a rotating gallery of photos, to a section titled *Where Will Your Visit Begin?*, which features a written introduction to the town and several video highlight reels. There is also a list of *Upcoming Events* and a text box announcing the upcoming 400th anniversary of the Mayflower voyage. Destination Plymouth also has several sponsored, clickable ads for “featured partners” and local attractions such as the Fuller Craft Museum, Pilgrim Hall

Museum, and A.D. Makepeace Company. At the bottom of the homepage are quick links to *Business Services*, *Lodging Specials*, and *Plymouth County*.

At the top of Destination Plymouth's website, the navigation bar has the following options: *Visitor Info*, *Things to Do*, *Lodging*, *Dining*, *Shopping*, *Group Info*, and *Weddings*. Under *Visitor Info*, visitors have nine different options: *visit our information centers*, *get your travel guide*, *how to get around*, *where to park*, *travel tips*, *take a virtual tour*, *history & fun facts*, *businesses and services*, and *Plymouth 400*.

Prospective visitors can also download a free map, planner, or dining, shopping & activities guide from the website simply by inputting their email and postal code. The guide contains a calendar of events, as well as information on historical points of interest, free things to do, maps, concerts, the local arts, beaches & parks, shopping and dining. The contents of the Plymouth County Vacation Planner are as follows: Welcome to Plymouth County, The Story of Plymouth Rock, Plymouth County Map, Day Trip: The Cape and Islands, Getting Around the County, Day Trip: Southeastern MA, Plan Your Stay/Plan Your Wedding, Calendar of Events, and Partner Directory/Index.

Clicking on the *Things to Do* tab will bring the user to a series of categories; clicking on one of these categories will bring the user to a list of businesses or activities in that selected genre. The categories include: beer/wine/spirits, farms & farmers' markets, Plymouth bay cultural district, seasonal activities & events, history, museums & monuments, cranberry growing & harvesting, golf & sports, art, theatre & music, outdoor adventure, science & nature, wellness & spas, tours, beaches, parks, and gardens and special interests. The *Lodging* tab is set up in a similar fashion, with the user having to choose from six categories of lodgings in order to learn more.

These categories are: hotels and motels, bed and breakfasts, campgrounds, guest houses & rentals, marinas, and lodging specials. The *Dining* tab offers many options as well, including: bakeries & dessert, bars & pubs, beer, wine & spirits, casual dining, culinary tours & tastings, fine dining, markets, waterfront & water view dining, catering and lodging specials. The *Shopping* tab houses a directory of Plymouth's boutiques, spa's, and small businesses. The *Group Info* tab has a plethora of quick links for traveling groups, including group-friendly festivals and events, group-friendly lodging, sample itineraries & profile sheets, group-friendly dining, group-friendly

attractions, performance venues, guided group tours & step-on guides, transportation & receptive services, and what's new in 2019. The *Wedding* tab has information for couples regarding wedding venues, transportation, photographers, planners, caterers, and food service in Plymouth.

For economic development information, visitors have to go to the Town of Plymouth website and click on the *Departments* tab. Here, the contact information for the Economic Development Assistant is listed alongside the department calendar and recent news bulletins. The navigation bar on the left side of the Economic Development page lists the following tabs: *2019 Special Events Calendar, Banner Policy, Specification & Permit, Destination Plymouth, Grant Application 2019, Guide to Local Business Permitting, Pilgrim Path a Walk Through History Map, Plymouth Area Chamber of Commerce, Plymouth Film Location Request Form, Plymouth Regional Economic Development Foundation, Special Event Permit, Special Event Permit Timeline & Requirements, Town Hall Common Rules & Application, Town Square a Walk Through History Map, and Visitor Services Board*. There is also a text box below the left navigation bar with a series of *Frequently Asked Questions*.

- [Lexington, MA: https://www.tourlexington.us](https://www.tourlexington.us)
Lexington's tourism website is a unique URL, but it is part of the municipal site. The design of Visit Lexington is clean, with various shades of blue and white used throughout. Lexington's town seal logo is positioned in the top left corner of the website, alongside the words: *Visit Lexington Massachusetts - The Birthplace of American Liberty*. At the bottom of the home page are clickable photos that lead to information on the *Liberty Ride Trolley Tour, Visitors Center, Battle Green Guides, and Historic Sites*. The navigation menu at the top of the homepage has links for *Home, Attractions, Events, Eat, Stay, Shop and Directions*.

On the *Attractions* tab, visitors can read a descriptive list of some of Lexington's most famous historical landmarks. There is also a link to a separate page with arts, culture and entertainment attractions. Visitors can also download either a one or two-page map of Lexington, as well as a Visitors Guide. Unlike other cities, Lexington does not require visitors to give their name, zip-code, or email in order to download the guide. The guide itself is a brief two pages, featuring a map of the Lexington Battle Green

with stops notated for those embarking on self-guided tours. It has a second map of various shops and attractions, and also lists reasons to linger in Lexington and historical attractions. Though detailed and nicely designed, the visitor guide pdf is difficult to decipher; a portion of the brochure is upside down, and while that would normally be remedied in a printed copy that is folded in half, it can be challenging for someone viewing the file on their phone or laptop.

The *Events* tab on the website contains information regarding upcoming events, although the events listed are limited and include businesses who have repeat events. There is a prompt to sign up for a monthly events newsletter, although this newsletter is targeted more towards residents and businesses than visitors.

The *Eat* tab has a directory of local restaurants with brief descriptions, contact information, addresses, and website links. The *Stay* tab has similarly detailed listings. The *Directions* tab contains a link specifically for tour bus operators, as well as the address for the visitor's center and an embedded Google Map showing its location. The *Directions* tab also notes its ease of access and close proximity to Logan Airport, I-95, the Alewife MBTA stop, and the Minuteman Bikeway.

Any economic development information regarding Lexington is located at <https://www.lexingtonma.gov/>, the main Town website, under the *Departments* tab. The economic development webpage contains information on the *Hartwell Zoning Initiative*, *staff contact information*, *hours of operation*, *a monthly newsletter sign-up*, as well as links pertaining to *Doing Business Here* and *Town Information*. There is also a line of text inviting visitors to follow the department's Twitter (@businessLex); however, this invitation is written in plain text, with no clickable link to the Twitter page attached (unlike *Sign up for our enewsletter!*, which, when clicked, automatically opens a new window where users can sign up). On the right side of the page is a scrolling picture gallery and recent news bulletins. On the left side of the webpage is a navigation menu with 12 tabs: *A Resource Guide for Businesses*, *Business Directory*, *Business Districts*, *Comprehensive Plans*, *Directions and Getting Around Lexington*, *Economic Development Advisory Committee*, *Get to Know Lexington*, *Hartwell Zoning Initiative*, *Local Business Profiles*, *Minuteman Bike Share*, *Parking in Lexington Center*, and *Subscribe to our Email List*.

Lexington is awaiting the completion of a new Visitor Center in 2020, which will coincide with the implementation of this marketing plan.

Recommendations:

Given the competition, it's important to have a strong brand that educates and compels visitors to experience and discover Lexington. Lexington is known as the birthplace of the American Revolution, but it offers so much more for the visitor. When visitors *discover* Lexington, they are amazed at the variety of offerings. It is recommended that the current branding is reviewed so that it can be modified and enhanced for the target audiences.

In this digital age, it is vital that a town have a detailed, eye-catching, and intuitive tourism website in its marketing arsenal. The Town's tourism website initially had many of the attributes that consumers are seeking when they make their travel plans, however, a few years ago, some of the way the website functions was changed and Tourism can no longer customize and update the site as it needs to be and the site looks like a municipal website. It is important to have regularly updated information that the visitor is seeking as they make their decisions on where to visit.

While Lexington's website is adequate, it has potential for growth and It is not enough for the website to list Lexington's points of interest; it needs to sell the Lexington experience and entice viewers. The website should spotlight all of Lexington's many dining, retail, entertainment, and lodging options, as well as its historic, cultural, and recreational treasures. It should include itineraries and suggestions tailored to various types of travelers, broadening the appeal to a wider audience. Of all the websites described in this section, Salem.org and SeePlymouth.com stand out as the most innovative and effective. Lexington should seek to emulate them and strive towards the standards they've set in presentation, design, attention-to-detail and providing information in a fun and engaging way, highlighting experiences in Lexington.

Effort should also be made to consistently update the Events tab on the website. At the time of writing, there are only a handful of events listed on the website, one of which is held weekly and is thus listed repetitively. Lexingtonma.gov has a variety of events and

links listed on their Community Event Calendars page. This same information should also be present on TourLexington.us, as it should be the leading authority on all Lexington events and attractions. The calendar of events that is posted in front of the existing visitor center would not be as time consuming to create if the online listings were correct and up to date. This calendar could just be pulled from the websites. As it currently exists, however, it is taking more time to produce than the value it brings. Events information on the tourism website should focus on events that visitors, those bringing in outside dollars into the community, would be interested in partaking in. Resident event listings could be found elsewhere on the Town website.

The visitor guide should be enhanced and a collateral piece should also be created to distribute to the group tour market. Unlike other towns, Lexington doesn't ask users to enter their information before downloading the free visitor's guide. However, if the website were to start requesting emails, it could establish a database of interested customers to whom newsletters and other tourism content could be sent. This would be a great way to grow the newsletter database and communicate all that Lexington has to offer visitors.

A more active social media presence should also be incorporated into Lexington's digital footprint. Images that emphasize the beauty of Lexington and the unique aspects of town life will intrigue viewers and encourage them to learn more about the town. Once again, Salem should be used as a model for their frequently-posted and compelling social media content.

Content should also be created for a more engaging newsletter. Although Lexington already has a monthly events newsletter, it should be expanded to include non-event based information. The newsletter should spotlight local businesses and Lexington's array of historic, art, culture and entertainment offerings.

The new Information Center should offer increased programming options for visitors & residents that not only offer *experiences* that they are seeking, but those that can be monetized as well – such as guided and self-guided tours for individuals as well as groups, pre-packaged tours, items for purchase, opportunities for Instagram (special Minute Man and/or Fife & Drum experiences, cut-outs for social media photos, etc.).

Implement a community relations campaign to educate residents on the value of tourism to Lexington and introduce them to the new Visitor Center, showing them how it is for them, as well.

Throughout all content, visitors should be led, through story-telling, to *Discover Lexington -- Discover Liberty, Discover Recreation, Discover Culture* and so much more.

Quarterly meetings should be held with the private sector and other partners in order to develop campaigns to increase visits to Lexington. These meetings would be in addition to coordination/collaboration with the Center Streetscape and Battle Green Masterplan groups.

Most importantly, a full-time dedicated tourism staff position should be created in order to ensure marketing efforts are maximized and the greatest ROI is generated from these efforts. By having this position implement strategies in this plan, it will ultimately help prepare Lexington for the Rev250 Celebrations in 2026.

III. STRATEGIES & TACTICS

In order to develop this Tourism Marketing Plan, existing 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 Lexington. The marketing recommendations emphasize the town's historic, recreational, arts & culture, dining and shopping opportunities, as well as its proximity to Boston and other comparable destinations. Strategies have been developed that allow for Lexington to remain flexible and able to make directional decisions quickly if the environment and circumstances change.

Lexington offers a wealth of historical and cultural assets that represent both the town's history, as well as its present day character. The richness and diversity of the community provides an opportunity to enhance the attractiveness of the town for visitors, as well as residents. Throughout this plan, marketing efforts have been designed to drive business, particularly during need periods. The marketing strategies will create awareness that Lexington 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.

This marketing plan is designed to increase local, regional, national and international awareness about visiting and discovering all of the things that Lexington has to offer, which will ultimately lead to increased visitation from domestic and international markets.

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. In addition, research will be undertaken on a regular basis in order 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 Lexington 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 Lexington, response to online visitor survey and more.

Increased tax revenue and the enhance of the economic vitality of the town will occur when the primary objective of this plan, to develop and implement effective marketing strategies that help to increase the number of visitors to Lexington, is met. 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 Lexington. 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 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:

- Increase visitors to the new Information Center
- Implement a social media strategy that builds and engages followers
- Enhance communications with Lexington residents about the tourism efforts and how it benefits them while remaining sensitive to their needs
- Build collaborations with outside tourism organizations (i.e. Concord, Salem, Plymouth)
- Increase the combined telephone, mail and e-mail inquiries for visitor information coming to Lexington
- Increase domestic visitors and international visitors to Lexington, mirroring the target markets of the Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism, Greater Merrimack Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau, Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau and Discover New England
- Increase visitors length of stay and the Town's hotel tax collections
- Develop baseline numbers and tracking mechanisms to measure success of programs going forward. These include:
 - Track People Counter at Visitor Center
 - Direct access to Google Analytics to be able to measure and analyze data on web visitors
 - Tracking the number of inquiries received through phone, mail and email

- Tracking the growth in the number of people subscribing to the visitor newsletter
- Tracking the number of partners participating in programs
- Tracking the amount of revenue generated through partnership programs
- Track the amount of media coverage generated (number of articles, value of coverage)
- Tracking the number of educational (familiarization) trips taking place in Lexington, including number of participants, number of partner businesses included, media coverage and/or business generated from hosted buyer/writer
- Tracking the number of charter bus tours in Lexington, including number of charters, number of participants, number of partner business included
- Including measurement tools in all promotional campaigns to be able to track and analyze statistics from the individual campaigns, as well as collectively
- Tourism Committee working with Town Staff and Partners (hotels, attractions, etc.) to meet quarterly and develop cumulative baseline visitor numbers to be measured quarterly
- Tracking and analyzing social media analytics
- Implement Annual Consumer Survey:
 - Analyze Survey Data, modifying surveys and measuring results
 - Track the number of businesses who sent out the survey
 - Track the number of emails that the survey is sent to
 - Track the number of surveys that were sent out
 - Track the number of surveys that were completed

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 overall business throughout the year.

Website:

It is important to have a dedicated website that provides information to visitors and residents about the wide variety of things to see and do in Lexington in a fun and informative manner. The flexibility of a website makes it an ideal outlet for communicating the message of a year round destination and all promotions should direct people to the site for more information. In this way, success of programs will be measurable.

The website needs to be appealing and provide useful information in a way that consumers want to view it. It should be clean and easy to navigate. Sites such as Salem.org should be used as a model. The site should highlight staying, shopping, dining and various recreational, historic and cultural activities. It should have suggested itineraries and recommendations for activities that would appeal to different audiences. The site should be updated regularly to include seasonal promotions, special opportunities, as well as in depth experiences that are thought provoking and allow visitors to integrate into town life for a day or longer.

The objective for the website is to make it easier for the visitor to find what they are looking for, as well as to make it easier for them to discover something new that will entice them to the area. Areas that could be added, include:

- Value Specials & Packages
- Suggested Itineraries
- Themes & Events
- Media Only Section
 - Press releases
 - Images
 - Story ideas

An interactive section could be created that encourages visitors to *Find Your _____*. This could be: Find Your History; Find Your Foodie; Find Your Culture; Find Your Adventurer, etc. In this way, the various activities that can be undertaken in Lexington could be customized for each traveler, increasing the opportunities for them to realize the experiences that await them if they visit Lexington.

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.

An enhanced website can also provide a revenue generating opportunity for the town. Event and partner information will be provided on the site in an effort to increase the number of unique visitors to the site and increase the number of total visitors, page views and length of session per visit. Partner business who participate in co-operative advertising programs or advertise in the visitors guide or map could have an enhanced listing with a photo on the website.

Communications:

Communications plays an important role in the marketing of Lexington to visitors and residents. In order to increase awareness, a comprehensive, integrated communications plan that enhances the town's image, promotes the town's assets and positions Lexington as a great place to visit, will be implemented.

There are two prongs to this communications plan:

- The first is a community relations campaign, that is designed to engage businesses and community leaders in Lexington, as well as inform the local community
- The second is the external communications program designed to educate visitors on all the town has to offer as a visitor destination.

Community Relations Campaign:

Regular communications among stakeholders and community leaders is imperative in order to keep and make the tourism marketing efforts sustainable. It is important to let the business community, residents and legislative leaders know that travel and tourism enhances the quality of life for a community by providing jobs, bringing in tax dollars for improvement of services and infrastructure, and attracting shops, restaurants as well as events catering to visitors and locals alike.

Outreach strategies will include regular e-blast newsletters and networking events. We will work to establish key partnerships within Lexington that will aid in leveraging marketing dollars and growing visitation. The approach will be to maximize and leverage resources by working with as many diverse partners as possible, ensuring that wherever possible, Lexington tourism programs will be integrated with other key stakeholder programs.

- 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 Lexington.
- 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 and promotion for existing and new community events.

The current mission of the Tourism Committee is as follows:

The Tourism Committee shall be charged with enhancing and promoting Lexington tourism. The committee shall work with community groups to ensure a cohesive tourism experience.

With the development of this tourism marketing plan, it is more important than ever that infrastructure is in place to support the tourism marketing efforts. Given the Tourism Committee members positions within the community, the Tourism Committee should focus on serving as a central clearinghouse for resources that require coordination throughout the community, help to create a master calendar of activities to avoid conflicts and enable collaboration, and ensure that programs such as wayfinding, public art/memorials, etc. are in place to help support the tourism marketing effort.

- Quarterly 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 Lexington. This E-Newsletter will also provide a way to keep partners, the community 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 local media outlets.
- Service Training Initiative: The service training initiative should be reintroduced. 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 Lexington. 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 Lexington year-round. There are a number of communications tools that can be utilized to communicate messaging to target audiences, including: media relations, newsletters, website, social media, educational trips and content development, among others. Consideration should be given to new channels as they arise.

- *Media Relations:* One of the most cost effective ways to market a destination is through an integrated media relations strategy. In addition, working closely with the Greater Merrimack Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau, Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau, Discover New England and the Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism will help Lexington to aggressively pursue travel editors to secure print, online and broadcast coverage for the town. Story ideas and suggested itineraries will be developed and pitched to media.

Media relations is critical in expanding Lexington'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.

Additional components of the media relations strategy include the following:

Targeted Contact Lists:

Consumer Media: A list of preferred media outlets will be created. This list will be segmented based upon topics within the media relations plan and should be updated on a regular basis. Targeted media should include, but not be limited to: print, television, radio, online, bloggers and influences.

Trade Media: A list of trade media will be created.

Tour Operators: A list of preferred group tour operators will be created

Editorial Calendar: An editorial calendar is used to ensure key information is distributed to media. This will result in regular coverage in targeted news outlets. The editorial calendar should be updated on an ongoing basis and focus on Lexington's assets and story ideas in an effort to ensure the promotion of positive stories about Lexington.

Media Releases: Consumer and trade media should be targeted with media releases. They should be sent out bi-monthly, or as necessary, to coincide with key milestones. They should be distributed by email and sent directly to a database of all media contacts. All releases should also be uploaded to the Lexington website and made accessible for all to read.

- *E-Newsletters:*

Consumer: 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 target audience for the newsletter will be visitors who may extend their visit if they are educated on the wide variety of offerings in Lexington. The newsletters will be sent quarterly or every other month, and once there is enough content, the newsletters should be sent on a monthly basis. The newsletter should also be sent to Town staff and all stakeholders so that they are informed of all tourism activities taking place in Lexington and how they're being promoted to visitors.

Group Tour: A group tour newsletter should be sent out quarterly, highlighting product, new programs and itineraries, as well as news.

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 Lexington. A recent survey by Manifest showed that nearly one-third of Americans interact with social media content over 10 times a day via liking, posting or sharing content. There are more than 2.7 billion social media users worldwide, representing around 35% of the worldwide population.

Social media is influential and is the quickest way to reach target audiences. A program to introduce regular posts to increase awareness for Lexington among visitors and residents will be created. The social media pages for Lexington should stay up to date with news from around Lexington, promote businesses, social events and other activities that help to position Lexington as a great destination to explore. The tone should be upbeat and ensure positive and encouraging messaging as it pertains to both stakeholders and people not from the area. All of the Lexington social media pages should be linked to the website for easy visitor access. In addition, the messaging and branding across all platforms should remain consistent, i.e. the tone on each platform should match, the information should be the same, etc. That is not to say that the posts should be the same – the audiences on each platform consume information differently so while an event or activity may be promoted across all platforms, the photography and copy writing should be tailored to the appropriate outlet.

A rolling calendar of social media posts will highlight news that should be promoted about Lexington. This calendar will be updated on a regular basis and will outline what the posts will focus on. For example, Lexington may consider talking about the Revolution on Monday, a cultural or outdoor activity fact on Tuesday, an upcoming event on Wednesday, a restaurant on Thursday and a shop on Friday. 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. The goal will be to generate engaging content that users will want to “like”, comment on, share, retweet and/or favorite to more widely disseminate information about Lexington. Analytics should be studied on a regular basis to see what the audience is responding to and posts should be modified to grow engagement.

In addition to planned posts, the sites should be monitored closely in order to respond to any comments, concerns and questions, as well as to stay informed about potential problems that might require attention.

- Facebook:

Facebook is a good platform to share posts, images and events. Posting should be frequent, with at least 3 posts a week. Topics can include: updates, events, new businesses, community photos, advisories, holidays, local business specials, fun facts and town anniversaries, among others. The goal is to use the page as a resource for visitors and residents alike. Although there is no character limit for Facebook posts, they should be kept short in order to hold people's attention.

- Twitter:

Twitter is a good platform for short updates, advisories, events and community photos. There is a character limit of 280 characters per post, meaning the messaging has to be short and impactful. Twitter messaging moves much faster than Facebook so it is beneficial to share more often on Twitter. Posting can be as frequent as necessary. The goal of Twitter is for it to be a quick and easy resource for residents to know what is happening in Lexington in a timely manner.

- Instagram:

Instagram is an image-sharing platform that can be used as a marketing platform and a source for community engagement. This is where the best images that portray Lexington as an ideal place to visit should be shared. Shared photos can include the Lexington community, event photos, photos of residents, local businesses, and scenic shots from around town. Instagram can also be used to follow and engage with the profiles of local businesses and community organizations. Photos should be posted at least 2 – 3 times per week.

In addition, hashtags should be created and promoted for use among stakeholders, residents and visitors. Hashtags serve as *file cabinets* and are searchable, so if someone is looking for festivals, dining options, recreation options or other activities, the hashtags may be where they look for more information.

- Pinterest:

Pinterest pages can be set up by theme to give potential visitors an idea of things to see and do while they're in Lexington – pages would include American History, Recreation, Arts & Culture, Shopping & Dining. Once established, they can be expanded to include niche themes such as: Solo Travel, Agritourism, Girls Getaways, and more.

Content Development:

One of the most cost effective ways to promote Lexington 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, existing itineraries will be enhanced and an additional series of itineraries and themed months will be developed in cooperation with businesses in Lexington. 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 on the trip people want to experience.

They could be half day to three day visits. The itineraries could be seasonal, weekend or weekday specific, helping to drive business to need periods. They could be targeted to consumers, group tour planners or corporate planners

Topics could include:

- American History
- Buy Local – art, food, services
- Soft Adventure Activities - hiking, biking
- Historical landscapes & architecture
- Walk the Path of Presidents/Walk the Path of Nobel Prize Winners
- Agritourism – connecting farms, food products and table
- Lexington as a Hub & Spoke location
- Arts & Culture
- Music & Entertainment
- Special Events
- 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 tell stories and 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 Lexington and partake in activities. 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, Lexington 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
- Ancestry Travel
- Generational Travel
- Nature Hiking & Biking Trails
- Locally made and produced items (art and food)
- Value Promotions, i.e. 40 ideas for under \$40
- 2020 Anniversary of the Suffragette Movement and how it links to other social movements
- 50 Ideas for Those Over 50 (or 50 Ideas for Those Under 50!)
- Utilizing events, such as the filming of *Little Women*, to develop packages and product.

For example, Women's History Month is March, and 2020 is the 100th anniversary of the Suffragette movement. Lexington 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 Leadership*. 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 town.

Collateral:

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. A key collateral piece for Lexington is the Visitor Guide. This is the premier destination marketing piece and if it is modernized and overhauled, it would be 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 Lexington. 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 Lexington lost business) or creating a *tag-a-long* program that would allow businesses to include their brochures for a small fee with the mailing.

The Visitor Guide will be distributed the Visitor Center, as well as through fulfillment requests, CTM, and also to be used at tradeshow and through cross promotion with businesses and other destinations.

The map of Lexington that is printed and posted on-line is useful for the visitor. Another consideration would be to create a map that shows the destination as well as itineraries that connect sites and narrates by theme. In addition, a bike path map that would take people from Lexington to Concord and back would be useful to show the diversification of activities that Lexington has to offer.

In addition, a profile sheet will be developed for the Group Tour market. This document will outline opportunities and suggested itineraries and will be distributed via email, sales calls and at trade shows.

Photography:

In this Instagram world that we live in, having good photography for promotional use is key. The most effective way to build a photo library is to hire a professional photographer. While it is an investment, it is one that can bear fruit over time given the multiple ways that images can be used. Photos should be all seasons and have people in them. Additional ideas to build a photo library include:

- **College Student Project:**
With all of the colleges and universities so close to Lexington, it is possible that the Town could work with a student or students to expand the Lexington photo library. Community models, locations, permissions and someone to produce and art direct the photography would be needed.
- **Open Call for Submissions to *Delight in Lexington*:**
Another option is to reach out to the community in a contest format to take photographs of the Town, based upon a creative brief. The community could be rewarded with an exhibition of the photos, payment could be offered for use of selected photography, and/or a way could be found to offer the artist credit. Explicit clearance for photographic use will need to be obtained, as well as permissions to feature people in the photographs.
- **Request for photos:**
The Town could request that the community submit photos via the website that would become property of the Town for promotional purposes.
- **Create Hashtags:**
Lexington should create a hashtag for social media that when used, gives the town permission to use the uploaded photo for promotional purposes. For example, the Lexington Instagram description can include copy such as: "Use the hashtag #DiscoverLexington to give us permission to feature your photo"

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.

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 Town's offerings, as well as develop packages that will promote *Off Season Lexington*.

A Lexington day pass/visitor card could be created offering entry into a number of attractions, as well as discounts at local shops and restaurants. This could be sold at the Information Center as well as on www.TourLexington.us.

The Liberty Ride Coupon Program, offering discounts to local businesses for those who buy a ticket for the ride, should also continue to be implemented in order to drive traffic to area businesses.

Partnerships:

Partnerships play an important role in leveraging resources to expand reach and messaging for Lexington.

- **Revolution250:**

Revolution 250 is a consortium of organizations working together to commemorate the 250th anniversaries of the events that led up to the American Revolution. With over 30 institutional members, they operate under the fiscal sponsorship of the Massachusetts Historical Society. Lexington should request requested designation from Rev250 to be included in their efforts and this partnership should be maximized leading up to the 250th anniversary in 2026.

- **Comparable Destinations:**

Lexington will look to work with comparable destinations such as Concord, Plymouth, and Salem to develop itineraries that enhance the visitor experience and expand their stay. These destinations have a similar visitor profile, but they are getting visitors that may not be visiting Lexington, and vice versa, so collaboration would aid in leveraging brands, budgets and increasing business.

Lexington will work with Concord to collaborate on programming activities such as Patriot's Day – sharing knowledge and resources for Parades and other activities, as well as collaborating with journalists, suggested itineraries, and general promotion of the area depending upon the theme, particularly when it comes to revolutionary history. Lexington & Concord are synonymous with the American Revolution and visitors expect the whole experience, so it only makes sense to work with Concord to provide the visitor with what they're seeking. The Liberty Ride is a popular attraction run by the Town of Lexington. Offering tours of the sites of the American Revolution in both Lexington and Concord, there is potential to expand the effort and incorporate Concord more fully into the ride.

- **Other Tourism Organizations:**

Lexington will continue to partner with the Greater Merrimack Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau, the Massachusetts Office of Travel.& Tourism, the Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau and Discover New England. Information on programs and

events will be sent to these organizations so that they can help to promote them. Events will be included on their online calendar listings and Lexington will work with these organizations to support educational trips for journalists. Advertising will be placed in their collateral where appropriate and they will be given the Lexington collateral for distribution where possible. Content will be developed collaboratively, when appropriate.

- Other Organizations:

Lexington will look to develop partnerships with organizations that can help leverage the product that is being promoted – i.e. developing a partnership with the Appalachian Mountain Club to promote the wide variety of outdoor offerings in Lexington; partnering with hotels within the community to develop content to drive corporate outing business (farm to table dinner or private tour at Wilsons Farm, for example); developing relationships with colleges and universities in the Greater Boston area to drive more business to Lexington in terms of meetings, tours or just general consumer promotions.

Events:

Events attract visitors to a destination. However, creating and producing events is very time consuming, particularly for a small staff. Therefore, Lexington will support existing events through communications efforts, brainstorm with partners about new events – such as something to celebrate the anniversary of the 19th amendment in 2020 - or take advantage of other events taking place within the community, such as Revolutionary Revelry.

Events will be used as a hook in marketing and communications channels in order to attract new, or larger, audiences to Lexington. Events such as the Patriots Day activities or events taking place in the National Park will be incorporated into suggested itineraries, media pitches, and social media efforts where possible to ensure that audiences outside of the greater Lexington area are made aware of all that is happening in the Town.

Events that are created for the Rev250 Celebration will be promoted in order to build awareness and capture visitors not only for the celebration in 2026, but for events leading up to it in the next few years.

Educational Trips/Familiarization Trips:

Educational (Familiarization) 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, an annual educational trip that invites all of the local people who help to sell and promote Lexington should be implemented. It would include hotel sales and marketing staff, as well as Concierge staff, from Lexington and surrounding communities, Information Center staff from Lexington and Concord, staff from the Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism (MOTT), Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau (GBCVB), Greater Merrimack Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau (GMVCVB), members of the Greater Boston Concierge Association, local receptive operators, destination management companies and other organizations that help to sell Lexington.

Memberships:

Lexington will continue to be involved with the following membership & tourism marketing organizations:

- Greater Merrimack Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Greater Boston Concierge Association
- Lexington Chamber of Commerce
- Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism
- Discover New England

Sales:

The various tour companies and receptive operators (those currently sending business to Lexington and other sending business to the region) will be contacted and educated on what there is to see and do in Lexington and how they can enhance their itineraries for their customers. These companies will include those bringing in both domestic and international individual and group travelers.

Lexington will also look to partner with local businesses who are members of Meeting Professionals International (MPI), Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA), Student Youth Travel Association (SYTA), American Business Association (ABA), National Tour Association (NTA) and others to host educational evenings for local members of those associations so that they can be better educated on what Lexington has to offer for group business.

Eventually, a customer advisory group will be created to solicit input from the various tour companies to help make the experience in Lexington better for the Group Tour visitor.

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 Lexington for direct response to the client. But in all cases, leads generated from advertising, tradeshow, promotions and other sources will be tracked for return on investment.

Tradeshows:

Eventually, Lexington should consider having a presence at the following shows, among others, in an effort to expand the network of potential clients and drive business:

- Discover New England Summit
- IPW (International Pow Wow)
- NTA (National Tour Association)
- ABA (American Bus Association)
- AAA Travel Marketplace
- Boston Globe Travel Show
- CT1/Hartford Courant Show
- New York Times Travel Show (in a lead up to Rev250)

Working 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 Lexington to leverage resources and expand exposure for the region among target audiences, while allowing for partnering between the private and public sector.

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 Lexington.

Advertising will focus on promoting Lexington as a destination to discover – that it is more than just the birthplace of the American Revolution, a perfect blend of the historical and the contemporary, underscored with value added offers. Lexington 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 with incomes of more than \$75,000 will be targeted. Sites such as TripAdvisor, Google Travel and others will be contacted to make sure that they have current information and are promoting the appropriate Lexington messaging.

Trends show it is typically the woman in the family/couple who make travel decisions. 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 Lexington experience.

Co-operative ads will 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 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 Lexington and the businesses in the Town are interested in.

Depending on budget available, media might include:

- Boston Magazine
- TripAdvisor
- New England Travel
- Boston.com
- Yankee Magazine Travel New England
- AAA Mid-Atlantic
- AAA New England
- Greater Merrimack Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau Publications: Visitors, Group Tour, Website banner ads, Eblast sponsorships
- Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau Publications: Visitors, Group Tour, Meetings, Website banner ads, Eblast sponsorships
- WBZ Traffic Reports
- CT1/Hartford Courant
- Comcast/Time Warner
- Social Media – Facebook, Instagram

Ad space will also be traded with other organizations to leverage reach (i.e. Salem, Concord, Plymouth, Sturbridge) wherever possible, and Lexington 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.

Revenue Generating Ideas:

In addition to revenue generated from the Liberty Ride and the Visitor's Center, revenue can be generated a number of other ways in a tourism marketing program.

A successful funding model would allocate a portion of the growth in visitor-oriented revenue streams to support visitor-oriented tourism efforts. Tourism industry group Destinations International states that there are a variety of ways to fund a Destination Marketing Organization, with a portion of hotel tax being the major way. With a program targeted towards overnight visitors, hotel taxes would increase, therefore, if there were a dedicated stream allocated for marketing, as Salem, Provincetown, Sturbridge, Gloucester and others do, this would increase as well.

Additional ideas include creating programs for the private sector and other partners to participate in, such as:

- Production of a visitor's guide. Determining the revenue that could be generated from the guide is difficult. If it is produced in house, there are more funds available, but if it were outsourced, staff would have more time to sell other programs. Either way, it is estimated that at least \$20,000 profit, if not significantly more, should be able to be generated from this guide.
- Organization of co-op advertising. A series of co-op ads can be placed in local and regional publications and Lexington could facilitate the placement of these ads. Full-page, spread and multiple spread pages could be purchased at a discounted rate and then sold to businesses in the area as fractional ads at a gross rate. The cost of the ad would be less than if the business were to purchase the same small ad themselves.
- Offering enhanced listings on the website for businesses. As the Town is contributing to the program, all businesses could be included in online listings on the website, but enhanced listings including photos, link to website, banner ad, etc. could generate additional funds.
- Visitor Information Support Program. When Lexington is fulfilling visitor requests for brochures and information, businesses can have their brochures inserted into

the mailings for a fee. Assuming 25,000 visitor packages were sent out in a year, at \$0.15 a brochure, \$3,750 would be generated from one business alone.

- Pursuing grants from the Greater Merrimack Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau, Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism, Massachusetts Cultural Council and other organizations both in Massachusetts and out of state.
- Soliciting Corporate Partnerships. The Tourism Department and those businesses who are in the tourism industry, should outline suppliers who benefit when tourism increases in the town (electric company, banks, companies who provided food/beverage to hotels & restaurants, credit card companies, etc). These suppliers would be contracted to contribute to the overall tourism effort. The argument to them would be if tourism increases, their profits increase, therefore, they should help with the effort. In return, they could get promoted in fulfillment pieces, at tradeshow in press kits, on the web site, etc. If implemented correctly, this program could generate at least \$10,000 - 30,000 to start.

In addition, the local travel & tourism industry will be relied upon heavily for in-kind assistance, such as hosting educational/familiarization trips, donating rooms and meals, and offering to help “sell” the destination to writers; representing Lexington when they’re at tradeshow or other events for their businesses; or offering direction and support, assistance finding sponsors, etc.

Surveys:

Two surveys will be conducted in order to better understand audience needs, provide benchmarks, help to measure ROI and provide important input and insight that can be used to determine strategy and direction.

A visitor survey will allow Lexington to:

- Understand how Lexington appears to a non-resident
- Gauge what visitors like the most/least about the Town
- Learn what drew visitors to Lexington
- Learn how visitors got their information
- Gather information on demographics
- Gather feedback on attractions, events and businesses.

A group operator survey will allow Lexington to:

- Understand how Lexington appears to the group tour market
- Gauge what is most/least appealing about Lexington to the group tour visitor
- Gather information on demographics
- Gather feedback on attractions, events and businesses
- Gather ideas for product development

Both of these surveys will be conducted annually and create a baseline for activities that can be measured against future years.

Tools to Track Measurable Outcomes:

The key measure of success will be through the implementation of the plan and subsequent results. To be successful, this plan requires engagement with all stakeholders for input, feedback, consultation, implementation and review.

Measurement tools should be attached to activities whenever possible. In addition, new ways should be sought out to measure success in order to ensure that Lexington is generating the greatest return on investment possible from the programs.

The measurement tools outlined below are designed to be both short and long term, so that programs can be measured for their effectiveness on a weekly or monthly basis (such as website analytics, partnership programs, media coverage) and on an annual basis. In this way there will be an ongoing understanding of successes and programs that need to be modified in order to become more effective will be identified. These analytics will allow for directional changes as needed.

The success of the initiatives will be measured by:

- Track people counter at visitor center
- Tracking industry trends
- Direct access to Google Analytics to measure/analyze data on web visitors
- Tracking the number of inquiries received through phone, mail and email
- Tracking the number of partners participating in programs & revenue generated
- Tracking the number of subscribers to the visitor newsletter
- Tracking the number of educational trips taking place in Lexington, including number of participants, media coverage and or business generated
- Tracking the amount and value of media coverage received
- Including measurement tools in all promotional campaigns to be able to track and analyze statistics from the individual campaigns, as well as collectively
- Work with Partners (hotels, attractions, etc.) to meet quarterly and to develop cumulative baseline visitor numbers to be measured quarterly
- Tracking and analyzing social media analytics
- Analyzing Survey Data, modifying surveys and measuring results
 - Tracking the number of businesses who sent out the survey
 - Tracking the number of emails that the Town has to send the survey to
 - Tracking the number of surveys that were sent out & completed

IV. Year One Priorities

A number of strategies and tactics have been outlined in order to reach the goals highlighted in this plan. Implementation of these strategies will ultimately help prepare Lexington for the Rev250 Celebrations in 2026.

In the first year, priorities should include:

- *Website Enhancements*

Enhance website to spotlight all of Lexington's many dining, retail, entertainment, and lodging options, as well as its historic, cultural, and recreational treasures.

- Include on site:
 - Suggested itineraries
 - Product, packages & theme months
 - Promotions
 - Media and industry sections
 - Consumer E-newsletter sign up
- Continually update content

- *Brand Development*

Analyze current brand and graphic touchpoints. Modify and develop a brand that will carry Lexington into the 250th anniversary in 2026 and beyond

- *Development of Communications Infrastructure*

Develop and implement internal communications program that includes:

- Create internal database
- Create internal E-newsletter template
- Bi-monthly e-newsletters
- Hold quarterly meetings with private sector and other partners
- Educate residents on the value of tourism to Lexington and introduce them to the new Visitor Center, showing them how it is for them, as well as visitors
- Send leads generated from programs to local businesses for follow-up

Develop and implement external Communications program

- Create consumer database
- Create external E-newsletter template
- Create and distribute bi-monthly E-newsletters
- Media Relations
 - Create Media database
 - Create 18-monthly 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, Twitter & Instagram pages
 - Develop a calendar of posts that tie into content offerings
 - Post 5 days per week
 - Respond to all reviews and follower comments/feedback
- Content Development
 - Develop five suggested itineraries. Could be 1/3/5 days
 - Include in e-news and media outreach
 - Designate four themed months for product and package development within the town and private sector
 - Include in e-news and media outreach
 - Update calendar of events and activities in Lexington to be promoted to visitors and partner who help sell the region. Post on website, include in e-newsletter and Calendar outside of visitor Center
- *Advertising*

Due to budget limitations, in 2020-2021, advertising will be limited to ads in TripAdvisor, Boston.com, Yankee Magazine - Travel Issue, Boston Magazine – Travel Issue, Greater Merrimack Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau publications, Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau publications and potentially WBZ Traffic Report.

- *Re-introduce Service Training Initiative*

Held in Winter 2021, the Service Training Initiative will include:

- Educating the industry on key selling points for 2021
- Customer Service Training

- *Revenue Generating Programs*

Being to look at opportunities for revenue generating programs – through the website, visitors guides mail programs and other opportunities.

- *Research & Measurement*

- Implement annual visitor survey – 2020 will form the baseline
- Develop program to implement tools to track measurable outcomes - 2020/2021 will form the baseline.
- Produce a report that outlines results on an annual basis, including leads generated and results from annual programs, individual programs and ongoing events.

